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Editorial Preface

The Editorial Board is proud to present Journal of Political Issues (JPI) Volume 7, Number 2, January 2026 Edition. This issue arrives amidst a shifting global and domestic political landscape, which demands both policy adaptation and sharper theoretical understanding. Through the Open Journal System (OJS), we present six selected articles that dissect a broad spectrum of issues, ranging from environmental diplomacy and maritime security to governance and the fulfillment of civil rights for minority groups. This diversity of topics reflects the journal's commitment to bridging strategic international political discourse with urgent public policy realities at the local level.

As an opening, the first article by Fini Aktalya, Alfajri, and Muhammad Arsy Ash Siddiqy discusses the dynamics of green energy cooperation between the United States and China as a strategic effort to address climate change. The authors highlight opportunities for collaboration in technology investment that coexist with political challenges and competition predicted to increase in the future. Next, the second article by Rachel Kumendong examines the failure of the Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines trilateral cooperation in curbing security threats in the Sulu–Sulawesi Seas through the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) approach. The author finds that although cooperation mechanisms have been established, their effectiveness is hindered by geographical vulnerabilities exploited by terror groups and interstate mistrust that obstructs operational cohesion. Completing the international studies, the third article by Bahjatul Murtasidin, Sandy Pratama, and Putra Pratama Saputra discusses the evolution of global maritime political research trends for the 2005–2025 period through a systematic mapping approach. The results of the analysis indicate an epistemological shift from a state-centric paradigm toward an ecological-political paradigm that views the sea as a complex and dynamic political space.

Shifting to governance and domestic policy issues, the fourth article by Sapto Setyo Nugroho, Dina Fadiyah, and Laras Ayu Andini discusses the dynamics and institutional resilience of government performance monitoring units in Indonesia through a comparative framework and the concept of "deliverology." This study concludes that the formation of such units remains temporary and pragmatic, thus requiring a stronger legal foundation to be institutionalized as long-term governance instruments. The fifth article, written by Ferdiansyah Rivai, Bagaskara Sagita Wijaya, Syuryansyah Syuryansyah, and Ridha Amalia, discusses the role of the Korea–Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC) as an adaptive governance model in responding to the securitization of forest fire issues in Ogan Komering Ilir. The study shows that while technical solutions have been successfully implemented, the cooperation still faces structural challenges in aligning external interventions with the socio-economic realities of local communities. Finally, the sixth article by Yayang Firdianda Cantika and Tabah Maryanah discusses the gap between legal recognition and the reality of civil rights fulfillment for indigenous faith believers (*penghayat kepercayaan*) in Indonesia following the Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016. The authors highlight the persistence of discrimination in administrative services, education, and burial rites caused by bureaucratic incompetence and the lack of regulatory socialization at the community level.

The Editorial Board expresses its deepest gratitude and appreciation to all authors who have entrusted their academic ideas to this journal, as well as to the peer reviewers (*mitra bestari*) who have provided critical reviews to maintain the quality of our publications. We hope that the collection of thoughts contained in this edition can contribute significantly to the

development of political science, enrich academic literature, and serve as a relevant reference for policymakers and social activists alike.

Happy Reading. . .

United States-China Green Energy Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges (2021-2024)

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Abstract

Abstract Green energy cooperation between the United States and China emerged as a strategic effort to address global climate change during the period from 2021 to 2024. This research explores the dynamics of this cooperation, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges faced by the two countries. Employing a liberal interdependence theoretical framework, the study employs qualitative methods, with library research serving as the primary data collection technique. Despite existing geopolitical differences, both countries advanced green energy development under the leadership of Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping. Opportunities for collaboration arose from various factors, including changes in leadership, enhanced dialogue, positive responses, global interdependence, formal agreements, and the strategic role of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Key areas of cooperation encompassed investment in green technology, knowledge transfer, and collaborative research efforts. However, challenges during Biden's administration were inevitable and continued to persist even after the administration ended due to divergent domestic policies and priorities arising from changing leadership, technological competition, and ongoing political tensions. Greater difficulties are anticipated as Donald Trump returns to office. The study concludes that cooperation in green energy between these two major economic powers is vital for the global energy transition and efforts to mitigate climate change; nevertheless, significant challenges must be addressed to facilitate positive trends and achieve progress.

Abstrak Kerja sama energi hijau antara Amerika Serikat dan Tiongkok muncul sebagai upaya strategis untuk menghadapi perubahan iklim global pada periode 2021–2024. Penelitian ini menelaah dinamika kerja sama tersebut, dengan menyoroti peluang sekaligus tantangan yang dihadapi kedua negara. Dengan menggunakan kerangka teori liberal interdependence, penelitian ini menerapkan metode kualitatif, di mana studi pustaka menjadi teknik utama pengumpulan data. Terlepas dari perbedaan geopolitik yang ada, kedua negara tetap mendorong pengembangan energi hijau di bawah kepemimpinan Presiden Joe Biden dan Xi Jinping. Peluang kerja sama muncul dari berbagai faktor, termasuk perubahan kepemimpinan, peningkatan dialog, respons positif, saling ketergantungan global, perjanjian formal, serta peran strategis Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Bidang-bidang utama kerja sama mencakup investasi teknologi hijau, alih pengetahuan, dan penelitian kolaboratif. Namun, berbagai tantangan pada masa pemerintahan Biden tidak terelakkan dan terus berlanjut bahkan setelah pemerintahannya berakhir, akibat perbedaan kebijakan domestik dan prioritas yang berubah, kompetisi teknologi, serta ketegangan politik yang berkelanjutan. Kesulitan yang lebih besar diperkirakan akan muncul seiring kembalinya Donald Trump ke kursi kepresidenan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa kerja sama energi hijau antara dua kekuatan ekonomi besar ini sangat penting bagi transisi energi global dan upaya mitigasi perubahan iklim; meskipun demikian, berbagai tantangan signifikan harus diatasi untuk mendorong tren positif dan mencapai kemajuan.

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Introduction

This research discusses green energy cooperation between the two countries with the highest emission levels in the world, namely the United States and China, during the years 2021-2024. This cooperation played a strategic role in accelerating the energy transition from fossil fuel sources to cleaner and more sustainable renewable energy. In facing the challenges of climate change and increasing energy needs, international cooperation in developing green energy is becoming increasingly crucial. Green energy offers a sustainable solution that is environmentally friendly and has the potential to reduce dependence on fossil fuels that contribute to pollution and global warming (Androniceanu & Sabie, 2022). Examples of green energy include solar and wind energy (Daaboul et al., 2023). Another green energy source includes hydropower (Ullah & Lin, 2024) and Biomass (Ali et al., 2022), alongside geothermal energy, which originates from the Earth's internal heat (Dashti & Korzani, 2021).

Green energy investment offers environmental, social, and economic benefits, strengthening a nation's global market position and potentially altering geopolitical power dynamics (Qing et al., 2023). It is crucial for combating climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Establishing bold green targets can position a nation as a leader in the green economy, impacting global trends (Hassan et al., 2024). International cooperation is key to driving the transition towards green energy, including sharing knowledge, technology, and best practices in renewable energy development. Initiatives like the Paris Agreement provide a platform for states and non-state actors to commit to emission reductions and promote transformative change (Alam et al., 2024).

China and the United States, as the two largest economic powers in the world, play a key role in the global green energy transition. The Global Carbon Atlas report reveals that the leading emitter countries contribute significantly to global CO₂ emissions. For example, China is responsible for 30.9% of all CO₂ emissions, the US for 13.5%, India for 7.3%, Russia for 4.7%, and Japan for 2.9% (X. Wang et al., 2024). Recently, both countries have shown significant progress in the investment and development of green energy. China has emerged as a global leader in renewable energy investment, accounting for 50% of the total growth in clean energy investment in 2023, while the United States made a 20% contribution (Cozzi et al., 2024). China is committed to reaching peak carbon emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060, demonstrating China's significant ambition to dominate the renewable energy sector (Myllyvirta, 2023).

Given the significance of transitioning to green energy, the two leading economies in the world have made ongoing efforts to implement this shift, as highlighted in previous research (Danish & Ulucak, 2021; Wu et al., 2022; Usman et al., 2023; Ullah et al., 2023; Xue et al., 2024; Y. Wang et al., 2024; Kilinc-Ata & Proskuryakova, 2024; Cifuentes-Faura et al., 2024). However, there is a notable lack of studies that focus on the cooperation between these two countries. Although the potential for collaboration was examined in 2014, that study was limited to future prospects and did not address both the opportunities and challenges involved (Zhang et al., 2014). Consequently, this research presents novel insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with green energy cooperation between the United States and China during the period 2021–2024. This research answers the question of how green energy cooperation between the United States and China would play out in the period 2021-2024 by first exploring the factors that drive opportunities for cooperation and identifying specific areas for collaboration, followed by an analysis of the challenges associated with such cooperation.

Conceptual Framework

This research employs the concept of liberal interdependence, as introduced by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, who posit that in the era of globalisation, interstate relations are shaped not solely by power conflicts but also by complex interdependence across various sectors, including the economy, technology, and environment. Keohane and Nye (2012) explain that "complex interdependence means there are many ways societies interact, no single issue is more important than others, and the use of military force is decreasing" (Keohane & Nye, 2012). In the context of green energy cooperation between the United States and China, this interdependence is evident in their mutual need to reduce carbon emissions, expedite the energy transition, and foster environmentally friendly technological innovations. Despite ongoing geopolitical tensions, both nations continue to collaborate through mechanisms such as the U.S.-China Climate Working Group and institutions like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment (Ewing, 2021).

Liberal interdependence suggests that increased interconnection between countries encourages cooperation and reduces conflict. US-China green energy cooperation, despite technological competition and disputes in the South China Sea, exemplifies this principle. The COP26 agreement demonstrates sincere efforts to reduce emissions and transition towards renewable energy sources (Climate Watch, 2024). Non-state actors, including tech firms and environmental organisations, also play significant roles in this complex interdependence framework. The private sector's active involvement in clean energy development demonstrates a broader range of participants (Dugis, 2016). This conceptual framework also reinforces the notion that cooperation based on interdependence is not devoid of challenges. Philippe Martin et al (2023) illustrates that economic interdependence does not necessarily prevent conflict when political and security interests predominate. Studies in international relations categorise environmental issues as low politics (Zahran & Alfajri, 2023). Consequently, within the context of US-China green energy cooperation, the classification of environmental issues as low politics facilitates greater opportunities for collaboration rather than rivalry.

Employing the framework of liberal interdependence, this research examines green energy cooperation as both an instrument of environmental diplomacy and a mechanism for managing global interdependence amid geopolitical rivalry. This analysis suggests that cooperation arises not only from ideological similarities but also can flourish from shared strategic and pragmatic needs. As Jackson & Sørensen (2013) note, liberal interdependence emphasises that "cooperation can emerge from mutual benefits and shared interests," particularly when tackling transnational challenges such as climate change.

Methods

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, employing a case study method to explore the dynamics of green energy cooperation between two countries or regions. The aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena through the interpretation of non-numeric data (Creswell, 2009). As noted by Arikunto (2013), research methods refer to the various ways researchers collect data. Qualitative research yields descriptive data, which is articulated through written or spoken words, reflecting the behaviours observed. Nawawi (2003) points out that data in case studies can be gathered from diverse related parties, implying that information is sourced from multiple avenues. Consequently, the findings of this research are specific to the case under investigation.

The descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it works well for understanding how green energy cooperation operates, helping to clarify what the opportunities and challenges of the cooperation are by looking at the context and interactions between the parties involved. This research obtains primary data from official documents and secondary data from journal articles, books, and online media. This research uses an interactive analytical approach

to analyse the data, which includes the following activities: data gathering, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014).

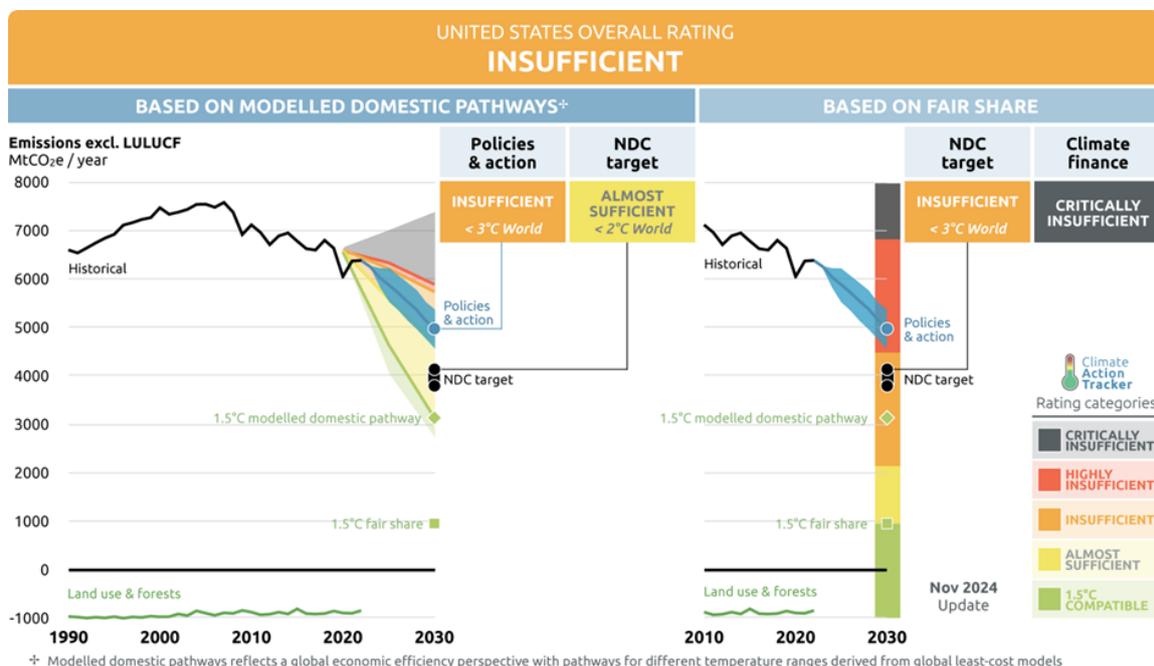
Results And Discussion

United States and China Green Energy Transition and Their Current State

The United States and China are significantly contributing to the global green energy transition through increased investment, clean energy production capacity, and ambitious emissions reduction commitments (Zhang et al., 2022; Cao et al., 2024). China invested USD 546 billion in renewable energy in 2022, more than three times the US's investment of USD 141 billion. The US is increasing its investment through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) 2022, providing tax incentives and research funds to accelerate clean energy adoption. China leads the world in renewable energy production, with a total renewable energy capacity of 1,000 gigawatts (GW) in 2023. The US aims to increase its capacity to 1,200 GW by 2030 (Sayigh, 2024). The US is also focusing on battery technology, smart grids, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure as part of its long-term strategy towards a low-carbon economy (Lopez et al., 2025). The United States aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels (Xu et al., 2024). China aims to peak emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 while accelerating the transition from coal to clean energy (Zhang et al., 2024).

During the Biden administration, US energy policies began to shift towards renewable energy through tax incentives, strict emission standards, and significant investments in solar and wind power (Pusdatim, 2024). Companies like Tesla, General Electric, and NextEra Energy contributed through clean technology innovations (Tjiwidjaja & Salima, 2023). The Biden administration had strengthened its commitment to the Paris Agreement and set a target of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 (Lashof, 2024). Through the Inflation Reduction Act 2022, the US allocated USD 369 billion for clean energy, making it the largest investment in the country's history (Bistline et al., 2023). The US administration's efforts to tackle the climate crisis, including transitioning to green energy, were deemed inadequate in addressing the broader climate emergency as shown figure 1 below.

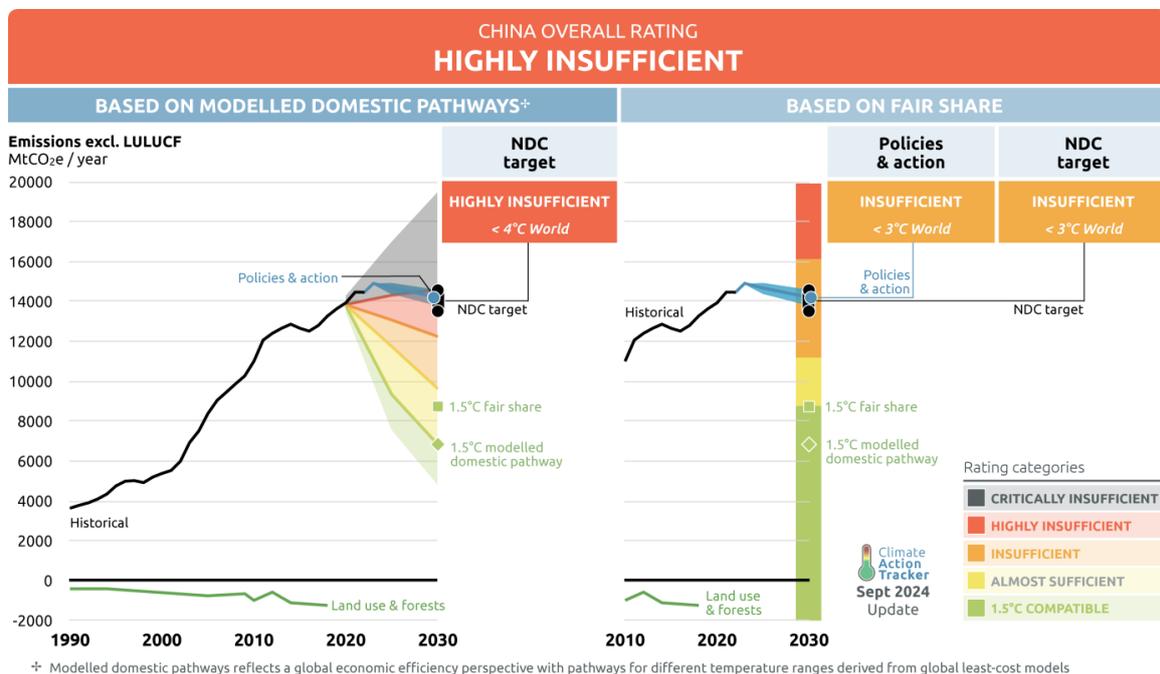
Figure 1. United States' Overall Rating is Insufficient



Source: (USA Climate Action Tracker, 2024)

Meanwhile, at the same time, China's centralised political system allowed for the faster and more efficient implementation of strategic decisions in various sectors, including the economy and energy. With full control over national policies, the Chinese government could implement large-scale regulations, contributing to the success of development programs, including the green energy sector (Wati et al., 2023). As the second-largest economy globally, supported by the manufacturing, export, technology, and infrastructure sectors (Saragih et al., 2022), China was and is a major producer of solar panels and wind turbines, with a renewable energy capacity of over 1,000 GW in 2023 (Simarmata et al., 2023). The country aims to achieve peak emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060 through policies like the 14th Five-Year Plan, which promotes investment in clean energy and electrification of industrial and transportation sectors (Feng et al., 2021). Incentives for electric vehicles and advancements in battery technology are also offered. China is actively engaged in the Paris Agreement and international cooperation on green energy (Zhou et al., 2021). Despite existing challenges, including reliance on coal and the necessity for substantial investments, the dedication of both the government and the industrial sector bolsters China's trajectory towards a sustainable energy future (Li et al., 2022). However, China's efforts to transition towards green energy as part of their larger climate commitment until 2024 are still considered overall highly insufficient, as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2. China's Overall Rating is still Considered as Highly Insufficient



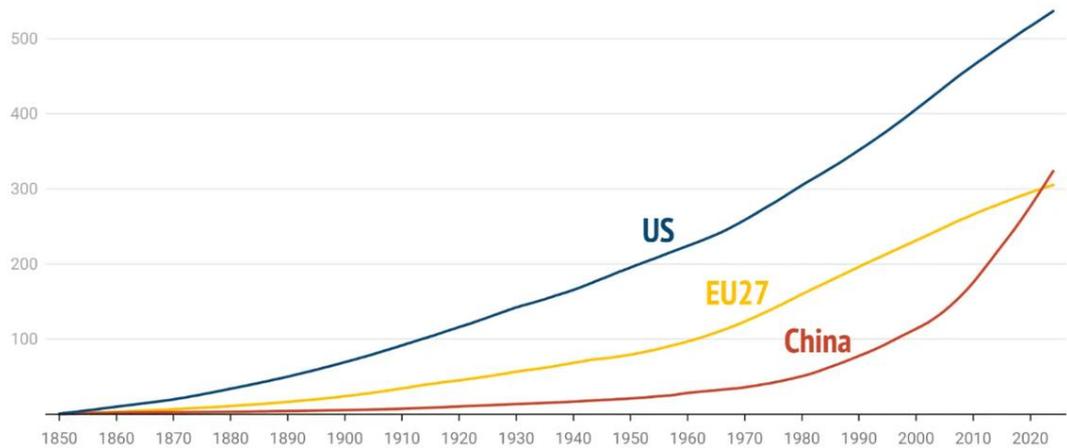
Source: (China Climate Action Tracker, 2024)

Despite increasing green energy investments, the US remained one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions due to its dependence on fossil fuels and coal till the end of the Biden administration's tenure (Sambodo & Satrio, 2024). Even until now, the United States remains the country with the highest emission levels, significantly outpacing other nations. At the same, time China has overtaken Europe, now ranking as the second largest emitter in the world, as illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. United States is still the biggest contributor to global warming – by far and China has overtaken Europe as the second -largest emitter in the world

The US is still the biggest contributor to global warming – by far

Cumulative historical CO2 emissions 1850-2024, billion tonnes



Source: Carbon Brief analysis

CarbonBrief
CLEAR ON CLIMATE

US, EU27 and Chinese cumulative historical CO2 emissions from fossil fuels, cement, land use, land use change and forestry, 1850-2024, billion tonnes. Source: Source: Carbon Brief analysis of figures from Jones et al (2023), Lamboll et al (2023), the Global Carbon Project, CDIAC, Our World in Data, the International Energy Agency and Carbon Monitor.

Source: (Carbon Brief, 2024)

Drivers of U.S.–China Green Energy Cooperation

During the years 2021-2024, the United States (US) and China demonstrated their commitment to the green energy transition, but geopolitical and economic challenges remained major obstacles to strengthening bilateral cooperation in this sector. Global competition between the two countries, especially in the fields of technology and economy, created various barriers that affect access to clean energy technologies and global supply chains. Rising geopolitical tensions also led to trade policies, restrictions on technology exports, and tighter protection of domestic industries, all of which contribute to the complexity of the green energy relationship between the US and China. To better understand, here are some of the key opportunities and challenges facing the two countries in green energy cooperation during that time.

Change of Leadership and Direction of US Environmental Policy

The change of leadership from Donald Trump to Joe Biden in 2021 caused a major shift in foreign policy and approach to environmental issues, reflecting the ideological differences between the Republican and Democratic Parties. The Republican Party, to which Trump belongs, was and is known for its conservative, pro-business views and support for a limited government role. On environmental issues, this party tends to be sceptical of regulations that are considered to limit economic growth and harm the fossil fuel sector. This attitude was reflected in Trump's policy of withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement in 2017, cutting the budget of environmental agencies such as the EPA, revoking the Clean Power Plan programme, and encouraging fossil fuel exploration on federal lands (Gross, 2020; Pompeo, 2019). This nationalistic and protectionist approach led to minimal bilateral climate cooperation with China, as environmental issues were not a priority in relations between the two countries.

In contrast, the Democratic Party and President Joe Biden took a more progressive approach. Biden viewed climate change as a global threat that requires collective action and

active government involvement. Since taking office, Biden had immediately returned the US to the Paris Agreement in 2021 and made climate diplomacy a key pillar of foreign policy. Through policies such as the Clean Energy Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act, Biden allocated significant investment for clean energy, electric vehicle incentives, and green technology research, with a target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 ([The White House, 2024](#)). This approach reopened the space for cooperation with China on transnational issues such as the green energy transition and carbon emission reduction.

Since the beginning of his presidency, President Joe Biden had taken strategic steps to strengthen green energy cooperation with China. Unlike the previous administration under Donald Trump, which withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement and limited cooperation with China on climate issues, Biden sought to revitalise environmental diplomacy as part of United States foreign policy. In January 2021, one of his first acts as president was to rejoin the Paris Agreement and set a target of net-zero emissions by 2050 ([Sweeney, 2021](#)). Biden emphasised that cooperation with China in green energy was not only important for both countries but also for the global community in addressing climate change. To achieve this goal, he appointed John Kerry as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate to lead negotiations with China and other countries. Biden also integrated green energy policies into his economic policies by passing the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in 2022, which allocated about \$369 billion for clean energy and green technology investments ([Williams & Smyth, 2023](#)).

Positive Response and Global Interdependence

During the period from 2021 to 2024, China responded positively to green energy cooperation with the US through its “dual carbon” target, which aims for emissions to peak before 2030 and for carbon neutrality to be achieved before 2060. The establishment of the national carbon market in 2021 accelerated China's industrial transition towards lower emissions ([Hou et al., 2023](#)). The two nations are interdependent within the clean energy supply chain, with the US continuing to import solar panels, lithium batteries, and wind turbines from China. China produces approximately 80% of the world’s solar cells and over 50% of electric vehicle batteries ([International Energy Agency, 2022](#)). Conversely, China required investment and technological expertise from the US. While the US had attempted to bolster domestic production through the Inflation Reduction Act, its short-term dependence on China remains significant. Consequently, strategic cooperation and dialogue are essential to ensure global supply stability and foster joint innovation. The subsequent figure illustrates China's dominance in the global solar panel supply chain and the US's reliance on these products.

Table 1. China’s dominance in the solar panel supply chain

No	Country/Region	Solar Panel Demand	Average Share of Solar Panel Manufacturing Capacity
1	China	36.4%	84.0%
2	Europe	16.8%	2.9%
3	North America	17.6%	2.8%
4	Asia Pacific	13.2%	9.1%
5	India	6.9%	1.3%
6	Rest of the World	9.1%	0.8%

Source: ([International Energy Agency, 2022](#))

At the 2023 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Summit, President Xi Jinping emphasised the importance of green transformation in cross-border projects, highlighting China's ambitions as a leader in sustainable development. This was in line with President Joe Biden's policy of placing clean energy as a priority in US foreign policy. This shared vision opens up

opportunities for strategic synergy between the two largest emitting countries in addressing global climate change (Rio et al., 2020).

Increasing the Intensity of Meetings and Dialogue on Green Energy

On November 4, 2020, the day after Joe Biden was elected, the US officially withdrew from the Paris Agreement, following President Trump's decision in 2017. Trump argued that the agreement was detrimental to the US economy and favoured countries such as China and India (McGrath, 2020). This decision was widely criticised because the U.S. is the largest cumulative carbon emitter in history. However, many cities and states remain committed to the climate goals. Biden has pledged to rejoin and aims to reduce emissions by 66% by 2035 (The White House, 2024). At the Climate Ambition Summit, Xi Jinping announced an increase in China's climate targets for 2030: a reduction in carbon intensity of >65% from 2005, non-fossil energy of 25%, an increase in forest stock of 6 billion m³, and a wind-solar capacity of 1,200 GW (Gacek, 2024). This target strengthens China's economic transition to clean energy and affirms its role in global climate leadership.

John Kerry and Xie Zhenhua issued a joint statement aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Paris Agreement and limiting the global temperature rise to below 1.5°C (U.S. Department of State, 2021). This agreement included commitments to reduce methane emissions, transition to clean energy, and achieve decarbonisation; however, it was noteworthy that China had not signed the global methane pact. John Kerry emphasised that cooperation was crucial for reaching global climate targets, while Greenpeace pointed out that these commitments must be accompanied by more ambitious steps each year (U.S. Department of State, 2021). The real challenge lies in effectively implementing the targets set for carbon neutrality by 2060 for China and 2050 for the US.

Then, Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan led to China suspending climate cooperation with the US, affecting transnational projects like green technology development and joint emissions targets. The episode led to US-China relations reaching their lowest point in 30 years, highlighting the fragility of environmental cooperation amid political conflict (Lo, 2022). At the G20 Bali Summit, Presidents Biden and Xi agreed to maintain open communication and avoid conflict, reopening space for cooperation on climate issues (Reuters, 2022). They supported the establishment of working groups and strategic dialogues on climate change, health, and food security.

Another visit by US climate envoy John Kerry to Beijing to resume previously stalled climate cooperation took place amid an extreme heat wave, underscoring the urgency of climate action (News Agencies, 2023). The focus of discussions included reducing coal and methane emissions. While China was and is aggressively developing renewable energy, its dependence on coal remains high due to domestic energy needs (Williams & Smyth, 2023). Although it did not produce any major breakthroughs, the visit was considered an important step ahead of COP28, with climate a potential area for collaboration even as political relations remain tense. Greenpeace's Li Shuo stressed that "the climate crisis cannot wait for political fixes."

The intensity of the meeting and dialogue continued as The Sunnylands Statement was released on November 14, 2023, establishing an important turning point in climate cooperation between the US and China. Both nations pledged to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C, with a maximum effort of 1.5°C. The focus is on reducing non-CO₂ emissions, transitioning to renewable energy, and reducing dependence on fossil fuels (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, 2023). The statement also called for collaboration on the circular economy, resource efficiency, plastic waste management, and forest protection. It was and is expected to be a catalyst for a global agreement.

Another worth mentioning event of close dialogue conducted between the nations during the Biden Administration was the second meeting of the U.S.-China Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s, which was held in Beijing on September 4–6, 2024,

led by John Podesta and Liu Zhenmin. The main agenda included the implementation of the 2030 NDC, preparation for the 2035 target, energy transition, and reducing methane emissions through a circular economy approach (Gacek, 2024). Hence, both countries welcomed cooperation forums such as the Circular Economy Cooperation Forum and the Subnational Climate Action Roundtable and agreed to co-host the Methane and Other Non-CO₂ GHG Summit at COP29 in Azerbaijan. Despite geopolitical tensions, this cooperation at that time reflected the recognition that the climate crisis was a shared challenge that requires global leadership, including in climate finance and the implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2024).

Strategic Role of EPA in Green Energy Cooperation

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) played a key role in national climate policy and global environmental diplomacy, especially under the Joe Biden administration. In addition to being a domestic regulator, the EPA has strengthened the US position in international green energy cooperation, including with China, through a scientific and technocratic approach. This cooperative endeavour sought to promote innovative sustainable technologies while tackling urgent global issues like pollution and climate change. In addition to boosting its reputation internationally, the EPA's emphasis on data-driven tactics inspires other countries to make comparable environmental protection pledges.

First, the EPA tightened vehicle and power plant emissions regulations to encourage a clean energy transition. Through the Clean Cars Rule, the EPA targets a reduction of 7.3 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions in 2027–2032. This standard was an international reference, including for China, which was also trying to reduce its dependence on coal (Environmental Protection Agency, 2024). These measures aimed to improve air quality and promote technological innovation in the automotive and energy sectors. As countries around the world looked to align with these standards, the momentum towards sustainable practices was likely to accelerate globally at that time.

The second development was that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China. The purpose of this agreement was to work together on the exchange of pollution monitoring technology and a digital emission inventory system. Due to the fact that this collaboration has taken place, the accuracy of China's emission data in industrial regions like Hebei and Shandong has been improved (Ewing, 2021).

Third, the EPA was active in global forums such as the COP and G20. In addition to being involved in the harmonisation of environmental standards and the decarbonisation of heavy industries, the agency had compiled data and roadmaps for the Global Methane Pledge (COP26). This report was published by the G20 Climate and Energy Joint Committee in 2023. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) significantly contributed to bridging the gap between domestic policy and international commitments, facilitating the United States' transition to green energy.

US-China Green Energy Cooperation: Opportunities and Areas

The following section outlines the agreements and commitments established in green energy cooperation between the United States and China, along with associated areas of collaboration, during 2021–2024. This partnership encompassed several significant initiatives, including the creation of the U.S.-China Climate Working Group, which concentrates on methane reduction, energy transition, and promoting a circular economy. Furthermore, the United States and China entered into various strategic agreements regarding green energy cooperation, covering aspects such as technology investment, knowledge transfer, and research collaboration.

First, the re-establishment of the U.S.-China Climate Working Group in 2023 aimed to achieve emission reductions through energy transition, industrial efficiency, and the circular economy (Lewis, 2020). Both the U.S. and China committed to enhancing their renewable energy capacities by 150 GW and 300 GW, respectively, by 2025 (Franssen, 2025). This collaboration included technology transfer, green finance, and the implementation of clean technologies, such as carbon capture and storage. According to the World Resources Institute (2023), this partnership could lead to a reduction of up to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2030 and the creation of over 4.5 million green jobs (Fransen et al., 2014).

Second, following their commitments made at COP26 and COP27 to reduce methane emissions, both countries established a measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) framework for the energy and agriculture sectors. Their goal is to achieve a 30% reduction in global methane emissions by 2030 (Yifan, 2021; International Energy Agency, 2022). They are employing technologies such as satellites and drones to detect methane leaks, which could potentially reduce emissions by as much as 75% (European Commission, 2021). A total investment of USD 1.2 billion has been earmarked for research and demonstration projects in Sichuan and the Permian Basin.

Thirdly, the Sunnylands Agreement was a means by which the two nations encourage joint investment in environmentally friendly technologies such as green hydrogen, smart grids, and lithium-ion batteries (Ball-Burack et al., 2024). With the assistance of raw materials from China as well as patents and capital from the United States, the primary objective was to increase the capacity of battery production by forty percent by the year 2026. In addition to this, they established a Clean Tech Fund with a value of five billion United States dollars to invest in sustainable urban development and renewable energy startups. According to estimates provided by BloombergNEF (2025), this collaboration has the potential to mitigate the emission of 5.2 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by the year 2040.

Challenges of US-China Green Energy Cooperation

While US-China green energy cooperation showed positive prospects in the 2021-2024 period, its implementation faced significant challenges. One of the main obstacles was domestic political dynamics, including changes in policy direction resulting from leadership transitions, which create uncertainty about long-term commitments. The difficulty was evident from the differences in climate policy approaches between the Trump and Biden eras, which affect the consistency of bilateral cooperation. Technological rivalry was also a challenge, with both countries competing to become global leaders in low-carbon energy sectors such as batteries, solar panels, and energy storage systems. This competition often hinders openness in technology transfer due to economic and geopolitical security considerations. Additionally, constraints related to infrastructure and funding, along with competing domestic priorities, complicated the implementation of cooperation. The success of long-term cooperation depends heavily on the ability of both countries to align national interests with global commitments and build an adaptive and resilient approach to climate governance.

Domestic Political Challenges (Change of Leadership)

With regard to the development of green energy in both the United States and China, domestic policies are an essential component. For the United States of America, the implementation of clean energy policies has been plagued by uncertainty as a result of policy shifts brought about by presidential transitions. Under the administration of Barack Obama, the United States of America took steps to cut carbon emissions and became a party to the Paris Agreement in 2015 (Bailey, 2019). However, Trump reversed this policy by withdrawing from the agreement and relaxing environmental regulations (Selby, 2019). As soon as Joe Biden took office, the United States of America recommitted itself to the Paris Agreement and passed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which allotted USD 369 billion for clean energy. Although

it was progressive, the industry was and is still confronted with long-term uncertainty as a result of the possibility of policy changes with each new federal administration (Barichella, 2023).

This change of leadership and policy is more likely to occur in the United States due to the intense competition between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, coupled with the democratic system the country has adopted. This system enables vibrant civil society organisations and other entities to influence government decisions regarding green energy. In contrast, leadership changes in China have been relatively stable, primarily because of the strong dominance of the Chinese Communist Party within the political and governmental framework. However, this arrangement does not imply that China is immune to policy changes when there is a shift in the highest level of leadership. As long as the Communist Party does not present a new political blueprint for green energy, the likelihood of drastic changes remains minimal.

Both the United States of America and China are required to formulate energy policies that are both consistent and long-term. To make a meaningful contribution to the fight against climate change and to ensure a successful transition to green energy, it is essential to ensure policy stability in the United States and to reduce China's reliance on coal (Kayani et al., 2024; Feng et al., 2021). This collaboration could lead to innovative solutions and technologies that benefit not only their respective nations but also the global community. A unified approach may facilitate the sharing of best practices and resources, ultimately advancing the global agenda for sustainable development.

Technological Competition Challenges

The technological competition between the United States (US) and China during the Biden administration, even until now, has had a significant impact on the green energy industry. The US restricts the export of semiconductors and advanced manufacturing technologies to China, which are essential for the production of batteries, solar panels, and smart energy systems. This policy hinders innovation and capacity development of renewable energy technologies in China (Kim et al., 2024). Through the “Chip War” policy, the US also prohibits the sale of technology to companies such as Huawei and SMIC, slowing the integration of advanced technologies in electric vehicles and smart grids (Mirrlees, 2024). In response, China has significantly increased its investment in domestic research and development and now controls over 60% of global production of rare earth elements (REEs), which are crucial for wind turbines and electric vehicle batteries. However, the US's restrictions on technology exports could intensify geopolitical tensions and disrupt global supply chains for green energy (Batsikadze, 2024).

The trade war that began in 2018 has exacerbated the situation. High tariffs imposed on green energy products, including solar panels and batteries, have resulted in market uncertainty and hindered bilateral cooperation (Liu, 2025). For instance, the tariffs applied by the US on solar panel imports from China have increased prices in the domestic market, thereby slowing the adoption of renewable energy—not only in the US but also in other countries that depend on such imports (Fang, 2020).

The US has also restricted Chinese investment in clean energy, particularly in power infrastructure and energy storage projects, thereby weakening technology transfer and research collaboration. In response, China has restricted exports of critical raw materials such as gallium and germanium, which are essential for green energy and semiconductor technologies, exacerbating global supply chain disruptions (Fang, 2020). Despite both countries' commitment to green energy, these tensions are hampering innovation and investment. Collaborative strategies, such as limited technology exchange mechanisms in the green energy sector, are necessary for the two countries to continue working together without compromising their respective strategic interests.

Infrastructure and Financing Challenges

The transition to green energy requires robust infrastructure and sustainable financing. The United States and China face distinct challenges in terms of grid capacity and the financing of clean energy projects. The US power grid is marked by fragmentation, which hampers its ability to accommodate intermittent renewable energy sources. In contrast, China has demonstrated expertise in using ultra-high-voltage (UHV) technology to effectively distribute energy from rural areas to major urban centres (Al-Shetwi, 2022; Leonard et al., 2020; Shi & Moser, 2021; Li et al., 2020).

Energy storage represents a considerable challenge due to the unpredictable nature of renewable energy sources. The United States is investing in lithium-ion batteries and hydrogen technology; however, the requisite infrastructure is still under development. Conversely, China has positioned itself as a leading battery manufacturer with a robust supply chain, although it continues to pursue long-term storage solutions (Al-Shetwi, 2022; Shafique et al., 2022). Additionally, electric vehicle infrastructure in the United States is insufficient, characterised by a lack of charging stations, whereas China has developed an extensive EV charging network consisting of millions of stations (Nicholas et al., 2019; Ou et al., 2020).

In terms of funding, the United States has relied on tax incentives and private investment, particularly through the USD 369 billion Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 (Meunier, 2024) his approach remains unchanged beyond Biden's administration. However, American investors frequently demonstrate reluctance to invest internationally due to perceived risks and uncertainties surrounding returns (Stein et al., 2022). In contrast, China leverages government investment and prioritises long-term projects, especially the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which finances green energy infrastructure in developing countries and is supported by significant credit lines from state banks (Liu, 2025).

Differences in regulations, investment policies, and geopolitical tensions have hampered green energy financing cooperation between the two countries. Import tariffs and restrictions on technology exports also complicate capital flows and innovation (Dar & Javid, 2025). However, by combining the US advantage in technological innovation and private sector dynamics with China's strategic production and financing capacity, cooperation that have been built during this Biden administration can accelerate the global clean energy transition. Therefore, closer diplomacy and collaboration are needed to address infrastructure and financing challenges for a sustainable future (Dar & Javid, 2025).

Conclusion

The research concludes that the opportunity for green energy cooperation between the United States and China was realised due to several driving factors, including the change of leadership from Donald Trump to Joe Biden, positive responses and global interdependence, increasing intensity of meetings and dialogues on green energy cooperation between the two countries, agreements and commitments to cooperation, and the strategic role of the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). The areas of cooperation included increasing investment in renewable energy technology, technology transfer, and collaboration in clean energy research and development. With this cooperation, the two countries could exchange innovations and technologies that can accelerate the transition to more environmentally friendly energy sources. Additionally, this cooperation contributed to bridging the gap in achieving global climate targets, particularly in supporting international agreements like the Paris Agreement. With increasing investment, the development of green energy reduces dependence on fossil fuels and encourages sustainable economic growth, which has the potential to create new jobs and increase competitiveness in the clean energy industry.

Despite the numerous opportunities for green energy cooperation between the United States and China during the Biden administration, significant challenges remained. One of the primary challenges, even following the conclusion of Biden's term, is the changing leadership

dynamics within both countries, which have influenced domestic and foreign policies regarding green energy. The United States often sees policies and regulations change with each new government, whereas China employs a centralised approach to energy decision-making. Additionally, technological competition poses a barrier to cooperation, particularly concerning the development and market dominance of clean energy technologies. Geopolitical factors, including trade tensions, economic sanctions, and ideological differences, further complicate bilateral relations, thereby affecting the sustainability of cooperation in the green energy transition. With Donald Trump's return as president of the United States, known for his climate-unfriendly policies, the future of such cooperation remains uncertain.

The impact of green energy cooperation on global geopolitics shows that collaboration between the United States and China affects their bilateral relations and has broader implications for global energy stability. As the two largest economic powers in the world, energy decisions and policies adopted by both countries will affect the dynamics of the international energy market. The success of this cooperation has the potential to encourage other countries to accelerate the green energy transition and increase their commitment to climate change mitigation, but failure would bring negative impacts to the world. In addition, collaboration in the field of green energy can also be an effective diplomatic tool to ease geopolitical tensions and create more stable relations between the two countries.

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Why Trilateral Cooperation Failed to Curb ISIS: A Regional Security Complex Theory Analysis

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Abstract

Abstract This study explains why the Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines trilateral cooperation has failed to curb regional security threats in the Sulu–Sulawesi Sea. The strategic position of the area has been exploited by ISIS networks to expand their influence and operations across Southeast Asia, intensifying security challenges in the tri-border region. In response, the three states established trilateral cooperation as a mechanism to suppress ISIS’s activities. However, empirical developments show that ISIS operations continued to grow despite this initiative. Guided by the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and using a deductive qualitative method, the findings reveal three interconnected factors that explain the TCA’s failure to curb ISIS expansion between 2017–2019. First, the geographical proximity and porous maritime borders of the Sulu–Sulawesi Sea facilitated the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, weapons, and financial flows, creating shared vulnerabilities that were not jointly managed. Second, interstate distrust, sovereignty sensitivities, and divergent threat perceptions hindered the institutionalization of coordinated mechanisms such as Joint Maritime Patrols, preventing cohesive operations. Third, limited and asymmetrical external involvement—particularly from the United States—focused on technical support rather than addressing root causes, weakening regional autonomy and coherence.

Abstrak Penelitian ini menjelaskan mengapa kerja sama trilateral Indonesia–Malaysia–Filipina gagal menangani ancaman keamanan regional di Laut Sulu–Sulawesi. Posisi strategis kawasan tersebut telah dimanfaatkan oleh jaringan ISIS untuk memperluas pengaruh dan operasi mereka di Asia Tenggara, sehingga memperburuk tantangan keamanan di wilayah tiga perbatasan. Sebagai respons, ketiga negara membentuk kerja sama trilateral sebagai mekanisme untuk menekan aktivitas ISIS. Namun, perkembangan empiris menunjukkan bahwa operasi ISIS justru terus meningkat meskipun inisiatif tersebut telah dijalankan. Berlandaskan Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) dan menggunakan metode kualitatif deduktif, temuan penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tiga faktor yang saling berkaitan yang menjelaskan kegagalan TCA dalam membendung ekspansi ISIS pada 2017–2019. Pertama, kedekatan geografis dan lemahnya pengawasan perbatasan maritim di Laut Sulu–Sulawesi memfasilitasi pergerakan foreign terrorist fighters, senjata, dan aliran dana, sehingga menciptakan kerentanan bersama yang tidak dikelola secara kolektif. Kedua, ketidakpercayaan antarnegeri, sensitivitas kedaulatan, dan perbedaan persepsi ancaman menghambat institusionalisasi mekanisme terkoordinasi seperti Joint Maritime Patrols, sehingga mencegah terbentuknya operasi yang kohesif. Ketiga, keterlibatan eksternal yang terbatas dan asimetris—khususnya dari Amerika Serikat—lebih menekankan dukungan teknis daripada penanganan akar permasalahan, yang pada akhirnya melemahkan otonomi dan koherensi respons regional.

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Introduction

The dynamics of globalization have significantly influenced threat perceptions, extending beyond traditional security threats to encompass cross-border non-traditional threats. Addressing such transnational non-traditional threats necessitates cooperative engagement among neighboring states within a region to collectively confront shared security challenges. In Southeast Asia, the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas constitute one of the most critical maritime routes, serving as a major trade corridor linking East Asia to the Middle East (Ho, 2006). Encompassing an estimated 900,000 square kilometers within the maritime boundaries of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, the Sulu–Sulawesi Sea constitutes a strategic maritime domain that plays a pivotal role in facilitating international navigation and enhancing regional connectivity among the three littoral states. It is estimated that approximately USD 40 billion worth of trade passes through this route annually, including around USD 800 million in coal exports from Indonesia to the Philippines (Chandran, 2016).

However, the strategic location of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas is accompanied by elevated security risks. The area has been identified as a hub for criminal activities, piracy, and terrorism in Southeast Asia (Febrica, 2014). The Sulu-Sulawesi Seas also known as the Tri-Border Area (TBA) (Singh & Jani, 2016)—the maritime border region between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines—this zone has been exploited by terrorist groups, particularly ISIS, to facilitate the movement of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) into conflict zones across Southeast Asia (Hidayat, 2017).

The Sulu-Sulawesi Seas serve as a primary gateway for the infiltration of terrorism into Mindanao. Terrorists are smuggled into Mindanao via trade routes traversing the Sulu-Sulawesi maritime corridor (Hastings, 2011). The persistent security fragility of the TBA continues to be exploited by terrorist groups to consolidate their power in Southeast Asia. Mindanao has emerged as the principal battleground for ISIS in the region (Sarmiento, 2020). Authorities have reported that militants were smuggled through the Sulu Archipelago, the Sangihe Islands, or Palawan to participate in the 2017 Marawi Siege (Yusa, 2018).

In the aftermath of the Marawi Siege, the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas have remained critical to the operational continuity and survival of terrorist networks in Mindanao. FTFs from across the globe have traveled to the region to support and join ISIS-affiliated groups, including Abu Sayyaf, the Maute Group, Ansharul Khilafah Philippines, and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (Postings, 2018).

Since 2016, ISIS has begun relocating and seeking new wilayat (provinces) following major defeats in the Middle East. The group ultimately designated the Southern Philippines as its base of operations in Southeast Asia (Gunaratna, 2017). This shift was followed by a surge in ISIS-initiated terrorist activities across the Tri-Border Area (TBA). The 2017 Marawi siege stands as one of the largest ISIS-related terrorist incidents to have occurred in Southeast Asia (Johnston & Clarke, 2017).

In 2016, Indonesia's Minister of Defense, Ryamizard Ryacudu, initiated the establishment of trilateral cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines as a counterterrorism measure to address the threat of terrorism in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) (Ryacudu, 2018). This agreement, known as the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA), generally facilitates the three countries in conducting joint patrols in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas.

The cooperation also includes arrangements for maritime security coordination mechanisms and intelligence-sharing mechanisms, which had been under discussion since 2016 but were only formalized in 2017 (Storey, 2018). One of the key initiatives was the establishment of Joint Maritime Command Centers located in Tarakan (Indonesia), Tawau (Malaysia), and Bongao (Philippines) (Parameswaran, 2019). There have also been proposals for regular joint air and sea patrols; however, information regarding the frequency of these joint surveillance operations remains unavailable (Abke, 2019).

The establishment of the TCA, which was expected to function as a counterterrorism measure in the TBA, appears to have been ineffective in curbing the growth of terrorist activities operating in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas. This phenomenon warrants further investigation to explain why the trilateral cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines has yet to succeed in suppressing terrorism in the TBA. In principle, regional security threats should be mitigated through cooperative arrangements among neighboring states. The period of 2017–2019 was selected for this study because 2017 marked the formal ratification of the TCA, and during these three years, ISIS activity in the TBA significantly increased.

Based on the foregoing discussion of the tangible threat of terrorism in the TBA and the establishment of the TCA as a counterterrorism measure in the region, this study poses the following research question: Why has the trilateral cooperation (also known as the TCA) between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas failed to curb the growth of ISIS in the Tri-Border Area?

Analytical Framework: Regional Security Complex Theory

This study seeks to explain why the trilateral cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines has failed to curb the growth of ISIS in the Tri-Border Area. This study addresses a critical gap in the application of Regional Security Complex Theory to the study of maritime security cooperation in Southeast Asia, a region that remains underrepresented in mainstream international relations scholarship. While RSCT has been extensively applied to regional dynamics in Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia, its explanatory potential for understanding non-traditional security challenges in maritime Southeast Asia has received minimal scholarly attention. The Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) among Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines thus offers a compelling empirical case through which to extend and test RSCT's analytical framework beyond its conventional contexts.

Accordingly, this research employs the Regional Security Complex (RSC) theory developed by Buzan and Waever (2003) to provide a comprehensive and contextual understanding of regional maritime security dynamics in Southeast Asia—particularly in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, which are marked by the prevalence and proliferation of transnational crimes such as maritime piracy, hostage-taking, and terrorism.

Before elaborating on the RSC theory, it is important to first examine the evolution of the concept of security and its contribution to the formation of the RSC framework. Fundamentally, the understanding of security has long been contested among scholars and practitioners of International Relations. Waltz (1979), in his seminal work *Theory of International Politics*, classifies security as a defense mechanism within the context of anarchy, wherein states can only rely on themselves because other states cannot be trusted. This defense mechanism—manifested in war and the use of military forces—emerged as the primary response of states to survive under conditions of anarchy. The end of World War II marked a significant development in the security concept, expanding the scope of security studies beyond military power or traditional military forces to encompass a much broader range of considerations (Nye & Lynn-Jones, 1988).

Furthermore, Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998) advanced the concept of security by focusing on the processes of securitization, the complexity of regional security, and sectoral security. Buzan et al. (1998, p. 21) define security as:

“It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (traditionally, but not necessarily the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them.”

Thus, the concept of security is no longer confined to discussions of military power and warfare, but has expanded to encompass non-traditional security threats.

Another key concept within the RSC theory is regional security. Buzan and Wæver (2003) outline the evolution of regional security in three stages: the modern era (1500–1945), the Cold War and decolonization period (1945–1989), and the post–Cold War era. During the modern era, Europe emerged as a global power, dominating the international system. Regional security issues were less prominent at this stage due to the prevalence of global rivalries among European states. The subsequent period had a profound impact on the development of regional security as decolonization led to the emergence of newly sovereign states. Concurrently, regional security issues became increasingly visible. The final stage, the post–Cold War period, saw a shift in the nature of regional security agendas, with a growing emphasis on non-traditional security threats.

The RSC theory offers a relevant framework for understanding the new structure of international politics in the post–Cold War era. According to this theory, a region consists of a group of geographically proximate states that share stronger relationships and more frequent interactions—characterized by patterns of amity and enmity—among themselves than with actors outside the regional constellation (Hammerstad, 2005). Such a region may be interconnected through economic dimensions, shared identities, and environmental externalities that necessitate the formation of a regional security complex (Kelly, 2007, pp. 197–229).

In their book *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Buzan and Wæver define a Regional Security Complex as “a set of units whose major processes of securitization and de-securitization or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another.” In other words, the RSC theory posits that states within a region are interconnected in such a way that the security issues of one state have significant implications for the security of its neighboring states (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, p. 44).

Geographical factors play a crucial role in the RSC theory. The central premise of this theory is that threats tend to travel more readily over short distances than over long ones, and that security interdependence is primarily formed on a regional basis (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, p. 4). Consequently, states at the regional level are more likely to establish security arrangements with one another than with states located in other regions. The formation of a regional security complex is also influenced by historical, socio-cultural, and economic factors among neighboring states, which shape the dynamics within the region (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, p. 43). Security interdependence, in turn, affects states by encouraging voluntary engagement and cooperation on a unilateral, bilateral, minilateral, or multilateral basis (Snedden, 2018, p. 3).

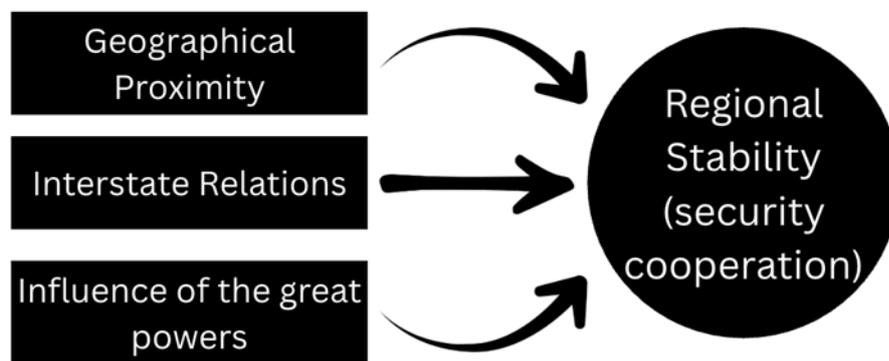
The existence of anarchy in the international system influences the RSC theory’s assessment of the role of great powers within that system (Sunawar, 2018). From a systemic perspective, regions may form subsystems that emerge from the interactions and connections among regional states. Great powers possess the capacity to engage in these regional affairs, for instance, through military or economic assistance. Such involvement can add to the complexity of regional security dynamics, either in a positive or a negative manner (Paul, 2012). Based on the foregoing explanation of RSC theory, it can be concluded that Buzan and Wæver (2003) identify several key variables in examining a regional security complex in the context of addressing security threats.

Table 1. Variables of the RSC Theory

Variables	Description
Geographical proximity	Geographical proximity plays a critical role in shaping security interdependence, as states located in close physical proximity are more likely to experience shared security concerns and heightened interconnectivity in their threat perceptions.
Interstate Relations	Examining the nature of interstate interaction within the region, whether characterized by relations of amity or, conversely, by enmity.
Influence of the great powers	Examining the interests, presence, and influence of great powers in the region, which in turn shape the dynamics of the regional security complex. External powers often penetrate a regional security complex, shaping its internal dynamics and influencing cooperative or competitive behavior among regional states.

Source: [Buzan, Waever, 2003](#); compiled by the Author (2025)

Figure 1. Regional Security Complex Theory



Source: created by the Author

The analysis of regional security dynamics in this study is based on both internal and external variables that shape the security complex. Internally, geographical proximity is crucial as neighboring states tend to share security concerns and are more interconnected in their perceptions of threats. Additionally, the nature of interstate relations—whether amity or enmity—significantly influences regional security interactions. Externally, the role of great powers is examined, focusing on their interests, presence, and influence, which have a considerable impact on shaping regional security dynamics. Together, these variables provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of the regional security environment and the factors affecting trilateral cooperation.

Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative and deductive approach to examine trilateral cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines in countering ISIS in the Tri-Border Area (TBA). The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) guides the analysis, allowing assessment of how geographical proximity, interstate security interaction, and external power involvement shape cooperative responses. A qualitative design is employed as it enables contextual interpretation of regional threat perceptions and security behavior ([Lamont, 2015](#)).

Data were collected through library and desk research using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and credibility. Primary sources include official policy statements, defense white

papers, and speeches by senior security officials from the three countries. Secondary sources consist of *the U.S. Country Reports on Terrorism, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses (CTTA), RSIS Commentaries, Defense Forum* publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, and established regional media outlets such as *The Philippine Star*. Only sources with clear authorship, institutional credibility, and editorial oversight were included; unverified or anonymous online materials were excluded. Data were analyzed through thematic coding aligned with RSCT variables, and cross-verification across databases, think-tank assessments, and official statements was conducted to minimize bias and strengthen validity.

In conducting this research, the author encountered challenges in obtaining certain secondary data, particularly detailed schedules of coordinated patrols under the Trilateral Cooperative Agreement (TCA), official government data on the number of ISIS-linked terrorist attacks in the TBA, and verified figures on foreign terrorist fighters who supported ISIS during the Marawi siege. These data gaps reflect both the sensitive nature of counterterrorism intelligence and uneven transparency across national reporting systems. The author hopes that such information will become more widely available through formal government release or collaboration with relevant non-governmental organizations. Despite this limitation, the study draws on triangulated, reputable, and cross-checked sources to provide a balanced and grounded assessment of trilateral security cooperation in the TBA.

Results and Discussion

This section analyzes the theory discussed in the preceding section. Accordingly, it is divided into three subsections. The first addresses the geographical proximity of the TCA member states. The second examines interstate interactions among Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines in relation to counterterrorism cooperation. The third discusses the influence of great powers—specifically the United States—within the region. These explanations serve to answer the research question, namely, why the TCA cooperation has not yet succeeded in curbing the growth of ISIS in the TBA.

Geographical Proximity and the Expansion of ISIS in the Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines Tri-Border Area

The Sulu Sea, located southwest of the Philippines, covers an area of 260,000 square kilometers and is bordered to the northwest by Palawan Island (Philippines), to the southeast by the Sulu Archipelago (Philippines), and to the southwest by Sabah (Eastern Malaysia) (Storey, 2018). The Celebes Sea, by contrast, has a surface area of 280,000 square kilometers and is bordered by the Sulu Sea to the north, the Sangihe Islands to the east, Sulawesi to the south, and East Kalimantan to the west (Febrica, 2014).

Figure 2. Map of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas

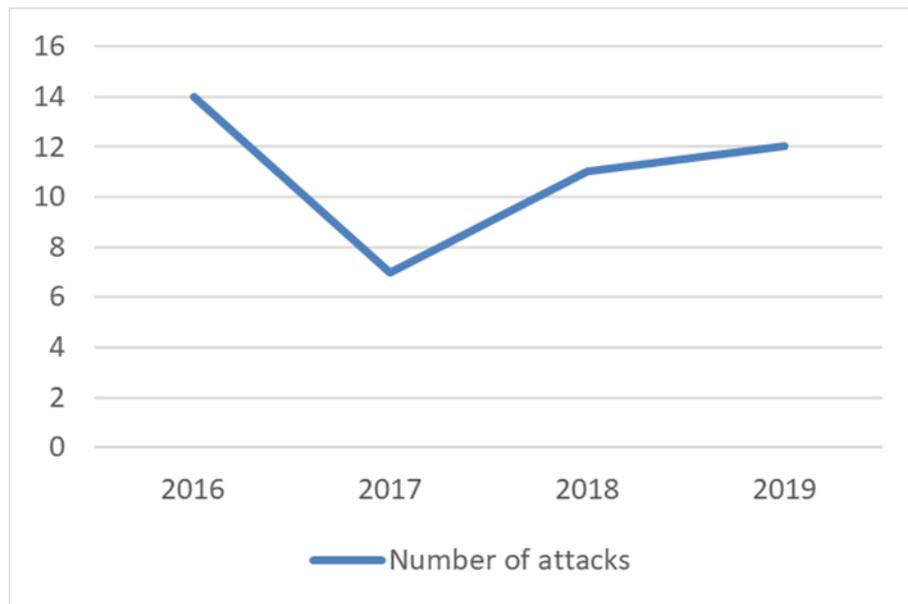


Source: Febrica & Myers (2024)

The geographical proximity of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines—interconnected through the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas—renders these states vulnerable to terrorism threats and has facilitated the expansion of ISIS in the region. ISIS-affiliated terrorist groups exploit this area to support the planning and execution of terrorist activities.

Terrorist acts carried out by ISIS-affiliated groups in the TBA increased between 2017 and 2019. The perpetrators of these attacks were not limited to domestic individuals or terrorist groups, but also included cross-border actors. The Siege of Marawi in the southern Philippines, which lasted from May to November 2017, involved 80 foreign terrorist fighters from Indonesia and Malaysia (Yusa, 2018). A Malaysian militant, Dr. Mahmud bin Ahmed, was reported to have played a central role as the mastermind behind the Marawi siege (Gunaratna, 2017).

Figure 3. ISIS-Affiliated Terrorism in the TBA



Source: The U.S. State Department Annual Report on Terrorism, compiled by the Author (2025)

The Siege of Marawi

The Siege of Marawi represents one of the most devastating and perilous acts of terrorism in Southeast Asia, perpetrated by pro-ISIS groups. The territorial control took place in the provincial capital of Lanao del Sur, Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, and lasted for five months—from May to November 2017. Marawi became the first city outside the Middle East and North Africa to fall under ISIS control (Samuel, 2017). One year prior to the siege, ISIS had declared the southern Philippines a *wilayat* (province) and appointed Isnilon Hapilon as its regional leader in Southeast Asia. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, reportedly instructed Hapilon to plan the siege of Marawi between March and April 2017 (Buan, 2017).

The conflict officially began on 23 May 2017, under the leadership of the Maute Group, also known as the Islamic State Lanao (ISL), with the participation of FTFs who entered Marawi under the pretext of attending a *Jamaah Tabligh* gathering. ISIS militants began seizing key government buildings and setting fire to churches and schools. It was estimated that they initially deployed around 300 militants in the assault on Marawi. This number included approximately 150 Islamic State of Lanao (Maute Group) fighters, 40 foreign terrorist fighters (mostly from Indonesia and Malaysia), 50 members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, 30 Balik Islam members, and 30 Maguindanaon militants (Gunaratna, 2017).

The confrontation between ISIS and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) resulted in significant casualties and triggered a severe humanitarian crisis. According to official government reports, more than 800 militants, including Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute, as well as 160 government soldiers, were killed in the armed clashes since 23 May 2017. The crisis also displaced approximately 360,000 people or 72,000 families (Romero, 2017). This made the Siege of Marawi the deadliest military engagement in the history of the Philippines in terms of casualties.

In the aftermath of the Marawi siege by ISIS, 100 ISIS militants from Indonesia and Malaysia were reported to have continued arriving to support ISIS operations in the region. Malaysian ISIS militants traveled from Sabah to Tawi-Tawi Island in the Philippines before proceeding to Marawi. In contrast, Indonesian ISIS militants used a different route, traveling from Manado to the Sangihe Islands, then onward to General Santos, Davao, and ultimately Marawi (Yusa, 2018). Another case was the bombing carried out by Indonesian nationals in the Philippines. In January 2019, an Indonesian husband-and-wife pair conducted a suicide bombing at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo. They traveled from Indonesia to Mindanao via the Sulu Archipelago (Kumendong & Wibisono, 2024).

Figure 4. Pro-ISIS Logistics Routes



Source: Watson (2017)

From the perspective of Regional Security Complex Theory, geographical proximity defines the spatial boundaries within which security interdependence emerges. In the case of the Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines Tri-Border Area, proximity not only generates shared vulnerabilities but also demands effective collective surveillance to manage transnational threats. However, the porous maritime geography of the Sulu–Sulawesi Seas, combined with limited state capacity and uneven implementation of the JMP, has weakened border control and situational awareness.

This condition created a permissive environment for the movement of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and the circulation of weapons and illicit funding across maritime borders. Consequently, southern Philippines (particularly Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago) became the primary battleground for ISIS operations in Southeast Asia.

Although proximity should foster cooperative security responses, in this case, it amplified transnational threats instead, as porous borders and limited maritime surveillance enabled ISIS militants to operate fluidly across the three states' territories. The failure to transform geographical interdependence into coordinated security control mechanisms contributed to the persistence of ISIS networks in the area.

Interstate Interaction Among Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines: Implications for ISIS Expansion in the Tri-Border Area

In May 2016, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines agreed to a joint declaration establishing the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas. Six months later, the three countries reached an agreement on the operationalization of the TCA, which involved conducting Joint Maritime Patrols (JMP), one of the programs of the TCA, to safeguard maritime security in the area. In June 2017, the TCA was officially ratified and began operations. However, its launch was not accompanied by an agreement on the standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be applied in the implementation of the JMP.

The lengthy period between the joint declaration and the official ratification of the TCA, coupled with the absence of established SOPs for the JMP, indicates a degree of reluctance and mutual distrust among the three states toward the trilateral cooperation. Since the establishment of the TCA, the member states have never conducted a joint JMP; instead, cooperation has been limited to optimizing the operations of their respective Maritime Command Centres ([Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022](#)). Furthermore, there was no discussion of the JMP during the TCA annual meeting held in June 2022 ([Da Costa, 2022](#)).

The issue of distrust among TCA member states, which has resulted in the non-implementation of the JMP, is closely linked to ongoing territorial disputes among the three countries. In the Sulawesi Sea, Indonesia has experienced a territorial dispute with Malaysia over the Ambalat Block. The Ambalat Block is a maritime area covering 15,235 square kilometers in the Sulawesi Sea, containing an estimated 421.61 million barrels of crude oil and 3.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas ([Kompas, 2008](#)). Rich in gas and mineral resources, this area holds significant economic value. The dispute over maritime boundaries in Ambalat dates back to 1969 between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Tensions over the Ambalat conflict have been met with displays of military force between Indonesia and Malaysia. In 2005, provocations between the Indonesian and Malaysian navies resulted in three collisions between the Indonesian warship KRI Tedong Naga and the Malaysian warship KD Rencong ([Tempo, 2005](#)). Four decades have passed, yet the Ambalat Block dispute remains unresolved between the two states. Throughout 2015, the Indonesian Navy reported nine violations by Malaysian aircraft entering Indonesian airspace, particularly over the Ambalat Block. In response to these incursions, Indonesia deployed military forces to the border areas of North Kalimantan, including the Ambalat waters, to demonstrate its commitment to defending the territory of its outermost regions ([Druce & Baikoeni, 2016](#)).

A similar case has occurred between Malaysia and the Philippines in the Sulu Sea regarding territorial claims over Sabah. Sabah, also known as North Borneo, is located approximately 500 kilometers from the Philippines. Since 1963, Sabah has been declared part of Malaysia based on a public referendum in which the population decided to join the Malaysian Federation ([Malindog-Uy, 2020](#)). This declaration has been rejected by the Philippines, which asserts that Sabah is part of its territory in accordance with the 1878 “Lease Treaty.” The treaty stipulates that Sabah was granted by the Sultanate of Brunei to the Sultanate of Sulu and thus constitutes a legitimate part of the Philippine state ([Ao, 2020](#)).

The protracted conflict over Sabah has had a negative impact on bilateral relations between Malaysia and the Philippines. Tensions between the two countries escalated in 2013 when, on 11 February, 200 members of the Royal Army of Sulu attacked the town of Lahad Datu, Sabah, resulting in the deaths of 68 Sulu Sultanate forces, 9 Malaysian armed forces personnel, and 6 civilians ([CNN, 2021](#)). To this day, the dispute over Sabah remains unresolved, and bilateral relations between Malaysia and the Philippines continue to be marked by mutual suspicion.

Territorial disputes among TCA member states have also hindered the implementation of the “right of pursuit,” a provision within the TCA agreement. The right of pursuit refers to a situation in which a country’s security forces enter or cross into another member state’s

jurisdiction while in active pursuit of criminals. Leaders of the three TCA member states have stated that their forces may enter each other's territory when pursuing terrorists (Glang, 2017). However, this provision has never been exercised due to the sensitivity of the aforementioned territorial claims.

Given the complexity of relations among the member states of the TCA, their interactions reflect a persistent level of distrust rooted in unresolved historical territorial disputes and divergent national interests. According to RSC theory, patterns of enmity or distrust stemming from past conflicts can significantly constrain the effectiveness of regional cooperation. This dynamic is evident in the TCA, where the lack of mutual confidence has hindered the institutionalization of crucial mechanisms such as the JMP, an initiative intended to enhance maritime surveillance and counterterrorism coordination.

Consequently, mutual distrust and bureaucratic asymmetries among TCA members have undermined intelligence sharing and real-time operational coordination. The persistence of "soft sovereignty sensitivities" and divergent threat perceptions has further prevented the establishment of a cohesive and integrated security framework. As a result, ISIS and its affiliated networks have been able to exploit governance gaps and porous borders in the Sulu–Sulawesi Seas, maintaining operational freedom and facilitating the continued spread of militancy across the Tri-Border Area.

The United States' Influence and Interests in Southeast Asia and Their Impact on ISIS Expansion in the Tri-Border Area

This study finds that the great power exerting the most significant influence on the development of ISIS in the TBA is the United States. In early 2016, ISIS lost much of its territorial stronghold in Iraq and Syria as a result of offensives by the Syrian government and the U.S.-led coalition. This prompted the group to seek a new base and ultimately declare the southern Philippines as its wilayat in Southeast Asia (Gunaratna, 2016). The United States viewed this as a threat to regional security, with potential implications for regional economic dynamics (Lamothe, 2017). Consequently, the United States became involved in safeguarding regional security by participating in efforts to combat ISIS in Southeast Asia, particularly in the TBA.

The influence of the United States on the development of ISIS in the TBA can be examined from the U.S.–Philippines military cooperation in counterterrorism. Security cooperation between the United States and the Philippines began with the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1951 and was further strengthened in 2014 through the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (U.S. Department of State, 2022). In terms of counterterrorism, the Philippines received USD 3.9 billion in assistance from the United States between 2019 and 2022, most of which was allocated for the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) (Suansing, 2022). Furthermore, the United States was the only country to assist the Philippines in combating ISIS in Marawi, providing logistical support, intelligence, military training, and defense equipment (Morales & Lewis, 2018).

Nevertheless, U.S. financial and logistical assistance does not appear to have provided a significant solution for eradicating ISIS in the Philippines or in the TBA. The data below indicate that terrorist attacks by ISIS have continued to occur in close succession. Notably, the suicide bombing in Jolo stands as one of the deadliest such attacks, claiming 23 lives and injuring 100 others (Banlaoi, 2020).

Tabel 1. Post–Marawi Siege ISIS Terrorist Attacks

Date	Location	Description
31 July 2018	Lamitan, Basilan	Suicide bombing by German and Moroccan nationals
27 January 2019	Jolo, Sulu	Suicide bombing by two Indonesian nationals
28 June 2019	Indanan, Sulu	Suicide bombing by a Filipino national
8 September 2019	Indanan, Sulu	Suicide bombing by a Filipino national

Source: Banlaoi (2020), compiled by the Author (2025)

The involvement of great powers in maritime Southeast Asia plays a crucial role in assisting regional states in addressing shared security threats. However, evidence suggests that U.S.–Philippine military cooperation in counterterrorism operations—particularly in the Philippines and the Sulu–Sulawesi Seas—has remained predominantly technical in nature, emphasizing military modernization, funding, and logistical assistance rather than comprehensive strategies aimed at tackling the underlying drivers of terrorism in the TBA.

The resurgence of ISIS-affiliated suicide bombings in the Sulu–Sulawesi Seas following the 2017 Marawi siege underscores the limited effectiveness of U.S. support in suppressing ISIS’s regional expansion. The region’s reliance on U.S. security assistance has generated asymmetrical dependencies, weakening the sense of regional ownership within the TCA. In line with RSCT, such external penetration disrupts regional cohesion and impedes the development of an autonomous and unified response to the threat posed by ISIS in the TBA.

Conclusion

The implementation of trilateral cooperation among Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines through the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) has been largely ineffective in curbing the expansion of ISIS in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) between 2017 and 2019. Despite the formal establishment of the TCA in 2017, ISIS has continued to conduct terrorist attacks and maintain operational networks across the three member states. Ideally, such a regional mechanism should have strengthened intelligence sharing, enhanced maritime surveillance, and restricted the movement of terrorist groups. However, empirical developments demonstrate that the persistence of ISIS is closely linked to three interrelated causal factors namely, geographical proximity, interstate mistrust, and the influence of external power as identified in Buzan and Wæver’s (2003) Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT).

First, the geographical proximity of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, coupled with the porous and weakly monitored maritime borders of the Sulu–Sulawesi Seas, has been exploited by ISIS and its affiliates to facilitate the movement of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), weapons, and financial resources. This geographical interconnection, instead of fostering coordinated border management, created shared vulnerabilities without shared control.

Second, interstate relations within the TCA have been constrained by mutual distrust, sovereignty sensitivities, and divergent threat perceptions, which have undermined efforts to institutionalize key mechanisms such as the Joint Maritime Patrols (JMP). The absence of trust and synchronized operational frameworks has prevented the TCA from evolving into a cohesive regional security mechanism.

Third, the involvement of great powers, particularly the United States, has been limited to technical and logistical support which focuses on military modernization and capacity-building programs rather than addressing the root causes of terrorism in the TBA. This dependence on external assistance has produced asymmetrical security relationships, weakening regional autonomy and coherence in responding to the ISIS threat.

Taken together, these factors illustrate that RSCT provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the constraints faced by regional cooperation mechanisms in addressing non-traditional security threats such as terrorism. The geographical vulnerabilities, political mistrust, and external dependencies that characterize the TCA demonstrate how structural and relational factors interact to weaken regional security governance. Consequently, the TCA's underperformance reflects not only the limitations of institutional design but also the broader dynamics of regional insecurity and external penetration that shape the security landscape of maritime Southeast Asia.

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Navigating Maritime Politics: A Systematic Review and Bibliometric Mapping

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Abstract

Abstract Maritime affairs constitute a strategic domain within contemporary geopolitical dynamics. In recent decades, maritime spaces have ascended as a critical arena for power projection, driven by intensifying global competition. This study employs a systematic mapping approach to delineate the evolution and predominant research trends within maritime political studies. Utilizing bibliographic data from the Scopus database in the period of 2005–2025, we analyzed a corpus of scientific articles on maritime politics. The data were processed using the VOSviewer software to generate a network map of keywords, elucidate inter-topic relationships, and trace conceptual developments. The analysis reveals five dominant keywords that form the discursive core: marine policy, governance, the marine environment, ocean governance, and marine governance. These themes are not isolated but are intricately interconnected within a conceptual network, illustrating the trajectory of maritime politics over the past two decades. The inter topic relationships signify the integration of ecological and political imperatives, shaping an emergent governance model characterized by its trans boundary, collaborative, and sustainability-oriented nature. This evolution represents an epistemological shift from a state-centrist paradigm, through a governance paradigm, toward a nascent ecological-political paradigm. Consequently, the sea is no longer conceived merely as an economic or territorial domain, but is increasingly recognized as a complex and dynamic political space.

Abstrak Kemaritiman merupakan salah satu isu strategis dalam dinamika politik global kontemporer. Dalam beberapa dekade terakhir, wilayah maritim telah menjelma menjadi ruang kekuasaan karena persaingan geopolitik global. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan pemetaan sistematis untuk mengidentifikasi perkembangan serta tren penelitian dominan dalam studi politik maritim. Dengan memanfaatkan data bibliografis dari basis data Scopus pada periode 2005–2025, penelitian ini menganalisis kumpulan artikel ilmiah yang membahas politik maritim. Data diolah menggunakan perangkat lunak VOSviewer untuk menghasilkan peta jejaring kata kunci, mengungkap hubungan antar-topik, serta menelusuri perkembangan konseptual. Hasil analisis menunjukkan lima kata kunci dominan yang membentuk inti diskursus, yaitu kebijakan kelautan, tata kelola, lingkungan laut, tata kelola laut, dan tata kelola kelautan. Tema-tema tersebut tidak berdiri sendiri, melainkan saling terhubung secara erat dalam suatu jaringan konseptual yang menggambarkan lintasan perkembangan politik maritim selama dua dekade terakhir. Hubungan antar-topik ini mencerminkan integrasi antara kepentingan ekologis dan politik, yang membentuk model tata kelola baru bersifat lintas batas, kolaboratif, dan berorientasi pada keberlanjutan. Perkembangan ini menunjukkan adanya pergeseran epistemologis dari paradigma negara-sentris, menuju paradigma tata kelola, dan selanjutnya ke arah paradigma ekologi-politik yang mulai mengemuka. Dengan demikian, laut tidak lagi dipahami semata-mata sebagai ruang ekonomi atau teritorial, melainkan semakin diakui sebagai ruang politik yang kompleks dan dinamis.

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Introduction

Maritime politics constitutes a critical nexus within the contemporary global geopolitical order. The realignment of global power, coupled with intensifying contestations over access to transoceanic trade routes and the exploitation of marine resources, has positioned the maritime domain as a central arena of international politics (Bueger, 2015; Summers, 2023). These contestations fundamentally concern the authority to establish norms, regulate marine resources, and exert military dominance. Consequently, maritime politics gains heightened urgency, functioning as a critical mechanism in the restructuring of global economic power and the processes of capital accumulation (Bueger & Edmunds, 2020). In this context, hegemony over major maritime trade routes equates to command over the global circulation of goods, energy, and capital.

Beyond its geopolitical and economic dimensions, maritime politics is inextricably linked to security, though the concept of 'maritime security' has undergone significant conceptual expansion. Previously confined to a militaristic framework of territorial integrity and sea lane protection, it now encompasses a broader 'maritime security complex' that includes ecological degradation, human migration, trans-boundary crime, and piracy (Bueger, 2015). This evolution signifies that maritime politics increasingly embodies a form of post-territorial governance—one that necessitates multilateral cooperation, global norm-setting, and inclusive institutional frameworks, transcending traditional notions of absolute sovereignty (Bueger & Edmunds, 2020).

Furthermore, the global climate crisis and the imperative of sustainability are deeply interwoven with maritime security. The ocean's capacity to absorb over 30 percent of global carbon emissions establishes it as a vital buffer for the global climate system. However, the over exploitation of marine resources precipitates ecosystem degradation (Campling et al., 2024; Havice, 2021), thereby threatening planetary life-support systems. It is therefore imperative to re-conceptualize maritime governance not merely through the lens of security and sovereignty, but as a matter of global responsibility for planetary sustainability. Maritime politics thus emerges as the crucial interface for mediating national interests and global ecological imperatives.

Synthesizing this literature reveals that maritime politics entails a re-articulation of global power orchestration. Command of the maritime domain translates into control over energy, food security, global logistics, and the digital infrastructure underpinning the global economy via submarine cables. In an era defined by digitization and energy transition, the sea has become indispensable infrastructure for the perpetuation of global capitalism; consequently, maritime politics is, unequivocally, the politics of the future. It is critical to recognize that this domain can serve as an arena for hegemonic struggles over global resources, yet it also provides a platform for negotiating a delicate equilibrium between security, economic, social, and environmental imperatives.

The phenomena delineated above illustrate the dynamic evolution of maritime politics as a field of study. Scholarly interest has surged over the past two decades, mirroring the growing salience of maritime issues in global policy agendas. A significant portion of the literature concentrates on maritime security and law (Bueger, 2015; Oxman, 2020), geopolitics, and diplomacy, particularly as they pertain to interstate power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific (Bueger

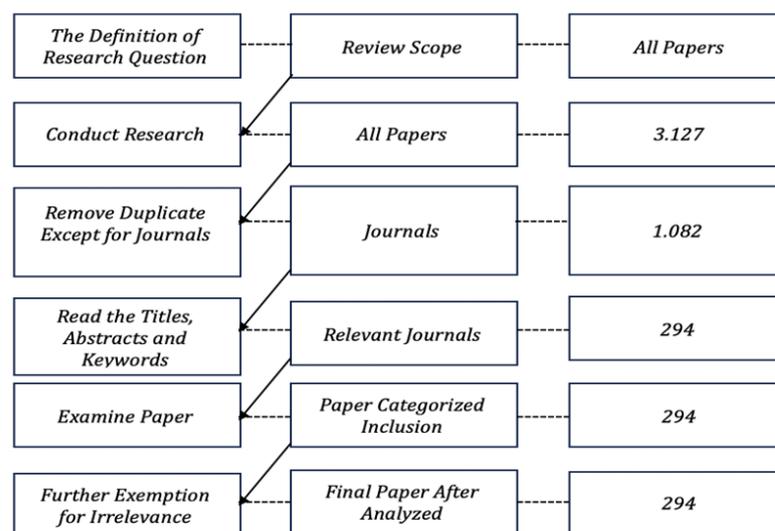
& Edmunds, 2020). Despite this growing corpus, the methodological landscape remains under explored. There is a conspicuous scarcity of research employing bibliometric methods to systematically map the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaborative networks within maritime political studies. Consequently, the knowledge base remains fragmented, lacking a comprehensive synthesis to forge a robust, cross-disciplinary conceptual framework. This gap underscores an urgent need to systematically and empirically investigate the constitution of maritime politics across global and local contexts

This study is designed to address this lacuna by conducting a systematic bibliometric analysis of scholarly publications on maritime politics from 2005 to 2025. The research aims to delineate dominant thematic trends, map collaborative networks among authors and institutions, and uncover the epistemological shifts guiding the field's development. In doing so, this study not only provides a definitive intellectual cartography of a rapidly evolving discipline but also offers critical reflections to guide future research toward just and sustainable ocean governance.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research design that integrates bibliometric analysis with a systematic literature review. Bibliometric analysis, a well-established method for mapping scientific literature, utilizes quantitative techniques to examine relationships between scholarly entities such as publications, authors, keywords, and institutions (Carradore, 2024; Donthu et al., 2020, 2021; Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015). This approach enables the objective identification of a field's intellectual structure, prevailing research trends, and its evolutionary trajectory (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Complementing this, a systematic review provides a rigorous, protocol-driven framework for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing all relevant research on a specific topic (Satnarine, 2023). The synergistic combination of these two methods facilitates a holistic investigation into maritime politics research. It captures not only the quantitative, structural dimensions of the field such as collaborative networks and influential contributors but also enables a qualitative, in-depth analysis of its conceptual themes and epistemological developments.

Data for this analysis were published at the Scopus database, selected for its comprehensive coverage, rigorous curation, and multidisciplinary scope, which ensures access to high-impact, internationally recognized literature. The research procedure follows the established guidelines for systematic mapping studies, as outlined below:



Source: (Petersen et al., 2008)

The data collection was began with a comprehensive search of the Scopus database. The primary search term, "maritime politics," was supplemented with a suite of synonymous and

thematically related keywords including ocean governance; maritime geopolitics; sea power; and blue politics to ensure a robust retrieval of relevant literature. This initial search returned 3,127 journal articles. A multi-stage filtering process was then implemented to refine the dataset. The results were limited to articles published within the last decade, confined to the social sciences discipline, and restricted to the document type article published in English. This initial filtration narrowed the corpus to 1,082 articles. A final refinement was performed by screening article titles and keywords for direct relevance to the study's focus, yielding a final, curated dataset of 294 articles. This dataset was exported in CSV format for subsequent analysis.

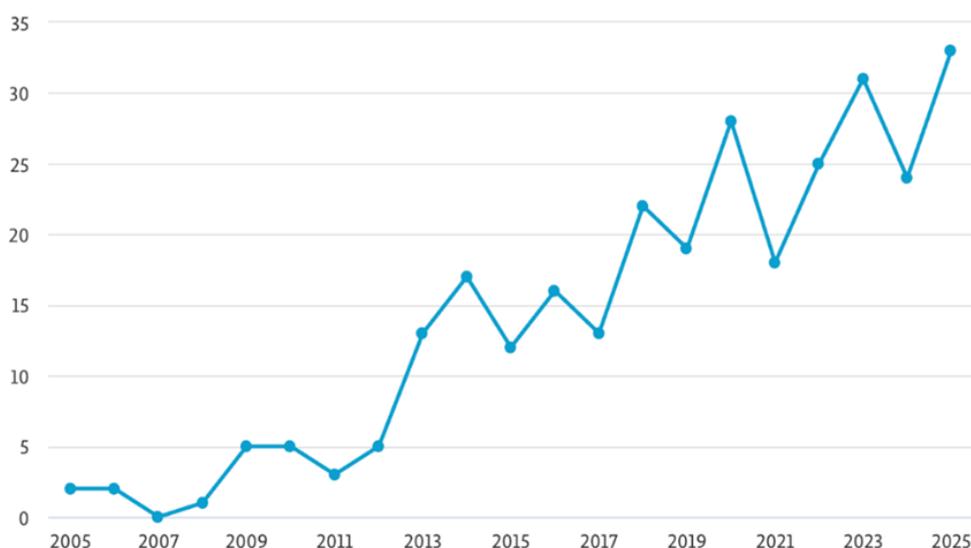
VOS viewer is used to visualize bibliographic data or datasets containing bibliographic elements (such as title, author name, author affiliation, and publication journal) based on co-occurrence. The analysis employed a tripartite framework: Descriptive Analysis, to quantify the annual scientific production and identified the most influential authors, institutions, and countries within the field; Intellectual Structure, this approach mapped the collaborative networks and the foundational literature that shape the field's knowledge domain; and Conceptual Structure, to identify the key concepts and themes prevalent in maritime politics research, grouping them into distinct thematic clusters to reveal the field's conceptual architecture (Bender & Leodir Lobler, 2023).

Results and Discussion

Publication Trends in Maritime Politics Research

Analysis of the 294 publications reveals distinct temporal trends in the scholarly output on maritime politics from 2005 to 2025. As illustrated in Figure 1, publication rates remained relatively low in the initial years of the study period but demonstrated a marked and consistent upward trajectory beginning in the early 2010s.

Grafik 1. Annual publications trends on maritime politics within the period 2005–2025



source : research data analysis in www.scopus.com, 2025

An analysis of 295 scientific articles reveals dynamic shifts in scholarly attention to maritime politics between 2005 and 2025. The field experienced a low-output initial first phase, with a mere 2 to 5 publications annually until 2012. At the second phase, commencing around 2013, marks a pronounced increase in scholarly output. Despite some volatility, including slight decreases in 2015 and 2017, the general trend rose sharply, culminating in 20 to 33 annual publications by the period's end. This pattern signifies a substantial growth in academic interest

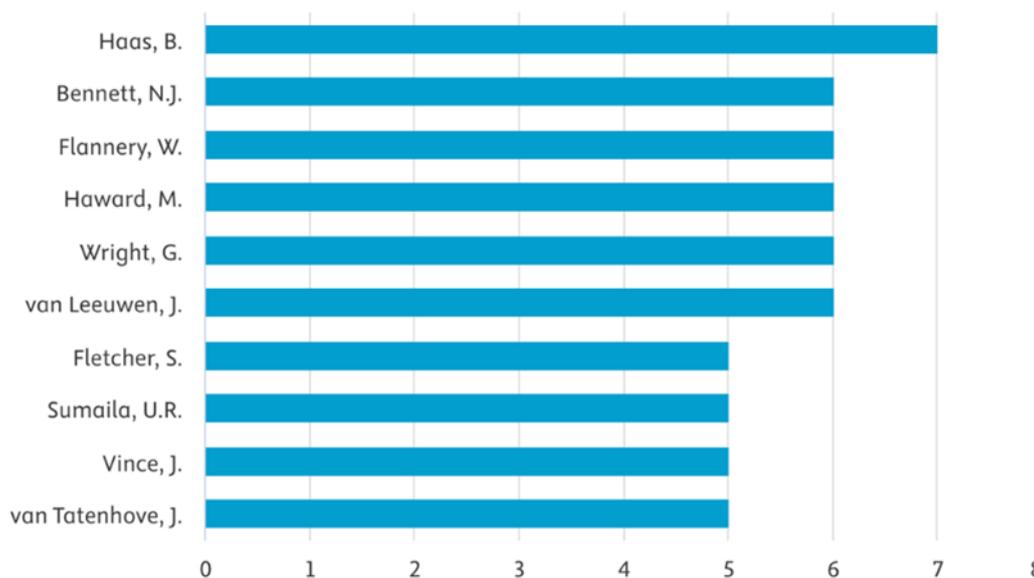
in maritime politics over the last decade. Although publications on maritime politics have gradually increased in the 21st century, reaching 20 to 33 annually, this output remains modest, indicating the topic has yet to enter the academic mainstream.

This pattern signifies a substantial and growing engagement with maritime politics as a field of study. The pronounced increase in publications post-2010 correlates directly with the rising global salience of maritime disputes, governance challenges, and the strategic importance of ocean spaces, reflecting the field's responsive evolution to contemporary geopolitical and environmental issues.

The Leading Authors, Institutions, and Countries Contributing to the Field of Maritime Politics

Grafik 2 lists the 15 most prolific authors on the topic of maritime politics between 2005 and 2025:

Grafik 2. The most prolific authors on the maritime politics domain from 2005 to 2025



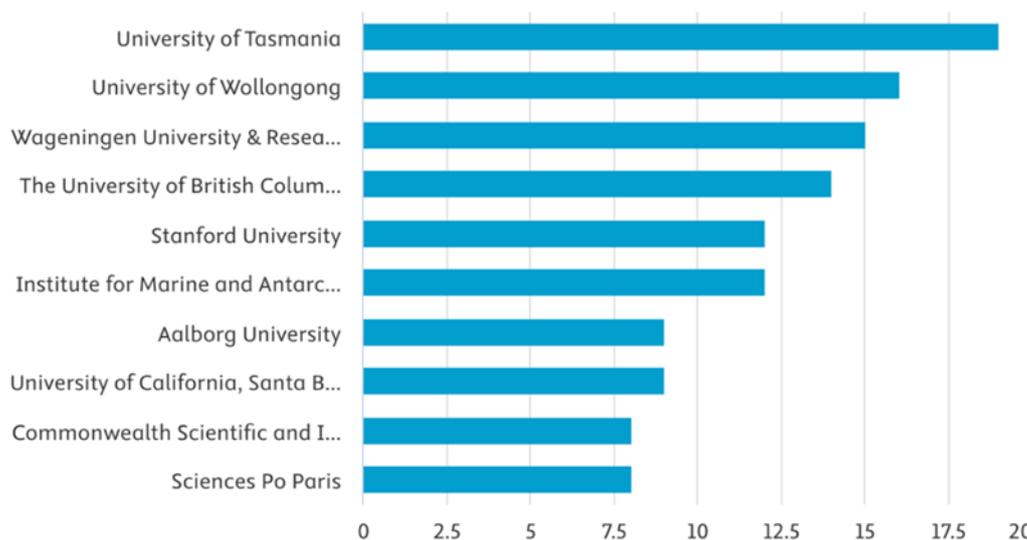
source : research data analysis in www.scopus.com, 2025

Grafik 2 identifies the most prolific contributors to maritime politics scholarship. Leading this cohort is Bianca Haas, with seven publications that primarily investigate blue growth and sustainable marine governance within a European context. She is followed closely by several authors, each with six articles, whose work defines key sub-fields: Nathan J. Bennett's research focuses on blue justice and social-ecological dimensions of marine resource management; while Wesley Flannery and Marcus G. Haward studies on marine spatial planning and ocean governance as foundational elements of modern maritime political regimes particularly in the North Atlantic and Indo-Pacific. Similarly, Glen W. Wright and Judith van Leeuwen, also with six articles each, examine the intersection of international marine governance and climate policy, offering critiques of blue economy paradigms that prioritize economic growth over social-ecological sustainability.

A subsequent tier of contributors including Stephen W. Fletcher, Ussif Rashid Sumaila, Joanna Zofia Vince, and Jan P.M. Van Tatenhove have each authored five articles. Their collective work strengthens the conceptual and empirical foundations of the field through interdisciplinary approaches spanning marine economics, conservation policy, and institutional analysis. Beyond individual authorship, the data reveal the leading institutional contributors to this domain. The most prominent affiliated institutions include the University of Tasmania, the

University of Wollongong, Wageningen University & Research, the University of British Columbia, Stanford University, the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, Aalborg University, the University of California, Santa Barbara, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, and Sciences Po Paris.

Grafik 3. Institutions with the greatest contribution in the field of maritime politics during the period 2005–2025



source : research data analysis in www.scopus.com, 2025

The geographic and institutional distribution of leading research affiliates reveals a clear pattern in the global landscape of maritime politics, with Australian universities—particularly the University of Tasmania and the University of Wollongong—emerging as central hubs alongside institutions such as Wageningen University & Research and the University of British Columbia. Australia’s prominence cannot be explained by geography alone; rather, it reflects the political centrality of maritime space to the Australian state, where oceans constitute key arenas of sovereignty, security, economic development, and environmental governance. This centrality is institutionally embedded through interdisciplinary research infrastructures that integrate political science, marine ecology, law, and sustainability studies, enabling maritime politics to develop as a core analytical framework rather than a peripheral subfield. Moreover, Australian scholarship has advanced an epistemic framing of maritime space as a site of governance, conflict, and identity, shaped in part by engagement with Indigenous sea country and postcolonial questions of sovereignty and citizenship. Taken together, the convergence of geography, state policy, institutional design, interdisciplinarity, and geopolitical positioning renders Australia a natural laboratory for maritime political research, explaining its disproportionate influence in shaping contemporary maritime political theory and practice.

The significant contributions from Stanford University and the University of California, Santa Barbara (USA) highlight a research emphasis on maritime security, geopolitics, and global ocean resource governance. Within the European context, Aalborg University (Denmark) and Sciences Po Paris (France) represent strong scholarly traditions in maritime governance, energy security, and diplomatic studies. Furthermore, the inclusion of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) (Australia) indicates that maritime policy research is not confined to the academic sphere but is also a priority for major applied research institutions.

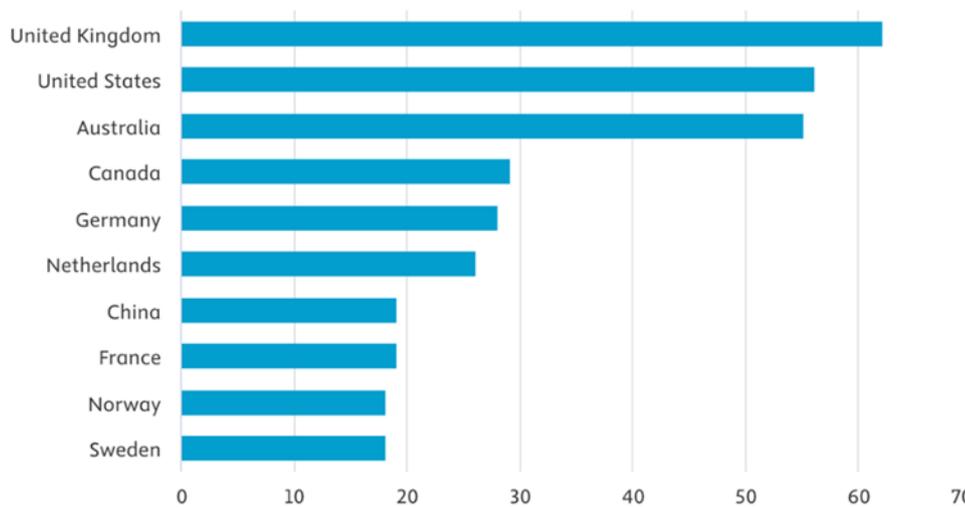
A key finding from this analysis is the direct correlation between a nation's strategic maritime interests and its scholarly output. The data demonstrate a pronounced dominance of affiliations from Australia, the Netherlands, Canada, and the United States, suggesting that

geopolitical and economic stakes in maritime domains are a primary driver of research productivity in this field.

This institutional analysis is complemented by the national-level data presented in Figure 3, which illustrates the distribution of countries contributing most significantly to maritime politics literature over the past two decades.

In Grafik 4, an analysis of the field from 2005 to 2025 reveals a distinct epistemic hegemony, with scholarly production dominated by institutions in the UK, US, Australia, Canada, and several Western European and East Asian nations. This pattern demonstrates that contemporary maritime order is constituted not only through physical control but also through the discursive power to define, represent, and govern the marine environment.

Grafik 4. Countries with the greatest contribution in the field of maritime politics during the period 2005–2025



source : research data analysis in www.scopus.com, 2025

Research Cluster Analysis and Mapping

Understanding the structure and evolution of a research field requires more than identifying influential authors or highly cited publications; it demands an examination of how ideas coalesce, interact, and transform over time. In rapidly expanding and interdisciplinary domains such as maritime politics, knowledge production is marked by thematic convergence, conceptual fragmentation, and shifting research priorities. Bibliometric approaches provide a systematic means of capturing these dynamics by moving beyond linear narratives of scholarly progress toward relational and spatial representations of knowledge. Within this analytical framework, cluster analysis plays a pivotal role in revealing the underlying intellectual architecture of the field and in situating individual studies within broader patterns of conceptual organization and change.

Cluster analysis constitutes a foundational component of bibliometrics precisely because it enables scholars to map the intellectual landscape of a scientific domain in a structured and replicable manner. Its first objective is to identify key thematic clusters that represent the core research topics around which scholarly debates are organized. By grouping publications, keywords, or authors based on patterns of similarity and co-occurrence, cluster analysis makes visible the dominant themes as well as emerging or marginal research areas. The second objective is to examine the relationships between these themes through networks of co-occurrence and citation, thereby illuminating how concepts, methods, and theoretical perspectives are interconnected across the literature. Such relational analysis reveals not only the density and cohesion of specific clusters but also the bridges and overlaps that link different strands of research. The third objective is to visualize the temporal development and transformation of the field, allowing researchers to trace how thematic clusters evolve, merge,

constitutes a broad conceptual umbrella, encompassing maritime law and governance, environmental conservation, security and geopolitics, economics and industry, coastal communities and society, and innovation and technology; Governance Approach refers to the prevailing paradigm for managing maritime and coastal areas, characterized by an emphasis on integrated, collaborative, and sustainable frameworks; Marine Environment is predominantly discussed in the context of systemic economic and energy transitions, particularly driven by the global emergence of the blue economy and renewable energy agendas; Ocean Governance concerns the architecture of coordination among diverse actors and across multiple levels of government in the global maritime commons; Marine Governance, by contrast, typically addresses management frameworks and regulatory instruments at national and regional scales.

To systematically delineate the intellectual structure of the field, Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the identified research clusters and their constituent conceptual elements.

Table 1. . Elements and Cluster of research concept

Cluster	Group of research themes	
	Elements of concept	Numbers of concept
Cluster 1	Arctic, arctic ocean, areas beyond national, bbnj, biodiversity, Canada, China, comparative study, coordination, environmental policy, environmental protection, fishery, fishing community, future prospect, geopolitics, government, high seas, Indonesia, innovation, international agreement, international cooperation, legislation, literature review, local government, marine policy, maritime boundary, maritime security, norway, ocean, ocean governance, ocean policy, policy, power relations, security, state role, Taiwan, traditional knowledge, unclos	42 items
Cluster 2	Action plan, baltic sea, covid-19, decision making, governance approach, holistic approach, implementation process, integrated approach, marine pollution, maritime policy, maritime transportation, organization, pacific island, pacific ocean, policy analysis, policy approach, policy development, policy impelentation, policy making, pollution control, russian federation, sea power, shipping, spatiotemporal analysis, strategic approach, sustainable development, united nations	28 items
Cluster 3	Alternative energy, atlantic ocean, blue economy, blue growth, caribbean sea, coastal communities, coastal zone, economic development, economic growth, indigenous population, Ireland, marine governance, marine renewable energy, marine spatial planning, new zealand, north sea, offshore structure, renewable resource, resource development, resource management, Scotland, spatial planning, transboundary cooperation, united kingdom, united states, wind power	26 items
Cluster 4	Adaptive management, brazil, climate change, coastal zone management, conservation	25 items

	management, England, environmental change, environmental economic, environmental legislation, environmental planning, equity, fisheries management, knowledge, marine conservation, marine environment, marine park, organization framework, participatory approach, perception, planning process, Portugal, qualitative analysis, regulatory framework, small scale industry, stakeholder	
Cluster 5	Anthozoa, complexity, conservation, data set, ecosystem approach, ecosystem management, ecosystem service, ecosystem-based management, environmental management, exclusive economic zone, human activity, industrialization, institutional framework, marine, marine ecosystem, maritime spatial planning, nature conservation, resilience, social-ecological system, soloman island	20 items
Cluster 6	Aquaculture, australia, collective action, communication, conceptual framework, global ocean, governance, local participation, marine protected areas, marine resource, protected area, sustainable development, theoretical study, transformation, trust	15 items
Cluster 7	Comanagement, common fisheries policy, Europe, european union, fisheries, fishery management, fishery policy, marine strategy framework, mediterrance sea, oceans governance, regional seas, regionalization, sustainability	13 items
Cluster 8	Marine spatial planning	1 item

source : research data analysis at VOSViewer, 2025

Comprising 42 items, Cluster 1 is anchored by the field's most prominent keyword. i.e. "marine policy." Its high frequency and strong associative links with concepts such as security, governance, and sustainability position it as the key nexus within maritime political scholarship over the past two decades. This indicates that marine policy serves as the primary conceptual framework through which diverse maritime issues are integrated and analyzed.

At the second cluster consisting of 28 items, is dominated by the "governance approach" keyword. Its prominence reflects a fundamental epistemological shift from state-centric government to multi-actor governance. This transition is necessitated by the ontological nature of the ocean as a global commons and transboundary space, which resists unilateral state control. This perspective is supported by Bueger (2015), who argues that effective ocean management necessitates complex networks involving states, international institutions, the private sector, and local communities interacting across multiple regimes.

Cluster 3, with 26 items, is led by the keyword "marine environment," a term characterized by its dual conceptualization. First, it refers to the physical-ecological system requiring sustainable management. Second, it has emerged as a critical political arena where competing interests—including energy, economics, and security—converge and are negotiated. The rising scholarly focus on this term parallels the escalating global discourse on climate change, the blue economy, and sustainable development. Consequently, the marine environment acts as a critical juncture between ecological and economic imperatives, thereby reinforcing the centrality of sustainability within maritime politics.

Cluster 4, comprising 25 concepts, is defined by the keyword "ocean governance." Its prominence signifies a scholarly trend toward the challenges of managing shared resources,

development, and environmental governance. This centrality is not merely geographical, but also political and institutional, as reflected in state policies, marine legal frameworks, and sustained investments in research. The dominance of early clusters focused on marine policy and governance in the bibliometric mapping suggests that the Australian context provides a “natural laboratory” for the development of maritime politics as a field of study, where the dynamics between the state, markets, local communities, and global environmental regimes can be observed empirically and systematically.

Furthermore, this development points to a shift toward a more hybrid and systemic knowledge structure, moving away from traditional, fragmented, and sectoral approaches. The discursive transition from state-oriented “marine policy” to multi-stakeholder “governance approaches,” and ultimately to the global framework of “ocean governance,” reflects a fundamental transformation in how power is exercised within maritime spaces. In the Australian context, this transformation is reinforced by the involvement of non-state actors, international environmental regimes, and the recognition of Indigenous sea country, which challenges singular models of sovereignty and opens space for more inclusive forms of maritime citizenship.

Thus, the prominence of maritime politics in the Australian context cannot be understood merely as a consequence of extensive maritime interests, but rather as the outcome of a convergence between geopolitical positioning, state policy orientation, interdisciplinary research institutionalization, and the dynamics of global ocean governance. This convergence positions Australia not only as an object of maritime political inquiry, but also as a key site of knowledge production that significantly shapes the theoretical directions and practical configurations of contemporary maritime politics within an increasingly polycentric global order.

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Institutional Durability of Delivery Units in Indonesia: Preliminary Findings

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Abstract

Abstract, This study examines the dynamics and institutional durability of various delivery units in Indonesia, including the Presidential Work Unit and the Presidential Staff Office, within a comparative cross-administrative framework and the conceptual lens of deliverology, as practiced by the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit in the United Kingdom. In contrast to short-term approaches driven by leadership style and performance orientation, this study emphasizes the importance of systematizing and sustaining coordination, synchronization, and control functions. The findings reveal that establishing delivery units in Indonesia tends to be temporary and pragmatic, lacking robust legal foundations and strong institutional integration. Political factors, leadership personalization, and overlapping authorities emerge as key impediments. Employing a collective or multiple-case study design with a comparative analytical approach, this research concludes that while several principles of deliverology, such as using targets and performance monitoring, have been adopted, delivery units have yet to be institutionalized as long-term governance instruments. Therefore, the study recommends establishing a stronger legal framework, developing adaptable institutional designs, and promoting professional leadership to ensure the continuity of these units in supporting the implementation of national priority policies.

Abstrak, Penelitian ini menganalisis dinamika dan ketahanan kelembagaan dalam berbagai delivery unit di Indonesia, seperti Unit Kerja Presiden, Kantor Staf Presiden, dan lainnya dalam konteks perbandingan lintas pemerintahan dengan kerangka deliverology atau praktik kerja Prime Minister Delivery Unit di Inggris. Berbeda dengan pendekatan jangka pendek berbasis gaya kepemimpinan dan kinerja, kajian ini menekankan pentingnya pelebagaan fungsi koordinasi, sinkronisasi dan pengendalian secara sistemik dan berkelanjutan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pembentukan delivery unit di Indonesia bersifat temporer, pragmatis, dan belum didukung oleh dasar hukum dan integrasi kelembagaan yang kuat. Faktor politik, personalisasi kepemimpinan, dan tumpang tindih kewenangan menjadi hambatan utama. Menggunakan studi kasus collective atau multiple dengan menganalisis secara komparatif, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun beberapa prinsip deliverology telah diadopsi seperti penggunaan target dan pemantauan kinerja, delivery unit belum mampu melembaga sebagai instrumen tata kelola jangka panjang. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan dasar hukum yang lebih kuat, desain kelembagaan yang adaptif, serta kepemimpinan profesional untuk memastikan keberlanjutan fungsi unit ini dalam pengawalan kebijakan prioritas nasional.

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Introduction

This paper aims to initiate a deeper discussion on delivery units and their institutional durability in Indonesia, spanning the period from the establishment of the first explicitly formulated delivery unit during President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration, its continuation under President Joko Widodo, and its current context during President Prabowo Subianto's administration. The focus on delivery units across different administrations distinguishes this study from normative works that remain confined to a technocratic perspective (Barber, Kihn, et al., 2011; Barber, Moffit, et al., 2011) and do not yet explore in depth the political and governance dimensions related to presidential leadership and institutional design. These factors can significantly influence the continuity of delivery units.

The importance of examining the institutional durability of delivery units in Indonesia is supported by both empirical and theoretical considerations. Empirically, delivery units in Indonesia frequently change their institutional names, along with shifts in their formal positions and authority. Institutional mandates are also distributed across multiple entities, not only within a single delivery unit but also within institutions that are not formally categorized as delivery units. In the present context, several institutions even perform the functions of delivery units, excluding those operating at subnational levels. Only two government leaders in Indonesia have explicitly announced the establishment of delivery units, namely President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Governor of Jakarta, Anies Baswedan (Hutagalung & Mayasari, 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, the existence of delivery units, as well as other institutions responsible for overseeing programs, development agendas, or government control, offers the potential to enhance the state-of-the-art or enrich the advancement of delivery unit studies, particularly in terms of institutional durability. Institutional durability in this context refers not only to the duration of an institution's existence but also to its ability to persist across different administrations in a systematic and sustainable manner. This leads to a fundamental question: why, in the Indonesian context, have delivery units or other institutions responsible for program, development, or government control been unable to achieve such institutional durability?

Overview of Institutions Responsible for the Oversight of Programs, Development, or Government Control in Indonesia

At the beginning of his administration, President Prabowo Subianto formed the Red and White Cabinet, which comprises seven Coordinating Ministries, 41 Ministries, several government agencies, and various appointed roles, including Special Advisors, Special Envoys, and Presidential Special Staff. This cabinet structure was guided by narratives emphasizing a professional cabinet, efficient governance, national greatness, continuity of development, and the fulfillment of Asta Cita (Nugroho et al., 2025). In terms of overseeing development and program implementation under the Asta Cita framework, several ministries and agencies within the presidential domain underwent functional reconfigurations. For example, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (PAN-RB) were placed directly under the President's authority, similar to the Ministry of State Secretariat and the Ministry of National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas). The Cabinet Secretariat was restructured to become the Cabinet Support Secretariat under the Ministry of State Secretariat. Additionally, the creation of the Development Control and Special Investigation Agency (Bappisus) and the Presidential Communication Office (PCO) resulted in the assumption of several functions that were previously carried out by the Presidential Staff Office (KSP).

Analyzing regulations governing program control institutions in Indonesia shows a pattern of changing nomenclature across different presidential administrations. During President Soeharto's tenure, the Ministry of State Secretariat oversaw several key components

of governmental operations, including the Cabinet Secretariat and the Secretariat for the Operational Control of Development (Setdalopsbang). At the time, the State Secretary also held the concurrent role of Cabinet Secretary, providing administrative support to the President as both head of the cabinet and head of government. Setdalopsbang was led by a Secretary who assisted the State Secretary in matters related to operational development control. Under President Abdurrahman Wahid, the Cabinet Secretariat and Setdalopsbang were formalized as separate entities, although their budgets remained coordinated by the Ministry of State Secretariat. During this period, the Ministry continued to function as the administrative support body to the President in his role as head of state. The name Setdalopsbang was changed to the Secretariat for Government Control, which was later merged into the Cabinet Secretariat.

During the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the Cabinet Secretariat was placed directly under the President's authority and given a separate budget from the Ministry of State Secretariat. A new institution for program and development control was established under the Presidential Working Unit for Program Management and Reform (UKP3R), which was later renamed the Presidential Working Unit for Supervision and Control of Development (UKP4). Under President Joko Widodo, UKP4 was dissolved and replaced by KSP. At that time, KSP took over functions similar to those of Setdalopsbang and earlier program control institutions, with an expanded mandate that included political information and strategic communication. The ongoing transformation in functions, organizational structures, and budgeting of institutions tasked with program, development, or governance control across different presidential periods raises fundamental questions about the drivers behind these changes and their evolution. This calls for a comprehensive study that examines the phenomenon through an analytical framework rooted in governance, public policy, and political analysis.

Previous Studies

Research on institutions or working units responsible for programs, development, or government control in Indonesia has been conducted at various times. One study on UKP3R, using a critical discourse analysis of media coverage, explored its background, the controversies and opposition it faced, the support it received, the stance taken by the President and the government during the public debate, the relevant regulatory and legislative context, as well as its impacts and the resulting calls for resolution (Vera, 2007). Later studies focused on the broader concept of Presidential Working Units, particularly UKP4, examining its formation through the lens of constitutional and democratic principles. These works raised critical questions about the scope of presidential authority and the potential for overlapping institutional mandates (Purnamawati, 2020; Ridho & Amin, 2021). Similarly, research on KSP, often employing the same analytical approach used for UKP4, emphasized that although its establishment falls within the President's prerogative, its authority, as defined by Presidential Regulation, may conflict with higher-order legislation. This has led to overlapping functions with the Vice President's Office, Coordinating Ministries, the Ministry of State Secretariat, and the Cabinet Secretariat, all of which have ministerial-level status. Such overlaps are further complicated by concerns over political interests, institutional rationalization, and bureaucratic efficiency (Almichael & Irwandi, 2023; Santika, 2016; Suyadi, 2019).

At the ministerial and sub-national levels, several studies have examined the roles of organizational entities or task forces such as GovTech Edu under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology; the Digital Transformation Office under the Ministry of Health; INA Digital under the Ministry of PAN-RB; and the Governor's Team for the Acceleration of Development (TGUPP) under the Jakarta Provincial Government. These entities are often categorized as delivery units. Research on local government task forces, for instance, has highlighted their emergence as a form of administrative discretion aimed at ensuring effective public service delivery or aligning priority programs within the limited

tenure of regional leaders, despite the absence of clear regulatory foundations. This kind of discretion is considered legitimate within the scope of administrative governance, particularly when addressing legal or institutional vacuums. However, scholars have recommended that central and local governments develop formal and permanent regulatory frameworks for delivery units. These units should be positioned as strategic support mechanisms rather than temporary or politically driven instruments. Furthermore, they must be integrated with the bureaucratic system to promote more agile, responsive, and accountable governance (Hutagalung & Mayasari, 2023).

Delivery Unit and Deliverology

The concept of the delivery unit originates from the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU), established by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2001 and led by Michael Barber. It was created to address persistent shortcomings in policy implementation, particularly in areas such as health, education, transportation, and crime. In his publications on PMDU's performance, Barber introduced the term deliverology, which refers to a systematic approach to executing public reform agendas and delivering on political commitments (Barber, Kihn, et al., 2011). Failures in policy and program implementation are often attributed to shifting political priorities, difficulties in measuring success, unclear consequences for failure, and opaque motivations among stakeholders. Deliverology is built on three core components: (1) the formation of a small, high-performing team focused on delivery; (2) the collection and use of data to set measurable targets and performance trajectories; and (3) the implementation of structured work routines that sustain attention on results. A key distinction of the delivery unit is its role as an extension of executive leadership, differing from traditional project management offices. Characteristics of an effective delivery unit include credible leadership, a small but agile team, non-hierarchical coordination, and members who are both capable and humble. These units often function as "critical friends", trusted advisors who offer candid feedback while maintaining system-wide credibility. To align with institutional structures, particularly in finance or budgeting, delivery units may rely on formal agreements or regulatory frameworks to define priorities.

A central feature of deliverology is focusing on two main instruments: targets and trajectories. Targets should be measurable, time-bound, and ambitious—balancing aspiration and feasibility to maintain accountability without discouraging implementers. Delivery units ensure these targets are visible and understood across the system. Meanwhile, trajectories represent evidence-based projections of progress over time toward those targets. Crafting effective targets and trajectories may involve internal data, historical trends, external benchmarks, and rigorous evaluation of policy design (Barber, Moffit, et al., 2011).

Arguably, the most important contribution of a delivery unit lies in the development of structured routines. These regular, scheduled interactions—such as monthly notes, quarterly reviews, and biannual delivery reports—enable leaders, program owners, and key stakeholders to assess performance and make timely strategic decisions. These routines create deadlines that generate urgency and drive action. Delivery reports, for instance, estimate the likelihood of success for each priority initiative using an assessment framework that considers planning quality, implementation capacity, and progress, often rated on a four-point scale. While not always exact, such assessments are vital managerial tools for ensuring adaptability and responsiveness. Overall, deliverology offers a valuable framework for public leaders committed to achieving tangible outcomes. By reflecting on past implementation challenges and systematically applying the principles of deliverology, leaders can enhance performance management and policy execution in measurable and sustainable ways (Barber, 2015).

Theory Framework

The adoption of delivery unit or the deliverology approach, pioneered by Michael Barber through the establishment of the PMDU in the United Kingdom, has been examined through various mainstream theoretical lenses (Birch & Jacob, 2019; Brock, 2020; Lafuente & González, 2018; Rao, 2022; World Bank, 2017). From the perspective of central control over policy implementation (Richards & Smith, 2006), the PMDU was conceived in part as a response to the limitations of New Public Management (NPM) reforms. Its formation was also shaped by features of the UK's political system, notably its strong personalism, the absence of a codified constitution, and the centralization of authority characteristic of the Westminster model. The PMDU significantly reshaped the role of the UK central government. It reallocated resources toward the center, redirected bureaucratic focus from processes to outcomes, and introduced new tools of control, including detailed performance metrics and data systems.

Additionally, it rebalanced information asymmetries between the center, departments, and local authorities while institutionalizing central control capacity, even as personalism remained a defining feature of the system. While formal policy coordination remained under the Cabinet Office, the PMDU exercised operational authority over major sectors and government priorities. Within the field of public management and policy, the PMDU model presents several dilemmas. These include tensions between central control and implementer autonomy, the limitations of targets as performance measures, and the risks of undermining local capacities, accountability systems, and administrative cultures through heavy-handed central intervention (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006). Further concerns have been raised regarding the appropriateness of the Prime Minister's direct involvement in implementation, particularly given the limited institutional capacity of the Prime Minister's Office compared to line ministries. This issue becomes more pronounced during national crises.

From the perspective of comparative politics (Lindquist, 2006), implementation units such as delivery units often emerge not from theoretical developments but as pragmatic responses by political leaders seeking to ensure the realization of flagship policies. Earlier implementation studies emphasized the gap between policy design and execution. In contrast, the rise of delivery units reflects a shift toward broader governance frameworks, such as whole-of-government coordination, policy networks, and policy instrumentation. However, institutional capacity remains an underexplored dimension. Motivations for creating these units vary and include fulfilling campaign promises, strengthening political oversight over bureaucracies, addressing design and coordination failures, shifting bureaucratic culture, and enhancing legitimacy and administrative professionalism. Functionally, these units constitute part of a government's adhocery, taking on different roles depending on the context, from upstream policy vetting to downstream monitoring and intervention.

These units often compete with other central institutions for authority, resources, and political attention, resulting in overlapping mandates in areas such as coordination, evaluation, or reform functions. Lessons from comparative cases highlight diverse motivations and outcomes: the UK's PMDU was a personalized instrument of control, while Australia's units served as tools for disciplining cabinet behavior, and New Zealand's units emerged in response to bureaucratic shortcomings. Across these contexts, a common vulnerability is their reliance on political leadership and exposure to institutional change. Nonetheless, delivery units may be institutionalized over time if they prove to be effective and adaptive. This is reflected in the evolution toward the Delivery 2.0 paradigm, which emphasizes performance that is measurable, outcome-oriented, rapidly executed, efficiently managed, and publicly communicated—even amid fiscal constraints—compared to Delivery 1.0, which focuses more narrowly on program implementation (Daly & Singham, 2012).

Despite extensive discussions on the creation, restructuring, budget allocation, and functional overlaps of delivery units in both international and Indonesian contexts (Scharff, 2014), the question of their institutional durability remains underexplored (Clemens & Cook, 1999;

Rocco, 2021). Key questions persist: To what extent can these units outlast a single administration? Are there concrete efforts toward their institutionalization, such as legal formalization, integration into bureaucratic systems, or embedding within national governance frameworks? Or are they inherently pragmatic, short-lived mechanisms driven by political expediency and heavily reliant on presidential leadership? Alternatively, could they evolve into enduring instruments of state capacity and strategic governance?

Based on the elaboration of this sequence of theoretical frameworks, durability will be analyzed through two main lenses. The first lens, central control and personalism (Richards & Smith, 2006), suggests that the durability of these units tends to be low because they function as ad hoc political instruments that depend on the personal support of a particular leader. The second lens, derived from comparative politics and institutional capacity (Lindquist, 2006), will be used to examine the extent to which delivery units have transformed from pragmatic mechanisms into permanent instruments of state institutions (Clemens & Cook, 1999). The analysis will also focus on evidence of legal formalization, structural integration, and adaptive capability (Daly & Singham, 2012) in order to assess whether these units merely reflect short term political strategies or have evolved into permanent strategic capacities

Methods

This study not only analyzes the institutions responsible for program development and government control in Indonesia through the conceptual lens of delivery units and the deliverology approach but also aims to examine their institutional durability. The establishment of UKP3R and UKP4 under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the dynamics of KSP under President Joko Widodo, and the emergence of entities such as PCO and Bappisus under President Prabowo Subianto reveal a recurring pattern of reorganization that is highly contingent upon presidential leadership. These institutions have generally been created through presidential regulations or decrees, rather than higher legal instruments such as statutory laws, making them vulnerable to shifts in political and administrative leadership.

The absence of a permanent regulatory framework also reflects the limited institutionalization of these units within the broader government system. Unlike technocratic bodies or regulatory authorities, delivery units in Indonesia are often positioned as direct extensions of the President, rather than as integrated elements of the formal bureaucratic structure. This positioning significantly constrains their long-term ability to perform coordination, evaluation, and control functions in a sustained and consistent manner. Moreover, there is no clear mechanism for integrating the roles of these units into the permanent inter-agency relationships among ministries and other state institutions. As a result, these units tend to function as short-term, politically driven instruments, rather than as institutionalized platforms capable of navigating policy agendas across successive administrations. One of the central challenges, therefore, lies not only in the effectiveness of program implementation, but also in the institutional resilience of these units—that is, their capacity to sustain national priority agendas over time, across leadership transitions, and through political cycles. This issue also raises broader questions about the institutional design of the Coordinating Ministries and the role of presidential special advisors.

This research employs a comparative-historical and qualitative methodology using an institutional case study approach (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Specifically, it adopts a multiple or collective case study design (Yin, 2008) to analyze and compare the formation, functions, and institutional evolution of several delivery units in Indonesia, including UKP3R, UKP4, KSP, PCO, and Bappisus, across different presidential administrations. The analysis focuses on variables such as political leadership, legal foundation, systemic integration, and the effectiveness of institutional control mechanisms. Data were collected exclusively through an intensive examination of regulatory documents, institutional archives, policy reports, and secondary sources, including academic literature and media coverage. Thematic and

institutional analyses were conducted for each administration since the introduction of direct presidential elections in Indonesia. The analysis therefore centers on archival and documentary evidence to reconstruct the organizational history and institutional logic or the 'case' of each delivery unit.

Results and Discussion

The following section presents preliminary findings on delivery units or other institutions responsible for overseeing programs, development, or government control in Indonesia. These initial findings do not yet include an examination of leadership dynamics within these institutions, nor do they cover entities such as councils, agencies, and presidential special advisers, particularly in the current context of the early administration of President Prabowo Subianto. These elements are intentionally excluded to maintain a more coherent structure that aligns with the analytical framework of this study.

Delivery Units during the Presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

During the administration of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, two delivery units were established: UKP3R during his first term in collaboration with Vice President Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, and UKP4 during his second term with Vice President Boediono. UKP3R, or UKP-PPR was formed through Presidential Decree No. 17 of 2006, while UKP4, or UKP-PPP was established under Presidential Regulation No. 54 of 2009. UKP3R was mandated to assist the President in monitoring, controlling, facilitating, and accelerating the implementation of priority programs and reforms. Its areas of focus included improving the business and investment climate and its supporting systems, advancing administrative reform, enhancing the performance of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), expanding the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and strengthening law enforcement. In contrast, UKP4 was tasked with overseeing and controlling the implementation of national development priorities. Initially, its mandate centered on improving the effectiveness of the national logistics system, accelerating bureaucratic reform and public service delivery, enhancing the investment climate, and increasing the performance and accountability of strategic SOEs. Over time, its scope was expanded through Presidential Regulation No. 10 of 2012 to include strengthening the effectiveness of law enforcement and promoting equitable and sustainable economic growth.

Overall, based on document analysis and archival research, the governance structures of UKP3R and UKP4 during President Yudhoyono's administration can be summarized as follows:

Table 1. The governance structures of UKP3R and UKP4

Category	UKP3R	UKP4
Legal Basis	Presidential Decree No. 17 of 2006, Presidential Decree No. 21 of 2008	Presidential Regulation No. 54 of 2009, Presidential Regulation No. 10 of 2012, Presidential Regulation No. 84 of 2014
Main Task	Managing reform programs	Monitoring and controlling development
Priorities	Business/investment climate, bureaucratic reform, SOEs, MSMEs, law enforcement	Logistics system, bureaucratic reform, business/investment climate, SOEs, law enforcement, economic growth
Functions	Setting priorities; addressing bottlenecks; receiving suggestions and complaints; determining quality and governance standards	Managing synchronization and consistency; establishing components and procedures for control; receiving suggestions and complaints; monitoring and analysis; overseeing 15 key priority programs

Priority Setting	Considering policies of Ministries/Agencies, in coordination with the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs	Considering policies of Ministries/Agencies; innovations must comply with statutory regulations; may coordinate with and receive information and technical support from relevant Ministries, Agencies, Local Governments, or other parties
Organizational Structure	Head, 2 Deputies, Assistants, Expert Staff, Special Team. Consultant services upon Presidential approval. Secretariat appointed by the Ministry of State Secretariat based on consideration from the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform	Head, 6 Deputies, Professional Personnel consisting of up to 15 expert assistants, up to 30 assistants, up to 20 junior assistants, up to 15 skilled personnel, Special Team, and Task Force. Secretariat appointed by the Ministry of State Secretariat based on consideration from the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform. Consultant services upon Presidential approval
Appointment and Dismissal	Head appointed by the President; Deputies appointed by the President based on the Head's recommendation through the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs; other officials appointed by the Head	Head appointed by the President; Deputies appointed by the President based on the Head's recommendation; other officials appointed by the Head
Term of Office	Head and Deputies serve a maximum of 3 years and may be extended; officials may come from civil servants or non-civil servants	Head serves a maximum of 5 years and may be extended; Deputies, Professional Personnel, Special Team, and Task Force members may come from civil servants or non-civil servants
Financial Rights and Benefits	Head equivalent to Ministerial level; Deputies equivalent to echelon I.a; other officials determined by the Head with approval from the Minister of Finance; no pension and/or severance for non-civil servants	Head equivalent to Ministerial level; Deputies equivalent to echelon I.a; Expert Assistants equivalent to echelon I.b; Assistants equivalent to echelon II.a; Junior Assistants and Skilled Personnel equivalent to echelon III.a; non-civil servants are not entitled to pensions and/or severance, while provisions for civil servants are regulated according to civil service regulations
Funding Source	State Secretariat budget	Funded by the State Budget (APBN) or other legitimate sources
Others	-	The Head may recruit personnel as needed; all state assets, documents, and financing managed by UKP3R were transferred to UKP4 upon approval from the Minister of Finance

Source: Author's Analysis

Although both UKP3R and UKP4 functioned as Presidential Working Units under the direct authority of the President, with their respective heads granted the right to attend cabinet

meetings, their legal foundations and institutional trajectories differed. UKP3R was established through Presidential Decree No. 17 of 2006 (Keppres), whereas UKP4 was established by Presidential Regulation No. 54 of 2009 (Perpres). UKP3R operated for three years during President Yudhoyono's first term before being replaced by UKP4, which remained active throughout his second term. This transition was formally stipulated in UKP4's founding regulation and can be interpreted as part of President Yudhoyono's effort to strengthen and institutionalize the role of Presidential Working Units. The duration of each unit also reflected the tenure of its leadership: the head of UKP3R was appointed for a term of up to three years, subject to extension, while the head of UKP4 could serve for up to five years, with the possibility of renewal.

UKP3R was led by Marsilam Simanjuntak, a respected statesman who had previously served as Cabinet Secretary, Minister of Justice, and Attorney General under President Abdurrahman Wahid. He was supported by two deputies: Agus Widjojo, former Chief of Territorial Affairs of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), who oversaw non-economic affairs; and Edwin Gerungan, former Head of the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA), responsible for economic affairs. In contrast, UKP4 was headed by Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, a technocrat with a distinguished career as Minister of Mining, CEO of the State Electricity Company (PLN), and Head of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh-Nias (BRR). He recruited his deputies, reflecting a more autonomous leadership style. The appointments of Marsilam and Kuntoro suggest that both individuals were trusted by the President and regarded as credible figures within the framework of deliverology.

The formation of UKP3R, however, encountered political resistance, particularly from the Golkar Party and Vice President Jusuf Kalla, who concurrently served as the chairman of Golkar. Objections arose on several grounds: Vice President Jusuf Kalla was excluded from the consultation process; the use of a Presidential Decree, typically reserved for personnel matters, was deemed legally questionable for establishing a working unit; and Marsilam Simanjuntak's appointment was controversial, due to part to his past advocacy for dissolving the Golkar Party. Additionally, the establishment of UKP3R coincided with legislative deliberations on a bill concerning the Presidential Advisory Council (Wantimpres), exacerbating tensions. As a result, UKP3R was perceived as a consultative body with limited authority over ministries and was ultimately overshadowed by the Advisory Council, which had only marginal influence.

In contrast, during the second term, President Yudhoyono—now partnered with Vice President Boediono, a technocrat and economist—granted UKP4 a broader and more authoritative mandate. It was empowered to monitor ministerial performance and report directly to the President, often in coordination with the Vice President. UKP4 remained active until the end of Yudhoyono's presidency and served as a model for other institutions, including some state-owned enterprises. Its notable contributions included the development of quarterly performance reports, the implementation of an action tracker system, the introduction of performance contracts for ministers, and the launch of the LAPOR! Public complaints platform, and oversight of deforestation and emission reduction programs (REDD+). Initially, UKP4's reports were presented during cabinet meetings and made public, increasing transparency but straining relationships with underperforming ministers, particularly those from coalition parties. The later decision to restrict the public release of reports reduced external pressure on ministers but also diminished UKP4's influence. Moreover, in the absence of a legally binding framework mandating compliance with its recommendations, UKP4's ambitious targets often proved difficult for ministries to achieve, leading to reduced bureaucratic morale.

Delivery Units during the Presidency of Joko Widodo

During President Joko Widodo's administration—initially with Vice President Jusuf Kalla and subsequently with Vice President Ma'ruf Amin—the delivery unit established was not designated as a Presidential Working Unit, but rather took the form of the Presidential Staff Unit, which later evolved into KSP. Although a unit bearing the name Presidential Working Unit was briefly established during this period, its mandate was limited to developing the Pancasila ideology. It was eventually transformed into the Agency for Pancasila Ideology Development (BPIP). The Presidential Staff Unit was originally tasked with providing political communication support and managing strategic issues on behalf of the President and the Vice President. The inclusion of the Vice President in its mandate reflects the institutional positioning of this body as part of the broader presidential apparatus. Under Presidential Regulation No. 190 of 2014, the unit was designated a non-structural institution reporting directly to the President, with its head bearing the title Chief of Presidential Staff, appointed for a term concurrent with the President's. This arrangement was reaffirmed and expanded in Presidential Regulation No. 26 of 2015, which formalized the unit as KSP. A key distinction between the two regulations lies in the omission of the clause in the 2015 regulation that previously required the Chief of Staff to seek presidential guidance when performing political communication functions.

The establishment of KSP marked a significant institutional strengthening initiative by President Joko Widodo. Designed with a broader organizational structure and wider operational mandate, KSP was vested with the authority to coordinate directly and to form ad hoc task forces involving ministries, government agencies, regional governments, and external stakeholders. Its creation absorbed responsibilities previously held by the Cabinet Secretariat and consolidated the functions, resources, and personnel of the dissolved UKP4. The first Chief of Presidential Staff was Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, a retired military general and former minister under President Abdurrahman Wahid, who also headed the institution during its earlier phase as the Presidential Staff Office. The institutional elevation of KSP is widely interpreted as indicative of Luhut's growing political influence within the Joko Widodo administration, as he subsequently served as Coordinating Minister in both of Joko Widodo's presidential terms.

In summary, based on document analysis and regulatory review, the organizational structure and operational framework of the Presidential Staff Office and KSP can be outlined as follows:

Table 2. The governance structures of Presidential Staff Unit and Presidential Staff Office

Category	Presidential Staff Unit	Presidential Staff Office
Legal Basis	Presidential Regulation No. 190 of 2014	Presidential Regulation No. 26 of 2015, Presidential Regulation No. 83 of 2019
Main Task	Providing political communication support and managing strategic issues for the President and Vice President	Assisting the President and Vice President in controlling national priority programs, political communication, and strategic issue management
Functions	Identification and analysis; strategy recommendations; political communication; monitoring and management; evaluation; reporting and follow-up recommendations	Control; problem-solving; acceleration; monitoring; management of strategic issues; political communication and information dissemination; analysis of strategic data and information; and communication strategies within the Presidential Institution
Organizational Structure	Chief of Presidential Staff; up to 3 Assistant Chiefs; up to 15	Chief of Presidential Staff; Deputy Chief of Presidential Staff; up to 5

	Professional Staff members consisting of Senior, Intermediate, and Junior Professionals; Secretariat whose structure and working procedures are determined by the Minister of State Secretariat with the approval of the Minister for Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform	Deputies; Professional Staff consisting of Principal Experts, Senior Experts, Junior Experts, and Skilled Personnel; Special Teams; Inter-Ministerial/Agency Task Forces; Consultants; Secretariat with structure and work procedures established by the Minister of State Secretariat with the approval of the Minister for Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform; up to 5 Special Advisors
Appointment and Dismissal	Chief appointed by the President; Assistant Chiefs appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Chief; Professional Staff appointed by the Chief; may be from civil servants or non-civil servants	Chief and Deputy Chief appointed by the President; Deputies appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Chief; Professional Staff and Special Advisors appointed by the Chief; may be from civil servants or non-civil servants
Term of Office	The term of the Chief is aligned with the President's term; Assistant Chiefs and Professional Staff serve for the same duration as the Chief	The term of the Chief is aligned with the President's term; the Deputy Chief, Deputies, Professional Staff, and Special Advisors serve for the same duration as the Chief
Financial Rights and Facilities	Chief equivalent to Ministerial rank; Assistant Chiefs equivalent to echelon I.b; Senior Professional equivalent to echelon II.b; Intermediate Professional equivalent to echelon III.a; Junior Professional equivalent to echelon IV.a; Non-civil servants are not entitled to pensions and/or severance pay; provisions for civil servants follow civil service regulations	Chief equivalent to Ministerial rank; Deputy Chief equivalent to Vice Minister rank; Deputies equivalent to echelon I.a; Principal Experts and Special Advisors equivalent to echelon I.b; Senior Experts equivalent to echelon II.a; Junior Experts and Skilled Personnel equivalent to echelon III.a; Non-civil servants are not entitled to pensions and/or severance pay; provisions for civil servants follow civil service regulations
Working Procedures	Regulated by the Chief of Presidential Staff	Organizational units coordinate regularly or as needed; units implement internal control systems; unit leaders supervise subordinates
Funding Source	Sourced from the State Budget (APBN)	Sourced from the State Budget (APBN) and other legitimate sources
Others	–	The Chief of the Presidential Staff Unit continued in office under KSP; initial funding utilized UKP4's budget; temporarily revoked the Cabinet Secretary's role in restructuring presidential organizational units; disbanded both UKP4 and the Presidential Staff Unit

Source: Author's Analysis

From political figure Teten Masduki to former Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Moeldoko, the Chief of Presidential Staff has remained operational across both

terms of President Joko Widodo's administration. Its institutional continuity can be attributed to the gradual expansion of its duties, authority, and resources—an evolution shaped by insights and lessons from prior delivery units. Nonetheless, KSP has not been immune to criticism. A primary concern involves functional overlaps with other presidential support bodies, including the Vice President, the Coordinating Ministries, and the Ministry of State Secretariat—all of which are more firmly embedded within the constitutional structure. Additionally, several of KSP's core functions had historically been carried out by pre-existing institutions such as Bappenas, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), and various Presidential Envoys and Special Advisors. Institutional critiques have highlighted issues such as budget inefficiency, bureaucratic redundancy, and fragmentation that arise from the creation of new structures. These concerns have heightened expectations for KSP to demonstrate stronger accountability and operational effectiveness.

Delivery Units during the Presidency of Prabowo Subianto

At the outset of President Prabowo Subianto's administration, there was a marked increase in the number and complexity of ministries, government agencies, and presidential support structures tasked with coordination, synchronization, and development control. This expansion included the establishment of seven Coordinating Ministries, alongside several key ministries that report directly to the President and are not placed under any coordinating ministry. These ministries include the Ministry of State Secretariat, the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of PAN-RB. In parallel, 43 deputy ministerial positions were established across two coordinating ministries and 41 line ministries, signaling a significant institutional broadening. In addition to the existing institutional framework, several new bodies were created to enhance presidential control and policy execution. These included PCO, the National Economic Council, Bappenas, and a restructured Cabinet Secretariat, which now operates under the Presidential Military Secretariat within the Ministry of State Secretariat. Furthermore, the presidential apparatus was strengthened through the appointment of numerous advisory roles, including Special Advisors to the President, Presidential Envoys, and Presidential Special Staff. The following section presents a document-based institutional analysis of the ministerial and presidential support structures during the early phase of President Prabowo Subianto's term, focusing on the organization, function, and political positioning of these entities within the broader governance framework.

Table 3. Delivery Institution/Entity under the Presidency of Prabowo Subianto

Institution/Entity	Legal Basis	Mandate	Composition
Coordinating Ministries	Law No. 61 of 2024, Presidential Regulation No. 139 of 2024	Synchronization and coordination of the Ministries under their purview	- Politics and Security - Law, Human Rights, Immigration, and Corrections - Economic Affairs - Human Development and Culture - Infrastructure and Regional Development - Community Empowerment - Food Affairs
Ministries Directly under the President	Law No. 61 of 2024, Presidential Regulation No. 139 of 2024	Administration of governmental affairs	- State Secretariat - Bappenas - Ministry of Finance - Ministry of PAN-RB

Vice Ministers	Law No. 39 of 2008, Presidential Regulation No. 140 of 2024	Assisting Ministers in policymaking and inter-unit coordination	- 1 Vice Minister each for: Coordinating Ministry for Political and Security Affairs, and Coordinating Ministry for Law, Human Rights, Immigration, and Corrections - 3 Vice Ministers each for: Foreign Affairs, Finance, and State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) - 2 Vice Ministers each for: State Secretariat, Home Affairs, Basic and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Science and Technology, Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, and Communication and Digital Affairs - 1 Vice Minister for each of the other Ministries
Presidential Communication Office	Presidential Regulation No. 82 of 2024	Supporting the implementation of communication and information related to the President's strategic policies and priority programs	- Chief - Deputy for Communication Materials and Information - Deputy for Dissemination and Media Information - Deputy for Information Coordination and Communication Evaluation - Presidential Spokesperson
Agency for Development Control and Special Investigation	Presidential Regulation No. 159 of 2024	Supporting the oversight, control, monitoring, and investigation of development program implementation and activities	- Chief - Deputy for Supervision and Control - Deputy for Monitoring and Investigation
Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Support Secretariat	Presidential Regulation No. 148 of 2024	Cabinet Secretary: coordination of scheduling for presidential activities and meetings chaired by the President. Cabinet Support Secretariat: Cabinet Management	The Cabinet Secretary operates under the Presidential Military Secretariat. The Cabinet Secretariat has been replaced by the Cabinet Support Secretariat, which consists of the following deputies: • Deputy for Politics, Law, Security, and Human Rights • Deputy for the Economy • Deputy for Human Development, Culture, and Community Empowerment

- Deputy for Food, Infrastructure, and Regional Development
- Deputy for Cabinet Sessions
- Deputy for Administration

Source: Author's Analysis

The number of Coordinating Ministries increased to seven, and the number of ministries overall rose to 41. These changes were enabled by revisions to the State Ministry Law at the end of President Joko Widodo's term, who is also the father of Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka. Similarly, regulations supporting the formation of the National Nutrition Agency, the Presidential Communication Office, and the positions of Special Advisors, Special Envoys, and Presidential Special Staff were enacted during this period. The Coordinating Minister positions—overseeing line ministers in their respective sectors—are now predominantly held by leaders of political parties, including former Chair of the Crescent Star Party Yusril Ihza Mahendra, former Chair of the Golkar Party Airlangga Hartarto, Democratic Party Chair Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, National Awakening Party Chair Muhaimin Iskandar, and National Mandate Party Chair Zulkifli Hasan. Among the ministries that report directly to the President are the Ministry of State Secretariat, led by Prasetyo Hadi, and Bappenas, led by Rachmat Pambudy—both of whom are cadres of the Gerindra Party, chaired by President Prabowo Subianto. The Ministry of Finance remains under the leadership of Sri Mulyani, who previously served in the same capacity during the administrations of Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo. The Ministry of PAN-RB is now headed by Rini Widyantini, who previously served as Secretary of the same ministry. Moreover, deputy ministerial appointments, originally intended for ministries with heavy workloads, have now been expanded across all ministries.

Regarding PCO and Bappisus, both of which assumed functions previously under KSP, the PCO focuses on presidential political communication and information dissemination. At the same time, Bappisus is responsible for addressing issues that emerge during the physical implementation of development projects. The PCO's functions closely align with those of the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs. In contrast, Bappisus operates similarly to the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), although its focus is more specifically directed toward financial oversight and project management. The PCO is headed by Hasan Nasbi, whom President Joko Widodo appointed at the end of his administration. Aries Marsudiyanto, the founder of the National Movement for Loving Prabowo Subianto, leads Bappisus. Likewise, the current Chief of Presidential Staff at the KSP is Anto Mukti Putranto, who previously served as Special Assistant to the Minister of Defense, Prabowo Subianto.

The current Cabinet Secretary is Teddy Indra Wijaya, who formerly served as an aide to Prabowo Subianto during his tenure as Minister of Defense. Initially announced alongside the appointment of ministers and even featured in the official cabinet photograph, his appointment was formalized concurrently with that of the deputy ministers. However, public concerns were raised regarding the appointment of an active military officer to a civilian position. This led to the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 148 of 2024, stipulating that the position of Cabinet Secretary may be filled by an active-duty military officer of echelon IIa rank, operating under the Presidential Military Secretariat. This office is tasked with coordinating the President's activity schedule and presiding over meetings chaired by the President. The role has since been reinforced through amendments to the Law on the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI). The Cabinet Secretariat, previously equivalent in status to a ministry, has now been restructured under the Ministry of State Secretariat (Setneg) as the Cabinet Support Secretariat. A Chief of Secretariat leads this secretariat and comprises six deputies: a Deputy for Politics, Law, Security, and Human Rights; a Deputy for Economic Affairs; a Deputy for Human

Development, Culture, and Community Empowerment; a Deputy for Food, Infrastructure, and Regional Development; a Deputy for Cabinet Sessions; and a Deputy for Administration.

Analysis of Institutional Change Processes

The establishment of delivery units in Indonesia, beginning with the administrations of Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Joko Widodo, and Prabowo Subianto, demonstrates a persistent pattern of “path dependence” characterised by a temporary nature and a weak legal foundation. This pattern continues because institutions such as UKP3R, UKP4, KSP, PCO, and Bappisus have consistently been created through lower-level legal instruments, namely Presidential Decrees or Presidential Regulations, rather than through stronger statutory legislation. This fragile legal basis reflects the positioning of these institutions as direct extensions of executive authority, functioning as “ad hoc political instruments” highly dependent on the personal support of the sitting leader. Since these units are not systematically integrated into the formal bureaucratic structure, they remain vulnerable to leadership changes and short-term political interests, underscoring their persistent failure to become institutionalised as sustainable long-term governance instruments.

The transition from UKP4 to KSP under President Joko Widodo represents an important “critical juncture” intended to strengthen the oversight capacity of national programs. KSP was established as a significant institutional reinforcement initiative with a broader operational mandate and absorbed the functions, resources, and personnel of the dissolved UKP4. Although KSP achieved remarkable operational continuity throughout President Joko Widodo’s two terms in office, thanks to its expanded authority and resources, the unit ultimately failed to achieve systemic institutional durability. This failure again stems from its weak legal foundation. KSP was formalised through a Presidential Regulation rather than a permanent legal framework. As a result, its resilience remained highly dependent on leadership style and political dynamics, rendering it a pragmatic mechanism rather than a permanent instrument of the state.

A comparative analysis reveals a consistent pattern in terms of the legal foundation and the personalisation of leadership across all units. The legal basis for UKP3R through a Presidential Decree, and for UKP4, KSP, PCO, and Bappisus through Presidential Regulations, demonstrates the same fundamental weakness, namely, regulations issued at the executive level that are vulnerable to alteration. At the same time, leadership personalisation plays a central role. UKP3R was led by Marsilam Simanjuntak and UKP4 by Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, both trusted figures of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Similarly, the initial elevation of KSP was significantly shaped by its first Chief of Staff, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, who wielded substantial political influence. In the Prabowo administration, PCO and Bappisus have also been headed by individuals closely associated with the inner circle of political authority, such as Hasan Nasbi and Aries Marsudiyanto. Meanwhile, functional overlap remains a chronic issue. KSP faced criticism for overlapping with the Vice President, the Coordinating Ministries, and the Ministry of State Secretariat. In the Prabowo administration, PCO and Bappisus are also assumed to have overlapping functions with the downsized KSP, the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs in the case of PCO, and BPKP in the case of Bappisus, although Bappisus has a stronger focus on oversight and investigation of physical development projects.

Potential Institutional Weaknesses and Their Implications for Public Policy

An analysis of delivery units in Indonesia demonstrates that weak institutional continuity, or ‘low institutional durability,’ has direct implications for national priority policy outcomes. The existence of these units is highly contextual, temporary, and dependent on the leadership style of the sitting President as well as short-term political considerations. When the performance of a unit, such as KSP, is driven by personalized leadership and the political

influence of appointed figures like Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan or Moeldoko, the unit's functional endurance is not embedded in the system. As a result, 'the policy framework' advanced by these units becomes highly vulnerable to political cycles and administrative turnover. The failure of these units to persist systemically across administrations means that long-term national priority agendas, which should extend beyond the term of a single President, tend to become fragmented, revised, or abandoned entirely during leadership transitions.

Delivery units should not be viewed merely as new organizational structures, but rather as 'policy instruments' specifically designed to address weaknesses in implementation and coordination within government. However, these instruments consistently fail to become institutionalized because they are established through Presidential Regulations or Presidential Decrees, which represent weak legal foundations that lack the authority of higher-level laws, such as statutes enacted by the legislature. This position renders them extensions of the President or ad hoc political instruments rather than integrated components of the formal bureaucracy. This structural weakness is compounded by accountability challenges within Indonesia's multiparty political system. For example, UKP4 faced tensions because its transparent performance reporting strained relations with underperforming ministers, especially those from coalition parties. In a context where ministerial loyalty may be directed more toward the political parties that support them rather than full compliance with directives from the President or oversight units, the absence of binding legal mechanisms to enforce adherence to unit recommendations, such as those issued by UKP4, makes it difficult to achieve ambitious targets and weakens bureaucratic morale.

The failure of institutionalization is also closely related to problems of systemic integration and overlapping mandates. Because these units are created outside the formal bureaucratic system, there is no clear mechanism to integrate their roles into permanent interagency relationships. The lack of a strong legal basis and the absence of structural integration require these units to compete with other central government institutions for authority, resources, and political attention. This significantly limits their ability to perform coordination, evaluation, and oversight functions consistently and sustainably over the long term. Given these institutional weaknesses, the most urgent policy implication is the need to strengthen state capacity in the implementation of long-term programs. Institutionalization efforts should be understood as a strategic policy approach to achieving effective governance. To build institutional resilience, recommendations call for establishing these units on a stronger legal foundation, such as legislation enacted by the legislature, integrating them systematically into the governmental structure, and leadership grounded in technical expertise rather than political loyalty. Embedding oversight and control functions on a permanent basis would ensure that the implementation of public policy, especially priority programs, does not depend solely on the discretion and political lifespan of any single leader but becomes an embedded strategic instrument for achieving development objectives.

Conclusion

This study finds that the existence of delivery units in Indonesia is highly contextual and often temporary. The transformation of entities such as UKP3R, UKP4, KSP, PCO, and Bappiss has not been grounded in strong institutional foundations. Rather, these units have generally depended on the leadership style of the sitting President, short-term political considerations, and evolving power dynamics among state institutions. As a result, they exhibit limited institutional durability, that is, a lack of capacity to persist, adapt, and function consistently across different administrations. While some control-oriented features of the deliverology approach have been introduced, such as a focus on outcomes, the use of performance targets, and the establishment of cross-sectoral teams, these mechanisms have not been fully embedded within Indonesia's broader governance system. The absence of permanent legal frameworks, overlapping mandates, and the predominance of political factors have continued to hinder

meaningful institutionalization. Comparative evidence from other countries suggests units are more likely to operate effectively when several key conditions are met. These include formal integration into the government structure, establishment through strong legal instruments such as legislation passed by parliament, and deployment as a strategic tool when existing ministries or agencies fail to perform adequately.

Furthermore, success often hinges on the use of data-driven and results-based working methods that are aligned with national priorities, supported by formal performance agreements between institutions, and reinforced through ongoing oversight and monitoring. Delivery units should also maintain professional autonomy while functioning as an extension of executive authority to support the implementation of priority programs. To uphold credibility and ensure accountability, leadership appointments within these units should be based on technical expertise and professional experience rather than political loyalty. Although such an approach may raise concerns about depoliticization, it is essential to protect the institution's integrity and effectiveness. In conclusion, the establishment of a delivery unit that enhances institutional capacity in policy implementation reflects a public leader's commitment to realizing development goals and achieving effective governance in the service of citizen well-being.

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Indonesia-South Korea Cooperation in Forest Fire Management in Ogan Komering Ilir: From Securitization to Adaptive Governance

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Abstract

Abstract Forest and land fires in Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI), South Sumatra, continue to pose a persistent environmental challenge. This study examines Indonesia-South Korea cooperation through the Korea-Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC), which was established in response to the securitisation of forest fires and has evolved into a model of adaptive governance. By examining KIFC, this article demonstrates that securitization enables deeper international cooperation and technical control, yet simultaneously constrains deeper adaptive governance needed to address local fire drivers. By employing a qualitative case study approach, this research examines KIFC's initiatives from 2015 to 2024, utilizing a combination of document analysis, policy review, and field observations. The findings show that while KIFC introduced advanced monitoring systems and early warning technologies, local economic dependence on land-clearing and fragmented governance remain significant barriers. This study argues that KIFC has succeeded technically but faces challenges in addressing deeper structural issues. The cooperation's success hinges on the alignment of external technical solutions with local socio-economic realities and the fostering of community-based resilience. This study contributes to understanding how international cooperation can bridge the gap between securitization and adaptive governance, offering lessons for future sustainable environmental governance in Indonesia and beyond.

Abstrak. Kebakaran hutan dan lahan di Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI), Sumatera Selatan, terus menjadi tantangan lingkungan yang berkelanjutan. Studi ini meneliti kerja sama Indonesia-Korea Selatan melalui Korea-Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC), yang didirikan sebagai respons terhadap sekuritisasi kebakaran hutan dan telah berkembang menjadi model tata kelola adaptif. Dengan meneliti KIFC, artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa sekuritisasi memungkinkan kerja sama internasional dan pengendalian teknis, namun secara bersamaan membatasi tata kelola adaptif yang lebih dalam yang dibutuhkan untuk mengatasi pendorong kebakaran hutan. Melalui pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini meneliti inisiatif KIFC dari tahun 2015 hingga 2024, dengan cara menganalisis dokumen, meninjau kebijakan, dan observasi lapangan. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun KIFC memperkenalkan sistem pemantauan canggih dan teknologi peringatan dini, ketergantungan ekonomi lokal pada pembukaan lahan dan tata kelola yang terfragmentasi tetap menjadi hambatan yang signifikan. Studi ini berpendapat bahwa KIFC telah berhasil secara teknis tetapi menghadapi tantangan dalam mengatasi masalah struktural yang lebih dalam. Keberhasilan kerja sama ini bergantung pada keselarasan solusi teknis eksternal dengan realitas sosial-ekonomi lokal dan penebangan hutan berbasis komunitas. Studi ini berkontribusi pada dalam menjelaskan bagaimana kerja sama internasional dapat menjembatani kesenjangan antara sekuritisasi dan tata kelola adaptif, menawarkan pelajaran untuk tata kelola lingkungan berkelanjutan di masa depan di Indonesia dan di luar negeri.

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Introduction

Forest and land fires in Indonesia, particularly in Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI), South Sumatra, are one of the country's most significant environmental challenges. These fires, primarily driven by agricultural land-clearing practices, result in extensive ecological degradation, loss of biodiversity, and severe socio-economic impacts. In 2015, the fires devastated over 2.6 million hectares of land, releasing more than 1.6 billion tons of CO₂ and causing an estimated economic loss of USD 16.1 billion (Edwards & Heiduk, 2015). Despite continuous national efforts, satellite imagery from MODIS and recent reports from BMKG show persistent hotspots in the region, indicating persistent gaps in governance and fire prevention measures (Kompas, 2023). These recurring fire outbreaks highlight the limitations of conventional governance approaches in addressing the underlying causes of forest fires and their long-term environmental consequences (Tacconi, 2016).

The Indonesian government has shifted its approach to managing forest fires over time. Initially, fire management was framed as an environmental and developmental issue, with a focus on land restoration and reforestation. However, in the face of recurring fires, the government increasingly viewed the issue through a securitization lens, treating forest fires as an urgent national security threat. This shift involved the use of emergency budgets, military forces, and multi-agency task forces (Buzan et al., 1998; Setiawan & Hadi, 2007). While securitization helps direct immediate attention and resources, it often overlooks the social and economic drivers of land-clearing activities, such as local economic dependence on palm oil plantations and inadequate governance at the local level (Floristella, 2013; Noojipady et al., 2017).

While securitization has its merits in addressing immediate threats, it often leads to short-term, crisis-oriented responses that fail to address the root causes of fire risks. The need for a more flexible and participatory approach to governance has led to the rise of adaptive governance. This model emphasizes collaboration, local empowerment, and resilience in the face of uncertainty (Folke et al., 2016). In adaptive governance, decision-making is decentralized, allowing for more local involvement and the integration of traditional knowledge with scientific expertise (Chaffin et al., 2014; Olsson et al., 2014). This shift aims to create systems that can adapt to changing environmental and socio-economic conditions, fostering long-term sustainability and reducing dependency on external interventions.

Research on forest and peatland fires in Southeast Asia has evolved into several interconnected strands. One group of studies focuses on the biophysical dimension, which includes quantifying emissions, fire dynamics, and the physical extent of burned areas. These studies have revealed the extraordinary scale of Indonesia's peatland fires. Gaveau et al. (2014) utilized long-term satellite observations to demonstrate that peat fires release disproportionately large amounts of greenhouse gases and aerosols, even in non-drought years, suggesting that the problem is structural rather than seasonal. Page et al. (2011) further emphasized that tropical peatlands store significant carbon stocks, and their degradation poses substantial risks to global climate stability. These findings underscore the urgency of

addressing the fire crisis, which is not only an environmental issue but also a transboundary problem that requires coordinated action.

Scholars have emphasized that fire prevention requires a combination of restoration, incentives, enforcement, and community engagement. Carmenta et al. (2021) argue that fire management must integrate community-driven approaches with technical expertise. For instance, Carlson et al. (2018) found that programs linking local livelihoods with enforcement mechanisms can reduce fire frequency, but only when institutional monitoring is consistent. Still, structural weaknesses persist, such as fragmented authority across ministries, weak enforcement capacity at local levels, and entrenched political–economic interests that hinder the implementation of cohesive policies.

Recent research has expanded the scope to investigate how international cooperation influences domestic governance. Studies on market-based instruments and certification schemes have shown mixed results. Carlson et al. (2018) demonstrated that certification schemes, while effective in reducing deforestation in specific contexts, have limited success in preventing peat fires unless combined with hydrological restoration and community participation. However, the literature suggests that bilateral cooperation initiatives, such as KIFC, offer a more effective solution when they go beyond the mere transfer of technology. The key to success lies in addressing local governance structures, economic incentives, and empowering communities to sustain long-term change (Yu et al., 2024). KIFC represents a model of climate diplomacy that combines technical support with normative commitments to global sustainability goals, such as SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

The establishment of the Korea-Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC) in 2015 marks a significant shift in Indonesia's forest fire governance, positioning international cooperation as a key tool in addressing both environmental and governance challenges. The center was created through a bilateral agreement between Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) and the Korea Forest Service (KFS), leveraging South Korea's post-war reforestation experience to provide technological solutions and capacity-building support in Indonesia. KIFC's role has evolved from a purely securitization-driven project to a more integrated approach that seeks to combine technological innovation with local empowerment (FAO, 2025; Lee et al., 2019). However, while KIFC has introduced early warning systems and fire monitoring technologies, local communities continue to face economic incentives to engage in land-clearing, and institutional fragmentation between national and local authorities remains a significant barrier (Gaveau et al., 2014; Rochmayanto et al., 2021).

By design, KIFC is a product of securitized, state-led diplomacy aimed at rapid risk control. In practice, however, it is compelled to operate within the constraints of adaptive governance, where local socio-economic conditions and fragmented institutions shape its effectiveness. While KIFC has strengthened technical capacity, institutional fragmentation and economic dependence on fire-based practices continue to limit the sustainability of fire prevention efforts in OKI. Addressing these challenges requires not only technological solutions, but also policy reform and deeper community engagement, which can help ensure policies are relevant and supported by local populations.

This study critically examines KIFC's role in mediating the transition from securitization to adaptive governance in Indonesia's forest fire management system. Focusing on OKI, it identifies persistent gaps in addressing local socio-economic conditions and inter-institutional coordination, while also exploring how bilateral cooperation might be restructured to enhance adaptive capacity beyond crisis response. Recognizing the tension between securitization and adaptive governance can help the audience appreciate the complexity and urgency of developing balanced, sustainable strategies. In doing so, the article contributes to broader debates on environmental diplomacy and transnational governance by demonstrating how international partnerships can facilitate the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals—particularly SDG 13, SDG 15, and SDG 17—into domestic governance contexts.

Taken together, the findings position Indonesia's forest fire governance within an enduring tension between securitization and adaptive governance, underscoring the need to assess KIFC not only as a technical intervention but as a political and institutional experiment in managing complex environmental risks.

Theory Framework

This study is grounded in a central governance tension between securitization and adaptive governance to analyze forest fire governance in Indonesia and the role of the Korea–Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC). Clarifying how these tensions influence policy effectiveness helps assess whether current approaches achieve long-term fire management goals. Rather than treating multiple theories as parallel analytical tools, this framework contrasts two competing governance logics that shape policy responses to forest fires: a securitized, top-down approach and a participatory, adaptive governance model. Global sustainability norms, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are treated as a contextual normative backdrop that informs, but does not determine, governance practices.

Securitization theory, as developed by the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al., 1998), explains how issues such as forest fires are framed as existential security threats, thereby legitimizing extraordinary measures. In the Indonesian context, the securitization of forest fires has justified the mobilization of emergency budgets, military forces, and multi-agency task forces. At the same time, this approach has enabled rapid coordination and resource allocation during crises; understanding its impact on actual policy outcomes, such as long-term fire prevention, is crucial. As a result, securitization often fails to address underlying socio-economic drivers of forest fires, including local economic dependence on land-clearing practices and persistent institutional fragmentation across governance levels (Balzacq et al., 2016; Setiawan & Hadi, 2007).

In contrast, adaptive governance offers a governance logic centered on flexibility, participation, and resilience in managing complex environmental challenges. Adaptive governance emphasizes decentralized decision-making, collaboration among multiple stakeholders, and the integration of local knowledge with scientific expertise (Chaffin et al., 2014; Folke et al., 2005; Olsson et al., 2014). In fire-prone landscapes, this approach prioritizes long-term capacity building and community engagement over emergency-driven interventions, positioning adaptive governance as a potential corrective to the limitations of securitization-dominated fire management.

Within this governance tension, international cooperation through KIFC occupies a complex and ambiguous position. While KIFC is institutionally produced through securitized, state-led diplomacy, its on-the-ground implementation requires adaptive governance practices to engage local actors and address socio-economic realities. To contextualize this dynamic, the study draws on Finnemore & Sikkink's (1998) concept of norm diffusion to explain how global sustainability norms, particularly SDGs 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land), are embedded in bilateral cooperation frameworks. This complexity invites researchers and scholars to explore how KIFC's role evolves within these broader international processes.

By framing securitization and adaptive governance as competing yet interdependent governance logics, this study emphasizes the need for policymakers to balance security and participation, fostering a sense of responsibility in navigating Indonesia's forest fire governance system. This framework enables a critical assessment of whether KIFC merely extends securitized control through technical interventions or contributes to a more adaptive and socially embedded approach to fire management.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative case study design to investigate how bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea, through the Korea–Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center

(KIFC), influences forest and land fire governance in Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI), South Sumatra. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to interpret governance logics, institutional behaviour, and policy framing that are not readily captured through quantitative measurement (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Following Yin (2018), the case study strategy is particularly well-suited for analyzing complex policy processes that operate across overlapping political, institutional, and socio-ecological contexts.

OKI was selected as a critical and illustrative case because it represents both high ecological vulnerability and an active site of transnational intervention, where nationally securitized fire governance is operationalized through bilateral cooperation amid local institutional constraints. Data were collected between 2015 and 2024 and consist primarily of documentary and secondary sources, including national policy documents on forest fire emergencies, presidential speeches and official statements, institutional coordination frameworks issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and related agencies, bilateral cooperation agreements, KIFC annual and project reports, technical manuals, and independent evaluations of fire management and peatland restoration programs. Limited, non-intrusive field observations were conducted at publicly accessible program sites to contextualize documentary findings and observe the visible outcomes of institutional collaboration at the local level.

Document and discourse analysis were employed as the primary analytical techniques to examine how forest fires are framed, institutionalized, and governed through language, policy instruments, and organizational practices (Bowen, 2009; Fairclough, 2010). Drawing on securitization theory, the analysis explicitly identified securitizing speech acts—such as emergency framing, existential threat narratives, and command-oriented language—and traced how these discourses were translated into institutional arrangements and KIFC programs.

In parallel, indicators associated with adaptive governance, including participation, capacity-building, flexibility, and community engagement, were used to assess how KIFC initiatives functioned in practice and interacted with local socio-economic conditions (Chaffin et al., 2014; Schultz et al., 2015). Analytical rigour was enhanced through triangulation across multiple document categories and corroboration with field observations (Rapley, 2007), while reflexivity was maintained to account for the researcher's interpretive position and theoretical assumptions (Tracy, 2020). Ethical considerations were addressed by relying exclusively on publicly available documents and conducting observations in open-access settings. Rather than seeking statistical generalization, the study aims for analytical transferability by generating conceptual insights into how bilateral environmental cooperation can simultaneously facilitate technical coordination and constrain adaptive governance within securitized contexts of transnational environmental risk management (Schweiger, 2022; Wight, 2006).

Results and Discussion

Reframing Environmental Risks: From Development Issue to Security Concern

The evolution of Indonesia's forest and land fire (*karhutla*) governance reflects a profound transformation in how environmental risks are understood and politically managed. Prior to 2015, forest and peatland fires were primarily viewed as technical and developmental issues associated with land conversion, plantation expansion, and seasonal climatic variability, necessitating improvements in land management, restoration, and productivity enhancement. This framing shifted decisively following the 2015 fire crisis, which burned approximately 2.6 million hectares of land, released more than 1.6 billion tons of CO₂, and generated economic losses estimated at USD 16.1 billion, making it one of the most severe environmental disasters in Southeast Asia (Tacconi, 2016; WHO, 2014; World Bank, 2021). The humanitarian consequences further amplified the magnitude of the crisis, with the World Health Organization reporting more than 500,000 cases of acute respiratory infections linked to haze exposure

during the same period (WHO, 2024). These intertwined ecological, economic, and public health impacts catalyzed a reframing process in which *karhutla* was no longer treated as a developmental externality but as a threat to public welfare, state legitimacy, and regional stability (Wijaya et al., 2024).

This reframing became increasingly visible in high-level political discourse. In his presidential address in Kubu Raya, West Kalimantan, in January 2015, President Joko Widodo emphasized that Indonesia already possessed the institutional infrastructure and monitoring technology required to detect fires, but lacked the political will to act preventively, signalling an early shift toward urgency and responsibility framing (S. K. R. Indonesia, 2015). The securitizing tone intensified in subsequent years. During the National Coordination Meeting on Forest and Land Fire Control in August 2019, the President explicitly labeled the 2015 fires as a “national crisis,” citing losses of Rp 221 trillion and 2.6 million hectares burned, and warning that such a catastrophe “must never happen again” (S. N. R. Indonesia, 2019). That is national priority, thereby legitimizing extraordinary policy responses. In line with securitization theory, the articulation of fires as existential threats enabled the mobilization of exceptional measures, including emergency funding, centralized command structures, and military involvement (Balzacq et al., 2016; Buzan et al., 1998).

The securitization of *karhutla* was subsequently institutionalized through formal policy instruments. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry’s Forest and Land Fire Control Strategy 2020–2024 repeatedly invokes concepts such as “resilience,” “preparedness,” and “sovereignty,” embedding a security-oriented lexicon within environmental governance (KLHK, 2024). Likewise, Presidential Instruction No. 3/2020 positions forest and land fire mitigation as a cross-sectoral “national duty,” explicitly involving ministries, regional governments, and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (S. N. R. Indonesia, 2020). This policy architecture reflects an ontological shift in which environmental governance becomes intertwined with demonstrations of state capacity and authority, reinforcing the Copenhagen School’s argument that securitization reshapes bureaucratic priorities and legitimizes centralized intervention under conditions of perceived existential threat.

Within this securitized governance context, international cooperation emerged as a politically enabled response. Bilateral initiatives, such as the Korea–Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC), were facilitated by the elevation of *karhutla* to a national and transboundary security concern. Intertextual analysis of policy documents issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), and joint KIFC–Korea Forest Service (KFS) reports reveals a convergence of security-oriented framing across domestic and international institutions. BNPB’s National Disaster Management Plan 2021–2024 explicitly classifies forest and land fires as a “non-traditional security threat,” aligning Indonesia’s domestic discourse with ASEAN’s broader narrative of environmental security and regional resilience (BNPB, 2021; Caballero-Anthony, 2022). In parallel, the KIFC–KFS Joint Report characterizes bilateral programs as “strategic investments” aimed at enhancing environmental resilience and technological sovereignty, situating forest fire cooperation within a security-inflected diplomatic framework (AgroIndonesia, 2021).

Table 1 summarizes the evolution of discursive frames in Indonesia’s forest fire governance from 2010 to 2024, illustrating how policy language and institutional priorities shifted from developmental management toward crisis response and, ultimately, toward security- and sovereignty-oriented governance.

Table 1. Evolution of Discursive Frames in Indonesia’s Forest Fire Governance (2010–2024)

Period	Dominant Frame	Representative Discourse / Citation	Key Actors	Policy Implications
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2010– 2014	<i>Developmental / Resource Management</i>	“ and land fires are land-use dynamics that require productivity enhancement and community-based restoration programs.” — <i>KLHK, Forest Development Report (2013)</i>	KLHK, Local Governments, Plantation Sector	Fires treated as development byproducts; focus on reforestation and land productivity.
2015– 2019	<i>Crisis / Emergency</i>	“The 2015 haze crisis caused losses of Rp 221 trillion and burned 2.6 million ha—this must never happen again.” — <i>Presidential Remarks, Rakornas 2019</i>	President’s Office, KLHK, BNPB, TNI	Elevation of <i>karhutla</i> as national emergency; military involvement and international coordination.
2020– 2024	<i>Security / Sovereignty</i>	“Forest and land fire control is a matter of sovereignty and national resilience.” — <i>KLHK Strategic Plan 2020–2024; KIFC–KFS Joint Report 2021</i>	KLHK, BRGM, KIFC, KFS, BNPB	Institutionalized securitization; environmental cooperation reframed as security diplomacy.

Source: *KLHK (2024); Sekretariat Negara (2015); (2019); (2020); KIFC–KFS (2021); compiled by author.*

As shown in Table 1, the semantics of forest fire governance shifted from “management” to “protection,” and from economic recovery toward national defence and resilience. This linguistic transformation was accompanied by material and institutional changes. Government monitoring data revealed persistent hotspots in fire-prone districts, such as Ogan Komering Ilir. Meanwhile, the BNPB reported that a substantial proportion of fire suppression operations involved military coordination, indicating the normalization of security actors in environmental governance (BNPB, 2023; KLHK, 2024; RRI, 2023). Consistent with Floyd’s (2019) concept of the institutionalization of security discourse, the introduction of crisis language into policy frameworks reconfigured governance logics by prioritizing rapid control, centralized coordination, and visible state intervention. Environmental protection thus became a metric of state legitimacy and crisis preparedness (Ramadhi et al., 2023).

However, the securitization of *karhutla* also produced ambivalent consequences. While it mobilized unprecedented political attention, funding, and international cooperation, it simultaneously narrowed the space for community participation and local agency. Empirical studies in South Sumatra have demonstrated that community-based fire management groups (*Masyarakat Peduli Api*) and local NGOs often experience reduced decision-making authority as centralized command structures expand (Carmenta et al., 2021). This dynamic illustrates how security-oriented governance can marginalize local knowledge and adaptive practices, resulting in governance that is rhetorically inclusive but operationally hierarchical. At the transnational level, Indonesia’s partnership with South Korea further embedded security logics within environmental diplomacy, aligning national fire governance with ASEAN’s framing of haze as a non-traditional regional security challenge (Caballero-Anthony, 2022).

Taken together, the reframing of forest and land fires as a security issue constitutes the institutional and discursive context within which KIFC operates. The securitized framing not only enabled bilateral cooperation and technological intervention but also shaped the boundaries within which adaptive governance could emerge. Understanding this transformation is essential for assessing how KIFC’s programs are designed, implemented, and constrained, and it provides the analytical foundation for examining the tensions between security-oriented control and adaptive, locally embedded governance practices discussed in the following sections.

Adaptive Governance in Practice: Institutional Learning and Policy Experimentation

If securitization reflects the state’s drive to impose centralized control over ecological uncertainty, adaptive governance emerges in response to the limitations of command-based intervention. This tension became evident in Indonesia after the 2015 haze crisis, when the

scale and complexity of forest and peatland fires exposed the inadequacy of hierarchical control alone. Rather than abandoning securitization, state institutions gradually supplemented emergency responses with learning-oriented approaches emphasizing flexibility, collaboration, and reflexivity. This shift reflects the recognition that uncertainty is not merely a problem to suppress, but a condition that requires adaptive institutions capable of evolving (Ruane, 2020). This understanding aims to foster a sense of collective effort among readers, emphasizing that collaborative approaches are vital for effective fire management.

Institutional adaptation unfolded through incremental policy experimentation rather than abrupt reform. The establishment of the Peatland and Mangrove Restoration Agency (BRGM) in 2016 marked a critical response to the structural drivers of peatland fires. Since 2020, the *Program Restorasi Gambut Berbasis Masyarakat* (PRGM) has sought to decentralize fire prevention by integrating peat rewetting, community-based monitoring, and livelihood support. In priority villages across South Sumatra, including Ogan Komering Ilir, BRGM reported a decline in local fire recurrence between 2018 and 2022, indicating that localized interventions can reduce fire risks when aligned with community participation (BRGM, 2022). These efforts reflect institutional learning through experimentation, whereby iterative interventions generate feedback for policy adjustment (Chaffin et al., 2014).

Adaptive governance has also been formalized within state bureaucracies. The Integrated Fire Management Plan 2021–2024 institutionalized coordination among KLHK, BNPB, BRGM, and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), assigning differentiated yet interdependent roles (Aminah et al., 2020). However, learning remains uneven. Although coordination mechanisms exist, inter-agency interactions often prioritize compliance and reporting over critical reflection, constraining deeper institutional learning (Harakan et al., 2025).

At the local level, adaptive governance is most visible in the evolving role of *Masyarakat Peduli Api* (MPA) groups. In Ogan Komering Ilir, MPA units have shifted from reactive firefighting toward proactive prevention through patrols, canal blocking, and peat hydrological monitoring. Supported by digital platforms such as SiPongi, these groups illustrate a polycentric governance structure in which multiple centers of authority and knowledge operate across scales (Budiningsih et al., 2022). Nevertheless, their effectiveness varies depending on leadership quality, access to resources, and sustained institutional support.

Transnational cooperation through the Korea–Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC) has further shaped this adaptive governance landscape. Since 2021, KIFC programs have introduced monitoring technologies, including the Forest Fire Management Information System (FFMIS), remote-sensing tools, and technical training for restoration teams (Budiningsih, 2017). While these interventions have strengthened monitoring capacity, their broader significance lies in the interaction between standardized foreign technologies and local practices. This interaction has produced hybrid learning processes, but also reveals a key tension: technology can enhance coordination while simultaneously reinforcing expert-driven governance if local knowledge is treated as secondary.

Trust remains a central yet fragile condition for adaptive governance. BRGM evaluations indicate that inclusive decision-making and transparent benefit distribution are associated with stronger community engagement and more sustained prevention outcomes (BRGM, 2022). Conversely, top-down interventions—regardless of technical sophistication—risk eroding trust and reducing local commitment. This supports the view that adaptability depends not only on institutional design, but also on social relationships and mutual accountability (Folke et al., 2016). Recognizing the importance of trust encourages readers to appreciate the role of social bonds in fostering effective governance.

Despite its promise, adaptive governance in OKI continues to face structural constraints. Fragmented authority across governance levels complicates coordination and knowledge sharing, while marginalized groups, including smallholders and indigenous communities,

remain underrepresented in formal decision-making (Carmenta et al., 2021). As Olsson et al. (2014) argue, adaptation is inherently political and claims of inclusivity may obscure persistent hierarchies of expertise and access. Acknowledging these challenges aims to motivate readers to consider their role in addressing power and socio-economic issues for more equitable fire governance

Within this context, KIFC illustrates both the potential and limits of adaptive governance embedded in bilateral cooperation. Although recent initiatives have shifted toward co-learning approaches that integrate community feedback with technical indicators, KIFC continues to operate within a broader securitized framework that prioritizes control and coordination. Adaptive governance therefore, does not replace securitization, but is negotiated within its boundaries. The OKI case demonstrates that institutional learning can enhance resilience only insofar as it addresses power asymmetries and socio-economic constraints, underscoring the need to evaluate whether adaptive practices introduced through international cooperation can move beyond technical adjustment toward more socially embedded and equitable fire governance.

Embedding Sustainability Norms: Translating Global Agendas into Local Practice

Within Indonesia–South Korea environmental cooperation, sustainability operates not merely as a moral principle but as a governance instrument that legitimizes policy choices and international engagement. The Korea–Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFC) in Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) was established to mitigate forest and land fires while simultaneously translating global sustainability agendas into Indonesia’s institutional and ecological context. In this framework, sustainability norms—particularly those associated with SDG 13, SDG 15, and SDG 17—function less as fixed implementation templates and more as reference points that shape discourse, program design, and policy justification (Sachs et al., 2019). The key analytical concern is therefore not formal adoption, but how these norms are interpreted, negotiated, and constrained within local governance realities.

While norm diffusion theory conceptualizes norms as progressing through emergence, cascade, and internalization (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998), empirical evidence from the Global South suggests a more contingent process. Acharya’s (2014) concept of norm localization better captures this dynamic by emphasizing selective adaptation to domestic political narratives and institutional priorities. In the KIFC case, sustainability is framed less as compliance with international standards and more as an extension of national resilience and sovereignty. Official policy documents consistently invoke notions of “ecological resilience,” “community preparedness,” and “environmental sovereignty,” embedding global sustainability objectives within Indonesia’s securitized narrative of state capacity and stability.

This translational process is evident across policy texts and inter-agency reports. The KLHK Strategic Plan 2020–2024 and BRGM Annual Reports explicitly align peatland restoration and fire prevention initiatives with SDG targets, while KIFC cooperation reports frame bilateral activities as “partnerships for sustainable restoration” (BRGM, 2022; KIFC, 2022). Such convergence reflects discursive intertextuality, whereby global sustainability language is absorbed into national bureaucratic and security-oriented frameworks (Fairclough, 2015). Through this process, sustainability operates simultaneously as a governance rationale and a diplomatic signal, reinforcing Indonesia’s international environmental credentials while sustaining centralized coordination.

At the empirical level, sustainability localization is reflected in program outputs and performance metrics. Between 2020 and 2023, KIFC-supported initiatives contributed to the restoration of approximately 6,000 hectares of degraded peatland in OKI and were associated with reduced hotspot density relative to pre-intervention conditions. Capacity-building efforts reached more than 200 local facilitators, integrating peat hydrological monitoring with Korea’s Forest Fire Management Information System (FFMIS). These outcomes illustrate the

operationalization of global norms, whereby normative commitments are translated into measurable, reportable, and fundable outputs within bureaucratic governance systems (Bernstein, 2005).

Table 2. Localization of Global Sustainability Norms in Indonesia–Korea Cooperation (2020–2023)

Global SDG Framework	Local Policy/Program in OKI		Main Implementing Body	Key Outputs (2020–2023)
SDG 13 – Climate Action	Integrated Fire Management Plan		KLHK, BNPB, TNI	31% reduction in hotspots; real-time fire alert integration
SDG 15 – Life on Land	Peatland Restoration	Rewetting & Forest	BRGM, Local Villages	6,000 ha restored; 15 priority villages rehabilitated
SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals	Korea–Indonesia Cooperation Center (KIFC)		KLHK–KFS	200+ trained facilitators; 5 joint workshops

Source: Compiled from KLHK (2024), BRGM (2022), and KIFC–KFS (2021).

While these outcomes signal measurable progress, they also prompt critical questions about whose knowledge and priorities define sustainability in practice. Critical scholarship cautions that global sustainability frameworks tend to privilege technocratic rationalities, often marginalizing local epistemologies and lived experiences (Escobar, 2018). In OKI, despite the formal emphasis on participation, evaluation metrics continue to prioritize restoration area, training outputs, and technological deployment over indicators of local well-being, cultural continuity, and livelihood security. This pattern reflects what Bernstein, Hoffmann, and Weinthal (2022) describe as the managerialization of norms, whereby sustainability is reduced to administrative benchmarks that risk obscuring underlying social relations.

At the same time, Indonesian governance actors display agency in negotiating these global scripts. The discourse of “mutual partnership” promoted in KIFC documents rhetorically departs from conventional donor–recipient hierarchies and resonates with broader narratives of South–South cooperation (Biermann & Kim, 2020). However, this partnership remains asymmetrical in practice, particularly in areas such as technology Design and data infrastructure, where the Korean side largely shapes expertise and standards. Rather than reflecting genuine equality, partnership discourse functions as a legitimizing narrative that facilitates cooperation while masking persistent power differentials.

Institutionally, the localization of sustainability norms reshapes coordination mechanisms. Under the National Action Plan for the SDGs 2021–2030, KIFC activities in OKI are formally linked to national targets on peat restoration, emissions reduction, and community resilience (Bappenas, 2021). However, overlapping mandates and data inconsistencies continue to constrain effective coordination across agencies. These conditions exemplify institutional bricolage, in which governance innovation emerges through pragmatic adjustment and informal adaptation rather than comprehensive structural reform (Cleaver, 2017).

At the community level, sustainability gains meaning through vernacular reinterpretation. Local facilitators in OKI frequently frame peat restoration as *merawat tanah leluhur*—caring for ancestral land—thereby integrating ecological objectives with cultural identity and moral responsibility. This process of re-signification transforms abstract global norms into locally resonant ethical commitments, strengthening legitimacy and participation (Henry, 2017). Field observations indicate that villages with greater community ownership maintain restoration infrastructure more consistently, underscoring that sustainability depends not only on technocratic precision but also on cultural resonance and social trust.

Taken together, the embedding of sustainability norms in OKI reveals a negotiated and contested process rather than linear diffusion. Global agendas are neither imposed wholesale nor fully internalized; instead, they are selectively adapted and reinterpreted within Indonesia’s securitized governance framework and the practical constraints of adaptive governance. As a result, sustainability functions as an enabling discourse for cooperation while remaining bounded by existing power relations and institutional logics.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the evolution of forest and land fire governance in Indonesia through securitization and adaptive governance frameworks, using the Korea–Indonesia Forest Cooperation Centre (KIFC) in Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) as an empirical case. The findings demonstrate that forest and land fires have been successfully reframed from a technical development issue into a matter of national and transboundary security. This securitized framing enabled the mobilization of extraordinary state resources, centralized coordination, and international cooperation, creating the institutional conditions for bilateral initiatives such as KIFC to emerge.

Empirically, the study shows that KIFC has achieved notable technical successes. The introduction of monitoring systems, early warning technologies, training programs, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms has strengthened Indonesia's capacity to detect and respond to fires, contributing to measurable improvements in fire management indicators in OKI. However, these technical gains coexist with persistent social and institutional gaps, such as local economic dependence on fire-based land management, uneven community participation, and fragmented authority across governance levels. These gaps continue to limit the sustainability of fire prevention efforts, underscoring that technical capacity-building alone is insufficient to address structurally embedded environmental risks.

From a theoretical perspective, the article argues that KIFC operates within a fundamental governance tension. By design, KIFC is a product of securitization, emerging from emergency narratives, state-led diplomacy, and security-oriented policy frameworks that privilege centralized control and technological solutions. In practice, however, KIFC is compelled to function through adaptive governance mechanisms that rely on learning, flexibility, and negotiation with local actors. This analysis highlights that securitization has not been entirely 'tamed' or replaced but has been partially reconfigured, with security logics remaining dominant at the policy framing and institutional design levels. At the same time, adaptive practices emerge unevenly at the implementation level.

Based on this insight, the article advances Adaptive Security Governance as its primary theoretical contribution. Adaptive Security Governance refers to a hybrid mode of environmental governance in which securitization enables cooperation and coordination, but adaptation determines whether such cooperation can endure beyond crisis moments. In this framework, security does not disappear; instead, it is negotiated through institutional learning, polycentric coordination, and selective localization of global sustainability norms. The case of OKI illustrates that adaptive governance does not operate outside securitization, but within its constraints, shaped by power asymmetries, expert-driven technologies, and bureaucratic imperatives.

The analysis of sustainability norms further reinforces this conclusion. While the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a shared normative language that legitimizes cooperation and aligns domestic policies with global agendas, their localization remains partial and contested. Sustainability norms are translated into administrative targets and performance indicators, but their social internalization depends on trust, cultural resonance, and recognition of local knowledge. As a result, sustainability functions primarily as an enabling discourse rather than a guarantee of transformative or equitable governance outcomes.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature on environmental securitization, adaptive governance, and international environmental diplomacy by demonstrating that security-driven cooperation can enhance technical capacity while simultaneously constraining deeper social adaptation. The Indonesia–South Korea partnership through KIFC highlights both the possibilities and limits of bilateral environmental cooperation in the Global South. While securitization can unlock resources and international support, long-term resilience depends on the extent to which adaptive governance practices address underlying socio-economic drivers

and redistribute epistemic authority. Although this study is limited to a qualitative case in OKI, it offers broader insights into how states navigate the politics of environmental risk under conditions of ecological uncertainty. Future research could extend this framework through a comparative analysis of similar bilateral initiatives or by incorporating community-level perspectives further to explore the social limits of securitized environmental governance.

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Politik Kewargaan Dimensi Hak bagi Penghayat Kepercayaan di Indonesia

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Abstrak

Abstract Adherents of indigenous beliefs represent belief systems rooted in local traditions that continue to be preserved by local communities. As of 2024, the number of adherents of indigenous beliefs reached 98,822 individuals, or approximately 0.003% of the total population. In Indonesia, adherents of indigenous beliefs continue to face limitations in legal recognition and the fulfillment of their rights. This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the legal recognition and rights of adherents of indigenous beliefs, the forms of discrimination in the implementation of the Constitutional Court decision, and to identify the factors that hinder the effective implementation of the Constitutional Court ruling. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method based on document analysis. Data were collected through the examination of government documents related to the recognition of the legal status of adherents of indigenous beliefs. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using a qualitative approach with content analysis techniques. The findings indicate that Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 represents the provision of a civil rights dimension; however, in practice, the implementation of these rights remains constrained, thereby hindering the fulfillment of social rights for adherents of indigenous beliefs. Discrimination persists in population administration, access to education, and burial arrangements. Such discrimination is influenced by factors including the limited competence of administrative officers, the lack of integration of educational services for adherents of indigenous beliefs, minimal public dissemination of the Constitutional Court decision, and weak law enforcement against violence and discriminatory practices targeting adherents of indigenous beliefs.

Abstrak Penghayat kepercayaan merupakan bentuk kepercayaan yang berakar dan bersumber dari kepercayaan lokal dan masih dilestarikan oleh penduduk setempat. Hingga tahun 2024, jumlah penghayat kepercayaan mencapai 98.822 Jiwa atau 0,003% dari total penduduk. Di Indonesia, penghayat kepercayaan masih menghadapi keterbatasan dalam pengakuan hukum dan pemenuhan hak-haknya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami lebih mendalam mengenai pengakuan hukum dan hak penghayat kepercayaan, bentuk diskriminasi dalam implementasi putusan MK serta mengidentifikasi penyebab implementasi Putusan MK masih terkendala. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif berbasis studi dokumen. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan mencari dokumen pemerintah terkait pengakuan status hukum bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Data yang telah dikumpulkan selanjutnya akan dianalisis lebih lanjut melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik analisis isi. Berdasarkan analisa yang telah dilakukan menunjukkan bahwa Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 merupakan perwujudan pemberian dimensi hak sipil, namun implementasi hak tersebut dalam praktiknya masih mengalami kendala yang menghambat pemenuhan hak sosial bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Adapun diskriminasi masih terjadi dalam pencatatan kependudukan, akses pendidikan, dan pengurusan pemakaman. Diskriminasi tersebut dipengaruhi oleh faktor petugas administrasi yang kurang kompeten, belum terintegrasinya layanan pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan, minimnya sosialisasi terkait Putusan MK kepada masyarakat, hingga lemahnya penegakan hukum terhadap kekerasan dan tindakan diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan.

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Pendahuluan

Politik kewargaan menjadi isu penting yang perlu mendapatkan perhatian oleh pemerintah dalam kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara. Kewargaan merupakan status seseorang sebagai anggota dari suatu negara yang memberi dasar pengakuan secara resmi sebagai warga negara yang didalamnya memuat hak serta peran aktif sebagai warga dalam kehidupan bernegara (Rosyidah, 2023). Kehadiran politik kewargaan akan menjadi jembatan antara negara dan warga negara dalam mengatur status hukum warga, pemberian hak terhadap warga negara, kewajiban dan pemberian kesempatan partisipasi warga dalam pemerintah serta pengakuan terhadap keanggotaan warga. Menurut Stokke & Hiariej (2017) terdapat empat dimensi kewargaan yaitu dimensi hukum, dimensi keanggotaan, dimensi partisipasi dan dimensi hak. Dalam konteks penghayat kepercayaan, dimensi hak menjadi salah satu indikator yang sangat penting yang menuntut adanya jaminan nyata bahwa setiap warga negara tanpa memandang latar belakang keyakinan memiliki akses yang setara terhadap perlindungan dan pengakuan negara sebagaimana yang dinikmati oleh pemeluk agama resmi lainnya.

Dimensi hak meliputi hak-hak dasar yang melekat pada status keanggotaan seseorang dalam suatu komunitas bangsa dan pengakuan legal yang diberikan oleh negara. Menurut Marshall (1950) dalam buku *Citizenship and Social Class* menerangkan bahwa terdapat tiga hak yang membentuk kewargaan seseorang diantaranya yaitu hak sipil, hak politik dan hak sosial. Hak sipil merupakan hak yang mencakup kebebasan individu dan perlindungan hukum seperti kebebasan untuk beragama dan berkeyakinan. Hak politik merupakan hak perlindungan bagi individu yang berkaitan dengan partisipasi dalam pemerintahan seperti hak untuk memilih dan dipilih. Hak sosial ialah hak untuk mendapatkan kesejahteraan, pendidikan dan standar hidup yang layak seperti hak untuk jaminan kesehatan dan pendidikan. Negara pada dasarnya memiliki kewajiban untuk menghargai, melindungi dan memenuhi setiap hak warga negaranya (Kabir, 2020).

Indonesia merupakan negara yang kaya akan keberagaman, mulai dari keberagaman suku, bahasa, etnis, iklim, bahasa, agama, pulau dan sebagainya. Salah satu keberagaman yang membentuk Indonesia ialah keberagaman agama yang tersebar diseluruh penjuru dan pelosok Indonesia, dimana agama menjadi tongkat dan titik tumpu tiap individu dalam menjalankan kehidupan. Indonesia saat ini memiliki enam agama resmi yang diakui oleh negara yang terdiri atas agama Islam, Kristen, Katholik, Hindu, Budha dan Konghuchu. Keberagaman agama ini menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia merupakan negara yang memberikan kebebasan kepada warga negaranya dalam memeluk agama menurut keyakinan masing-masing.

Direktorat Jenderal Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil (Ditjen Dukcapil) memublikasikan data jumlah penganut tiap agama dalam laporan tahun 2024 (KumparanNEWS, 2024), saat ini jumlah penganut tiap agama memiliki variasi yang signifikan, adapun data selengkapnya dapat dilihat pada tabel dibawah ini:

Table 1. Tabel 1. Jumlah Penganut Tiap Agama di Indonesia

No	Agama	Jumlah Penganut	Persentase
1.	Islam	245.973.915 Jiwa	87,08 %
2.	Kristen	20.911.697 Jiwa	7,40 %

3.	Katholik	8.667.619 Jiwa	3,07 %
4.	Hindu	4.744.543 Jiwa	1,68 %
5.	Budha	2.004.352 Jiwa	0,71 %
6.	Khonghuchu	76.636 Jiwa	0,03 %
7.	Penghayat Kepercayaan	98.822 Jiwa	0,03%

Sumber: Ditjen Dukcapil, 2024

Hingga pada tahun 2024, Dukcapil menyatakan bahwa agama Islam merupakan agama mayoritas penduduk Indonesia yang diyakini oleh 245.97.915 jiwa dengan persentase 87,08%, yang selanjutnya disusul oleh agama Kristen, Katholik, Budha, dan Khonghucu. Namun, masyarakat tetap meyakini berbagai aliran kepercayaan lain di samping enam agama resmi. Penduduk setempat melestarikan kepercayaan lokal secara turun-temurun. Masyarakat saat ini menyebut kepercayaan ini dengan penghayat kepercayaan. Penganut penghayat kepercayaan hingga tahun 2024 tercatat sudah mencapai 98.822 Jiwa dengan persentase 0,003% dari seluruh penduduk di Indonesia.

Penghayat kepercayaan merupakan sekelompok orang dengan kepercayaan yang diyakini selama turun temurun yang terbentuk dari kebiasaan, tradisi, nilai, budaya dan kearifan lokal penduduk setempat (Bonaparte et al., 2025). Tradisi dan kearifan lokal membentuk keberagaman keyakinan yang tersebar di berbagai daerah yang menyebabkan antara daerah satu dengan daerah lainnya memiliki keyakinan yang berbeda-beda. Sebagai contoh, kepercayaan masyarakat Kejawan di daerah Jawa menitikberatkan pada pelestarian alam dan dilarang keras untuk merusak alam semesta. Kepercayaan Sunda Wiwitan menekankan kesucian dan penghormatan terhadap Tuhan Pencipta Alam. Kepercayaan Tolotang meyakini Dewata Sewae sebagai Tuhan yang harus disembah dan dipuja serta mengikutsertakan penyembahan terhadap enam nenek moyang. Aliran Kaharingan yang tersebar di Kalimantan yang menganggap terdapat berbagai dewa di alam semesta seperti dewa yang menguasai batu, tanah, pohon dan sebagainya.

Indonesia memiliki ribuan kepercayaan lokal yang masih mengakar kuat di tengah masyarakat. Direktorat kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa mempublikasi bahwa saat ini di Indonesia terdapat lebih dari 187 aliran penghayat kepercayaan. Banyaknya aliran kepercayaan ini menunjukkan tingkat keberagaman agama di Indonesia. Jumlah aliran tersebut tentunya akan terus bertambah seiring tumbuhnya kesadaran masyarakat untuk melestarikan kearifan lokal di daerahnya.

Beberapa peneliti terdahulu telah membahas tentang penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia, seperti Viri & Febriany (2020) melakukan penelitian terhadap dinamika penghayat kepercayaan dalam mendapatkan pengakuan dari negara dan respon negara yang kerap membedakan antar penghayat kepercayaan dengan pemeluk agama resmi lain. Kemudian Sukirno (2019) dalam penelitiannya menyebutkan bahwa intervensi dari agama mayoritas yang ada di Indonesia dapat memberikan dampak pengucilan status hukum terhadap penghayat kepercayaan yang dilakukan dengan cara mempengaruhi kebijakan yang sudah ada. Selanjutnya penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Rosyidah (2023) berfokus pada perjuangan salah satu penghayat kepercayaan untuk selalu proaktif dalam segala kebijakan yang telah ditetapkan oleh pemerintah. Kemudian Jufri (2020) melakukan penelitian yang menyatakan bahwa hak penganut penghayat kepercayaan dalam hal pengurusan administrasi kependudukan masih mengalami kendala dalam penyebutan jenis agama dikarenakan belum tercantumnya kolom tersebut. Selanjutnya Belgradoputra et al., (2023) dalam penelitiannya menyimpulkan bahwa ketidaktegasan pemerintah mengakibatkan diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan.

Penelitian ini memiliki perbedaan dengan penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya, dimana dalam penelitian ini secara spesifik menganalisis bagaimana negara dalam memberikan pengakuan dan hak terhadap penghayat kepercayaan hingga bentuk diskriminasi yang masih dialami oleh penghayat kepercayaan. Oleh karena itu, pembahasan lebih mendalam terhadap

aspek-aspek tersebut menjadikan penelitian ini lebih komprehensif dalam menelaah dimensi hak bagi penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia.

Negara demokratis secara fundamental menjamin kebebasan untuk berkeyakinan dan memeluk agama yang diyakini oleh setiap warga negaranya. Namun, penghayat kepercayaan hingga saat ini belum sepenuhnya merasakan kebebasan dalam berkeyakinan. Produk hukum yang telah dilahirkan Indonesia hingga saat ini masih membuat penghayat kepercayaan mengalami berbagai tantangan dalam menentukan keyakinan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa pemenuhan dimensi hak bagi penghayat kepercayaan masih belum setara dibandingkan dengan kelompok agama resmi lainnya. Akibatnya, penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia masih belum bisa menikmati hak-hak dasarnya sebagai warga negara sepenuhnya.

Hingga saat ini, penghayat kepercayaan masih mengalami kendala pelayanan publik saat mengurus dokumen kependudukan. Data menunjukkan bahwa ketidakseragaman pemahaman petugas di berbagai kantor Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil (Dispendukcapil) menghambat proses ini. Sebagai contoh, banyak penghayat kepercayaan yang masih mengalami penolakan saat mencatatkan perkawinan mereka (Bonaparte et al., 2025). Hambatan ini memicu sulitnya penerbitan KTP dan kartu keluarga (KK) sehingga hak administratif penghayat kepercayaan sebagai warga negara tidak terpenuhi.

Selain hambatan dalam pelayanan kependudukan, penghayat kepercayaan juga masih menghadapi tantangan di sektor pendidikan. Pihak sekolah sering kali menekan siswa penghayat kepercayaan untuk mengikuti mata pelajaran agama yang tidak sesuai dengan keyakinan mereka. Sebagai contoh, pada tahun 2021, tiga siswa penghayat kepercayaan di Tarakan Kalimantan Utara tidak naik kelas selama tiga tahun berturut-turut akibat menolak mengikuti pelajaran agama diluar keyakinan mereka (BBC.com, 2021). Kasus ini membuktikan bahwa masih terdapat hambatan sosial yang menghalangi pemenuhan dimensi hak atas pendidikan bagi warga negara yang menganut penghayat kepercayaan.

Berdasarkan permasalahan diatas, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali bagaimana pemenuhan dimensi hak bagi penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia. Secara lebih mendalam, kajian ini akan menelaah sejauh mana negara dalam mengimplementasikan prinsip kesetaraan dalam kebijakan pasca putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi (MK), menganalisis bentuk diskriminasi yang masih kerap dialami oleh penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia serta mengidentifikasi penyebab implementasi putusan MK masih terkendala.

Landasan Teoritik

Teori Kewargaan (Citizenship Theory) – T.H. Marshall

Menurut Marshall (1950), kewargaan (*citizenship*) merupakan pengakuan terhadap status hukum dan sosial individu sebagai bagian dari suatu komunitas bangsa. Pemberian status tersebut akan memberikan jaminan atas hak dan kewajiban yang menunjukkan posisi seseorang sebagai bagian dari masyarakat yang diakui secara sah oleh negara. Marshall (1950) dalam bukunya *Citizenship and Social Class* menegaskan bahwa kewargaan merupakan jembatan individu untuk menuju kesetaraan sosial. Menurut Stokke & Hiariej (2017) terdapat empat dimensi kewargaan yaitu dimensi hukum, dimensi keanggotaan, dimensi partisipasi dan dimensi hak.

Dimensi hak menurut Marshall (1950) tersusun atas tiga hak dasar utama yang membentuk kewargaan individu, yaitu:

a) Hak sipil

Hak sipil merupakan bagian dari dimensi hak yang memberikan kebebasan tiap individu dalam hal kebebasan berpikir, berbicara, beragama dan berkeyakinan. Konsep kewargaan dalam hal ini menjadi tameng dalam melindungi kebebasan tiap individu dari intervensi negara dan pihak lain. Adapun lembaga yang bergerak dan berperan dalam menjamin hak sipil tiap individu adalah lembaga peradilan. Hak sipil berkembang pada abad ke-18 dengan pengembangan dari pada hak-hak baru terhadap

status yang telah ada. Hadirnya hak sipil akan melindungi tiap warga negara dari kebebasan untuk bergerak dalam bekerja, beragama dan sebagainya.

b) Hak politik

Hak politik merupakan bagian dari dimensi hak yang mencakup hak untuk berpartisipasi dalam politik baik hak untuk memilih maupun hak untuk dipilih. Dalam hal ini warga negara bukan sekedar menerima pengakuan hukum dari negara namun tiap individu juga diharuskan untuk memiliki keterlibatan langsung dalam hal pemerintahan. Dengan adanya hak politik, maka akan terbangun hubungan antara warga negara dengan negara dalam membangun sistem demokrasi. Dalam dimensi ini lembaga yang berperan penting ialah parlemen dan dewan pemerintahan lokal. Hak politik ini juga berkembang pada abad ke -19 setelah adanya hak sipil dengan tujuan untuk memperluas dan menjabarkan hak-hak lama agar dapat dimiliki oleh tiap individu.

c) Hak Sosial

Dimensi hak dalam hal hak sosial memberikan hak bagi seluruh individu untuk memperoleh kesejahteraan dan hidup yang layak. Hak sosial ini mencakup hak setiap warga negara dalam memperoleh pendidikan, kesehatan, kesejahteraan dan jaminan sosial. Hak sosial mengalami perkembangan setelah hak sipil dan hak politik ada. Adapun lembaga yang berperan penting dalam hak sosial ini ialah lembaga pendidikan dan pelayanan sosial.

Ketiga hak diatas menggambarkan kualitas utama dari kewargaan dikarenakan hak tersebut berperan penting dalam menentukan sejauh mana tiap warga diakui, dilindungi dan dapat berpartisipasi dalam kehidupan politik sebuah negara. Dimensi hak juga memperlihatkan interaksi antara warga negara dan negara dimana negara berperan sebagai pihak yang wajib memberikan dan melindungi hak agar dapat dilaksanakan sebagaimana mestinya bukan sekedar formalitas saja.

Teori kewargaan T.H. Marshall dalam hal pemenuhan hak warga negara memperluas dimensi hak dari sekedar pengakuan hukum menjadi pemenuhan substantif yang mencakup aspek sipil, sosial dan politik. T.H. Marshall juga menegaskan bahwa kewargaan tidak hanya ditandai dengan adanya hak politik atau hukum tetapi juga oleh kemampuan negara dalam hal menjamin kesejahteraan warganya.

Penghayat Kepercayaan

Penghayat kepercayaan merupakan sekelompok orang dengan kepercayaan yang diyakini selama turun temurun yang terbentuk dari kebiasaan, tradisi, nilai, budaya dan kearifan lokal penduduk setempat (Bonaparte et al., 2025). Aliran kepercayaan ini telah ada sebelum 400M silam jauh sebelum adanya kemunculan agama di Indonesia. Aliran kepercayaan ini memiliki perkembangan di setiap zaman mulai dari kepercayaan terhadap nenek moyang, animisme, dinamesme hingga yang terakhir pada sistem kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa.

Masuknya berbagai agama ke Indonesia secara pelan-pelan melengserkan keberadaan dan menurunkan eksistensi penghayat kepercayaan di tengah kehidupan masyarakat. Penghayat kepercayaan mengalami masa kritis pada saat keruntuhan kerajaan Majapahit, saat itu agama-agama lokal semakin didesak akan keberadaan dan perkembangan agama Islam yang semakin pesat. Sehingga pada saat itu, penganut penghayat kepercayaan mengalami kemunduran. Memasuki era orde baru, kepercayaan ini kembali berada di titik kritis. Pada masa ini, negara hanya mengakui terhadap enam agama resmi yaitu agama Islam, Kristen, Katholik, Budha, Hindu dan Khonghucu. Kebijakan era orde baru mendeskriminasikan keberadaan agama lokal dan membuat penghayat kepercayaan mengalami kesulitan dalam beribadah, serta hak-hak kewarganegaraannya tidak diakui secara resmi. Bahkan saat itu agama lokal ini dianggap sebagai penghambat pembangunan nasional.

Seiring berjalannya waktu dan perubahan sosial politik di Indonesia, penghayat kepercayaan mulai menunjukkan perkembangannya kembali. Berakhirnya orde baru memberikan ruang kebebasan berekspresi dan berkeyakinan sehingga penghayat kepercayaan dapat kembali menjalankan aktivitas secara lebih terbuka. Meskipun mengalami berbagai hambatan, kelompok kepercayaan ini terus berusaha untuk mempertahankan tradisi leluhur yang telah diwariskan secara turun temurun. Mereka mulai membentuk berbagai organisasi dan komunitas untuk memperkuat solidaritas sesama penghayat kepercayaan ditengah dominasi agama besar lainnya.

Aliran kepercayaan ini tersebar di seluruh pelosok Indonesia sehingga menjadikan aliran tersebut memiliki variasi keberagaman. Wilayah yang satu dengan wilayah lainnya memiliki aliran kepercayaan masing-masing yang didukung oleh kearifan lokal dan tradisi di wilayah tersebut. Hingga saat ini, Indonesia terdapat lebih dari 187 aliran penghayat kepercayaan.

Metode Penelitian

Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ialah metode kualitatif deskriptif berbasis studi dokumen. Metode kualitatif deskriptif merupakan tipe penelitian dengan metode menggambarkan, menjelaskan, memaparkan segala bentuk kejadian yang diteliti berdasarkan fakta yang terjadi di lapangan (Sugiyono, 2020). Metode penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi dokumen merupakan salah satu metode yang digunakan untuk mengkaji dan menelaah terhadap dokumen dan data yang telah ada. Dokumen tersebut dapat berupa laporan, buku, karya ilmiah maupun dokumen peraturan atau kebijakan yang dikeluarkan oleh pemerintah seperti arsip, artikel, kebijakan yang relevan dengan penelitian. Pemilihan studi dokumen didasarkan pada data yang dihasilkan cenderung lebih stabil dan objektif karena merupakan catatan/dokumen asli yang dibuat tanpa pengaruh dari proses penelitian yang sedang berlangsung. Selain itu, metode ini juga memberikan akses yang luas terhadap informasi tanpa kendala biaya dan kendala geografis, selama dokumen tersebut tersedia dan dipublikasikan secara resmi. Penggunaan metode ini untuk menjawab persoalan tentang "Politik Kewargaan Dimensi Hak bagi Penghayat Kepercayaan di Indonesia".

Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan mencari dokumen pemerintah terkait pengakuan status hukum bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Dokumen tersebut berupa UU yang mengatur kebebasan tiap individu dalam memilih agama, putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi dalam pemberian status hukum kepada penghayat kepercayaan, dokumen dari Ditjen kependudukan dan catatan sipil termasuk laporan dari komnas HAM, LSM, maupun artikel yang memuat tentang diskriminasi yang dialami oleh penganut penghayat kepercayaan. Data dan dokumen ini selanjutnya akan dianalisis lebih lanjut melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik analisis isi untuk memahami bagaimana negara melalui instrumen hukum mengatur, mengakui dan memenuhi hak-hak kewargaan bagi penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia.

Hasil Dan Pembahasan

Negara dalam Memberikan Pengakuan dan Hak bagi Penghayat Kepercayaan di Indonesia

Dimensi hak kewargaan menjelaskan bahwa setiap individu memiliki hak-hak yang melekat dari statusnya sebagai warga negara dalam suatu bangsa. Dimensi hak menegaskan bahwa negara memiliki kewajiban untuk memberikan pengakuan legal serta menjamin pemenuhan hak-hak tersebut melalui kebijakan dan peraturan yang adil. Salah satu hak yang berhak dimiliki oleh setiap warga negara dan wajib dilindungi oleh negara yaitu hak sipil. Hak sipil merupakan hak individu untuk mendapatkan kebebasan dan perlindungan hukum, salah satu contoh hak sipil yaitu hak warga negara dalam kebebasan beragama dan berkeyakinan. Negara wajib menjamin kebebasan berkeyakinan sebagai bagian dari hak sipil setiap warga negaranya. Dalam praktiknya, pemerintah harus mengakui identitas penghayat kepercayaan dan mencantumkan identitas tersebut secara resmi ke dalam dokumen kependudukan.

Frasa agama dan kepercayaan telah menjadi subjek perdebatan panjang sejak awal pembentukan Indonesia, terutama dalam proses perumusan Pancasila. Tokoh-tokoh seperti Ir. Soekarno, Moh. Yamin dan Soepomo mengajukan rumusan yang beragam hingga melahirkan Piagam Jakarta. Pasal pertama piagam tersebut menekankan “Ketuhanan dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariat Islam bagi pemeluknya”. Namun, rumusan tersebut dianggap mendiskriminasi penganut agama lain di Indonesia. Melalui diskusi panjang, para tokoh akhirnya mencapai konsensus dengan menetapkan sila pertama “Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa”.

Perubahan sila menjadi “Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa” menunjukkan bahwa negara tidak berpihak pada salah satu agama yang ada di Indonesia, serta mengakui adanya keberagaman keyakinan yang berkembang di masyarakat. Kata “Ketuhanan” dalam sila tersebut menunjukkan sifat pencipta yang umum tanpa berat kepada pencipta dari agama Islam, Kristen, Katholik dan lainnya. Melalui frasa dari sila pertama ini menjadi landasan bahwa Indonesia menjunjung tinggi kebebasan warga negara dalam memeluk agama dan kepercayaan. Sila ini juga memperlihatkan bahwa kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa juga bagian dari sistem keyakinan yang sah dan diakui dalam konteks kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara.

Hal ini diperkuat oleh UUD 1945 Pasal 29 ayat (2) yang berisikan tentang jaminan warga negara untuk memeluk agama dan beribadah sesuai dengan keyakinan masing-masing. Ketentuan tersebut mendeklarasikan bahwa setiap individu berhak dalam menentukan kepercayaannya. Keberadaan pasal ini menjadi landasan hukum yang kuat bagi penghayat kepercayaan untuk mendapatkan perlindungan hukum dan pemenuhan hak-hak kewargaan yang setara dengan pemeluk agama lainnya.

Populasi penghayat kepercayaan yang mencapai 98.822 Jiwa atau sekitar 0,003% dari total penduduk di Indonesia merupakan angka yang signifikan untuk dijamin status hukum serta hak-hak kewargaannya. Oleh karena itu, pemerintah wajib memperhatikan dan memenuhi hak penghayat kepercayaan tersebut secara adil dan merata. Dalam konteks ketatanegaraan Indonesia, dinamika berbangsa dan bernegara mengalami pergeseran paradigma pasca reformasi menjadi UUD 1945 mendorong berbagai pembaruan dalam tata kelola negara, termasuk dalam isu kewarganegaraan. Perubahan ini menandakan bahwa Indonesia mengalami pergeseran rezim kewargaan dimana negara dapat mengatur dan mendistribusikan status serta hak kewargaan terhadap warga negara (Hermanto, 2023).

Rezim kewargaan pasca reformasi membuka ruang bagi penguatan prinsip kesetaraan, pengakuan hak asasi manusia serta perluasan pencantuman status kewargaan bagi warga negara yang sebelumnya terpinggirkan dalam struktur kewargaan negara. Perubahan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa negara telah membangun rezim kewargaan yang lebih inklusif. Namun demikian, perubahan rezim kewargaan tersebut belum sepenuhnya terimplementasikan. Dalam konteks penghayat kepercayaan, pengakuan hak secara *de jure* tercermin dalam jaminan konstitusional yang ditercantumkan dalam UUD NRI 1945, khususnya pasal 28E ayat (2) yang berisikan “Setiap orang berhak atas kebebasan meyakini kepercayaan, menyatakan pikiran dan sikap, sesuai dengan hati nuraninya”. Lahirnya produk hukum tersebut merupakan salah satu pengakuan formal negara terhadap kebebasan berkeyakinan sebagai bagian dari hak kewargaan.

Keberadaan pasal 28E ayat (2) juga menjadi benteng kuat bagi pengakuan keberadaan penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia. Negara dalam pasal ini memberikan kebebasan bagi tiap warganya untuk menentukan pilihan agama yang diyakini. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa agama yang diakui tidak sekedar mengacu pada agama resmi (Islam, Kristen, Katholik, Budha, Hindu, Konghuchu) saja, melainkan juga mencakup berbagai sistem kepercayaan lain yang masih ada dan berkembang di Indonesia.

Sebagai tindak lanjut dari pengakuan tersebut, pada tahun 2006 negara mengesahkan UU No. 23 tahun 2006 pada Pasal 61 ayat (2) yang mengatur administrasi kependudukan bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Pasal ini menjelaskan bahwa bagi penduduk yang agamanya belum diakui secara resmi oleh negara maka jenis agama dalam kolom kartu identitas atau Kartu

Tanda Penduduk (KTP) dapat dikosongkan atau diisi dengan tanda (-), namun pencatatan data mereka akan tetap tersimpan dalam data kependudukan. Kebijakan ini merupakan sebuah langkah baru yang diambil oleh pemerintah untuk mengakui keberadaan para penghayat kepercayaan dengan cara menerima keberadaannya tanpa memaksa kelompok tersebut untuk memilih dari enam agama resmi lainnya untuk dicantumkan dalam administrasi.

Kebijakan pengosongan kolom agama dan pengisian dengan tanda (-) justru menimbulkan persoalan identitas bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Kebijakan tersebut dianggap belum sepenuhnya mencerminkan pengakuan terhadap kepercayaan yang mereka yakini. Di hadapan negara, penghayat kepercayaan merasa tersingkirkan karena seolah-olah tidak memiliki agama yang sah secara administratif. Meskipun secara hukum penghayat kepercayaan tidak lagi dipaksa memilih salah satu dari enam agama resmi, pada kenyataannya penghayat kepercayaan masih merasa harus menyesuaikan diri dengan arus agama resmi. Hal ini dilakukan demi memperoleh kemudahan dalam pengurusan administrasi kependudukan, akses pekerjaan serta pelayanan pendidikan.

Disamping itu, penghayat kepercayaan juga mengalami ketimpangan dalam pencatatan perkawinan. Sebelum tahun 2016, perkawinan penghayat kepercayaan tidak bisa dicatatkan secara sah di kantor pencatatan sipil. Hal ini terjadi karena penghayat kepercayaan tidak termasuk dalam kategori agama yang diakui negara dan tidak memiliki lembaga resmi untuk mencatatkan pernikahan tersebut. Kondisi ini memaksa banyak penghayat kepercayaan untuk mengaku sebagai salah satu dari enam agama resmi agar perkawinannya diakui oleh negara (Bonaparte et al., 2025). Kesulitan pencatatan perkawinan ini akhirnya berdampak luas pada status hukum suami-istri, status anak, hak waris hingga hak-hak sipil lainnya.

Desakan emosional dari penghayat kepercayaan dan lembaga hak asasi manusia menuntut negara untuk memberikan pengakuan yang lebih konkret terhadap penghayat kepercayaan. Pemerintah merespon tuntutan tersebut dengan cara mengeluarkan Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi (MK) No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 yang menjadi tonggak pengakuan resmi bagi penganut penghayat kepercayaan. Pasca putusan tersebut, penghayat kepercayaan dapat mengisi kolom agama di KTP dengan “Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan YME” serta mendapatkan pelayanan yang sama dalam pencatatan kependudukan dan pencatatan pernikahan. Melalui putusan ini, Mahkamah Konstitusional menegaskan bahwa penganut penghayat kepercayaan memiliki kedudukan hukum dan hak yang setara dengan pemeluk agama resmi lainnya di Indonesia.

Di dalam perspektif dari teori kewargaan seperti yang dikemukakan oleh Marshall (1950), dimana pemberian status hukum merupakan jembatan yang akan menghubungkan individu dengan kesetaraan sosial. Kerangka pemikiran T.H. Marshall menjelaskan bahwa terdapat tiga hak utama yang harus didapatkan oleh tiap individu untuk membentuk kewargaan, di antaranya yaitu hak sipil (*civil right*). Elemen hak sipil merupakan hak dasar yang diperlukan individu untuk mendapatkan kebebasan berpikir, beragama dan berkeyakinan. Putusan MK No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 secara teoritis merupakan upaya negara untuk memenuhi dimensi hak sipil bagi penghayat kepercayaan yang selama ini terabaikan. Marshall menegaskan bahwa hak sipil merupakan instrumen perlindungan bagi warga negara terhadap tindakan diskriminatif secara administratif. Pengakuan yang diberikan oleh negara bukan sekedar perubahan teknis pada kolom KTP, melainkan sebuah pernyataan hukum bahwa para penghayat kepercayaan kini memiliki status kewargaan yang secara ideal memiliki hak yang setara dengan agama resmi lainnya.

Di samping itu, pengakuan atas hak sipil ini merupakan faktor yang sangat krusial, apabila hak sipil terhadap penghayat kepercayaan tidak terpenuhi maka akan menghambat akses penghayat kepercayaan terhadap hak politik dan hak sosial. Sehingga pada akhirnya, peneliti menilai bahwa putusan MK No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 merupakan bentuk pemenuhan dimensi hak sipil yang bersifat fundamental. Kerangka teoritis T.H. Marshall mengungkapkan bahwa ketiadaan hak sipil yang jelas akan menghambat individu untuk mengklaim hak politik

dan hak sosial nya secara efektif. Tanpa adanya jaminan hak sipil, maka dimensi hak lainnya akan sulit untuk diimplementasikan secara substantif.

Pasca putusan MK No.97/PUU-XIV/2016, pemerintah mulai menindaklanjuti dengan menerbitkan surat edaran dan peraturan pelaksana bagi dinas kependudukan untuk mengakomodasi penghayat kepercayaan dalam dokumen kependudukan. Dengan demikian, pengakuan negara terhadap penghayat kepercayaan melalui kebijakan dan Putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016 menunjukkan perwujudan nyata dari dimensi hak kewargaan, dimana negara tidak hanya memberikan pengakuan secara legal namun juga menjamin pemenuhan hak-hak bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Implementasi kebijakan yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah merupakan bagian yang tak terpisahkan dari hak dasar kewargaan yang harus dihormati, dilindungi dan dipenuhi secara setara bagi seluruh warga Indonesia.

Diskriminasi dalam Implementasi Putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016 bagi Penghayat Kepercayaan

Implementasi putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016 merupakan langkah besar yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah dalam memperjuangkan kesetaraan bagi penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia. Lahirnya putusan ini memberikan pengakuan hukum yang sah dari negara terhadap penghayat kepercayaan untuk memperoleh hak yang sama seperti penganut agama lain baik dalam segi administratif maupun pelayanan publik lainnya. Putusan ini menunjukkan bahwa penghayat kepercayaan memiliki kedudukan yang setara sebagai warga negara yang berhak untuk diakui, dihargai, dihormati dan dilindungi dalam kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara. Namun dalam praktiknya, implementasi putusan MK ini belum sepenuhnya berjalan dengan yang diharapkan. Fakta di lapangan menunjukkan bahwa masih banyak ditemui bentuk diskriminasi baik secara struktural maupun sosial yang menghambat pemenuhan hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan. Adanya putusan MK ini juga menjadi babak baru pengakuan secara *de jure* terhadap hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan.

Namun terdapat kesenjangan antara pengakuan hak secara normatif dan implementasinya secara *de facto*. Pada level *de facto*, penghayat kepercayaan masih kerap menghadapi berbagai tantangan dan hambatan dalam mengakses hak-hak kewargaan. Berbagai hambatan tersebut muncul dalam bentuk diskriminasi diantaranya diskriminasi administrasi, pelayanan dari struktur birokrasi, serta penolakan yang kerap terjadi di tengah masyarakat. Kondisi ini menunjukkan kontrasnya kesenjangan antara hak yang diakui secara hukum dan hak yang benar-benar di alami oleh penghayat kepercayaan.

Salah satu bentuk diskriminasi yang dialami oleh penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia yaitu seperti yang dialami oleh Widi seorang pelajar yang menjadi korban perundungan dan intimidasi di lingkungan sekolah. Diskriminasi yang dia terima berupa tekanan dari guru untuk mengenakan atribut (hijab), adanya ajakan dari guru untuk berpindah keyakinan, hingga pelecehan verbal oleh teman sebaya yang memaksa Widi untuk melakukan ibadah yang tidak sesuai dengan keyakinannya (BBC.com, 2025). Selain pengakuan korban tersebut, Kepala Pusat Penguatan Karakter Kemendikbudristek Ruspita Putri mengungkapkan bahwa meskipun putusan MK sudah menjamin hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan, namun penganut agama tersebut masih mengalami diskriminasi dalam pendidikan dan perundungan di lingkungan sekolah, ia memaparkan bahwa banyaknya kasus diskriminasi di lingkungan pendidikan masih kerap terjadi karena kurangnya sosialisasi terkait pemenuhan hak pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan sebagaimana terpenuhinya hak bagi agama mayoritas lainnya (Validnews.id, 2023).

Maraknya diskriminasi yang masih diterima oleh penghayat kepercayaan membuat Yayasan Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKIS) mendesak agar RUU Sisdiknas lebih mengakomodasi hak pendidikan masyarakat penghayat kepercayaan secara setara. LKiS menilai produk hukum yang telah ada masih kurang mampu untuk membentuk diskriminasi yang masih terjadi di sektor pendidikan (Muhamad, 2025). Sebagai bentuk perlawanan

terhadap maraknya diskriminasi yang diterima, Komisioner Komnas Perempuan Dewi Kanti bersama dengan perempuan Sunda Wiwitan (penganut penghayat kepercayaan) mendukung eksistensi gerakan budaya yang dilakukan oleh perempuan Sunda Wiwitan. Gerakan kebudayaan melalui karya mereka dengan membuat batik merupakan salah satu bentuk perlawanan kultural dan diskriminasi yang diterima. Masyarakat sunda Wiwitan saat ini bertahan hidup mengandalkan karya tersebut, dan karya tersebut menjadi tameng untuk menghilangkan stigma negatif atas mereka dari masyarakat sekitar (Sari, 2023).

Di dalam perspektif teori Marshall (1950) mengungkapkan bahwa untuk mendapatkan kewargaan dalam menunjang jaminan atas hak dan kewajiban yang menunjukkan posisi seseorang sebagai bagian dari warga negara yang diakui, maka diperlukan pemenuhan terhadap hak sipil, hak politik hingga hak sosial. Analisis teoritik dalam bagian ini menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan antara perolehan hak sipil yang sudah didapatkan oleh penghayat kepercayaan dengan realitas hak sosial di lapangan. Kerangka pemikiran T.H. Marshall dalam *civil right* (Putusan MK No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016) seharusnya berfungsi sebagai landasan bagi penghayat kepercayaan untuk menikmati hak lainnya seperti hak sosial (pelayanan publik dan akses pendidikan). Namun, fakta menunjukkan bahwa penghayat kepercayaan masih mengalami hambatan dalam layanan administratif pengurusan KTP dan layanan pendidikan yang membuktikan adanya kecacatan dalam implementasi teori T.H. Marshall terhadap penghayat kepercayaan. Pemberian hak sipil bagi penghayat kepercayaan secara hukum ternyata tidak serta merta membuka pemenuhan hak lainnya bagi penghayat kepercayaan.

Berdasarkan teori kewargaan menurut Marshall (1950), dimensi hak kewargaan tiap individu akan utuh apabila adanya pemenuhan terhadap hak sipil, hak politik dan hak sosial. Di dalam konteks penghayat kepercayaan, diskriminasi yang masih di alami oleh mereka merupakan bentuk kewargaan yang tidak utuh. Kondisi ini terjadi karena hak sipil hanya sebatas pengakuan hukum tidak diiringi oleh pemenuhan hak sosial, sehingga mengakibatkan mekanisme dimensi hak menurut Marshall tidak berjalan dengan mulus. Hak sosial merupakan pemberian hak bagi seluruh individu untuk memperoleh kesejahteraan dan hidup yang layak yang mencakup hak memperoleh pendidikan, kesehatan, kesejahteraan dan jaminan sosial. Pelayanan publik yang diskriminatif bagi penghayat kepercayaan dan adanya tekanan bagi siswa penghayat kepercayaan untuk mengikuti ajaran agama lain hingga ajakan berpindah keyakinan, adalah bukti nyata pelanggaran hak sosial. T.H. Marshall menekankan bahwa sektor pendidikan merupakan tonggak penting dalam dimensi hak khususnya hak sosial, adanya tekanan untuk mempelajari nilai-nilai agama diluar keyakinan siswa penghayat kepercayaan merupakan salah satu tindakan diskriminasi. Peneliti menilai bahwa diskriminasi yang dialami oleh penghayat kepercayaan merupakan bentuk kegagalan dalam insitusi dan birokrasi, yang membuat penghayat kepercayaan hanya di akui di selembar kertas namun kehilangan hak substantifnya dalam pelayanan sosial. Kondisi ini memperlihatkan bahwa pemenuhan hak sipil saja tidak cukup, namun harus diiringi dengan pemenuhan terhadap hak sosial bagi penghayat kepercayaan.

Negara dalam merespon berbagai bentuk diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan mengeluarkan kebijakan terbaru lainnya untuk mengimplementasikan putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016, salah satunya dengan diterbitkan nya Putusan Menteri Dalam Negeri No.118 tahun 2017 tentang Blanko Kartu Keluarga, register dan Kutipan Akta Pencatatan Sipil dan Surat Edaran Direktorat Jenderal Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil No. 471.14/10666/DUKCAPIL yang mengatur tentang penerbitan Kartu Keluarga (KK) bagi penghayat kepercayaan (Jufri, 2020). Ketentuan dan kebijakan ini membawa angin segar bagi penghayat kepercayaan dalam mencantumkan jenis agama dalam kartu identitas seperti KTP dan KK. Namun implementasi dilapangan, menunjukkan bahwa pengisian kolom agama dalam KTP dan KK dengan keterangan "Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan YME" masih terhambat karena petugas Dukcapil belum memahami mekanisme teknis dan belum memperbaiki sistem administrasi kependudukan yang memuat pilihan tersebut. Akibatnya, banyak penghayat

kepercayaan yang masih belum bisa mencantumkan identitas agamanya secara resmi dalam dokumen kependudukan.

Fenomena terhambatnya pelayanan di lapangan ini dapat dianalisis menggunakan teori birokrasi Max Weber. Dalam konsep birokrasi idealnya, Weber mengungkapkan sepuluh ciri birokrasi yang terstruktur, tertulis, dan terdapat prosedural formal yang pada dasarnya mencakup konsep Standar Operasional Prosedur (SOP) (Ngadisah, 2022). Kasus terhambatnya pengisian kolom KTP bagi penghayat kepercayaan menunjukkan bahwa birokrasi ditingkat Dukcapil belum berjalan secara rasional karena bertentangan dengan ciri birokrasi Max Weber yang menempatkan jabatan yang tidak sesuai dengan kompetensinya. Ketidapahaman petugas Dukcapil mengenai mekanisme teknis mencerminkan lemahnya distribusi informasi dalam struktur hierarki birokrasi, hal ini berdampak pada hak konstitusional warga negara terabaikan hanya karena kendala administratif.

Weber juga memperingatkan munculnya “*iron cage*” dalam struktur birokrasi, konsep ini diperkenalkannya dalam salah satu karyanya yang berjudul “*The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*” pada tahun 1905. Weber mengungkapkan bahwa hubungan yang terjadi dalam kehidupan dapat meningkatkan rasionalisasi dalam kehidupan sosial. Birokrasi yang terbentuk melalui peningkatan rasionalitas justru menempatkan individu kedalam sistem yang diciptakannya sendiri. Akibatnya, ruang bagi tindakan bebas individu dan masyarakat akan semakin terbatas. Terbentuknya struktur organisasi yang hierarkis pada akhirnya membentuk kondisi *iron cage* (kerangkeng besi), dimana manusia terperangkap dalam sistem yang dibuatnya sendiri (Ikramatoun et al., 2021).

Hambatan teknis dan ketidaksiapan sistem dilapangan tersebut mencerminkan sisi kelam dari *iron cage*. Meskipun Weber mengakui bahwa birokrasi adalah sistem paling rasional untuk mengelola masyarakat modern dan memberikan banyak manfaat bagi keberlangsungan hidup manusia, namun Weber juga memperingatkan bahwa sistem birokrasi dapat berubah menjadi “kerangkeng besi” bagi manusia itu sendiri. Dalam struktur hierarkis birokrasi, kendali atas segala hal sekaligus pengambilan keputusan berada ditingkat atas, sementara petugas dilapangan bawah seringkali kehilangan inisiatif karena terjebak dalam SOP yang ditekan.

Akibatnya, birokrasi yang seharusnya memudahkan masyarakat, justru menjadi penghambat karena masyarakat dan petugas sama-sama dibatasi oleh aturan yang kaku. Dalam konteks penghayat kepercayaan, birokrasi yang seharusnya menjadi jalan keluar rasional bagi pemenuhan hak sipil justru berbalik menjadi tekanan bagi mereka. Sifat birokrasi yang kaku pada akhirnya mematikan inisiatif petugas dalam mencari solusi teknis, dan menciptakan tekanan yang justru merugikan penghayat kepercayaan yang seharusnya dilayani agar mendapatkan hak nya termasuk pencantuman jenis agama dalam KTP.

Hambatan dalam pencantuman identitas pada KTP berdampak signifikan terhadap pemenuhan hak-hak sipil penghayat kepercayaan. Beberapa tahun terakhir banyak penghayat kepercayaan gagal dalam seleksi CPNS, TNI dan Polri karena tidak mencantumkan identitas agama di KTP. Sistem seleksi yang mensyaratkan pencantuman agama resmi menjadi penghalang bagi kelompok ini untuk memperoleh kesempatan kerja yang setara. Bahkan, penghayat kepercayaan yang telah menjadi CPNS pun kerap memiliki status “belum kawin” di KTP karena pernikahan mereka yang tidak dapat dicatatkan secara sah di Dispendukcapil.

Fenomena tersebut memperlihatkan bahwa meskipun telah ada putusan MK yang mengakui penghayat kepercayaan, implementasi di tingkat birokrasi terhadap putusan tersebut masih menghadapi hambatan struktural dan teknis. Kondisi ini akan menghambat pemenuhan terhadap hak sipil warga negara dalam memperoleh dokumen kependudukan dan pengakuan status hukum yang setara di hadapan negara.

Penghayat kepercayaan juga menghadapi ketimpangan dalam sektor pendidikan. Anak-anak yang lahir dari orangtua penghayat kepercayaan umumnya akan memiliki kepercayaan yang sama dengan orangtuanya. Kondisi ini sering kali memicu diskriminasi terhadap anak tersebut ketika menempuh pendidikan di sekolah. Kurikulum pendidikan saat ini cenderung

menyamarkan pola pendidikan dengan mengajarkan nilai-nilai keagamaan agama mayoritas. Hal tersebut memberikan tekanan bagi anak-anak penganut penghayat kepercayaan dalam mengakses pendidikan. Sistem yang mengajarkan nilai-nilai agama mayoritas di sektor pendidikan akan mendiskriminasi penganut penghayat kepercayaan. Selain paksaan untuk mempelajari agama yang berbeda dengan identitasnya, mereka juga menghadapi hambatan administratif karena sekolah sering kali hanya menyelenggarakan ujian untuk agama-agama yang diakui secara resmi oleh negara.

Berbagai kasus diskriminasi dalam sektor pendidikan terjadi di Indonesia, Prasetyo et al (2024) mengungkapkan bahwa pada tahun 2020, siswa penghayat kepercayaan mengalami diskriminasi karena kolom mata pelajaran mereka tidak tercantum dalam rapor. Kemudian pada tahun 2021 di kota Magelang, ratusan siswa belum mendapatkan hak pendidikan yang sesuai dengan keyakinannya, mereka dipaksa untuk mengikuti pelajaran agama lain karena minimnya guru dan fasilitas pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Diskriminasi serupa juga terjadi di SMPN 2 Kudus, dimana pihak sekolah melarang guru penghayat kepercayaan mengajar di kelas dengan alasan jumlah siswa hanya satu orang, sehingga pembelajaran terpaksa dilakukan secara informal di rumah.

Fenomena tersebut menunjukkan bentuk diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan yang menghambat mereka dalam penyerapan pendidikan. Penghayat kepercayaan seharusnya mendapatkan hak yang sama dalam memperoleh ilmu sebagaimana dalam UU No 20 Tahun 2003 dalam Pasal 5 Ayat 1 dan Pasal 5 Ayat 3 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, yang menerangkan bahwa setiap warga negara berhak untuk mendapatkan pendidikan yang berkualitas. Pemerintah dan lingkungan sekitar harusnya mendukung setiap anak untuk memperoleh pendidikan dan fasilitas yang sama dalam mengemban ilmu tanpa memberikan identitas anak agama yang satu dengan agama yang lainnya.

Namun kenyataannya, pendidikan justru menjadi faktor yang menghambat penghayat kepercayaan dalam memperoleh kesempatan yang sama untuk belajar dan mengembangkan nilai-nilai spiritual dengan keyakinan yang dianutnya. Alih-alih mendapat sarana yang inklusi, sekolah sering kali memperkuat praktik diskriminatif melalui kebijakan yang ada. Kondisi ini menunjukkan bahwa dimensi kewargaan yang mencakup hak sosial warga negara dalam bidang pendidikan tidak terpenuhi secara adil.

Fenomena diskriminasi dalam sektor pendidikan yang dialami oleh siswa penghayat kepercayaan di lingkungan sekolah merupakan bentuk nyata dari *iron cage* dalam birokrasi pendidikan. Birokrasi dalam sektor pendidikan merupakan salah satu hal yang harus diakui karena pada dasarnya adanya kehadiran birokrasi dalam pendidikan tersebut merupakan salah satu manifestasi untuk memudahkan administrasi pendidikan yang pada akhirnya dapat mempermudah penyelenggaraan sistem pembelajaran. Namun hingga kini, birokrasi dalam pendidikan malah bergeser kedalam bentuk yang kaku, dimana terdapat banyak aturan yang membebani siswa dan tenaga pengajar (Ikramatoun et al., 2021).

Diskriminasi terhadap siswa penghayat kepercayaan di lingkungan sekolah merupakan salah satu bentuk dari *iron cage* (kerangkeng besi) dalam birokrasi di sektor pendidikan. Pemaksaan terhadap siswa penghayat kepercayaan untuk mempelajari mata pelajaran agama mayoritas, mengikuti ujian mata agama mayoritas, hingga tidak adanya pencantuman nilai rapor untuk kolom penghayat kepercayaan, dilakukan untuk mengikuti prosedur formal yang telah ditetapkan dalam birokrasi sektor pendidikan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa, sekolah tidak lagi mementingkan pemenuhan hak asasi manusia bagi setiap warganya, namun lebih mementingkan prosedural formal yang harus dijalankan dan memaksa individu untuk tunduk terhadap penyeragaman sistem tersebut.

Fenomena ini juga terlihat dari adanya tindakan larangan dari sekolah dimana guru penghayat kepercayaan dilarang untuk mengajar dikelas karena siswa penghayat kepercayaan hanya satu, sehingga sistem pembelajaran dilakukan secara informal di rumah. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa birokrasi pendidikan terjebak dalam hierarki otoritas yang sangat kental,

dimana inisiatif guru tersebut menjadi melemah karena tidak adanya petunjuk teknis yang tertulis. Guru pada akhirnya menjadi takut melanggar aturan administratif daripada membiarkan terjadinya pelanggaran hak konstitusional siswa. Pada akhirnya, siswa penghayat kepercayaan menjadi pihak yang paling dirugikan, dimana keyakinan mereka dipertaruhkan demi kelancaran teknis sebuah sistem administrasi yang diinginkan.

Bentuk diskriminasi lain juga dialami oleh penghayat kepercayaan dalam aspek pelayanan pemakaman. Kejadian ini menimpa penghayat kepercayaan yang tinggal di Desa Trangkil Kabupaten Pati, ketika warga setempat menolak pemakaman jenazah orang tua salah satu penghayat kepercayaan di tempat pemakaman umum (TPU). Penolakan tersebut didasari oleh persepsi warga bahwa TPU hanya diperuntukkan bagi pemeluk agama Islam. Praktik ini secara jelas bertentangan dengan Permendagri dan Permenbudpar No. 43 dan 41 tahun 2009 Pasal 8 ayat (1) dan (2) yang menjamin hak penghayat kepercayaan untuk dimakamkan di tempat pemakaman umum tanpa diskriminasi (Sulaiman, 2018).

Konflik tersebut memaksa pihak keluarga untuk membuat surat pernyataan yang mengeklaim bahwa orangtua nya beragama Islam demi mendapatkan akses pemakaman di tanah wakaf desa. Kejadian ini membuktikan bahwa hak penghayat kepercayaan telah dirampas dan tidak dihormati dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Fenomena tersebut mencerminkan bentuk nyata pelanggaran terhadap dimensi hak sipil dan hak sosial yang seharusnya dijamin oleh negara bagi setiap warga negaranya.

Kemudian tempat tinggal penghayat kepercayaan yang umumnya menetap di daerah pedalaman memperparah penghayat kepercayaan untuk mendapatkan akses terhadap pelayanan administrasi pencatatan sipil. Kondisi pedalaman dengan akses transportasi yang sulit, didukung dengan minimnya infrastruktur pelayanan publik, serta jarak yang cukup jauh untuk menjangkau Dinas Kependudukan dan Catatan Sipil (Dukcapil) membuat proses pengurusan dokumen kependudukan menjadi terhambat. Kondisi ini pada akhirnya akan menyumbang pada minimnya penghayat kepercayaan untuk memiliki KTP dan Kartu Keluarga yang mencantumkan identitas agama secara resmi, atau kondisi terburuknya keberadaan mereka belum tercatat sebagai warga negara secara administratif.

Berdasarkan kompleksnya permasalahan dan diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia baik dalam pencatatan kependudukan, dalam akses dan pelayanan pendidikan, hingga dalam pengurusan jenazah membuktinya bahwa putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016 belum sepenuhnya terimplementasi secara efektif di lapangan. Dalam putusan tersebut memang sudah memberikan landasan hukum yang kuat terhadap pengakuan dan perlindungan bagi penghayat kepercayaan sebagai bagian dari warga negara yang sah, namun dalam praktiknya masih terdapat kebijakan yang tidak sesuai dengan mestinya. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa pengakuan *de jure* terhadap hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan sudah ada namun praktik *de facto* di lapangan terhadap hak-hak tersebut masih mengalami tantangan. Lemahnya implemtasi dan stigma sosial di masyarakat menyebabkan penghayat kepercayaan belum dapat menikmati hak-hak kewargaan secara setara dengan pemeluk agama lainnya. Kondisi ini menunjukkan bahwa dimensi hak kewargaan (*citizenship rights*) penghayat kepercayaan yang mencakup hak sipil, hak sosial dan hak politik belum sepenuhnya terpenuhi bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Oleh karena itu, negara dituntut untuk tidak hanya memberikan pengakuan secara formal bagi penghayat kepercayaan namun juga harus memastikan perlindungan hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan dalam seluruh aspek kehidupan.

Gagalnya implementasi *de facto* terhadap hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan khususnya setelah adanya Putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016, dapat dijelaskan dengan menggunakan teori sistem hukum Lawrence Friedman. Friedman menjelaskan bahwa untuk menjalankan sistem hukum harus mencakup tiga elemen utama yang saling berkaitan, yaitu substansi hukum (*legal substance*) yang merupakan produk hukum yang dihasilkan, dalam konteks penghayat kepercayaan yaitu Putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016. Selanjutnya struktur hukum (*legal structure*) yang merupakan lembaga penggerak produk hukum tersebut seperti pengadilan,

kejaksaan, hingga Dukcapil. Selanjutnya yang terakhir yaitu budaya hukum (*legal culture*) yang merupakan elemen paling krusial yang mencakup nilai, sikap, opini dan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap hukum. *Legal culture* inilah yang akan menentukan apakah masyarakat akan mematuhi hukum atau justru mengabaikannya.

Ketiga elemen sistem hukum ini berjalan secara beriringan, berkaitan dan memiliki keterikatan mutlak antara satu sama lain. Kita tidak bisa mengharapakan hukum yang adil dan bermanfaat apabila hanya terpaku pada produk hukum nya saja, tanpa adanya struktur hukum yang menjalankannya dan budaya hukum masyarakat dalam menerimanya. Hubungan timbal balik antara struktur dan substansi hukum mampu melahirkan budaya hukum yang ideal, dan begitupun sebaliknya. Budaya hukum merupakan kunci dalam proses pembentukan dan penegakan hukum itu sendiri. Ketiga elemen tersebut pada akhirnya saling berkesinambungan, dan budaya hukum yang terbentuk merupakan cerminan dari bagaimana struktur dan substansi hukum berinteraksi dalam sistem tersebut.

Teori sistem hukum Lawrence Friedman ini sangat relevan dengan pengakuan terhadap penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia, terutama pasca Putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016 yang memperbolehkan para penghaya kepercayaan untuk mencantumkan agama “Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan YME” di kolom KTP. Secara substansi hukum, keberadaan penghayat kepercayaan sudah kuat sejak adanya Putusan MK tersebut, dimana secara *de jure* mereka telah memiliki hak yang sama dan setara dengan penganut agama mayoritas dalam pencatatan sipil (KTP dan KK). Namun dalam sisi struktur hukum, keberadaan penghayat kepercayaan masih mengalami tantangan khususnya dalam pelayanan administrasi kependudukan, dimana petugas Dukcapil masih memiliki kendala untuk implementasi putusan MK tersebut. Ketidaksiapan struktur hukum dalam hal ini Dukcapil akan menghambat dan mempersulit pemenuhan dimensi hak penghayat kepercayaan.

Selanjutnya dalam sisi budaya hukum (*legal culture*) memiliki dua budaya yang berbeda, yaitu internal dan eksternal. Budaya hukum internal mencakup sikap aparat penegak hukum/birokrasi, apabila petugas Dukcapil memiliki stigma bahwa penghayat kepercayaan tersebut bukan agama yang diakui atau menyimpang, maka petugas akan cenderung menghambat hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan yang sudah tercantum dalam undang-undang. Selanjutnya budaya hukum eksternal mencakup sikap masyarakat dimana mencerminkan bagaimana masyarakat menerima kehadiran penghayat kepercayaan dalam kehidupan sosial. Apabila budaya hukum masyarakat masih belum mengakui penghayat kepercayaan, maka penganut penghayat kepercayaan akan merasa takut untuk menunjukkan identitas dirinya.

Fenomena penolakan pemakaman terhadap penganut penghayat kepercayaan di Kabupaten Pati tersebut merupakan cerminan dari budaya hukum (*legal culture*) Friedman, fenomena tersebut menunjukkan kegagalan sistem hukum dalam mengintegrasikan nilai kesetaraan ditingkat masyarakat. Meskipun secara substansi hukum negara telah memberikan hak dan pelayanan yang setara, namun budaya hukum masyarakat masih intoleran dan bertindak sebagai penghambat utama. Budaya hukum di Pati tersebut seolah menghadirkan ‘hukum sendiri’ yang mengabaikan putusan MK, dimana identitas agama mayoritas dijadikan standar untuk pemakanan umum. Hal ini membuktikan bahwa tanpa budaya hukum yang mendukung, Putusan MK dalam mengakui keberadaan penghayat kepercayaan hanyalah sekedar produk hukum yang tidak memiliki kekuatan untuk melindungi hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan ditengah kehidupan masyarakat.

Penyebab Implementasi Putusan MK masih Terkendala

During Banyaknya kasus diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan dalam berbagai ruang lingkup, menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan pemerintah yang telah ada belum cukup efektif dalam melindungi hak penghayat kepercayaan. Meskipun status hukum dan pengakuan terhadap penghayat kepercayaan dalam Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi No.97/PUU-XIV/2016

telah ada, realitas dilapangan masih dijumpai banyak diskriminasi terhadap kelompok penghayat kepercayaan.

Teori kewargaan dimensi hak Marshall (1950) mengungkapkan bahwa negara harus memberikan jaminan bagi tiap warga untuk bisa mengakses hak secara adil. Dalam perspektif T.H. Marshall kewargaan yang adil sangat bergantung pada dukungan instansi-instansi yang menjalankan setiap dimensi hak. Marshall menegaskan bahwa lembaga yang bergerak dan berperan dalam menjamin hak sipil adalah lembaga peradilan, hak politik melalui lembaga perwakilan, dan hak sosial melalui lembaga pendidikan serta pelayanan sosial. Secara teoritis, Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi (MK) telah menuntaskan kewajiban negara pada dimensi hak sipil melalui peradilan tertinggi. Namun demikian, peneliti menilai bahwa terdapat hambatan sinergis antar lembaga dalam pemenuhan hal lain bagi penghayat kepercayaan.

Realita yang di hadapi oleh penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia saat ini, implementasi Putusan MK terkendala karena adanya lembaga birokrasi yang masih melakukan tindakan diskriminatif. Kerangka teori Marshall, institusi sosial terutama sekolah dan Dikemendiknas seharusnya berfungsi sebagai sarana untuk penyaluran pemenuhan hak sosial. Namun di lapangan, lembaga-lembaga ini justru menjadi lokasi terjadinya diskriminasi yang menghalangi penghayat kepercayaan untuk mendapatkan kesetaraan. Peneliti menilai bahwa kendala implementasi Putusan MK terjadi karena birokrasi di Indonesia masih terpaku pada aturan yang lama yang diskriminatif.

Adapun salah satu penyebab implementasi putusan MK masih terkendala ialah rumitnya aspek pengurusan administrasi kependudukan, penghayat kepercayaan kerap diwajibkan untuk terdaftar dalam organisasi kepercayaan resmi agar dapat diakui dan memperoleh hak administratif seperti KTP dan KK (Abdali, 2022). Aturan ini menimbulkan diskriminasi karena memaksa penghayat kepercayaan untuk bergabung dalam organisasi, padahal tidak semua penghayat memiliki afiliasi organisasi atau berkeinginan untuk bergabung dengan organisasi. Akibatnya, hak atas identitas kependudukan yang seharusnya bersifat individual justru menjadi bergantung pada pengakuan organisasi, hal ini bertentangan dengan prinsip kesetaraan warga di depan hukum.

Selain itu, petugas administrasi yang kurang kompeten hingga saat ini masih banyak ditemui dilapangan. Petugas administrasi yang belum memahami secara utuh ketentuan hukum terkait pengurusan catatan kependudukan khususnya dalam pencantuman kolom agama "Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan YME", akan mempersulit penghayat kepercayaan untuk mencantumkan identitas agama secara sah. Kurangnya pemahaman ini berdampak pada terhambatnya penghayat kepercayaan dalam mencantumkan identitas agama secara sah dalam dokumen kependudukan.

Belum terintegrasinya layanan pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan ikut serta menjadi penyebab Putusan MK masih terkendala. Sektor pendidikan meskipun pemerintah telah mengeluarkan UU No 20 Tahun 2003 Pasal 5 Ayat 1 dan Pasal 5 Ayat 3 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, yang menerangkan bahwa setiap warga negara berhak untuk mendapatkan pendidikan yang berkualitas tanpa diskriminasi, praktiknya penghayat kepercayaan masih kerap mengalami perlakuan tidak setara. Salah satu penyebab utama ialah belum terintegrasinya layanan pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan kedalam sistem pendidikan nasional secara menyeluruh. Ketidadaan kurikulum, modul pembelajaran, serta tenaga pendidik penghayat kepercayaan yang diakui secara formal menyebabkan sekolah-sekolah belum mampu mengakomodasi kebutuhan peserta didik penghayat kepercayaan secara adil. Akibatnya, siswa penghayat kepercayaan sering kali dipaksa untuk mengikuti pendidikan agama lain atau tidak mendapatkan layanan pendidikan agama yang sesuai dengan identitasnya. Temuan ini semakin diperkuat oleh hasil penelitian Sitompul et al., (2022) yang menunjukkan bahwa belum adanya sistem sertifikasi, pelatihan serta pengaturan status dan kesejahteraan tenaga pendidik penghayat kepercayaan yang turut memperparah ketidaksetaraan layanan pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan.

Minimnya sosialisasi terkait Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 kepada masyarakat ikut serta melemahnya implemtasi putusan MK. Diskriminasi yang diterima oleh penghayat kepercayaan saat ini tidak terlepas dari minimnya sosialisasi putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 kepada masyarakat luas. Kurangnya penyebarluasan informasi mengenai pengakum hukum terhadap penghayat kepercayaan berkontribusi pada kuatnya stigma negatif di masyarakat yang kerap memandang penghayat kepercayaan sebagai kelompok diluar agama resmi yang diakui negara. Ketidaktahuan masyarakat akan hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan yang telah dijamin oleh negara menyebabkan praktik diskriminasi terus berlanjut dalam kehidupan masyarakat. Dengan demikian, lemahnya sosialiasi putusan MK ini menjadi salah satu faktor yang menyebabkan tindakan diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan masih terus berlangsung hingga saat ini.

Selanjutnya, lemahnya penegakan hukum terhadap kekerasan dan tindakan diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan membuat penghayat kepercayaan terus mengalami diskriminasi. Hingga saat ini berbagai bentuk kekerasan verbal atau fisik terhadap kelompok penghayat masih terjadi. Menurut laporan komnas perempuan yang diambil dari Jurnal Perempuan (2016) terdapat lebih dari 100 kasus diskriminasi dan kekerasan terhadap perempuan dari kelompok penghayat perempuan yang belum ditangani secara hukum. Hal ini menunjukkan lemahnya penegakan hukum di Indonesia bagi penghayat kepercayaan sehingga diskriminasi terus terjadi. Apabila pelaku kekerasan tidak ditindak secara hukum dan diskriminasi terus dinormalisasi, maka hal ini akan membuat penghayat kepercayaan tetap berada dalam kondisi rentan dan tidak memperoleh jaminan akan rasa aman sebagai bagian dari hak kewargaan mereka.

Berbagai kondisi yang telah disebutkan diatas merupakan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan terus berlangsung hingga saat ini. Sulitnya akses terhadap administrasi kependudukan, petugas yang kurang kompeten, belum terintegrasinya layanan pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan hingga lemahnya penegakan hukum terhadap kekerasan dan diskriminasi bagi penghayat kepercayaan menunjukkan bahwa peran negara untuk menjamin terpenuhinya hak sipil, hak politik dan hak sosial bagi penghayat kepercayaan belum sepenuhnya hadir secara efektif di tengah kehidupan Masyarakat.

Simpulan

Penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia memiliki perjalanan panjang dalam mendapatkan keadilan, dimana melalui Putusan MK No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 menjadi tonggak penting dalam pengakuan hak penghayat kepercayaan sebagai bagian sah dari warga negara Indonesia. Analisis teoritik terhadap teori kewargaan dimensi hak T.H. Marshall secara keseluruhan menunjukkan bahwa penghayat kepercayaan di Indonesia belum sepenuhnya mendapatkan dimensi hak. Putusan MK No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 secara teoritis merupakan upaya negara untuk memenuhi dimensi hak sipil bagi penghayat kepercayaan. Implementasi di lapangan menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan antara perolehan hak sipil yang sudah didapatkan oleh penghayat kepercayaan dengan realitas hak sosial di lapangan. Kerangka pemikiran T.H. Marshall dalam *civil right* (Putusan MK No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016) seharusnya berfungsi sebagai landasan bagi penghayat kepercayaan untuk menikmati hak lainnya seperti hak sosial (pelayanan publik dan akses pendidikan). Namun, fakta menunjukkan bahwa penghayat kepercayaan masih mengalami hambatan dalam bentuk diskriminasi diantaranya diskriminasi administrasi, pelayanan dari struktur birokrasi, serta penolakan yang kerap terjadi di tengah masyarakat. Diskriminasi tersebut dipengaruhi oleh kaku nya sistem birokrasi yang ada dan hadirnya iron cage yang membuat manusia tunduk terhadap aturan yang dibuat dan melengserkan *pemenuhan* hak asasi manusia yang selayaknya didapatkan oleh setiap warga.

Gagalnya implementasi *de facto* terhadap hak-hak penghayat kepercayaan khususnya setelah adanya Putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016, dapat dijelaskan dengan menggunakan teori sistem hukum Lawrence Friedman yang memiliki tiga elemen utama untuk menjalankan

sistem hukum yaitu: substansi hukum (*legal substance*) yang merupakan produk hukum yang dihasilkan, dalam konteks penghayat kepercayaan yaitu Putusan MK No 97/PUU-XIV/2016. Selanjutnya struktur hukum (*legal structure*) yang merupakan lembaga penggerak produk hukum tersebut seperti pengadilan, kejaksaan, hingga Dukcapil. Selanjutnya yang terakhir yaitu budaya hukum (*legal culture*) yang merupakan elemen paling krusial yang mencakup nilai, sikap, opini dan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap hukum. Dalam konteks penghayat kepercayaan diperlukan keterkaitan yang berkesinambungan antara ketiga elemen tersebut agar diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan dapat dihindari.

Dimensi hak kewargaan seharusnya mengharuskan penghayat kepercayaan untuk memperoleh hak sipil, sosial dan politik yang sama seperti warga negara lainnya. Namun demikian, hadirnya Putusan MK No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 masih membuat diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan terus terjadi. Adapun penyebab putusan MK terus menghadapi kendala disebabkan oleh aspek administrasi kependudukan yang rumit, petugas administrasi yang kurang kompeten, belum terintegrasinya layanan pendidikan bagi penghayat kepercayaan, minimnya sosialisasi terkait Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi No.97/PUU-XIV/2016 kepada masyarakat, hingga lemahnya penegakan hukum terhadap kekerasan dan tindakan diskriminasi terhadap penghayat kepercayaan.

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