

Integration of Environmental Governance with Economic Policy: Towards a Green Governance Model in Makassar City

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to analyze how environmental governance is integrated with economic policy in Makassar City and to assess the extent to which this integration contributes to the development of a green governance model. Specifically, the study examines institutional arrangements, policy coordination mechanisms, and stakeholder participation that shape the alignment between environmental sustainability objectives and local economic development agendas.

Subjects and Methods: The study employed a qualitative case study approach focusing on Makassar City as a rapidly growing urban center in Indonesia. Data were collected over a four-month period through semi-structured interviews, policy document analysis, and limited field observations. A total of twenty-seven informants were purposively selected, including local government officials from environmental and economic planning agencies, representatives of the private sector, civil society organizations, and community leaders. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to policy integration, governance practices, and institutional dynamics, with triangulation applied to enhance analytical rigor.

Results: The findings indicate that environmental considerations have been increasingly incorporated into economic policy discourse and planning instruments, particularly through sustainability-oriented programs and green economy narratives. However, practical integration remains partial and uneven, as economic growth imperatives continue to dominate policy implementation. Institutional fragmentation, limited inter-agency coordination, and varying levels of stakeholder engagement constrain the effectiveness of green governance initiatives. Interviews revealed that environmental policies exert greater influence when aligned with short-term economic benefits, while long-term ecological objectives often receive secondary attention.

Conclusions: The study concludes that advancing a green governance model in Makassar City requires stronger institutional integration, enhanced cross-sectoral coordination, and more inclusive stakeholder participation. By highlighting the governance conditions that facilitate or hinder policy integration, this study contributes to the literature on urban environmental governance and offers policy-relevant insights for cities in the Global South seeking to balance economic development with environmental sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanization and economic expansion have intensified environmental pressures in cities across the Global South, creating complex governance challenges that demand integrated policy

responses (Véron, 2010; Sekovski et al., 2012; Patel & Raval, 2024; Swapan et al., 2017). Urban areas increasingly function as engines of economic growth while simultaneously concentrating environmental risks such as pollution, ecosystem degradation, and climate vulnerability. As cities pursue competitiveness and development, the separation between environmental governance and economic policy has often resulted in fragmented decision-making, where short-term economic objectives override long-term ecological sustainability (Kissinger et al., 2011; Nilsson & Persson, 2003; Benn et al., 2009; Yaffee, 1997).

In response, the concept of green governance has emerged as a normative and analytical framework that emphasizes the alignment of environmental objectives with economic policy instruments to promote sustainable urban development. This approach is grounded in the recognition that environmental protection and economic growth are not inherently contradictory but can be mutually reinforcing when governed through coherent, accountable, and inclusive institutional arrangements (Lemos, 2024).

The integration of environmental governance with economic policy has gained increasing attention in both academic and policy debates, particularly in the context of sustainable development and green economy transitions (Mundaca et al., 2016; Razzaq et al., 2023; Bailey & Caprotti, 2014). International frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement explicitly call for policy coherence across environmental, economic, and social domains (Coscieme et al., 2021; Kim, 2016; Tosun & Leininger, 2017). Scholarly literature highlights that cities play a critical role in operationalizing these global commitments, as urban governments possess regulatory authority, planning capacity, and proximity to local stakeholders (Saha, 2009).

Recent studies demonstrate that integrated governance approaches can enhance policy effectiveness by internalizing environmental externalities, fostering green innovation, and encouraging sustainable investment patterns (Saqib et al., 2025; Hamdouch & Depret, 2010; Abdelfattah et al., 2025). However, empirical evidence from developing country cities remains limited, particularly regarding how such integration is negotiated within existing political, institutional, and economic constraints.

Despite growing recognition of the need for integration, many cities continue to experience a persistent disconnect between environmental governance and economic policymaking. Environmental policies are frequently framed as regulatory constraints, while economic policies prioritize growth, infrastructure expansion, and investment attraction with insufficient consideration of environmental impacts (Wolsink, 2010). This fragmentation is often exacerbated by sectoral silos, overlapping institutional mandates, and limited coordination across government agencies (Okunola, 2025).

In the Indonesian context, decentralization has further complicated governance arrangements by reallocating authority to local governments without always ensuring adequate capacity, resources, or policy coherence (Yuwono & Hanani, 2025; Winters, 2012). As a result, environmental considerations are often marginal within local economic development strategies, leading to unsustainable land use, increased pollution, and social-environmental conflicts.

To address these challenges, the literature broadly proposes policy integration as a general solution, emphasizing horizontal and vertical coordination, mainstreaming environmental objectives into economic planning, and strengthening institutional mechanisms for cross-sectoral collaboration (Marín-González et al., 2022). Integrated policy approaches are expected to improve governance outcomes by aligning incentives, reducing trade-offs, and enhancing accountability. In urban contexts, this includes integrating environmental impact assessments into economic planning, adopting green fiscal instruments, and embedding sustainability criteria into public investment decisions.

While these solutions are conceptually appealing, their implementation in practice is highly contingent on local political dynamics, administrative capacity, and stakeholder engagement, which remain uneven across cities in the Global South. More specifically, previous studies have identified a range of policy instruments and governance mechanisms that can facilitate the integration of environmental governance with economic policy. Market-based instruments such

as environmental taxes, green subsidies, and incentive schemes are frequently cited as tools to internalize environmental costs and stimulate environmentally friendly economic activities.

Strategic spatial planning and sustainable urban development frameworks have also been shown to align economic growth with environmental protection by guiding land use, transportation, and infrastructure investments (Fuseini & Kemp, 2015; Okeke, 2015). Additionally, participatory and collaborative governance approaches can help reconcile competing interests by involving businesses, communities, and civil society in decision-making processes. These mechanisms collectively form the building blocks of what is increasingly referred to as green governance.

The concept of green governance extends beyond policy instruments to encompass broader institutional and normative dimensions. It emphasizes transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and long-term ecological responsibility within governance systems. Empirical research suggests that green governance is more likely to emerge where environmental objectives are embedded within economic policy frameworks rather than treated as external constraints. In urban settings, this requires strong political leadership, administrative coordination, and the ability to mobilize financial and social resources toward sustainable development goals (Guarini et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, studies also caution that green governance initiatives risk becoming symbolic or fragmented if not supported by robust institutional arrangements and enforcement mechanisms, particularly in cities facing rapid growth and fiscal pressures. A growing body of literature has examined environmental governance and economic policy separately in Indonesian cities, including issues such as urban environmental management, local economic development, and climate adaptation. However, relatively few studies explicitly analyze how these two policy domains interact and are integrated at the city level.

Existing research often focuses on sector-specific outcomes, such as waste management or industrial regulation, without sufficiently addressing cross-sectoral policy coherence and governance integration. Moreover, studies that do address integration tend to emphasize national-level policies, leaving a gap in understanding how local governments operationalize green governance within their specific socio-economic and political contexts. This gap is particularly evident in secondary metropolitan cities, which face significant development pressures but receive less scholarly attention than national capitals.

Makassar City presents a particularly relevant case for examining the integration of environmental governance with economic policy. As a major metropolitan center in eastern Indonesia, Makassar has experienced rapid economic growth, urban expansion, and increasing environmental challenges, including coastal degradation, flooding, and waste management pressures. The city has also articulated ambitions to position itself as a hub for trade, services, and sustainable urban development. These dynamics create both opportunities and tensions for integrating environmental objectives into economic policymaking. While local policies reference sustainability and green development, the extent to which environmental governance is systematically aligned with economic policy remains underexplored. This context highlights a critical research gap regarding how green governance is conceptualized, implemented, and constrained at the city level in Indonesia.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine how environmental governance is integrated with economic policy in Makassar City and to assess whether this integration reflects the emergence of a green governance model. A qualitative design is appropriate because the research seeks to understand institutional dynamics, coordination practices, and policy coherence within a specific urban setting rather than to test causal relationships statistically. Case study methodology is widely regarded as effective for exploring complex governance processes, uncovering policy narratives, and capturing context-dependent practices that influence decision-making at the local level. By concentrating on a single metropolitan area, the study provides a

detailed and grounded understanding of how green governance is interpreted and enacted in practice.

Case Selection

The selection of Makassar City was guided by substantive and analytical considerations. Substantively, Makassar functions as a major economic hub in eastern Indonesia and has experienced rapid urban expansion, infrastructure growth, and increasing environmental pressures, particularly in coastal areas, waste management, and flood risk. Analytically, local policy documents increasingly reference sustainability, green development, and environmental protection alongside economic growth objectives. This combination makes Makassar a strategic and information-rich case for investigating how policy integration occurs within a decentralized governance framework. Purposive case selection in this sense enhances the theoretical relevance of the findings by embedding them in a context where tensions between development and sustainability are highly visible.

Data Collection

Data were gathered from multiple qualitative sources in order to strengthen triangulation and provide a comprehensive view of governance processes. Primary data consisted of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in environmental and economic policymaking. Informants included officials from environmental agencies, planning institutions, economic development offices, and actors engaged in infrastructure and investment decisions. Semi-structured interviews enabled flexibility to explore participants' perspectives while maintaining comparability across major themes, including inter-agency coordination, institutional mandates, and interpretations of green governance. Discussions focused on the ways environmental objectives are incorporated into economic strategies, the mechanisms supporting integration, and obstacles encountered during implementation. In addition to interviews, document analysis constituted a central source of evidence. The study reviewed development plans, environmental strategies, spatial planning documents, regulatory frameworks, and other relevant policy materials. Documents were treated not only as formal statements of intent but also as expressions of institutional priorities and governance narratives. Where available, evaluation and implementation reports were examined to contextualize how policies translate into practice.

Analytical Framework

The analysis was guided by conceptual debates on green governance and environmental policy integration. Green governance was operationalized through several analytical dimensions, including policy coherence, institutional coordination, accountability arrangements, and the incorporation of environmental objectives into economic decision-making. These dimensions provided a structured lens for interpreting both interview accounts and documentary evidence. Using an explicit framework allowed the study to move beyond description toward evaluation of the extent to which governance arrangements enable or constrain integration.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis strategy was employed to interpret the qualitative materials. Interview transcripts and documents were coded iteratively through a combination of deductive and inductive procedures. Deductive categories were derived from the analytical framework, ensuring alignment with established theory. At the same time, inductive coding allowed new issues emerging from the field to be captured, including institutional fragmentation, development priorities, political negotiation, and administrative capacity. This approach supports theoretically informed yet context-sensitive interpretation, enabling identification of patterns across actors and policy arenas.

Triangulation

To enhance analytical robustness, findings from interviews were systematically compared with documentary evidence. This triangulation process helped reveal consistencies as well as mismatches between official commitments and everyday governance practices. Such comparison

is crucial in policy research, where formal narratives often differ from implementation realities. By integrating multiple viewpoints, the study aims to produce a nuanced and credible account of policy integration.

Validity and Reliability

Several strategies were adopted to strengthen trustworthiness. Transparency was maintained by clearly documenting data sources, interview procedures, and analytical steps. The reliance on established theoretical constructs enhanced construct validity by grounding interpretation in recognized scholarship. Furthermore, interpretations were compared across respondents to identify converging and diverging perspectives, thereby reducing reliance on single-source explanations. Although statistical generalization is not intended, these measures support analytical credibility and allow readers to assess the transferability of findings to similar contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings on the integration of environmental governance with economic policy in Makassar City by combining policy analysis and in-depth interview data. The results are organized thematically to reflect key dimensions of green governance, with interview excerpts embedded in each subsection to substantiate and contextualize the analysis.

Policy Alignment Between Environmental Governance and Economic Development

The findings indicate that Makassar City has increasingly incorporated environmental sustainability into its economic development discourse. Strategic planning documents consistently frame environmental protection, green development, and sustainability as complementary to economic growth objectives, reflecting broader global and national sustainability narratives (OECD, 2019; UN-Habitat, 2020). At the policy level, environmental governance is no longer portrayed solely as a regulatory burden but as a component of long-term economic resilience.

However, interview data reveal that this alignment remains largely rhetorical. A senior official from the local development planning agency stated,

“Environmental sustainability has become an important narrative in our development plans. Every economic program must now mention environmental aspects, but in practice, economic growth targets still dominate.”

Another respondent from the economic planning unit similarly observed,

“We try to balance environmental and economic goals on paper, but budget allocations clearly show that economic priorities come first.”

A third interviewee emphasized the symbolic nature of integration, noting,

“Environmental issues are acknowledged, but they rarely determine which economic projects are approved.”

These perspectives confirm that policy coherence exists more at the discursive level than in operational decision-making, consistent with findings in the policy integration literature (Jordan & Lenschow, 2010).

Institutional Coordination and Sectoral Fragmentation

Institutional coordination emerged as a major challenge for green governance in Makassar City. Multiple agencies are formally involved in environmental management and economic development, yet coordination remains fragmented. Although inter-agency meetings are conducted during planning processes, their substantive impact on policy integration is limited.

An official from the environmental agency explained,

“We attend coordination meetings, but our role is mostly advisory. Economic and infrastructure decisions are often made before environmental considerations are discussed.”

Another respondent highlighted sectoral silos, stating,

“Each agency works according to its own mandate. Environmental concerns are not always seen as a shared responsibility.”

A planning officer further noted,

“Coordination often focuses on fulfilling administrative requirements rather than integrating environmental objectives into economic planning.”

These accounts illustrate how hierarchical institutional arrangements and sectoral mandates constrain early-stage integration, reinforcing patterns of reactive environmental governance described in previous studies (Peters, 2015; Runhaar et al., 2014).

Economic Prioritization and Development Pressures

The dominance of economic imperatives strongly shapes governance trade-offs in Makassar City. As a regional economic hub, the city faces continuous pressure to attract investment, expand infrastructure, and sustain economic growth. Interviewees consistently acknowledged that environmental objectives are often subordinated to short-term economic considerations.

A representative from the economic affairs department stated,

“Makassar is under pressure to attract investors. When there is a conflict, economic urgency usually takes precedence over environmental concerns.”

Another official involved in infrastructure development noted,

“Environmental impacts are considered, but delaying a project for environmental reasons is politically difficult.”

A third respondent emphasized the growth-oriented mindset, explaining,

“Economic development is seen as the main indicator of success, while environmental protection is treated as a supporting issue.”

These statements reflect governance dynamics in which economic priorities dominate, echoing broader findings on sustainability trade-offs in rapidly urbanizing cities (Meadowcroft, 2007).

Selective Integration of Environmental Objectives into Policy Instruments

The results show that integration between environmental governance and economic policy is uneven across sectors. Stronger integration is evident in areas where environmental and economic objectives are perceived as mutually reinforcing, such as waste management and urban cleanliness. In these sectors, environmental initiatives are often justified in terms of efficiency, public health, and economic benefits.

One official involved in urban services remarked,

“Waste management programs are easier to integrate because they clearly affect public health and the city’s image.”

Another respondent explained,

“Environmental projects gain support when they can be linked to economic efficiency or cost savings.”

In contrast, integration is weaker in land-use planning and large-scale infrastructure projects. An interviewee from the planning agency stated,

“Environmental impact assessments are required, but they rarely change the main design of major projects.”

These findings support existing critiques of environmental policy instruments that function primarily as compliance tools rather than as mechanisms for reshaping economic development pathways (Cashmore et al., 2010).

Stakeholder Perceptions of Green Governance Practices

Stakeholder perceptions indicate that green governance is widely recognized as a desirable policy direction but remains unevenly institutionalized. Government officials generally expressed normative support for green governance while emphasizing practical constraints.

A planning official noted,

“The idea of green development is gaining attention, especially because of national and international agendas.”

Another government respondent added,

“We support green governance in principle, but implementation is limited by capacity and budget constraints.”

Civil society actors provided more critical assessments. An NGO representative stated,

“Environmental language is increasingly used in economic policies, but meaningful participation is still weak.”

Another civil society respondent observed,

“Communities are rarely involved in decisions related to large development projects that affect their environment.”

These perspectives highlight gaps in inclusiveness and accountability, which are core elements of green governance frameworks (Bäckstrand et al., 2010).

Leadership and Political Commitment

Leadership emerged as an important enabling factor in the integration of environmental governance and economic policy. Interviewees emphasized that political commitment can significantly influence coordination and policy priorities.

A senior bureaucrat explained,

“When political leaders emphasize sustainability, coordination becomes easier.”

Another respondent noted,

“Environmental issues receive more attention in economic planning when they are championed by the mayor or senior officials.”

However, reliance on individual leadership was also viewed as a weakness. A planning officer cautioned,

“These priorities can quickly change when leadership changes.”

These findings illustrate the fragility of green governance initiatives that depend on personal commitment rather than institutionalized mechanisms, a concern widely discussed in sustainability governance literature (Haque & Ntim, 2018).

This study examines how environmental governance is integrated with economic policy in Makassar City and what this reveals about the emergence of a green governance model in an urban context within the Global South. The findings demonstrate that while environmental sustainability has become an increasingly prominent discourse in economic policymaking, its practical integration remains partial, selective, and institutionally fragile. This section discusses these findings in relation to existing theoretical and empirical literature, highlighting both contributions and limitations of current governance practices.

The results show that the alignment between environmental governance and economic development in Makassar City is largely discursive rather than operational. Environmental objectives are formally acknowledged in planning documents and policy narratives, reflecting the diffusion of global sustainability norms into local governance frameworks. This supports earlier studies suggesting that cities often adopt sustainability language to signal policy modernity and international legitimacy without fundamentally altering growth-oriented development paradigms. In Makassar, the persistence of economic growth targets as the dominant policy priority indicates that environmental governance functions more as a complementary narrative than as a guiding principle shaping

economic decisions. This pattern reinforces critiques of weak policy integration, where environmental concerns are incorporated rhetorically but remain marginal in implementation.

Institutional fragmentation further constrains effective integration. The findings reveal that sectoral mandates and hierarchical decision-making structures limit early-stage coordination between environmental and economic agencies. Environmental considerations tend to enter the policy process after key economic decisions have already been made, reducing their influence on project design and strategic direction. This reactive mode of governance aligns with previous research on environmental policy integration, which emphasizes that meaningful integration requires cross-sectoral coordination at the agenda-setting stage rather than during implementation. In the absence of institutional mechanisms that mandate shared responsibility, environmental governance in Makassar remains siloed and dependent on inter-agency consultations with limited authority.

Economic pressures associated with urban growth and investment competition also shape governance trade-offs. As a regional economic center, Makassar faces strong incentives to prioritize infrastructure development and investment attraction, often at the expense of environmental safeguards. The findings illustrate how political and economic imperatives discourage delaying or revising projects due to environmental concerns. This reflects broader urban sustainability challenges in rapidly developing cities, where short-term economic gains are frequently prioritized over long-term environmental resilience. Such dynamics highlight the structural difficulty of advancing green governance in contexts where development success is predominantly measured through economic indicators.

At the same time, the study identifies areas of selective integration where environmental and economic objectives are perceived as mutually reinforcing. Waste management and urban cleanliness initiatives demonstrate stronger alignment, as these policies can be framed in terms of efficiency, public health, and economic benefit. This supports the argument that environmental policies gain traction when they are linked to tangible economic outcomes. However, the unevenness of integration across sectors suggests that green governance in Makassar remains instrumental rather than transformative. Environmental tools such as impact assessments are often treated as compliance requirements rather than mechanisms for reorienting development pathways, limiting their capacity to influence strategic economic planning.

Stakeholder perceptions further illuminate gaps between normative support for green governance and its practical realization. While government officials generally endorse the principles of sustainability, they emphasize constraints related to capacity, budget, and institutional authority. Civil society actors, in contrast, highlight limited participation and accountability, particularly in relation to large-scale development projects. These findings resonate with governance theories that emphasize inclusiveness and deliberation as core components of sustainability transitions. The marginalization of community voices weakens the legitimacy and effectiveness of environmental governance and underscores the need for participatory mechanisms that go beyond formal consultation.

Leadership and political commitment emerge as important enabling factors, but also as sources of vulnerability. Strong leadership can temporarily elevate environmental issues within economic policymaking, facilitating coordination and signaling political priority. However, reliance on individual champions rather than institutionalized frameworks makes green governance susceptible to political change. This underscores a key theoretical insight in governance literature, namely that sustainable policy integration requires durable institutional arrangements rather than episodic political support.

The findings suggest that Makassar City is in an early and transitional stage of developing a green governance model. The city demonstrates awareness of environmental–economic interdependencies and has initiated selective integration, yet these efforts remain constrained by dominant growth paradigms, institutional fragmentation, and limited accountability. This study contributes to the literature by illustrating how green governance unfolds in practice at the urban level in a developing country context, where structural economic pressures and governance capacity significantly shape policy outcomes. The discussion highlights that advancing green governance requires not only policy alignment but also institutional reform, participatory engagement, and a redefinition of

development success that places environmental sustainability at the core of economic decision-making.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of environmental governance with economic policy in Makassar City remains uneven and largely incremental, reflecting an ongoing transition toward a green governance model rather than its full realization. While sustainability principles are increasingly embedded in policy narratives and planning frameworks, their influence on core economic decision-making is still constrained by growth-oriented development priorities, institutional fragmentation, and limited cross-sectoral coordination. The findings indicate that environmental considerations are more likely to shape policy outcomes when they align with immediate economic benefits, yet they remain marginal in strategic development decisions with long-term ecological implications. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on urban green governance by demonstrating how political commitment, institutional design, and stakeholder participation jointly condition the effectiveness of policy integration in a rapidly developing city context. Strengthening green governance in Makassar therefore requires the institutionalization of cross-sectoral mechanisms, enhanced public participation, and a shift in development metrics toward long-term environmental and economic resilience, offering important lessons for other cities in the Global South pursuing sustainable urban transformation.

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