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Actor Contestation in Coastal Development Policy Formulation: A Systematic Literature Review of Political, Institutional, and Fiscal Dynamics in Indonesia

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Systematic Review

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Abstract

Coastal development policy is formulated in arenas where governmental agencies, elected officials, state-owned enterprises, investors, civil-society organizations, and coastal communities compete to define problems, control spatial and fiscal resources, and determine distributive priorities. This article systematically synthesizes a 50-record corpus identified in an uploaded Scopus AI report to explain how actor contestation shapes coastal development policy, with Indonesia as the principal analytical setting. The review applies a PRISMA-informed but explicitly adapted procedure because the source report does not disclose the original search string, duplicate-removal log, excluded records, or full study-level data. Thematic coding focuses on actors, resources, arenas, mechanisms, institutional moderators, and policy outcomes. Six recurrent mechanisms emerge: bureaucratic bargaining, jurisdictional conflict, state-corporate coalition formation, party-system and distributive competition, technocratic exclusion, and participatory counter-mobilization. Contestation is most consequential at the intersections of spatial planning, licensing, budgeting, and project implementation. Decentralization expands local discretion but also fragments authority and creates opportunities for elite capture, while institutional capacity, transparency, participation, and horizontal coordination moderate whether conflict produces negotiated integration or persistent policy dissonance. The evidence base is strongest on implementation and integrated coastal management, but remains comparatively weak on causal links between political competition, actor power, and coastal budget allocation. The review proposes an actor-contestation framework and a research agenda centered on process tracing, network analysis, comparative subnational design, and the integration of political economy with fiscal and spatial data.

1 Introduction

Coastal development is not a neutral technical exercise. Decisions concerning reclamation, port expansion, shoreline protection, marine spatial planning, fisheries infrastructure, tourism, settlement upgrading, and climate adaptation redistribute land, access, public expenditure, environmental risk, and development opportunities. Because these decisions create concentrated benefits and diffuse or unevenly distributed costs, they attract actors with different legal mandates, material interests, knowledge claims, and political constituencies. The central analytical problem is therefore not only whether coastal policies are technically integrated, but also how competing actors gain access to decision arenas, mobilize resources, construct coalitions, and shape the substantive content of policy.

Indonesia is a particularly important setting for this question. Decentralization has broadened the formal role of provincial and municipal governments, yet coastal development remains embedded in overlapping sectoral mandates, national infrastructure priorities, local electoral incentives, state-owned enterprise strategies, and community claims to livelihoods and customary space. The uploaded Scopus AI synthesis identifies ministries and local agencies such as PUPR, BAPPEDA, spatial-planning offices, and fisheries offices; state-linked corporate actors such as PT Pelindo; local executives and legislatures; investors; fishers; non-governmental organizations; and community groups. It also highlights recurrent problems of policy misalignment, power asymmetry, weak transparency, and limited participation. These

observations indicate a fragmented policy system in which authority is distributed but not necessarily coordinated.

Existing research is dispersed across political science, public administration, coastal management, development studies, planning, environmental governance, and public finance. Coastal-management studies frequently emphasize institutional integration and implementation, whereas public-administration and political-economy studies examine decentralization, fiscal incentives, party fragmentation, and distributive politics. The result is a conceptual separation between the governance of coastal space and the politics of resource allocation. A systematic synthesis is needed to connect these literatures and clarify the causal pathways through which actor contestation influences policy formulation.

This review addresses four questions: (1) Which actors are represented in the literature on coastal development policy and what resources do they mobilize? (2) In which policy arenas does contestation occur and through what mechanisms? (3) Which institutional and socio-political conditions moderate the effects of contestation on policy outcomes? and (4) What theoretical and empirical gaps should guide future research on Indonesian coastal development?

The article makes three contributions. First, it reframes coastal governance as a sequence of contested arenas rather than a single coordination problem. Second, it integrates actor power, multi-level governance, political fragmentation, public budgeting, and participation in one analytical framework. Third, it establishes a transparent boundary between direct Indonesian coastal evidence, contextual evidence on Indonesian institutions and Southeast Asian coastal governance, and analogical evidence from other jurisdictions. This distinction is essential because several claims in the source synthesis—especially those concerning party fragmentation and expenditure—derive partly from non-coastal or non-Indonesian studies and should be treated as propositions for testing rather than settled causal findings.

2 Conceptual framing: actors, arenas, and policy resources

2.1 Actor contestation in policy formulation

Actor contestation refers to structured competition and negotiation among organizations or groups seeking to influence policy agendas, policy instruments, spatial allocations, budgets, and implementation rules. Contestation may be overt, as in litigation, protest, intergovernmental dispute, or legislative bargaining, but it may also be embedded in administrative routines, technical standards, information control, sequencing of planning documents, and selective participation. The key unit of analysis is therefore the interaction between actors and institutional venues rather than the preferences of a single dominant organization.

The corpus supports an actor-centered approach. Stakeholder analysis in Semarang identifies differentiated actor positions and power relations (Kismartini et al. 2023), while research on waterfront megaprojects and reclamation shows that urban development projects become conflict-filled when

public authority, corporate investment, and social-environmental claims intersect (Pütz and Rehner 2008; Adharani et al. 2019). Studies of technocrats and residents further demonstrate that conflict is shaped not only by substantive interests but also by decision procedures and the recognition of local knowledge (Nath et al. 2022).

2.2 Multi-level governance and institutional fragmentation

Coastal development is governed through multiple territorial and sectoral levels. Vertical fragmentation arises when national, provincial, and local institutions possess partially overlapping mandates or inconsistent planning and budgeting cycles. Horizontal fragmentation arises when agencies at the same governmental level pursue sector-specific objectives with limited mechanisms for joint decision-making. Classic and comparative coastal-governance studies repeatedly identify integration and intergovernmental coordination as central institutional challenges (Lowry and Eichenberg 1986; Lowry et al. 2005; Martino 2016; Petersohn and Behnke 2025).

In Indonesia, decentralization creates both opportunity and risk. Local discretion can improve contextual responsiveness, but unequal fiscal capacity, bureaucratic capability, and bargaining power generate spatially uneven outcomes (Lewis 2005; Talitha et al. 2020; Setiawan et al. 2022; Siburian 2020). For archipelagic and island settings, uniform decentralization may be institutionally mismatched, strengthening the case for asymmetric arrangements (Jamil et al. 2024). The relevant question is therefore not whether authority is centralized or decentralized in the abstract, but whether authority, resources, and accountability are aligned at the scale of the policy problem.

2.3 Political economy, budgeting, and participation

Budget formulation is a critical arena because fiscal allocations translate political priorities into material interventions. The corpus includes direct evidence on Indonesian local expenditure and broader comparative studies of party fragmentation, interjurisdictional competition, and distributive politics (Bischoff and Prasetyia 2019; Jimenez 2014; Meseguer and Aparicio 2012; Stokan and Deslatte 2019; Su et al. 2021). These studies suggest mechanisms through which electoral and party configurations may affect spending, but only a limited subset directly addresses Indonesian municipalities and none, in the supplied corpus, offers a dedicated causal test of coastal-development budgets. Accordingly, the relationship between party structure and coastal spending should be framed as an under-tested hypothesis.

Participation is both a normative requirement and a political resource. It can broaden the information available to decision makers, enhance legitimacy, and counterbalance concentrated interests. Yet participation may be symbolic, selectively designed, or undermined by distrust and unequal capacity (Soma and Vatn 2009; Areia et al. 2023; Bratton and Wade 2026). Budget transparency and information disclosure similarly affect whether organized communities can monitor priorities and challenge elite bargains (Carlitz 2013; Liuta and Mershchii 2019).

3 Methods

3.1 Review design and source corpus

The review is designed as a qualitative systematic literature review and thematic evidence synthesis. Reporting is informed by PRISMA 2020, which provides a checklist and flow-diagram architecture for transparent systematic-review reporting (Page et al. 2021). However, the procedure is necessarily adapted because the supplied source is a Scopus AI-generated synthesis rather than a raw Scopus export. Elsevier's current content policy explicitly advises researchers to cite and verify the original papers rather than treating AI-generated Scopus responses as citable evidence. Consistent with that principle, the present manuscript uses the AI report only to define and organize the corpus and cites the original studies listed in the report.

The uploaded report was generated on 15 July 2026 and contains 50 references. It states a study scope of 2010–2023, but its bibliography actually spans 1986–2026. The review therefore uses the bibliographic years of the listed records and flags the date-range inconsistency as a source limitation. Because the report does not include the exact natural-language prompt, Boolean search string, database filters, duplicate count, screening decisions, or excluded records, a conventional PRISMA identification-and-exclusion flow cannot be reconstructed.

Table 1
Review design and audit trail

Protocol element	Specification
Database/source	Scopus AI report supplied by the user; 50 cited records
Report date	15 July 2026
Actual bibliographic span	1986–2026
Unit of analysis	Individual cited publication
Core concepts	Actor contestation, policy formulation, coastal development, multi-level governance, budgeting, participation, institutional capacity
Coding dimensions	Actor; resource; arena; mechanism; institutional moderator; policy outcome; geography; evidence directness
Synthesis method	Narrative and thematic synthesis with an actor-centered institutional interpretation
Unavailable audit data	Original query, filters, duplicates, title/abstract exclusions, full-text exclusions, and study-level quality data
Recommended replication query	TITLE-ABS-KEY((coastal OR shoreline OR maritime OR "coastal zone" OR "marine spatial planning") AND (policy OR governance OR planning OR development) AND (actor* OR stakeholder* OR contest* OR conflict* OR power OR political OR interest*) AND (formulation OR agenda OR decision* OR budget* OR allocation) AND (Indonesia* OR "Southeast Asia"))

3.2 Eligibility, coding, and evidence directness

All 50 references were retained because each was explicitly presented by the source report as supporting at least one theme. Records were coded from the bibliographic title, publication venue, geographic context, and the thematic statements in the report. The coding framework distinguished six actor categories: (1) central-government ministries and national agencies; (2) provincial and local executive agencies; (3) legislatures, parties, and elected political elites; (4) state-owned enterprises and private investors; (5) civil-society organizations and knowledge intermediaries; and (6) coastal communities, fishers, and residents. Actor resources were coded as formal authority, fiscal control, technical expertise and information, control over land or permits, organizational access, electoral legitimacy, economic capital, or place-based knowledge.

Because full texts and abstracts were not available for systematic appraisal, the review does not assign conventional risk-of-bias scores. Instead, it uses an evidence-directness classification: Tier 1 includes studies directly focused on Indonesian coastal policy or governance; Tier 2 includes Indonesian institutional or fiscal studies and Southeast Asian coastal-governance studies that provide contextual mechanisms; and Tier 3 includes comparative or theoretical analogues from other jurisdictions. This is a relevance hierarchy, not a quality ranking.

3.3 Analytical procedure

The synthesis proceeded in three stages. First, descriptive mapping identified temporal, geographic, and thematic patterns. Second, open coding extracted recurring mechanisms of contestation. Third, axial coding linked mechanisms to institutional conditions and outcomes. The final framework treats policy formulation as a sequence of arenas—agenda setting, spatial planning and licensing, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring—within which actors deploy different resources. Cross-case interpretation was used to identify propositions that are strongly supported, contextually plausible, or presently under-tested in Indonesia.

3.4 Methodological limitations

The review has four limitations. First, the source corpus was generated by an AI interface and cannot substitute for a reproducible database search. Second, bibliographic metadata are incomplete and include truncated author lists; all references should be verified against an official Scopus, Crossref, or publisher export before journal submission. Third, several records are indirect analogues rather than direct studies of Indonesian coastal policy formulation. Fourth, the corpus is dominated by implementation, integrated coastal management, and institutional design, which limits causal inference about agenda setting, coalition formation, and budget allocation. The manuscript should therefore be read as a rigorous structured synthesis and theory-building review, not as a completed meta-analysis.

4 Results

4.1 Profile and structure of the evidence base

The 50 records span 1986–2026. Publication is heavily concentrated in the most recent period: 22 records were published between 2020 and 2026, compared with 4 between 1986 and 1999. This pattern reflects growing interest in decentralization, blue-economy policy, marine spatial planning, participation, and integrated coastal governance. At the same time, foundational coordination and institutional-design studies from the 1980s and 1990s remain prominent in the conceptual architecture of the field.

Table 2
Composition and analytical reach of the corpus

Corpus segment	n	Primary analytical contribution
Direct Indonesian coastal studies	10	Stakeholder relations, spatial planning, livelihoods, blue economy, implementation failure, island vulnerability, sea-fence conflict, conservation, reclamation
Indonesian institutional/fiscal contextual studies	12	Multi-level alignment, decentralization, expenditure, service capacity, political economy, fiscal inequality, asymmetric decentralization, central-local conflict, PPP capacity
Southeast Asian and regional contextual studies	5	Philippine agency roles and financing, East Asian governance, regional ICM lessons
International coastal comparative studies	18	Coordination, participation, conflict, institutional integration, monitoring, trust, and waterfront development
Non-coastal political/fiscal analogues	5	Party fragmentation, interjurisdictional competition, land-use change, growth coalitions, distributive politics

The geographic distribution reveals both a strength and a limitation. Twenty-two records are explicitly Indonesian, but only ten directly address coastal policy or governance. A further five concern Southeast Asian or regional coastal governance, while 23 provide international or cross-sector analogues. The corpus can therefore support a robust mechanism-based synthesis, but it cannot justify treating every identified mechanism as empirically established in the Indonesian coastal context.

4.2 Actor configurations and power resources

The literature depicts a polycentric but unequal actor system. Formal government actors possess statutory authority, budgetary access, planning instruments, and administrative continuity. Central ministries can define national infrastructure priorities, technical standards, and funding channels. Provincial and municipal agencies translate these priorities into spatial plans, programs, and permits, but their influence depends on fiscal capacity, personnel, and political support. BAPPEDA occupies a particularly strategic position because it links planning, prioritization, and budgeting; spatial-planning and fisheries offices control sectoral information and regulatory instruments; and public-works agencies command infrastructure expertise and project pipelines.

State-owned enterprises and private investors derive power from capital, project-delivery capacity, control over strategic infrastructure, and privileged access to executive decision makers. In port, reclamation, tourism, and waterfront projects, these resources may enable corporate actors to function as agenda setters or indispensable implementation partners even when their formal policy mandate is limited. The source synthesis specifically identifies PT Pelindo as a high-power contextual actor. Because the underlying full-text evidence is unavailable, this actor-specific characterization should be independently verified before publication; nevertheless, it illustrates a broader pattern of state-corporate influence in coastal development.

Political actors—local executives, legislatures, and parties—shape the conversion of plans into budgets and authorizations. Their resources include electoral mandates, appointment powers, coalition control, and the capacity to accelerate or veto projects. Evidence on Indonesian education expenditure suggests that party composition can be associated with spending patterns (Bischoff and Prasetyia 2019), while comparative studies show that excessive fragmentation may complicate coordination and intensify strategic competition (Jimenez 2014; Stokan and Deslatte 2019; Su et al. 2021). The direct implications for coastal budgets remain insufficiently tested.

Coastal communities, fishers, residents, and non-governmental organizations usually possess less formal authority and capital, but they command place-based knowledge, social legitimacy, collective-action capacity, and sometimes legal or media leverage. Their influence depends on whether participatory institutions provide early access to agenda setting and design, or only late-stage consultation after key spatial and investment decisions have been made. Studies of local democracy, public preferences, and political trust indicate that procedural design strongly conditions whether participation is consequential (Soma and Vatn 2009; Areia et al. 2023; Bratton and Wade 2026).

Table 3
Actor-resource matrix in coastal development policy formulation

Actor category	Principal resources	Typical interests	Recurring contestation risks
Central ministries and national agencies	Statutory authority; national standards; earmarked funding; technical expertise	National development priorities; regulatory consistency; strategic infrastructure	Mandate centralization; sectoral dominance; limited local fit
Provincial/local executives and agencies	Planning authority; permits; local budgets; implementation networks	Regional growth; service delivery; political credit; administrative feasibility	Horizontal fragmentation; capacity gaps; opaque prioritization
Legislatures and political parties	Budget approval; coalition control; oversight; electoral representation	Constituency benefits; party advantage; distributive claims	Pork-barrel allocation; veto bargaining; short-termism
State-owned enterprises/private investors	Capital; project expertise; land or infrastructure control; executive access	Commercial return; port/logistics expansion; property development	Regulatory capture; displacement; socialized risk
NGOs, experts, and universities	Research, advocacy, legal expertise, convening capacity	Environmental protection; accountability; evidence-based policy	Technocratic gatekeeping; donor dependence; uneven access
Fishers, residents, and community groups	Place-based knowledge; social legitimacy; protest; customary claims	Livelihood security; access; compensation; ecological continuity	Late consultation; fragmented representation; coercion or exclusion

4.3 Arenas of contestation

Agenda setting is the first arena. Actors compete to define whether a coastal problem is primarily an infrastructure deficit, an economic-growth opportunity, an environmental risk, a livelihood crisis, or a spatial-ordering problem. Problem framing matters because it determines the lead agency, the eligible funding instrument, the relevant evidence, and the actors invited into subsequent deliberation. Blue-economy and integrated-management narratives can broaden the agenda, but they may also obscure conflicts between aggregate growth and the distribution of costs and access (Safitri et al. 2023; Chua 2013).

Spatial planning and licensing constitute a second arena. Marine and coastal space is finite, and the designation of ports, reclamation zones, conservation areas, tourism sites, aquaculture areas, and fishing grounds creates winners and losers. Collaborative marine spatial planning studies emphasize the value of cross-sector deliberation (Murtasidin and Sujadmi 2021; Ramadhan et al. 2020), while reclamation and resource-conflict studies reveal the persistence of asymmetric bargaining and

contested impact distribution (Masalu 2000; Adharani et al. 2019). The politics of maps, technical classifications, and permit sequencing are therefore central to actor contestation.

Budget formulation is a third arena. Plans without fiscal commitment remain symbolic, while budget choices determine project scale, location, timing, and beneficiaries. Contestation occurs through executive prioritization, legislative bargaining, intergovernmental transfers, sectoral earmarks, public-private partnership design, and the treatment of compensation or social safeguards. Budget transparency can reduce information asymmetry, but only when disclosure is timely, intelligible, and linked to meaningful oversight (Carlitz 2013; Shodiqi et al. 2024).

Implementation is a fourth arena rather than a purely administrative stage. Procurement, land acquisition, beneficiary selection, enforcement, and monitoring create opportunities for policy drift, capture, and renegotiation. Indonesian studies of rural coastal social policy, local capacity, and community welfare show that weak coordination and unequal institutional resources can disconnect formal objectives from experienced outcomes (Yudiatmaja et al. 2021; Setiawan et al. 2022; Eryanto et al. 2026). Monitoring and evaluation form a fifth arena because indicators privilege particular definitions of success and determine whose losses become visible (Lamari et al. 2016).

4.4 Mechanisms of actor contestation

Six mechanisms recur across the corpus.

First, bureaucratic bargaining occurs when agencies defend sectoral mandates, budgets, and professional jurisdictions. Coordination deficits are not simply communication failures; they often reflect incentives to retain control over programs, data, and implementation authority. Horizontal committees may improve information exchange, but their effectiveness depends on decision rights, stable staffing, and the capacity to resolve distributive disagreement (Park and Feiock 2006; Petersohn and Behnke 2025).

Second, jurisdictional conflict arises from inconsistencies between levels of government. National priorities may be legally or fiscally dominant, whereas local governments bear social and environmental consequences. Indonesian multi-level policy research and the Archipelagic Regions Law case demonstrate how formal alignment can coexist with substantive competition over authority and resource distribution (Ningrum et al. 2024; Arianto et al. 2024).

Third, state-corporate coalition formation links public authority with capital and project capability. Such coalitions can overcome implementation bottlenecks and mobilize infrastructure finance, but they may also narrow the policy agenda, privilege commercially valuable land uses, and transfer social or ecological costs to less organized groups. Waterfront redevelopment and public-private partnership studies illuminate both the capacity and accountability dimensions of this mechanism (Pütz and Rehner 2008; Shodiqi et al. 2024).

Fourth, party-system and distributive competition affects how benefits are spatially and socially targeted. The corpus suggests that party dominance can facilitate decisive allocation, while fragmentation can create bargaining costs and inconsistent priorities. Yet comparative evidence also implies a non-linear relationship: limited competition may improve responsiveness, whereas excessive fragmentation may undermine collective action. This mechanism remains a priority for direct testing in Indonesian coastal budgets.

Fifth, technocratic exclusion operates through the authority of expert knowledge, administrative procedures, and narrow definitions of feasibility. Technical expertise is indispensable in coastal policy, but it can become a gatekeeping resource when community knowledge is treated as anecdotal or when participation begins after core design choices have been fixed. The Bangladesh tidal-river case illustrates how decision procedures shape conflict between technocrats and residents (Nath et al. 2022).

Sixth, participatory counter-mobilization occurs when communities, NGOs, and local networks use consultation, protest, legal claims, media attention, or collaborative forums to alter policy. Participation is most influential when it is early, representative, connected to decision authority, and supported by accessible information. Trust and political identity influence willingness to engage, while repeated exclusion can reduce legitimacy and compliance (Bratton and Wade 2026).

Table 4
Thematic synthesis of contestation mechanisms

Mechanism	Core process	Likely policy effects	Illustrative evidence
Bureaucratic bargaining	Agencies exchange, withhold, or defend authority, budgets, and information	Lead agency, budget share, policy integration	Lowry and Eichenberg 1986; Park and Feiock 2006; Martino 2016
Jurisdictional conflict	Central and local actors contest mandate, scale, and responsibility	Policy dissonance, delay, duplication, unfunded mandates	Lowry et al. 2005; Ningrum et al. 2024; Arianto et al. 2024
State-corporate coalition	Public authority is combined with capital and implementation capacity	Project acceleration, commercial prioritization, capture risk	Pütz and Rehner 2008; Adharani et al. 2019; Shodiqi et al. 2024
Party/distributive competition	Elected actors bargain over allocation and constituency benefits	Spending volatility, targeting, or coalition stability	Jimenez 2014; Bischoff and Prasetyia 2019; Stokan and Deslatte 2019
Technocratic exclusion	Expert procedures narrow legitimate knowledge and options	Low legitimacy, implementation conflict, policy mismatch	Nath et al. 2022; Yudiatmaja et al. 2021
Participatory counter-mobilization	Communities and civil society activate knowledge, trust, law, and collective action	Reframing, safeguards, compensation, or policy revision	Soma and Vatn 2009; Areia et al. 2023; Bratton and Wade 2026

4.5 Institutional moderators and policy outcomes

Institutional capacity is the most consistent moderator. Analytical capacity affects whether governments can compare alternatives and anticipate distributional impacts; operational capacity affects implementation, enforcement, and monitoring; and political capacity affects coalition management and legitimacy. These capacities are complementary. A technically sophisticated plan may fail without interagency authority or political acceptance, while a politically supported project may generate poor outcomes when local administrations lack staff, data, or fiscal resources (Setiawan et al. 2022; Celliers et al. 2015).

Transparency and accountability moderate information asymmetry. Public disclosure can expose inconsistencies between plans and budgets, clarify project beneficiaries, and enable legislative or civic oversight. However, disclosure after decisions are effectively final has limited corrective value. Accountability therefore requires traceable decision criteria, accessible budget data, conflict-of-interest controls, and institutional venues in which objections can alter decisions (Carlitz 2013; Zainal and Zeriand 2022).

Participation moderates both legitimacy and policy fit. The corpus does not support an assumption that participation is automatically inclusive or effective. Its influence depends on representation, timing, deliberative quality, decision linkage, and trust. When these conditions are weak, participation may legitimize predetermined projects rather than redistribute influence. When they are strong, communities can contribute ecological and livelihood knowledge that improves spatial and implementation design.

The combined policy outcomes are distributive and institutional. Actor contestation shapes which projects receive funding, whose access is protected, where infrastructure is located, how environmental risk is allocated, and whether implementation is coordinated. Under high capacity, transparency, and participation, contestation can produce negotiated integration and adaptive policy. Under low capacity and asymmetric power, the same plurality of actors can generate policy dissonance, capture, delay, or exclusion.

5 Discussion

5.1 From coordination failure to contested governance

A central implication of the review is that the dominant language of coordination failure is analytically incomplete. Coordination problems are often symptoms of deeper distributional conflict. Agencies may resist integration because coordination would reduce their authority or budget; local governments may oppose national projects because they bear uncompensated costs; investors may support streamlined procedures that limit public scrutiny; and communities may reject technically coherent plans that threaten livelihoods or access. Treating these conflicts as mere communication deficits risks depoliticizing the policy process.

The proposed framework therefore distinguishes coordination as an institutional capacity from contestation as a political process. Coordination mechanisms can manage interdependence, but they cannot eliminate substantive conflict over land, fiscal resources, risk, or development models. Effective institutions must provide rules for bargaining, evidence disclosure, representation, appeal, and compensation. This perspective explains why lead agencies and integrated frameworks sometimes improve outcomes, yet fail when they lack legitimacy or authority to resolve distributional disputes.

5.2 The decentralization paradox in coastal policy

Indonesia’s decentralization creates a paradox. Local governments are expected to provide context-sensitive development and public services, but many coastal problems exceed municipal boundaries and depend on national infrastructure, intergovernmental finance, or sectoral regulation. Decentralization without adequate fiscal and analytical capacity can disperse responsibility while preserving practical dependence on central actors. Conversely, recentralization can improve standardization but marginalize local knowledge and accountability.

The relevant institutional design problem is alignment. Authority should be assigned at the scale at which externalities can be managed, while participation and accountability should remain close enough to affected communities to preserve responsiveness. Archipelagic and island contexts may require asymmetric arrangements that account for high service costs, fragmented geography, and cross-jurisdictional ecosystems (Jamil et al. 2024). Horizontal coordination among neighboring governments and sectoral agencies is equally important because coastal systems rarely coincide with administrative boundaries.

5.3 Political fragmentation: established mechanism or untested transfer?

The source synthesis gives substantial attention to party dominance and fragmentation. The review confirms that this is a theoretically credible mechanism, but the evidence is indirect. Bischoff and Prasetyia (2019) provide Indonesian municipal expenditure evidence, whereas Su et al. (2021), Jimenez (2014), Kim et al. (2015), and Stokan and Deslatte (2019) examine other countries or policy sectors. These studies illuminate possible causal pathways—coalition stability, bargaining costs, competitive targeting, and interjurisdictional rivalry—but they do not establish the effect of party fragmentation on Indonesian coastal-development spending.

This distinction is consequential for future research. A direct test would require subnational panel data linking party composition, executive-legislative alignment, electoral competition, coastal budget classifications, project locations, and socio-environmental outcomes. Qualitative process tracing should then examine how party and bureaucratic actors bargain over specific coastal projects. Until such evidence is available, claims of a general causal relationship should remain conditional.

5.4 Theoretical propositions

The synthesis supports five propositions for empirical testing:

Proposition 1

Actor contestation intensifies when legal authority, fiscal responsibility, and ecological scale are misaligned across levels of government.

Proposition 2

State-corporate coalitions are most influential when control over infrastructure capital converges with executive authority and weak transparency.

Proposition 3

Political fragmentation has a non-linear effect: moderate competition may improve responsiveness, while excessive fragmentation increases bargaining costs and policy inconsistency.

Proposition 4

Institutional capacity transforms contestation from veto-oriented conflict into negotiated integration by improving information, coordination, and implementation credibility.

Proposition 5

Participation affects substantive policy outcomes only when it occurs before core spatial and fiscal commitments are fixed and when participatory outputs are institutionally linked to decision authority.

6 Policy implications

For policy practice, the review suggests that coastal governance reforms should focus on the architecture of decision authority rather than the proliferation of consultative forums. First, governments should establish a legally recognized lead-coordination mechanism for major coastal-development programs, with explicit authority to reconcile sectoral plans, disclose disagreements, and record final decision rationales. Second, planning and budgeting should be integrated through traceable links between spatial priorities, project appraisal, budget lines, and expected distributional effects.

Third, actor and conflict mapping should be conducted before project design. Mapping should identify formal mandates, resource dependencies, likely veto points, affected livelihoods, and underrepresented groups. Fourth, public participation should be staged: early problem definition, alternatives appraisal, design review, and implementation monitoring. Consultation after a preferred project and financing model have been selected is insufficient.

Fifth, coastal budget transparency should extend beyond aggregate expenditure. Public information should include project location, procurement method, land acquisition, compensation, environmental safeguards, fiscal commitments under public-private partnerships, and monitoring indicators. Sixth, capacity-building should target political and collaborative competencies in addition to technical skills. Agencies require negotiation, facilitation, stakeholder analysis, and conflict-resolution capacity to manage interdependence.

7 Research agenda

The literature is mature on integrated coastal management but comparatively underdeveloped on the politics of formulation. Future research should move from general stakeholder lists to relational and causal analysis. Four priorities are especially important.

First, process-tracing studies should reconstruct how particular coastal projects move from agenda setting to budgeting and implementation, identifying critical decisions, coalition shifts, and veto points. Second, social-network analysis can measure centrality, brokerage, and coalition structure among agencies, firms, political actors, and community organizations. Third, comparative subnational designs should exploit variation in party systems, fiscal capacity, administrative competence, coastal economic

structure, and participatory institutions. Fourth, spatial and fiscal data should be integrated to determine whether public expenditure aligns with exposure, poverty, livelihood dependence, and environmental vulnerability.

Table 5
Priority research agenda

Research domain	Core question	Recommended design/data	Expected contribution
Causal politics of coastal budgets	How do party composition, executive-legislative alignment, and electoral competition affect coastal expenditure?	District/province panel data; difference-in-differences; budget coding; interviews	Causal link between political structure and coastal allocation
Actor networks and coalition change	Which actors broker information and resources across policy arenas?	Social-network analysis; meeting records; document coding; elite interviews	Relational power and coalition dynamics
Multi-level conflict and policy alignment	When does decentralization produce coordination or jurisdictional conflict?	Comparative case studies; process tracing; legal-institutional analysis	Conditions for vertical and horizontal alignment
Participation and distributive equity	Which participatory designs change project location, safeguards, or compensation?	Matched cases; participatory observation; survey experiments; outcome tracing	Substantive rather than procedural participation
State-owned enterprises and private capital	How do state-corporate coalitions shape agenda setting and risk allocation?	Contract analysis; ownership/network data; procurement and PPP datasets	Corporate influence and public accountability
Spatial justice and coastal welfare	Who gains and loses from infrastructure, reclamation, conservation, and adaptation?	GIS; household surveys; distributional impact analysis; ethnography	Integration of fiscal, spatial, welfare, and ecological outcomes

8 Conclusion

The literature demonstrates that coastal development policy is shaped by the interaction of multiple actors with unequal resources. Government agencies, political elites, state-owned enterprises, investors, experts, NGOs, and coastal communities contest problem definitions, spatial claims, budgets, implementation rules, and evaluation criteria. These interactions are structured by decentralization, overlapping mandates, fiscal capacity, party competition, transparency, and participatory design.

The principal analytical contribution of this review is to connect coastal-governance research with political and fiscal analysis. The resulting framework identifies five linked components: institutional setting, actor resources, policy arenas, contestation mechanisms, and outcomes. It also clarifies that

coordination and contestation are not opposites. Coordination institutions can channel contestation productively when they provide authority, transparency, representation, and credible implementation; without these conditions, multi-actor governance can reproduce dissonance and elite capture.

The evidence base remains uneven. Direct Indonesian research is strongest on stakeholder relations, implementation, spatial planning, reclamation, livelihoods, and integrated coastal management. It is weaker on agenda-setting power, party-system effects, state-corporate coalitions, and the causal determinants of coastal budget allocation. A next generation of research should combine process tracing, network analysis, subnational comparison, and spatial-fiscal data. Such work would move the field from descriptive stakeholder mapping toward a political explanation of who governs coastal development, through which mechanisms, and with what distributive consequences.

Declarations

Consent for Publication

All the data in our study is collected from public resources through legal channels. Thus no patient consent are required.

Ethics Approval

All analyses were based on previous published studies, and the data in our study is collected from public resources through legal channels, which will not violate any ethical rules. Thus no ethical approval and patient consent are required.

Competing Interest

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Author Contributions

Mohammad Afifuddin wrote the main manuscript text and Medhy Aginta Hidayat checked and revised the result. All authors reviewed the manuscript.

Data and Code Availability

Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Figures

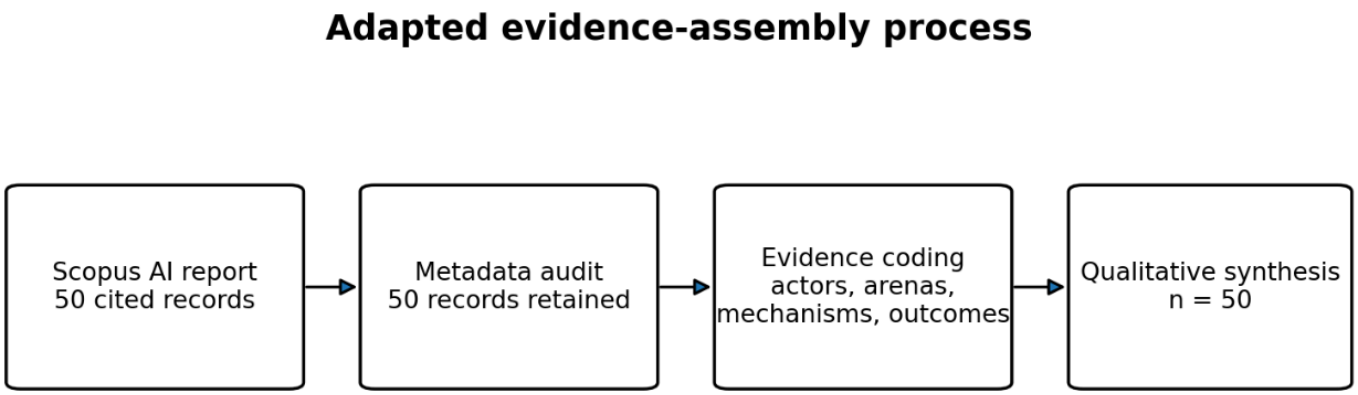


Figure 1

Adapted evidence-assembly process for the uploaded Scopus AI corpus.

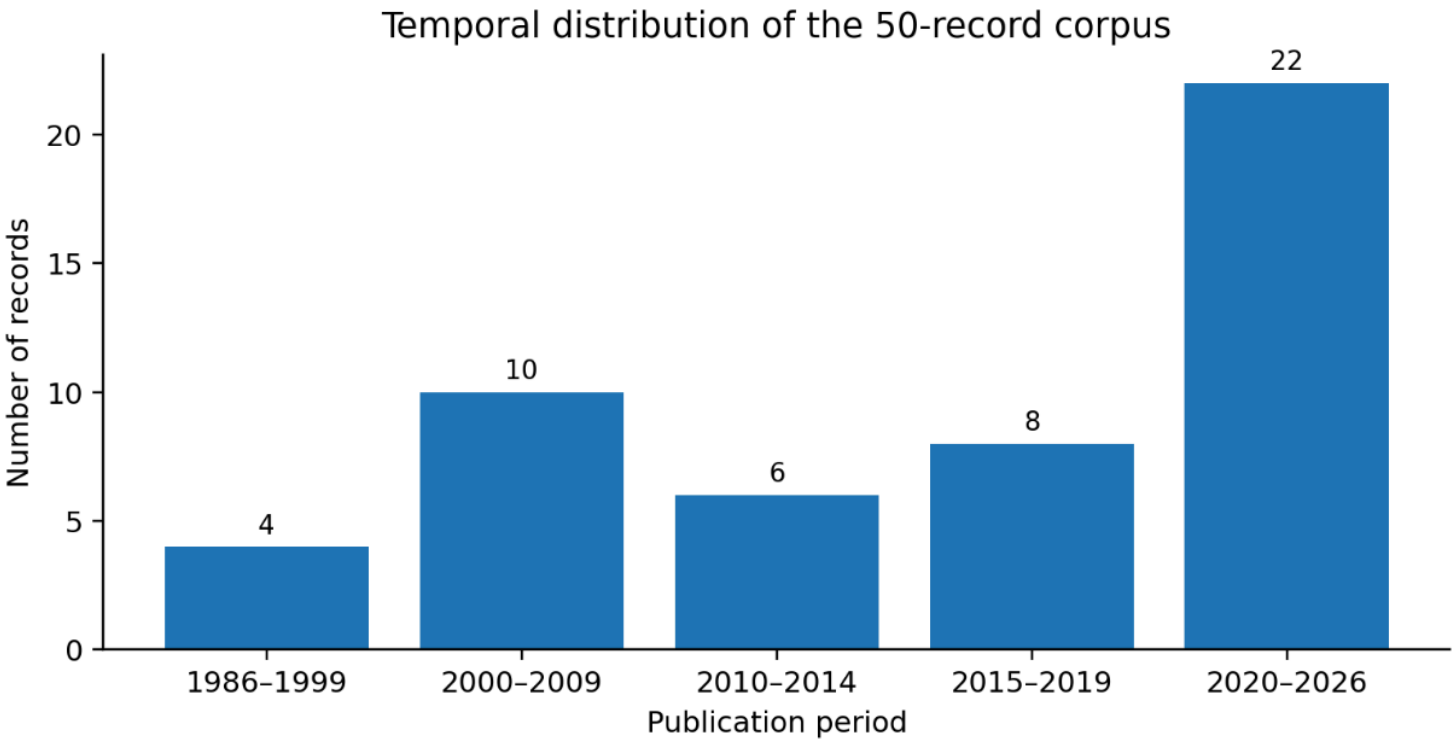


Figure 2

Temporal distribution of the 50-record corpus.

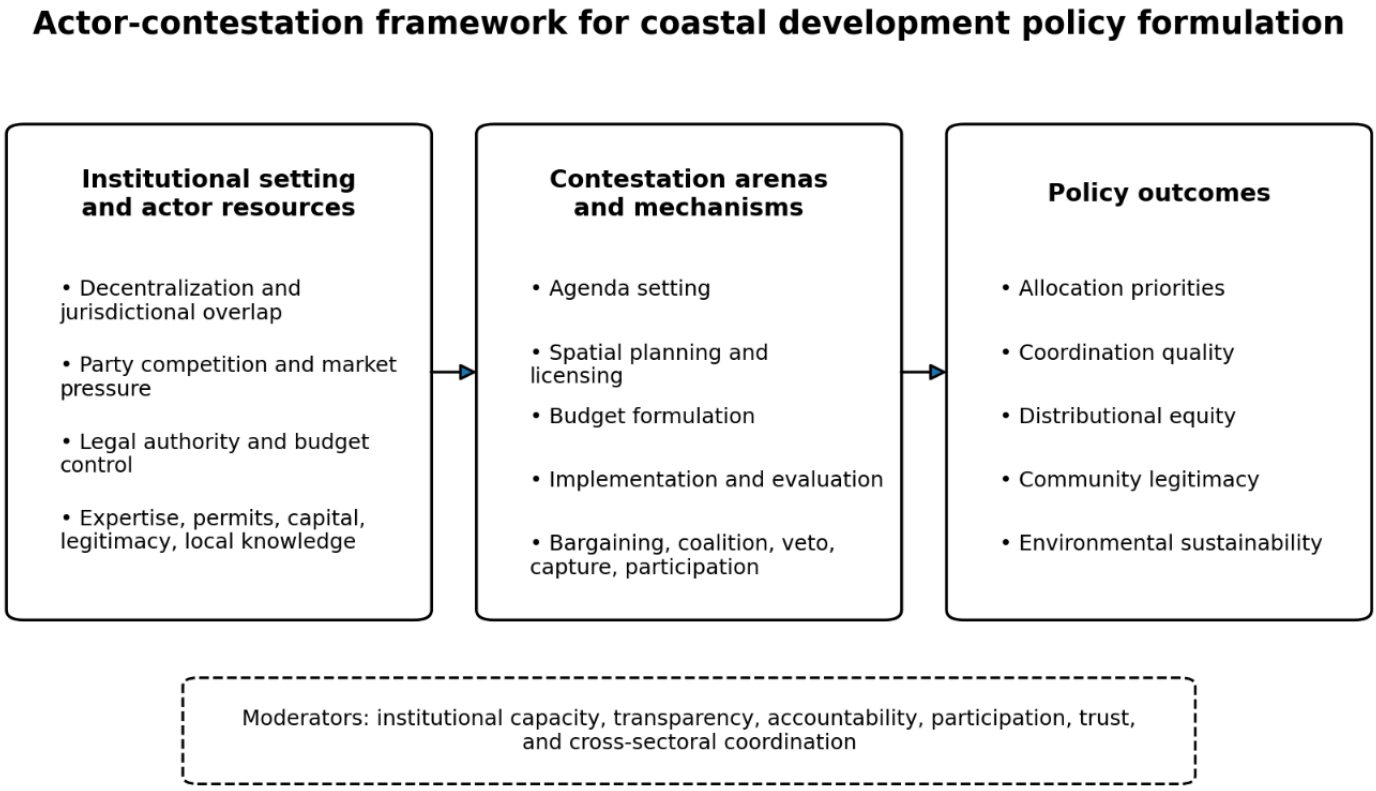


Figure 3

Actor-contestation framework for coastal development policy formulation.