

Learning-Based Maritime Governance: Institutional Synergy and Maritime Domain Awareness in the Waters of Karimun Besar Island, Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia's maritime identity as the world's largest archipelagic state places it at the center of global maritime trade and security dynamics. However, fragmented coordination among its maritime enforcement agencies—namely BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD—continues to limit effective governance, particularly in strategic regions such as Karimun Besar Island within the Malacca Strait. This study examines the problem of institutional synergy and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through a learning-based governance perspective, employing a qualitative document analysis and triangulation approach. The research integrates three learning theories—Connectivism, Constructivism, and Social Learning Theory—to explore how inter-agency cooperation can evolve through digital connectivity, shared meaning, and behavioral adaptation. The findings reveal that Indonesia's maritime security governance remains hindered by overlapping mandates, unintegrated information systems, and limited interoperability. Applying learning-based principles, the study argues that improving maritime synergy requires not only legal harmonization but also institutional learning through continuous data exchange, joint training, and shared operational frameworks. The paper proposes a National Maritime Security Coordination Framework that emphasizes data integration, collaborative learning, and adaptive policy reform. Strengthening institutional synergy and MDA through a learning-oriented approach is essential for realizing Indonesia's vision as a Global Maritime Fulcrum, ensuring that its maritime

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governance becomes more coordinated, sustainable, and intelligence-driven.

Keywords: learning-based governance, maritime security, institutional synergy, interagency cooperation, Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA); BAKAMLA; KPLP; POLAIRUD; Document Analysis;

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's maritime identity as the world's largest archipelagic state defines its geopolitical and strategic orientation as a maritime nation. With more than 17,000 islands and vast sea areas connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia serves as a pivotal hub in global maritime trade and security (Bateman, 2016). Among its most strategic maritime zones is Karimun Besar Island, located in the Malacca Strait, one of the busiest and most vital sea lanes of communication in the world (Storey, 2017). This area not only represents Indonesia's economic and geopolitical importance but also faces increasing non-traditional maritime security challenges, including illegal fishing, smuggling, human trafficking, and natural resource exploitation (Bueger, 2015). These complex issues threaten not only Indonesia's maritime sovereignty but also its environmental and socio-economic stability (Winarno & Yusgiantoro, 2021).

The Malacca Strait's geopolitical position makes Karimun Besar a focal point for both regional cooperation and security tension. The dense flow of international trade and energy transport through this corridor exposes Indonesia's border waters to potential transnational crimes and resource depletion (Agastia, 2017). However, efforts to safeguard this maritime domain remain constrained by institutional fragmentation among key enforcement agencies—namely the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA), the Sea and Coast Guard Unit (KPLP), and the Water and Air Police (POLAIRUD). Despite having complementary mandates, overlapping jurisdictions and the absence of integrated command mechanisms have resulted in duplication of patrols, inefficient resource allocation, and weak maritime domain awareness (MDA) (Afriansyah, Imanuel, & Darmawan, 2024).

From a governance perspective, Indonesia's maritime security architecture remains divided under multiple ministries and agencies with differing legal authorities and operational priorities. BAKAMLA, established under Presidential Regulation No. 178 of 2014, is tasked as the national coordinator for maritime security; however, KPLP under the Ministry of Transportation and POLAIRUD under the National Police continue to operate independently (Laksamana, 2022).



This fragmented command structure leads to a lack of real-time information exchange and complicates interagency coordination in addressing maritime threats. As Beckman (2019) and Laksamana (2022) note, the overlapping legal mandates among Indonesia's maritime enforcement bodies have become a persistent obstacle to achieving coherent maritime governance.

The challenge of institutional synergy in maritime security reflects the broader issue of governance integration in Indonesia's maritime domain. Effective Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) requires not only technological infrastructure—such as radar, satellite, and AIS systems—but also an organizational framework that enables data sharing, joint operations, and unified decision-making across agencies (Yuniarto, Santosa, & Nugroho, 2019). Without such integration, surveillance and enforcement efforts risk remaining fragmented, undermining national objectives such as the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) vision (Winarno & Yusgiantoro, 2021).

This study seeks to analyze the institutional synergy among BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD in preventing the exploitation of natural resources in the strategic waters of Karimun Besar. By employing a qualitative document-based analysis and triangulation approach, the research examines how Indonesia's legal frameworks, institutional coordination mechanisms, and technological systems interact to shape the effectiveness of maritime governance (Creswell, 2018). The findings aim to contribute to theoretical and policy discussions on maritime security governance and to propose a National Maritime Security Coordination Framework that enhances interagency collaboration, information integration, and operational efficiency.

Ultimately, strengthening institutional synergy and MDA represents a critical step toward realizing Indonesia's aspiration to become a Global Maritime Fulcrum—a nation that not only commands its maritime territory but also manages it sustainably, collaboratively, and securely in accordance with international norms and national interests (Popescu & Gasparotti, 2022; Beckman, 2019).

OVERVIEW OF CONNECTIVISM

Connectivism is a modern learning theory that explains how knowledge is created and shared through networks of people, technology, and information (Siemens, 2005). It differs from older theories like behaviorism or constructivism because it views learning as something that happens not only inside individuals but also across digital and institutional systems. In other words, learning occurs through connections—between people, data, and organizations—that allow knowledge to flow and grow. In maritime governance, this perspective helps explain how



institutions such as BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD can coordinate more effectively through digital connectivity and shared information systems.

According to Siemens (2005), connectivism suggests that “knowledge exists in networks.” This means the strength of an organization’s learning depends on how well it can build and maintain links with others. In the maritime field, these networks include information-sharing platforms, joint surveillance systems, and communication channels between agencies. When these networks are integrated, agencies can detect and respond faster to threats such as illegal fishing, smuggling, or unregulated resource exploitation (Bueger & Edmunds, 2020). However, when the networks are disconnected, each agency works in isolation, creating gaps in Indonesia’s Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

Downes (2012) adds that connectivism is about recognizing and developing patterns of connection. This means that Indonesia’s maritime agencies need more than structural reform—they need data fluidity. Effective coordination depends on how easily information can move between BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD. For example, if BAKAMLA’s radar data or POLAIRUD’s enforcement reports are not linked with KPLP’s navigation safety data, the system cannot provide a full picture of what is happening at sea.

Technology also plays an essential role in connectivism. As Heyes (2012) explains, digital systems can extend human cognition. In maritime governance, technologies such as the Automatic Identification System (AIS), satellite surveillance, and coastal radar networks serve as “extensions” of institutional knowledge. These technologies allow agencies to analyze maritime activities together and make informed decisions, supporting Indonesia’s vision of becoming a Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) (Winarno & Yusciantoro, 2021).

Laksamana (2022) notes that one of Indonesia’s biggest challenges is the lack of interoperability between maritime agencies. Applying connectivist principles means building a shared learning network, where agencies exchange information and learn from each other’s experiences. This approach shifts maritime security from a traditional command structure to a collaborative learning ecosystem, where knowledge and decision-making are distributed through data, networks, and human cooperation.

In summary, connectivism highlights that Indonesia’s maritime security depends on its ability to connect and learn collectively. Through networked learning and digital integration, institutions can strengthen coordination, improve situational awareness, and achieve more effective maritime governance.



OVERVIEW OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes how knowledge is actively built through experience, reflection, and interaction with the surrounding environment (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). Instead of viewing knowledge as something that is simply transferred from teacher to learner, constructivism sees learning as a process where individuals construct meaning based on their personal and social experiences. This perspective is useful in understanding how different maritime institutions in Indonesia—such as BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD—develop their understanding of maritime security and build coordination mechanisms through shared experiences and institutional interactions.

In the context of maritime governance, constructivism helps explain that institutional behavior is not determined only by laws and regulations, but also by shared perceptions, norms, and identities (Wendt, 1992). Each maritime institution constructs its own interpretation of what “security” means. For example, BAKAMLA may define it through national surveillance, KPLP through navigation safety, and POLAIRUD through law enforcement at sea. These differences influence how they act and cooperate in daily operations. Without a shared understanding, coordination can remain limited even if formal legal frameworks exist (Laksamana, 2022).

Constructivism also highlights the role of social interaction and communication in creating shared meaning. When maritime officers from different agencies engage in joint patrols, inter-agency meetings, or shared training, they exchange not only technical information but also perspectives and values. This continuous process of interaction allows institutions to co-create new norms of cooperation and improve their mutual understanding. Such social learning is crucial for building effective synergy in maritime security (Bandura, 1977; Pahl-Wostl, 2009).

Furthermore, constructivist thinking supports a bottom-up approach to policy development, where local knowledge and field experience contribute to institutional learning. For example, lessons from maritime patrols in Karimun Besar Island can inform national strategies by showing how environmental, social, and security dimensions are interconnected. These real-life experiences help policymakers design more adaptive and inclusive frameworks for maritime governance, aligning with Indonesia’s vision as a Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) (Winarno & Yusgiantoro, 2021).

In short, constructivism shows that strengthening institutional synergy in Indonesia’s maritime sector requires more than new policies—it requires the construction of shared meaning, trust, and collaboration among agencies. By understanding how knowledge and identity are built through interaction, the government can create a more cohesive maritime security community



capable of facing complex, non-traditional threats at sea.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1977), explains that people learn not only through direct experience but also by observing and imitating others. This process, known as observational learning, highlights how behavior is shaped through social influence, modeling, and reinforcement. The theory bridges cognitive and behavioral perspectives by suggesting that learning happens within a social environment where individuals observe, interpret, and replicate the behaviors of others. In the context of maritime governance, this idea is highly relevant because institutions—like BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD—learn from each other's experiences through cooperation, shared missions, and repeated interaction.

Bandura (1986) later expanded his theory through the concept of Triadic Reciprocal Determinism, which shows that learning is shaped by the dynamic interaction between behavior, environment, and personal factors. Applied to Indonesia's maritime institutions, this means that organizational culture, operational practices, and leadership attitudes influence how each agency adapts and learns. For example, when BAKAMLA successfully uses new surveillance technology, other agencies may adopt similar practices after seeing its effectiveness. This process represents institutional modeling, where success stories become informal lessons across organizations.

Social Learning Theory also emphasizes the role of communication and shared observation. In joint maritime patrols or training exercises, officers observe the actions of other units, compare outcomes, and gradually internalize effective practices. These interactions help develop a shared sense of professionalism and cooperation. Through this continuous cycle of observation, reflection, and feedback, agencies strengthen their coordination and reduce operational fragmentation (Pahl-Wostl, 2009).

Reinforcement is another key element of this theory. According to Rebellon (2006), reinforcement does not only mean rewards or punishments but also the social approval that comes from peers and institutions. In maritime cooperation, when agencies are recognized for successful joint operations or efficient coordination, positive reinforcement encourages others to follow similar behaviors. Over time, this shared reinforcement builds a culture of collaboration and mutual trust, essential for maintaining effective Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

Moreover, Social Learning Theory supports the idea that knowledge transfer in maritime governance is both formal and informal. While formal training provides technical skills, informal social learning—through field experience, mentoring, and interagency dialogue—plays a bigger



role in shaping adaptive behavior and problem-solving. For example, local knowledge shared by coastal officers in Karimun Besar can influence national-level decision-making by providing real-world insights into illegal resource exploitation and security threats.

In conclusion, Social Learning Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how Indonesia's maritime institutions can enhance synergy through continuous learning and shared experience. By promoting observational learning, communication, and reinforcement across agencies, Indonesia can strengthen institutional coordination, improve adaptive capacity, and build a more cohesive maritime security community.

THEORETICAL INSIGHT

The three learning theories—Connectivism, Constructivism, and Social Learning Theory—together form a strong foundation for understanding how knowledge and coordination evolve within Indonesia's maritime governance system. Each theory focuses on different aspects of learning and interaction, but all share a common view: that learning is a social, dynamic, and adaptive process shaped by relationships, environment, and experience (Bandura, 1977; Siemens, 2005; Wendt, 1992). When applied to institutional synergy among BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD, these theories explain how collaboration, shared understanding, and digital integration can strengthen maritime domain awareness (MDA) and national security governance.

From a connectivist perspective, knowledge flows through networks of institutions, technologies, and individuals. The effectiveness of maritime cooperation depends on the ability of these agencies to connect their data systems and exchange real-time information (Siemens, 2005; Downes, 2012). This network-based learning process transforms governance into a living system—where new insights are continuously generated and shared. In practice, this means integrating surveillance data, vessel tracking information, and operational intelligence across agencies to enhance Indonesia's situational awareness in critical areas such as Karimun Besar Island.

From a constructivist viewpoint, institutions learn by interpreting their environment and constructing shared meanings of "security" and "coordination." Each maritime agency develops its own identity and perception based on its operational experiences, but effective synergy emerges only when these perceptions are aligned through communication and reflection (Wendt, 1992; Piaget, 1972). Joint training programs, inter-agency dialogues, and collaborative policy-making can help harmonize institutional values, leading to mutual understanding and collective responsibility in maritime enforcement.



Meanwhile, Social Learning Theory adds the behavioral dimension to this process. It shows that institutions, like individuals, adapt by observing successful practices, imitating effective strategies, and reinforcing positive outcomes (Bandura, 1986; Pahl-Wostl, 2009). For example, when BAKAMLA demonstrates efficient patrol coordination or data-sharing mechanisms, other agencies can learn and adopt these methods through observation and interaction. Over time, this cycle of learning by doing—combined with mutual feedback and reinforcement—creates an adaptive maritime security culture.

Integrating these three theories provides a comprehensive understanding of how knowledge, norms, and behaviors evolve collectively within maritime governance. Connectivism explains the flow of digital information, Constructivism describes the creation of shared meaning, and Social Learning Theory explains the behavioral adaptation that sustains institutional change. Together, they highlight that successful maritime coordination depends not only on structural reform but also on continuous learning, mutual trust, and the ability to transform experience into policy innovation.

In short, theoretical insight from these frameworks suggests that building effective institutional synergy in Indonesia's maritime sector requires both technological integration and social adaptation. By linking data systems, aligning institutional values, and fostering shared learning, agencies can move beyond fragmented governance toward a truly collaborative and knowledge-driven Maritime Domain Awareness framework.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of institutional synergy among BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD reveals that Indonesia's maritime governance system is still undergoing a critical transition—from a fragmented, ministry-based structure to a more integrated and knowledge-driven network. The application of learning theories such as Connectivism, Constructivism, and Social Learning Theory provides valuable insight into how inter-agency collaboration can evolve through digital connectivity, shared meaning, and continuous adaptation. These frameworks demonstrate that effective coordination in maritime security is not only a matter of legal alignment but also of institutional learning and cultural transformation.

From a connectivist perspective, Indonesia's maritime institutions can be understood as nodes within a complex information network. Their ability to prevent illegal resource exploitation in Karimun Besar Island depends on how effectively they share and process data across digital platforms. The existing gap in information exchange—where BAKAMLA's *Maritime Security*



Information System (MSIS), KPLP's navigational monitoring, and POLAIRUD's enforcement databases operate separately—illustrates weak network connectivity. This disconnection limits Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), making it difficult to detect and respond to real-time threats. Strengthening digital interconnectivity, therefore, aligns directly with connectivist principles: the creation of *knowledge through connection* (Siemens, 2005; Downes, 2012). Establishing an integrated data-sharing hub or Joint Maritime Operation Center (JMOC) would transform these fragmented networks into an interactive learning ecosystem.

From a constructivist viewpoint, each agency's interpretation of "security" and "coordination" is shaped by its institutional experience and cultural identity. BAKAMLA perceives security through the lens of surveillance and coordination, KPLP through navigation safety and maritime regulation, while POLAIRUD focuses on law enforcement and investigation. These differing perceptions often lead to overlapping operations and inconsistent priorities. Constructivism suggests that shared understanding must be constructed through interaction—via joint exercises, regular communication forums, and inter-agency policy dialogues. Through such engagement, agencies can co-create a unified meaning of maritime security, aligning operational goals with national interests and the broader Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) vision.

Meanwhile, Social Learning Theory explains how institutional behavior evolves through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. In practice, when one agency successfully implements an innovation—such as real-time vessel tracking or integrated patrol scheduling—other agencies are likely to emulate it after witnessing its success. This process fosters a learning-by-doing environment, where practical knowledge spreads horizontally across institutions. Continuous joint training, inter-agency mentorship, and cross-assignment programs could formalize this learning cycle, ensuring that lessons from successful patrols or investigations are captured and replicated. Reinforcement through recognition, shared rewards, and joint achievements further strengthens collective motivation and trust (Bandura, 1986; Rebellon, 2006).

Integrating these three theoretical lenses reveals that Indonesia's maritime security challenges are both structural and behavioral. Legally, overlapping jurisdictions create ambiguity in authority; operationally, different agencies rely on separate technologies; and culturally, inter-agency collaboration remains limited by institutional egos and sectoral mandates. Addressing these challenges requires a shift from bureaucratic coordination to networked collaboration, where learning and adaptation become ongoing processes. This approach supports the establishment of a National Maritime Security Coordination Framework that institutionalizes digital data integration, shared situational awareness, and inter-agency learning mechanisms.



Furthermore, the theories highlight that sustainable maritime governance depends on cultivating a learning culture within institutions. Instead of relying solely on command hierarchies, agencies must learn to collaborate through information networks, collective interpretation, and shared behavioral norms. As Popescu and Gasparotti (2022) emphasize, hybrid analytical frameworks such as SWOT–AHP can be applied to evaluate institutional strengths and prioritize strategies for synergy. By combining theoretical learning principles with empirical policy tools, Indonesia can design an adaptive governance model that evolves alongside changing maritime threats.

In essence, the discussion demonstrates that Indonesia’s path toward effective Maritime Domain Awareness requires not only advanced technology and legal harmonization but also a transformation in how institutions learn, connect, and cooperate. Applying learning theories to maritime security governance provides both a conceptual and operational foundation for achieving Indonesia’s long-term goal as a Global Maritime Fulcrum—a nation that safeguards its seas through integration, innovation, and institutional learning.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Indonesia’s maritime governance continues to struggle with institutional fragmentation and limited synergy among BAKAMLA, KPLP, and POLAIRUD, particularly in addressing non-traditional maritime threats in the waters of Karimun Besar Island. Although each agency has a clear mandate, overlapping jurisdictions, unintegrated information systems, and inconsistent coordination still weaken operational effectiveness and reduce national Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). From a theoretical standpoint, the combination of Connectivism, Constructivism, and Social Learning Theory provides valuable insight into how coordination and learning can evolve within maritime institutions. Connectivism underscores the importance of digital connectivity and data integration to strengthen information exchange between agencies, while Constructivism explains how shared meanings and mutual understanding can be built through communication, interaction, and institutional experience. Social Learning Theory complements both by illustrating how agencies can learn from one another through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, transforming best practices into common standards. Therefore, improving maritime synergy requires more than legal harmonization; it demands continuous institutional learning and adaptation. Strengthening data-sharing mechanisms, enhancing digital interoperability, and fostering inter-agency communication will help create a more cohesive operational environment. Establishing a Joint Maritime Operation Center (JMOC)



in strategic locations like Karimun Besar, combined with standardizing interagency training and protocols, could institutionalize collaboration and real-time decision-making. Ultimately, the success of Indonesia's maritime security governance depends on the ability of its institutions to learn collectively, trust one another, and act as a unified system that aligns with the nation's vision as a Global Maritime Fulcrum—one that manages its seas sustainably, collaboratively, and intelligently in accordance with national and international norms.

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