

The Role of Ngos in Localizing UN-REDD+ In Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT: This study explores the role of national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in localizing the UN-REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) norm in Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia. UN-REDD+ aims to mitigate climate change by promoting sustainable forest management in developing countries. Sulawesi Tengah was selected as a pilot province due to its extensive forest cover and relatively undisturbed deforestation activities. However, despite international support, the initiative encountered resistance from local communities, influenced by national and local NGOs. This research examines the complex interactions among international, national, and local NGOs by applying Acharya's norm localization theory. While international NGOs provided technical expertise, local NGOs significantly shaped the community perspective. These local NGOs raised concerns about the potential exploitation of forests and disruption to indigenous cultural values, fuelling opposition to the program.

Consequently, the localization failed, and UN-REDD+ was discontinued in Sulawesi Tengah in 2012. The findings highlight the importance of considering local actors and their concerns in global environmental governance. Local NGOs, closely connected to communities, played a decisive role in rejecting the program, underscoring it, and addressing local values and governance issues.

KEYWORDS: NGOs; Norm Localization; Sulawesi Tengah; UN-REDD+

I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) was established in September 2008 to support developing countries in enhancing their capacity to lower emissions and engage in a prospective REDD+ framework. Within the scope of this strategy, REDD+ encompasses efforts to reduce emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, as well as the promotion of conservation, sustainable forest management, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in these countries (Distr, 2008).

UN-REDD Programme leverages the convening power and specialized expertise of its three participating UN agencies—namely, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). The program collaborates closely with other REDD+ initiatives, particularly those managed by the World Bank, and aids in the implementation of decisions made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). During the interim phase before the REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC is formally established, the UN-REDD Programme Team, alongside the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, provides secretariat services to the REDD+ Partnership in Oslo, Norway, formed in 2010 to boost REDD+ actions and funding (*UN-REDD Programme 2011-2015 Strategy - English*, n.d.).

The primary objective of the UN-REDD+ initiative is to promote the participation of developing countries in global climate change mitigation efforts (FAO, 2024). As a key developing country, Indonesia is a significant target of this initiative, given its vast forest resources and crucial role in reducing carbon emissions (Syahbani et al. 2024). During President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration, Indonesia and Norway established a forest governance collaboration based on the UN-REDD+ framework. The signing of the Letter of Intent (LoI) between Indonesia and Norway in May 2010 formalized their partnership (Wijaya & Witri Elvianti, 2022). Norway's primary objective was to support Indonesia's efforts to reduce deforestation emissions and forest and peatland degradation. As a highly committed developed country, Norway has been actively involved in implementing the UN-REDD+ initiative in Indonesia and other developing countries, including Vietnam, Peru, and Panama. Norway provided \$1 billion in funding to Indonesia for emissions reduction efforts under the REDD+ scheme and allocated \$3.5 billion to support the UN-REDD+ Program globally (Philips chad, 2010).

In the continuation of the collaboration in March 2010, the Indonesian government held the UN-REDD inception workshop in Jakarta, where it was decided that Sulawesi Tengah would serve as the pilot province for the UN-REDD+ scheme. This decision

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followed a presentation by the Sulawesi Tengah Provincial Forestry Office highlighting the region's potential such as: first, the absence of similar activities minimizes the risk of external influence, as the UN-REDD project is currently the only REDD-related initiative in Sulawesi Tengah, second, since there have been no significant previous REDD+ projects in this province, the evaluation of the project's outcome and impact can be conducted with greater objectivity, and lastly, Sulawesi Tengah hosts several conservations areas, such as Lore Lindu National Park and Morowali Nature Reserve, offering opportunities to implement REDD+ within protected areas, also in Sulawesi Tengah, while deforestation has taken place, a substantial amount of forest cover still remains, with relatively high carbon density, local capacity is sufficient to generate rapid results, drivers of deforestation can be addressed relatively quickly and REDD+ can result in significant co-benefits within the chosen location (Ani Mardiasuti, 2012). Another reason is that about 65% of the land in Sulawesi Tengah where is still forested, and an estimated 800.000 people (33% of the total population) live in and around forest areas (Hansen, 2012).

In response, Indonesia established a national task force known as SATGAS REDD+/ The REDD+ Task Force that was given the mandate: (a) to prepare for the establishment of a National REDD+ Agency; (b) to ensure the development of a National REDD+ strategy and national action plan for the mitigation of Green Houses Gasses (GHG) emissions; (C) to set up a funding instrument; (d) to set up an independent Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system; (e) to develop the selection criteria and strategy for implementation in pilot provinces; and (f) to prepare and implement other assignments by the LoI (Ani Mardiasuti, 2012). In May 2011, the government implemented a two-year moratorium on issuing new permits for forest conversion (Hansen, 2012). In March 2012, a draft of sub-national guidelines for obtaining the consent of local communities was field-tested in the villages of Talaga and Lembah Mukti, Sulawesi Tengah Province (Williams, 2023). In line with these efforts, several activities were conducted to build capacity through workshops, one of which focused on establishing the REDD+ Working Group (Pokja Pantau/Pokja) in Sulawesi Tengah. This Working Group was organized into four key areas. First, Working Group I: Policy Development related to REDD+ implementation in Sulawesi Tengah (Regional Strategy). Second, Working Group II: Institutional and Methodological Frameworks. Third, Working Group III: Demonstration activities. Fourth, Working Group IV: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). The REDD+ Working Group represents various stakeholders in Sulawesi Tengah, including the Provincial Government, universities, indigenous people and local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector (Ani Mardiasuti, 2012).

Under these circumstances, Indonesia has yet to develop national guidelines for the FPIC process to determine community consent for REDD+ activities. However, the National Forestry Council submitted FPIC policy recommendations to the national REDD+ Agency and Ministry of Forestry in March 2011. These sub-national guidelines, developed for a pilot project in Sulawesi Tengah were field-tested in Talaga and Lembah Mukti in 2012. The Provincial Working Group, with the Forest Management Unit, led the testing, proposing reforestation with valuable species like rubber to encourage villagers to halt forest conversion (Williams, 2023)

In practice, however, this UN-REDD+ is only sometimes easily implemented, and gaps emerged during the pilot program in the two villages. Broadly, many issues have arisen in Indonesia and other Asian Countries. In Sulawesi Tengah, communities have expressed concern over the need for meaningful implementation of critical provisions, such as FPIC. Additionally, the same pilot project has made limited efforts to safeguard land and resource rights, instead focusing on a single approach that has been detrimental to local communities (Feather, 2013)

Moreover, although the UN-REDD+ scheme guarantees the rights of indigenous communities within the framework of Indonesia's national laws, the participation of indigenous or local communities in the program remains limited. Ensuring these rights is critical, particularly about forests, as these communities depend on them for their livelihoods. Neglecting this can lead to significant challenges. According to Williams (2023), distinct challenges were faced in the two villages, resulting in mixed outcomes. In Lembah Mukti, the REDD+ mechanism was victorious, while in Talaga, it Failed, as the local community decided to discontinue the program (Williams, 2023). Therefore, UN-REDD+ stopped in Sulawesi Tengah in 2012.

One of the things that makes UN-REDD+ effective and successful is the intervening in several multi-stakeholder partnerships, including NGOs as a significant group (influential actors in sustainable development) in the 21st agenda Earth Summit in Brazil 1992 (Isnaeni, n.d.). NGOs have a crucial role in international relations. They emerged in the 1950s and aimed to help people by influencing governments to consider certain concerns and interests of civil society (Burlinova, 2022). Thus, in implementing global norms at the local level, it is essential to see how local actors—especially NGOs play a role in translating and localizing UN-REDD+ and whether this norm can be accepted or rejected (Schnyder, 2023). Hence, this paper discusses the role of NGOs in localizing UN-REDD+ norms in Sulawesi Tengah by applying Acharya's concept of norm localization.

II. METHOD

In order to investigate the relationship between theory and research, this paper uses qualitative research techniques that use an deductive approach, beginning with an existing theoretical framework to develop hypothesis that are then tested through empirical data. In this approach, the researcher establishes a theory or conceptual framework, formulates hypothesis, collects data, and analyzes data, and either confirms or reject the hypothesis. If the data supports the hypothesis, the theory is reinforced; if not, the

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hypothesis may be rejected or modified (Bryman, 2012). This paper uses the theory of Norm Localization by Acharya (2004) in analyzing how the role of NGOs a local agent in affecting the process of UN-REDD+ localization in Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia, and my hypothesis is The NGOs have crucial role and very impactful actor in this localization because they are the closest actor to the local community who can change the paradigm of local community about UN-REDD+. The study makes use of secondary data from scholarly sources or the internet. The author refers to sources such as media, journals, e-books, and official websites of organizations to refer to the problem discussed regarding the role of NGOs in localizing UN-REDD+ in order to answer the research question (Lamont, 2015).

The deductive methodology is considered beneficial since it uses an iterative process to validate evidence against the theory. This method allows for thoroughly comprehending, analysing, and synthesizing the available data to clarify how the UN-REDD+ norm is localized in Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia.

III.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To understand Acharya's concept regarding norm localization, we can see the model below:

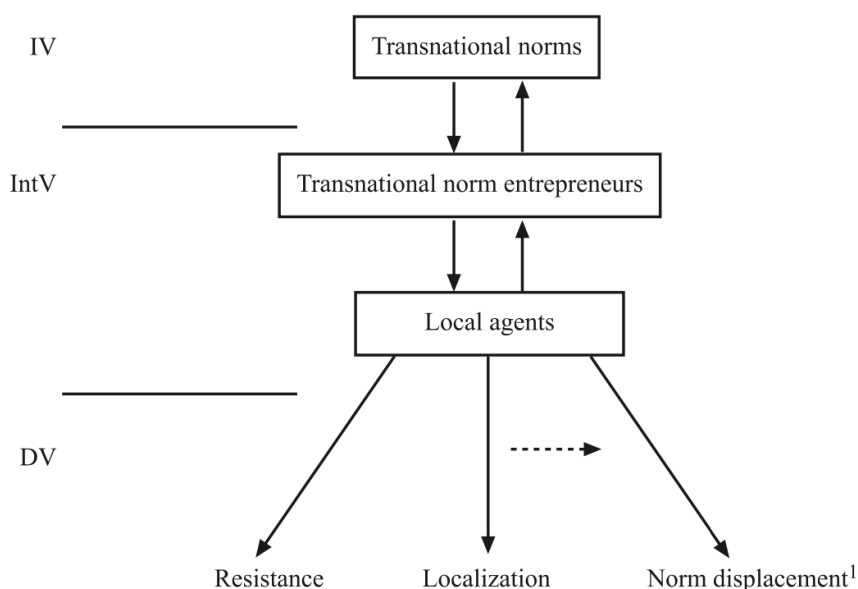


Figure. 1. Internalization Process of Acharya's Concept

Source: (Acharya, 2004)

According to Acharya (2004), global norms are translated by transnational norm entrepreneurs and passed on to local agents, who can shape opinions and engage in discussions about these global norms. This process enables local agents to advocate for global norms within their communities and on the global stage (Acharya, 2004). In our case, UN-REDD+ was introduced by three key United Nations Agencies: FAO, UNDP, and UNEP. They were the Transnational Norm Entrepreneurs. In response, the local agents—the Indonesian government, NGOs, and local communities- made a national team to implement UN-REDD+ at the local level. Also, Acharya has four stages of action: Pre-Localization, Local initiative, Adaption, and Amplification. However, we found that the localization of UN-REDD+ in Sulawesi Tengah was just in the stage of local initiative, where the Indonesian government and NGOs demonstrated the UN-REDD+ to the local communities and reframe UN-REDD+. Moreover, in this paper, we only focused on NGOs as a local initiative because NGOs are the closer actors to local communities in demonstrating UN-REDD+, so there was rejection from local communities in Sulawesi Tengah.

Along the journey of implementation of UN-REDD+ in Sulawesi Tengah, many NGOs faced challenges. Because many NGOs are involved, I categorized them into International NGOs (who promote the UN-REDD+) and national and Local NGOs (Who support and challenge the UN-REDD+).

A. International NGOs: Promoting the UN-REDD+ in Indonesia

In 2009, international NGOs from Norway—namely Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN)- initially recommended the UN-REDD Programme for the UN-REDD+ pilot province in Indonesia. This recommendation made Sulawesi Tengah the pilot province to implement UN-REDD+ in Indonesia in 2012 (Rainforest Foundation Norway, 2009). Also, in October 2011, the Forest Peoples Program (FPP) surveyed their local partners, asking the local community to pinpoint essential experiences and emerging lessons learned concerning REDD+ and rights issues over the last three years. In Indonesia, partners include Pusaka, FPP, and field staff.

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FPP also actively published articles regarding REDD+. In their article, they said that in all cases reviewed, existing REDD policies are being developed with a lack of empirical information and a weak analysis of the drivers of deforestation. REDD+ Policies and sub-national projects still unjustly blame the poor and local communities for forest loss (Forest Peoples Program, 2011)

Both RFN and FPP, as international NGOs, have facilitated workshops for national NGO activists aimed at equipping them with information on REDD and its associated funding mechanism. Additionally, FPP has undertaken follow-up monitoring to assess the progress of REDD initiatives in Sulawesi Tengah. However, the activities were conducted only for a short duration, raising concerns about the adequacy of local representation (Howell, 2014).

B. National and Local NGOs: Supporting and Challenging the UN-REDD+ in Sulawesi Tengah

National NGOs such as AMAN and WALHI are included in Pokja (Kelompok Kerja) Pantau or the REDD Monitoring Working Group, where they have a role in monitoring UN-REDD+ in Sulawesi Tengah (Howell, 2015). When establishing the Working Group, AMAN—a trusted and respected national representative organization—was invited to participate but expressed significant concerns regarding the actions of the Provincial Forestry Service in Sulawesi Tengah. Other local NGOs were also skeptical of the government's intentions. Nevertheless, these national and local NGOs remained engaged, with some even being hired as consultants (Boer, 2019).

AMAN was conducted through a presentation to socialize the UN-REDD+. At the end of the presentation, the villagers of Hano were asked to provide feedback. Instead of offering comments, a petition of rejection was read out. However, apart from that, AMAN keeps socializing with UN-REDD+ (Bakker, 2014).

In July 2011, the Central Sulawesi REDD+ Working Group hosted a visit from Indigenous communities from Kenya, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The FPIC Working Group supported this visit in collaboration with AMAN. The visit aimed to study the multi-stakeholder process developed by the Sulawesi Tengah REDD+ Working Group (Ani Mardiasuti, 2012).

Even though national and local NGOs in Sulawesi Tengah have been involved in several activities to support the REDD initiative, evidence suggests a more complex dynamic. Some national and local NGOs express reservations about the program and challenge its implementation. Their distrust stems from concerns over transparency, inclusivity, and the effectiveness of REDD in addressing local environmental and social issues. Moreover, these NGOs face a range of challenges. I found several instances where this monitor and the relevant government authorities and NGOs clashed over the implementation of UN-REDD+ in Sulawesi Tengah.

According to Howell (2015), NGOs faced difficulties in localizing UN-REDD+ due to the uncertain primary duties and function of the local NGOs in demonstrating UN-REDD+ in local communities. The Pokja Pantau did not produce any information material because they monitor UN-REDD+ activities, not promote them. Also, Yayasan Merah Putih (one of the largest local NGOs in Sulawesi Tengah) did contain information about the dangers of deforestation and REDD—however, the information needed to be more widely distributed (Howell, 2015). Meanwhile, Hansen (2012) argues that several NGOs initially rejected the REDD Program: Walhi Sulteng, Solidarity Perempuan Palu, and JATAM Sulteng. Walhi disapproves of REDD since the Jakarta headquarters disapproved of REDD Because Walhi stated that the discussion of REDD overly prioritizes the interests of forestry corporations (Rahman, 2014).

Furthermore, One NGO that advocates for women and women's rights is Solidarity Perempuan Palu; they oppose REDD because it may lead to the marginalization of women. This issue is related to the press circular of the Central Women's Solidarity that the Central Sulawesi Government must be firm regarding the REDD Scheme: Urging Emission Producing Countries to Improve Forest Governance by Taking Action Against Companies Destroying Forests and Guaranteeing the Protection of the Rights of Communities Around Forests, Especially Women (Solidaritas Perempuan, 2013).

JATAM's reason is that since they focused on mining-related concerns and know that mining activities contribute to deforestation and forest degradation, they oppose REDD and work on related issues instead. However, The REDD Working Group still includes the three NGOs (Hansen, 2012).

C. Complexity among NGOs in Implementing UN-REDD+

Numerous NGOs are involved in the UN-REDD+ failure in Sulawesi Tengah, which highlights the fact that there are distinct tensions between NGOs and other NGOs. According to Hansen's research, there was resentment between local and national NGOs since the former should have a more significant influence in Sulawesi Tengah. Additionally, the widespread conflicts over REDD+ funding make it highly challenging to implement the program effectively at the local level, ultimately impacting the local community (Hansen, 2012). Also, Howell mentioned that NGOs at the local level lacked capacity (Mcgregor et al., 2015). We argue that they have enough capacity in this case; however, they were not given ample opportunities in this program. Hansen found that NGOs from Java, such as HuMa, AMAN, and Walhi, seem to have more influence on the design of REDD+ in Sulawesi Tengah, which local NGOs think is unfair since they are from Java. For example, AMAN was situated somewhat beyond the core of the Palu (Capital city of Sulawesi Tengah) NGO community. The other campaigners did not think highly of them. The head of AMAN Sulawesi and his wife identified as "indigenous," but some activists took issue with this as they did not live like "indigenous" people; instead, they lived in hotels while traveling by plane from Jakarta to Palu. AMAN is known as the "representative" of Indonesia's

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"Indigenous people" and focuses on "Indigenous people." AMAN has been instrumental in REDD efforts. AMAN is well-known and has garnered much attention from the media and reports, which makes them different from other local NGOs in Sulawesi Tengah (Hansen, 2012).

AMAN provided information about local practices and aspirations to socialize about REDD. However, Palu officials were taken aback when residents in the REDD-designated region refused to assent to the official REDD delegation. This situation demonstrated that the officials had not prioritized handling FPCI (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent) and needed to prepare for the pushback. Since they had no family in the area, AMAN was not involved in this case; nonetheless, Pokja Pantau representatives had been actively opposing REDD for some time. REDD will pillage the forest and demolish traditions and societal values, and REDD, a phony solution for climate change, was among the vibrant stickers they handed. Even in actuality, the primary cause of REDD's rejections was the public's mistrust of the surveys that had begun to draw boundaries and their anxiety over losing their land (Howell, 2015).

Another NGO that has a role in this case is HuMa, which is one of the NGOs in Indonesia that focuses on legal updates relating to land and other natural resources. HuMa with Perkumpulan Bantaya and Local Activist Network have long worked in Sulawesi Tengah to promote the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in managing natural resources. Regarding climate change, HuMa's activities in Sulawesi Tengah are focused on efforts to encourage the formation of regulations at the regional and local levels that accommodate the interests and rights of indigenous peoples and the local community, especially in the context of implementing the REDD+ program in Sulawesi Tengah. One of the activities carried out by HuMa, Perkumpulan Bantaya, and the Network was an effort to encourage the formulation of regulations at the regional (district) and local (village) levels that contain the substance of the principle of free and prior informed consent (FPIC), not only in the REDD+ program but also in all development programs (Permatasari, 2012).

Also, the Women and Children's Care Group director in Sulawesi Selatan (The Southern part of Sulawesi) helped promote the REDD Program. Mutmainnah Korona said that women's position in society should no longer be overlooked, including with the implementation of the REDD program in 2012. This issue is very important because there is a close connection between the forest and women (Sangadji Rusland, 2011).

On the other hand, HuMa, I argued that NGOs in Sulawesi Tengah always make observations in the field. Noticing that what they found when conducting the observation, they found that although the development of REDD+ in Sulawesi Tengah has only reached the stage of building institutions, regulations, and policies (strategies) and has not yet entered the stage of implementing specific projects, there are many precedents from past development projects that showcase of neglect and violations of the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities. For instance, in the case of development of the Lore Lindu National Park (TNLL) which limits access of Indigenous peoples to the forest. In addition, a preliminary study conducted in 2011 on the portrait of FPIC implementation in Sulawesi Tengah found that the FPCI rights of local communities were consistently violated in the REDD+ Project, coupled with unclear boundaries of forest areas and community management areas. As per the initial analysis of HuMa partners Working in the field, the unclear boundaries can trigger conflict when implementing the REDD+ project in Sulawesi Tengah, which does not pay close attention to the actual conditions occurring in the community. Until October 2012, HuMa recorded 72 conflicts in forest areas spread across 17 provinces. In Central, at least nine active conflicts were recorded, covering an area of 55,603 ha (Permatasari, 2012).

Moeliono, Santoso, and Galleore (2013) show that there are 13 national NGOs and 10 International NGOs (number included in network analysis) that are included in the REDD+ policy-making process in Indonesia (Moeliono et al., 2013). Boer (2019) also said this. The ability of various actors to influence decision-making can also be evaluated by measuring the quality of participation on a scale ranging from substantial to symbolic; for instance, expert-driven mechanisms for national and sub-national consultations have been established to support specific objectives of donors and government which these processes are frequently dominated by robust networks from NGOs, multilateral organization and the government (Boer, 2019). This means there will be a superior influence on the process of UN-REDD+.

From the explanations above, one of the most astonishing aspects discovered by Williams was Williams (2023) examines that villager in Talaga, Sulawesi Tengah, did not wish to continue the UN-REDD+ Program, having reportedly been influenced by advocacy efforts of the local NGO-led monitoring group. The local NGO-led monitoring organization, Pokja Pantau, reportedly informed the Talaga villagers that "REDD+ will take the forest by force and will destroy the socio-cultural values of the community," according to the UN-REDD Programme's report on the Sulawesi Tengah FPI trials. Members of this NGO monitoring group also reportedly had their discussions with Talaga villagers, "raising concerns about potential alienation of community land as a result of REDD+" (Williams, 2023).

Apart from all that, given NGOs' many roles, it is evident that international, national, and local NGOs greatly influenced localizing the UN-REDD+ norm in Sulawesi Tengah. However, we found that national and local NGOs in Sulawesi Tengah have played a more influential role in the localization process of UN-REDD+ by directly influencing local communities, asserting that REDD+ poses a threat to the forest and local community's land.

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This complexity situation is consistent with Acharya's model in Figure 1, which illustrates the efforts of local agents to localize the UN-REDD+ program. The figure includes dashed lines, symbolizing the possibility that, despite localization efforts, the UN-REDD+ initiative probably met with resistance. This resistance could stem from the influence and contestation by local agents, including international, national, and local NGOs. These actors engage in ongoing debates that shape how the program is interpreted and implemented at the local level, with the potential to challenge or even reject the UN-REDD framework, particularly when local interests, such as control over forests and land, are perceived to be threatened (Acharya, 2004)

CONCLUSION

International NGOs have been identified as possessing the technical capability to promote UN-REDD+ among the various actors involved. However, they differ from national NGOs, which have branches in each province in Indonesia and, thus, are more closely integrated into local communities, effectively becoming local NGOs. In Sulawesi Tengah, the most influential actors opposing UN-REDD+ have been these local NGOs, which directly and significantly influence local communities, particularly in the villages designated as UN-REDD+ pilot sites.

The behavior of local NGOs has played a crucial role in shaping the opposition to UN-REDD+. Through advocacy efforts, particularly those of local NGOs participating in the REDD+ working Group in Sulawesi Tengah, they have actively shaped local perceptions. These NGOs have communicated to local communities that REDD+ would exploit their forest and land while also disrupting their social and cultural values. As a result, this narrative has fuelled resistance among local communities. Ultimately, this opposition led to discontinuing efforts to localize UN-REDD+ norms in Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia.

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