



Platform Governance in the Prevention of Child Radicalization in Indonesia: A Policy Network Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the governance transition in Indonesia's Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) policy. It traces the governance perspective used in the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism (RAN-PE), which has shifted from a policy-network perspective toward a whole-of-government approach. Using qualitative methods, the study finds that the whole-of-government approach does not yet fully recognize digital platforms as actors beyond the traditional P/CVE policy network. Although coordination among state institutions has developed in addressing communications and cyber issues, the government has not effectively regulated the infrastructural power of digital platforms. This limitation is particularly visible in cases of child radicalization. The study therefore recommends strengthening P/CVE efforts through platform governance as a complement to the whole-of-government framework in responding to radicalization in digital spaces.

Keywords *Child Radicalization, P/CVE, Policy Network, Whole-Of-Government, Platform Governance*

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism remains a threat to human security, and its more recent forms have increasingly affected minors. In 2025, an official report by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) stated that 112 children from 26 provinces had been exposed to extremism from late 2024 through 2025 (Farisi & Prabowo, 2025). The emergence of cases involving children exposed to extremism, known as Terrorism-Connected Children (TCC), indicates that the spread of radical ideology is increasingly expanding through the digital world. One of the main entry points through which children are exposed to radical ideology is social media and online games.

Children's involvement in radical movements is not new. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), from its rise in 2014 until its defeat in 2018, involved children in acts of terrorism. There are three pathways through which children become involved in the ISIS movement: being taken there by their parents, being born there, or traveling on their own initiative (Rasyid et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, children affiliated with movement-based terrorist and extremist groups fall into two categories. The first category consists of children returning from conflict zones to the country, and the second includes children who became affiliated domestically (Rasyid et al., 2023). Meanwhile, although the ISIS movement has been defeated as mentioned above, radicalism and violent extremism remain serious threats. The digital space is becoming an increasingly unsafe environment; the latest developments in online gaming have turned these platforms into media that disseminate content containing messages of radicalism and violent extremism.

Children involved in terrorist exploitation must be viewed primarily as victims. Children's



recruitment by terrorist and armed groups is coercive and often involves brutal methods. Even when the recruitment process appears voluntary, the line between voluntary and forced participation is blurred and superficial in practice (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2019). Consequently, addressing terrorism requires serious and extraordinary efforts from various stakeholders. In this regard, one of the Indonesian government's initiatives is to engage in international cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), resulting in the "Bali Call for Action" declaration. In this context, this step is intended as a global commitment to enhance counter-terrorism capacity at various operational levels (Kusuma & Juned, 2024). However, recommendations to formulate specific regulations on children involved in terrorism, suggested by various parties based on analyses and studies (Kusuma & Juned, 2024; Rasyid et al., 2023), have yet to be implemented.

To combat terrorism, the Indonesian government established the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), which serves as the lead agency in P/CVE efforts. The government subsequently incorporated P/CVE policies into the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Extremism (RAN-PE). Although it has adopted a whole-of-government approach within its policy framework, digital radicalization is developing faster than the policy's capacity to adapt and respond. Given the likely continued rise in cases of child radicalization in digital spaces, it is time to consider redistributing resources and authority, including those held by non-state actors, particularly digital platforms. Thus, this study addresses limited research on how platforms, as non-state actors, are constructed, guided, and held accountable within governance frameworks for preventing child radicalization. This study aims to examine P/CVE policies developed through a "whole-of-government" approach in response to the complexities of child radicalization in the digital space.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Evolution of Governance Approaches in the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Extremism (RAN-PE)

For roughly a decade, the P/CVE policy framework has emphasized interagency and cross-sectoral coordination. The 2020–2024 RAN-PE, enacted through Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021, reflects a "policy network" combining legal institutions and a "soft-approach" involving law enforcement agencies (Taufiqurochman, 2021), encompassing issue-networks and dimensions of membership, integration, resources, and power (Marta & Agustino, 2019; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). The 2026–2029 RAN-PE, enacted through Presidential Regulation No. 8 of 2026, expands this coordination through "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approaches (Aoki et al., 2024; Jing & Xue, 2021). Yet digital platforms have become a "beyond actor" in counterterrorism, transforming communication ecosystems and exercising power described as a new form of imperialism (Bannerman, 2024; Mansell et al., 2025). While expected to prevent extremist exploitation (Reed & Henschke, 2021), government intervention may threaten freedom of speech and association (Loik & Puusalu, 2026). This expansion beyond state-centered coordination underscores the need for platform governance to examine interactions between state authority and platform power.

Platform Governance: A Perspective on Governing the Information Ecosystem

Democracy and the public sphere face growing challenges from social media platforms (Recuero & Tavares, 2026; Trice & Jones, 2020). Although platforms claim to democratize communication through market, commercialization, and community logics, "cherry-picking" policies and "strategic supervision" undermine the public sphere (Schuessler et al., 2026). This has driven a shift from self-regulation toward co-regulation between states and platforms, particularly

in content moderation (Fasel & Weerts, 2025; Stockmann, 2023). In Indonesia, governance has similarly shifted toward self-regulation and co-governance, reflecting changing state–society–platform relations (Gumati, 2024). As government is no longer the sole actor in legislation, enforcement, and service provision (Fukuyama, 2013), platform governance offers a framework for understanding these socio- technical interactions and contemporary policy dynamics (Devadasan, 2024; Gorwa, 2019a, 2019b; Lu et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a case study approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to examine the policy governance implemented by the Indonesian government to address and prevent the radicalization of children in the digital space. The study combines policy network theory and the governing information ecosystem perspective to analyze policy actors' roles in P/CVE efforts. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted from April to July 2026 with three institutional representatives from the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), the Indonesian National Police's Special Detachment 88 (Densus 88), and the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI). These institutions were selected as key informants. The study also collected additional data through a literature review; the researchers then analyzed the data using both deductive and inductive methods (Braun & Clarke, 2021). To enhance data credibility, this study used source triangulation by comparing and confirming information from various informants and cross-referencing it with relevant documents and literature.

Deductive analysis identified categories based on policy network theory and the governing information ecosystem perspective, including actors, relationships, coordination mechanisms, the distribution of resources and power, and forms of intervention targeting platforms. Meanwhile, inductive analysis identified patterns, dynamics, and findings emerging from empirical data beyond the initial categories. The analysis focuses on three main areas: (1) the dynamics of child radicalization within the digital information ecosystem and the context of extremism convergence; (2) the evolution of platform governance, including the role and power of platforms in preventing child radicalization; and (3) changes in governance mechanisms, particularly the shift from network-based policy steering toward regulatory interventions targeting platforms. These findings are then used to analyze their implications for democratic governance in the digital sphere.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Trends in the Radicalization of Children in the Era of Converging Extremism

Child radicalization has become an important concern in the context of violent extremism. One entry point is children's exposure to radical content through digital devices. The likelihood of this situation has increased alongside the emergence of escalating and converging crises (SPLC & PERIL, 2021), including the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digitalization across many aspects of life. Additionally, events that fueled racism and hatred—particularly within Western societies in the United States led to the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. In a digital society where geographical boundaries have become irrelevant, this movement rapidly spread across various regions and countries, including Indonesia.

The data and interviews showed a discrepancy in the number of children exposed to radicalization: 110 children according to Densus 88 (Interview with Densus 88) and 112 children according to BNPT. This discrepancy indicates differing perspectives and data collection methods among institutions regarding child radicalization. Interviews with Densus 88 revealed that the figure of 110 is based on an assessment of the level of children's exposure to and involvement in radicalism, taking into account efforts to rescue the children. Furthermore, within the context of the RAN-PE, this reflects the principle of child protection through a restorative approach that

prioritizes the child's best interests.

Platform Governance in the Indonesian Context: An Analysis of Government Regulation No. 17 of 2025 on Countering Digital Radicalization Among Children

Digital-platform policy is an important element in addressing child radicalization. The most relevant regulation is Government Regulation (PP) No. 17 of 2025 on the Governance of Electronic Systems in Child Protection, later referred to as PP TUNAS (Tunggu Anak Siap). Essentially, this regulation implements Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (as amended); it includes a two-year transition period that ends on March 27, 2027.

This policy addresses the increasing risks children face in the digital space. In this regard, it focuses on governing electronic systems in children's spaces, with the policy objective of urging Electronic System Operators (ESOs) to immediately implement a series of assessments within their business operations. The main requirement that ESOs must comply with is conducting risk assessments regarding children's access to their services and features. This regulation broadly governs ESOs, including website operators, social media platforms, gaming consoles, and IoT devices. The risk assessment is divided into three stages, two of which fall within the internal domain of the ESOs—namely, conducting self-assessments and reporting to Komdigi while the verification and determination stages are carried out by Komdigi. This framework essentially aims to shift from a reactive approach to a proactive “privacy by design” approach, as referenced in global standards such as the Age-Appropriate Design Code (UK), the General Data Protection Regulation (EU), and the UNCRC; Indonesia is the first Asian country to implement it (Özkul & Vosloo, 2026). In summary, this regulation addresses several key points, including establishing an age verification mechanism, a parental control dashboard, and a consent pause system, all of which require a lengthy product development cycle.

Although PP TUNAS aims to strengthen the protection of Indonesian children against the growing threat of radicalism in the digital space, there are still several important considerations regarding its implementation. The government's efforts to take control over the operation of digital platforms are not yet fully operational. Results from interviews with the BNPT indicate that Meta—one of the major digital platform corporations did not respond positively when the BNPT negotiated and sought to guide the platform's operational practices to involve them in monitoring radical content. Furthermore, Meta raised objections, arguing that this is a business matter (Interview with BNPT, 2026). Consequently, coordination and steering within the policy network remain ineffective because they lack legal authority and indicate a power imbalance. Therefore, a clearer and more definitive framework, namely platform governance, is needed so that policy processes and steps involving digital platforms will take the form of regulatory intervention. For example, both the BNPT and Densus 88 face the same difficulties in monitoring radical content spreading across various digital platforms, despite having collaborated with Komdigi (Interview with BNPT, 2026 & Densus 88). In an interview with the BNPT, they asked Komdigi to remove 2,800 pieces of radical content, but Komdigi removed only 600 (Interview with BNPT, 2026). Meanwhile, in an interview with the KPAI—the agency most closely involved in child protection efforts—it was noted that the agency does not yet have a focus on platform governance. Instead, KPAI focuses more on child risk management (Interview with KPAI, 2026).

Nevertheless, Dharta et al. (2026)'s critical analysis of the TUNAS Government Regulation warrants reflection. Some findings indicate policy gaps that could be counterproductive, undemocratic, and still incapable of ensuring platforms' compliance with the government. Furthermore, the substance of the PP TUNAS policy essentially reflects the state's digital re-hegemony. This is because the logic of public surveillance remains dominant, while crucial and measurable steps such as mandatory Child-Impact Assessments have not yet been implemented.

Additionally, digital platforms are not yet required to conduct Algorithmic Impact Assessments. Given these weaknesses, this regulation risks undermining human rights as enshrined in the UN Convention and risks reinforcing a paternalistic conception of digital citizenship (Dharta et al., 2026; Livingstone & Third, 2017).

Platform Governance: From Policy Steering to Regulatory Intervention

Considering the risks of child radicalization in digital spaces, responsive, participatory, and consultative policies are needed. In the context of network policy and coordination among government agencies, the prevention and countering of violent extremism have employed an integrated and collaborative approach, while applying the principles of human security. The Indonesian government has established a regulatory framework in the form of Presidential Regulation No. 8 of 2026 on the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism (RAN-PE) for 2026–2029, with the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) serving as the leading sector or primary coordinator. Although the 2026–2029 RAN-PE has identified communications and cyberspace as one of the key focuses of human security, it has not yet strategically adapted to certain conditions that remain beyond control. For example, the action plan in this focus area involves flooding cyber channels with alternative narratives that promote tolerance and democracy to counter manipulative online propaganda. While this effort is crucial, it is not yet relevant to the context of platform governance.

CONCLUSIONS

A review of the two policies indicates that the logic of the policy network within the RAN-PE, particularly as it relates to the focus on human security in communications and cyberspace, is beginning to consider a platform governance approach. Nevertheless, a first step toward this would be to intensify coordination and steering between the BNPT and the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs. Furthermore, the government must commit to institutionalizing the Child-Impact Assessment (CIA/CRIA) and the Algorithmic Impact Assessment (AIA) as impact assessment tools within the governance framework initiated by the global community in this case, by UNICEF. These anticipatory governance measures could serve as a starting point for regulatory intervention. In this regard, future research could examine how Child-Impact Assessment and Algorithmic Impact Assessment mechanisms can be integrated into digital platform governance to prevent the risk of child radicalization.

LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study still has several limitations. Future research could expand the scope of information gathering by involving more ministries and agencies participating in the RAN-PE policy network, as well as further exploring the role and involvement of digital platforms in the governance of child radicalization prevention. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of coordination, inter-agency relationships, and governance dynamics in the prevention of child radicalization in the digital space. Comparative studies with other countries could also examine how variations in policy and platform governance influence efforts to prevent child radicalization in the digital space.

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