

## **Social legitimacy-based deterrence: an effective strategy against non-military threats**

Fitri Anggraeni Sekar DWIANTI\*, Asep Adang SUPRIYADI\*\*

### **Abstract**

*Strengthening the civil defense posture is crucial due to the transformation of threats to national security, which are no longer limited to conventional military aggression but also in non-physical forms such as social conflicts, and cyberattacks. This research uses a literature based qualitative descriptive approach, using international scientific journals as data sources and thematic analysis to examine social and civil defense as a non-military deterrence strategy. The deterrence approach based on social legitimacy is considered more relevant in dealing with modern threats. In the European Union, this strategy implies the need for policy integration between civil defense and governance. Modern European Union strategies advocate a whole of society approach involving citizens, civil society, and government actors to enhance preparedness and societal resilience against these threats. By prioritizing a sociological approach and strengthening social legitimacy, the state can create a non-military deterrence system that is effective, and sustainable in accordance with contemporary threat dynamics.*

**Keywords:** civil defense posture, non-military deterrence, social legitimacy, strategy non-military

### **Introduction**

National security is the main foundation for the sustainability of a country. From a strategic perspective, the pillars of national security not only serve to maintain sovereignty, but also ensure political, social, and community stability. So far, the defense paradigm tends to emphasize the military aspect as the main instrument of deterrence. The dynamics of contemporary global and domestic threats show that threats to the state are no longer limited to conventional military aggression, but extend to non-physical forms such as disinformation, radicalism, horizontal conflicts, pandemics, and cyberattacks. This transformation marks a shift from *hard security* to *comprehensive security*, which requires the state to reorganize its defense strategy by including social, psychological,

\* Fitri Anggraeni Sekar DWIANTI is researcher at Sensing Technology Study Program, Faculty Defense Technology and Science, Indonesian Defense University, e-mail: fitri.harning@gmail.com.

\*\* Asep Adang SUPRIYADI is professor at Sensing Technology Study Program, Faculty Defense Technology and Science, Indonesian Defense University, e-mail: aadangsuryadi@gmail.com.

and cultural aspects as determining factors. For example, the United Kingdom with its military dominance uses the concept of future warfare to strengthen defense institutions and maintain its country's influence in the field of security (Morgan-Owen and Gould, 2022). Then in India, the dominance of bureaucratic civilian oversight can hinder the effectiveness of the military so that reforms are needed for its civilian and military (Mukherjee, 2022). Indonesia, different from the two cases, places civil defense as an important part of the universal defense system by integrating the Indonesian National Armed Forces, the National Police, and civil society in maintaining national stability. This context confirms that civil defense is not just a backup in emergency situations, but a strategic pillar that determines the sustainability of national security. Threats to state sovereignty are no longer limited to conventional military attacks, but extend to include forms of non-military threats such as natural disasters, cyberattacks, pandemics, disinformation, and horizontal social conflicts. This development reflects a paradigm shift in the national defense sector, where multidimensional threat dynamics are increasingly prominent in the contemporary global context. This situation demands a more comprehensive security approach, involving all elements of the nation, including civil society, and relying on armed forces as an integral part of the defense system. One response to this complexity is to strengthen one of the important pillars of the national security system, namely strengthening civil defense. Civil defense is not just a support system for emergencies, but it is a systematically organized social structure to improve the preparedness, resilience, and response capacity of communities to crises. The lack of attention of the civilian elite to national security policy can weaken political control over the military and hinder effective defense reforms, so structural reforms are needed in the form of strengthening civilian institutions and developing a comprehensive policy framework to balance civil-military relations (Lima, *et al.*, 2020). Strengthening the civilian defense posture through social legitimacy is a strategic way to ensure that the defense system is not only resilient to physical threats, but also able to prevent social disintegration originating from within the country through actions such as building public trust in state institutions, strengthening solidarity between social groups, increasing public security literacy, and creating inclusive dialogue spaces to prevent the emergence of potential social conflict. The role of civil society in the national defense system is to support the country's defense efforts and ensure the readiness of organizations and individuals, so that when needed, they can carry out their duties effectively and optimally (Liwang, 2023). In this case, the civil defense posture has a strategic value that reflects the capacity of the state, through community participation, to respond to crises independently, resiliently, and organized. The posture covers various aspects, ranging from the capacity of human resources, information systems, regulations, institutions, to social structures that support solidarity and public trust. Through a strong defense posture, civil defense is able to reduce risks, minimize impacts, and accelerate recovery from

crises to increase national stability. The importance of the study of civil defense posture from a sociological perspective to develop a more comprehensive, adaptive, and sustainable concept of national defense. However, the effectiveness of this posture is highly dependent on the state's ability to build legitimacy, foster public trust, and encourage the active participation of citizens in maintaining national stability.

## 1. Theoretical framework

The sociological approach provides a new lens for understanding and strengthening the posture of civil defense. Classic sociological theorists provide a conceptual foundation for examining the role of social structures in sustaining national security. Durkheim emphasized the importance of social solidarity as the basis of order, while Weber highlighted legitimacy as a legitimate source of authority (Isdiyanto, 2025). In the context of defense, these two theories explain why public trust and social cohesion can be a more sustainable deterrent than coercive force. Security can no longer be seen only as a product of military institutions, but also as the result of social processes that involve collective awareness, belonging, and active participation of citizens. A sociological approach to civil defense posture not only strengthens the foundations of national defense, but also ensures its sustainability and adaptability in the midst of increasingly complex global challenges (Bengtsson and Brommesson, 2024). The civil defense posture plays a strategic role as the main foundation in creating a more inclusive and participatory national security system. National security is the main foundation for the solidity of a country and the survival of its nation. National security not only defends the territory from military attacks, but also includes various aspects that affect the overall stability of the country. The pillars of national security, which include military defense, political stability, economic, socio-cultural, information technology, and environmental and natural resource sustainability, need to be designed integratively to protect all vital aspects of the life of the nation and state, as well as become a strategic foundation for the formulation of defense and security policies that are responsive to the challenges of the global era. A deep understanding of civil society and state relations in the context of national security is an important perspective in shaping the civil defense posture as a key pillar of national security. Solid cooperation between states and societies is becoming increasingly important as the source of threats no longer comes only from external physical attacks, but also from within, such as social polarization, the spread of disinformation, and declining public trust in institutions. The transformation of the threat character, which now tends to be hidden, fragmented, and operates in a hybrid manner, makes the non-military deterrence approach increasingly significant in maintaining national stability. According to Sörenso (2024), deterrence strategies can be understood

in different ways. This approach is important so that non-military deterrence strategies are not *top-down*, but develop from the ground up through active support and public awareness so that countries can design non-military deterrence strategies more effectively and relevant to the challenges of the times.

Deterrence or in the sense of prevention is often associated with military force that focuses on prevention efforts that do not rely on the power of weapons but through social, economic, cultural, and political forces. Legitimacy and public trust play a more dominant role than threats of violence such as threats that are asymmetrical or originating from within the country such as radicalism, social conflicts, or hoaxes. The classic paradigm of deterrence by punishment has long dominated in dealing with offenses and crimes (Nagin, 2013), relying on the threat of punishment as the primary means of preventing acts of offense. This approach assumes that individuals will avoid unlawful behavior if they believe the risk of being caught and punished is high enough. In line with the times and the increasingly complex social dynamics, the effectiveness of punishment-based deterrence is increasingly questionable. As an alternative to these limitations, a more sustainable and trust-oriented approach is offered by a deterrence model based on social legitimacy. However, compliance with the law is not solely driven by fear of punishment, but also by people's perceptions of the legitimacy of the law, norms, and enforcement authorities. The government is considered to have legitimacy if the community believes that the rules set are appropriate and in accordance with the standards of community behavior (Debbaut and De Kimpe, 2023). An approach that relies solely on punishment tends to fail to produce genuine compliance, and can even trigger resistance if the public considers the policy to be unfair. Law enforcers who uphold procedural justice, namely providing equal treatment, listening to the voice of the community, and being neutral, will more easily gain public trust. Community involvement in the civil defense system has proven crucial in a variety of global cases. New Zealand, for example, relies on social legitimacy and public trust in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, so the level of community compliance is relatively high without relying on coercive controls (Rod and Miron, 2023). On the other hand, the British, which tends to prioritize a coercive approach, experiences greater social resistance. This example shows that *deterrence by punishment* has limitations in the context of modern threats, while deterrence by legitimacy actually increases social resilience organically. In this context, the active and voluntary participation of citizens is the main key, which is reinforced through involvement in the policy process. Practices such as crisis simulations, anti-hoax campaigns, and the involvement of community leaders in building a national narrative reflect a sociological-based non-military deterrence approach.

In the framework of deterrence based on social legitimacy, collective awareness and a sense of shared responsibility in maintaining social order are the main foothold to prevent violations. Citizen

compliance is born from the desire to support the sustainability of common norms that are considered legitimate and benefit all citizens. Not only can the use of coercive force be expensive and potentially trigger conflict can be minimized, but also social cohesion is further strengthened. To implement deterrence that focuses on social legitimacy, fundamental changes are needed in the relationship between society and law enforcement officials. For example in the French State, the results of research conducted by (Maire and Schmitt, 2022), show that civilian control over the military in France does not only depend on official rules, but is also influenced by personal relationships and trust in leaders. Various factors make the balance of power between civilian and military actors fluctuate and changeable, depending on the political situation and the character of the leader in power. Officials need to be equipped with training to prioritize transparency, build healthy, humane communication, and respect each other with the community. In addition, the state must ensure the existence of efficient oversight mechanisms to prevent abuse of authority, considering that this kind of practice is one of the main causes of loss of legitimacy and declining levels. A non-military deterrence approach with a sociological perspective offers a paradigm renewal, emphasizing the importance of social resilience, community cohesion, and the credibility of state institutions. Based on research by Gearhart and Joseph, 2022, show that strengthening social cohesion and increasing the collective capacity of citizens to support each other is a key focus in community based on crime prevention strategies. This strategy is no longer seen as a mere domestic issue, but has become a crucial component of the global cooperation framework, given that various forms of transnational threats such as disinformation, digital-based radicalism, and terrorism require a collective and integrated response between countries. Collaboration between countries in building joint social resilience is key to creating a more effective and adaptive prevention system against new forms of threats.

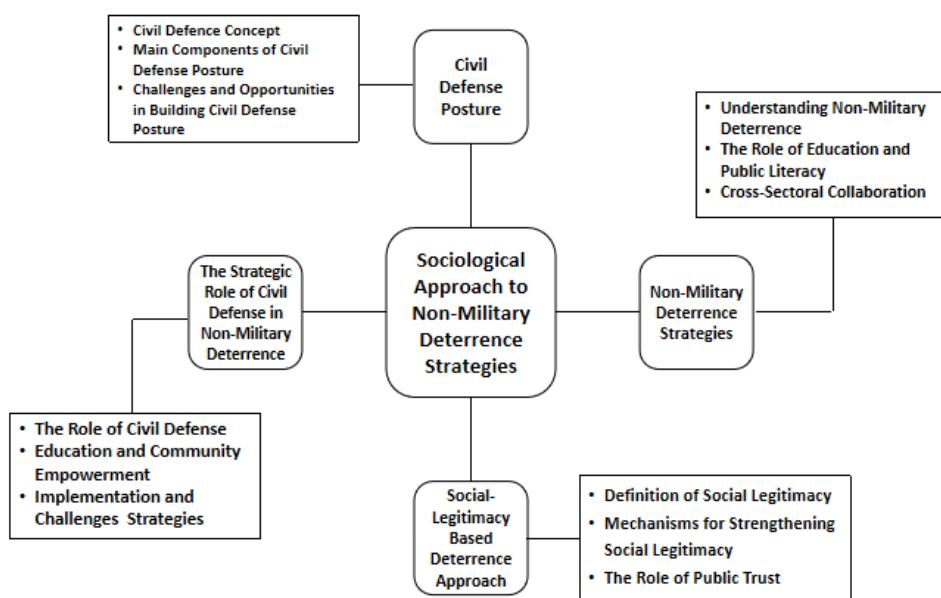
The sociological approach in non-military deterrence strategies encourages the formation of a network of cross-border cooperation based on shared values, such as social justice, inclusivity, and respect for human rights. Knopf (2010) argues that deterrence no longer depends only on the threat of physical force, but also on the ability of states or societies to manage information, build narratives, and strengthen social solidarity. The exchange of knowledge and experience between countries is an important asset. Countries with a high level of social cohesion can be a reference for other countries in formulating policies that are able to strengthen people's resilience to provocations or non-physical attacks that threaten national and regional stability. This collaboration allows for the realization of a collective early detection mechanism against emerging social threats. For example, countries can exchange data and information related to the pattern of spreading hoaxes or cross-border propaganda that have the potential to threaten the unity of society. Thus, prevention efforts are not only reactive

after the emergence of threats, countries can carry out early detection collectively and carry out prevention proactively, thus creating a common social fortress that strengthens national, regional, and global stability.

## 2. Methodology

The writing of this paper uses a descriptive qualitative approach based on literature studies sourced from reputable scientific journal articles (Scopus Q1 and Q2), strategic study reports, as well as sociological and defense theories. This approach was chosen to describe and analyze the strategic function of the civil defense posture in building a country's non-military deterrent, especially in the context of Indonesia's national security. The analysis was carried out with a conceptual framework that integrates social legitimacy theory, deterrence strategies, and sociological approaches to security. This method aims to develop normative and strategic arguments regarding the importance of strengthening civil defense as a non-military deterrence tool capable of adapting to a variety of complex security challenges. See the research framework in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Research framework**



Source: Processed from Author Representation

## 3. Results and discussion

The results of this study highlight the centrality of a sociological approach in understanding the dynamics of non-military deterrence strategies, particularly through the integration of civil defense

posture, social legitimacy, and community-based deterrence mechanisms. Each component in the framework, civil defense posture, non-military deterrence strategies, and legitimacy-based deterrence, demonstrates how societal structures, public trust, and cross-sectoral collaboration collectively shape a nation's capacity to respond to hybrid and non-physical threats. The findings show that civil defense does merely serve as an auxiliary security element; but functions as a strategic component that strengthens preparedness, enhances community resilience, and supports the broader architecture of national security. This reinforces the argument that non-military deterrence is most effective when it is rooted in the social fabric and collective consciousness of society.

### **3.1. Civil defense posture**

Civil defense is one of the important components of the national defense system that places the community as the main element in maintaining national security, order and resilience. The structure, preparedness, and capacity of the community to deal with various types of non-military threats in a planned and integrated manner are at the core of the concept of civil defense. The involvement of the military in non-conventional tasks such as disaster response and social development requires effective coordination between civilian and military institutions in order for the military's role to remain in line with democratic principles (Solar, 2017). This concept not only includes response to disasters, but also involves mitigation, preparedness, and recovery processes with social, psychological, and cultural approaches. According to Bernardini *et al.* (2019), education and training in disaster evacuation are also needed to increase the resilience and safety of the community in dealing with disasters. In contrast to military defense that relies on coercive force, civil defense prioritizes social resilience, solidarity, and citizen participation. People who have a high level of concern for their environment will be more responsive in detecting threats, both physical such as natural disasters and non-physical ones such as disinformation, radicalism, and terrorism. Today's threats are no longer limited to traditional military attacks, but also include cyberattacks, ideological infiltration, and social tensions that could potentially be exploited by certain groups to undermine the power of the state. People have strong reasons to be worried about crime because of its negative impacts, especially related to reduced personal security and self-protection (Bun *et al.*, 2020). Countries need to develop more inclusive defense systems, in which civilian elements play an active role in detecting, responding to, and mitigating various forms of non-traditional threats. The foundation of a resilient civil defense posture lies in active community involvement, adequate understanding of security issues, and synergy between various parties, ranging from the government, local communities, to educational institutions.

The ideal civil defense posture must meet several key dimensions. First, the institutional dimension, which includes a clear regulatory framework, inter-agency coordination, and the presence of strong and effective civil defense institutions from the central to local levels. Good institutions ensure the existence of an efficient command line, resources, and coordination mechanism between elements of the government and the community. Institutions that are trusted by the community are able to encourage voluntary obedience that is much more effective than coercion. For example, the success of the National Disaster Management Agency in coordinating disaster response in Indonesia is often determined by the capacity of public communication that builds public trust in the state. Second, the human resource dimension plays a key role, emphasizing the importance of training, education, and community organizing in a sustainable manner. Civil defense will not be effective without citizens who are aware, trained, and have adequate social literacy. For example, national defense programs and digital literacy training among youth can strengthen collective awareness and foster a sense of responsibility for social security. Third, the dimension of information and communication systems plays an important role in shaping public awareness and regulating the flow of communication when disturbances occur. The system includes an early warning network, fast and accurate public information, and a digital platform that allows the public to respond quickly. Fast, transparent, and credible information can reduce panic while preventing social polarization. In civil defense, good public communication is a deterrence mechanism because it makes the public more critical of information manipulation and more resistant to provocation. Fourth, the logistics and infrastructure dimensions, include the readiness of public facilities, basic needs reserves, and accessibility to strategic locations in the evacuation or emergency assistance process. In addition, the civil defense posture also requires the support of a strong collective culture, namely the values of togetherness, solidarity, mutual cooperation, and the spirit of nationalism. Social resilience is an important factor, as it is able to accelerate recovery efforts and optimize response in emergency situations.

The development of a civil defense posture requires important components in the form of national education, digital literacy, and strengthening the values of unity as part of an integrated program. Civil defense education through this approach not only focuses on technical aspects, but also plays a role in strengthening social and political relations between society and the state. Military education encompasses more than just organizational and institutional structures, but it also plays a role in shaping the professionalism, individual identity of soldiers, and their social role in society. Exercises designed based on the alignment of different sectors play an important role in developing collaborative capabilities between the civilian and military sectors, emphasizing alignment between objectives, activities, and evaluations to achieve an effective response to crisis situations (Hedlund

and Alvinius, 2024). Activities such as crisis handling simulations, cross-community dialogue, and the development of community-based communication networks can serve as effective means of building social solidarity and increasing public trust in state institutions. In an effort to form a resilient civil defense posture, various complex challenges need to be faced, ranging from weak intersectoral coordination, limited resources, to the need to harmonize roles between civilian and military elements. One of the main challenges is the low level of public awareness and participation on non-military defense issues. The lack of defense literacy and the lack of integration of civil defense materials in the education system cause limited community preparedness in dealing with emergency situations. An integrated approach is needed with an emphasis on strengthening institutions, formulating policies that are responsive to threat dynamics, and developing human resource capacity in a consistent and sustainable manner. The active involvement of the private sector and civil society can expand the reach and effectiveness of civil defense systems (Bollen and Kalkman, 2022). Cross-sectoral coordination must be institutionalized through clear communication and command mechanisms, so that each agency, both at the central and regional levels, can carry out its role effectively in crisis situations. On the other hand, there are significant opportunities in strengthening civil defense through increased cross-sectoral cooperation, the formation of a culture of shared learning, and the use of local technology and innovation that can strengthen disaster response and prevention capacity. The integration of civilian and military roles must be built on the principle of mutually supportive cooperation, through integrated training, the preparation of joint doctrines, and the development of joint operating systems that are adaptive to field conditions and various types of crises that may occur.

Regulatory challenges, responsibility sharing, and potential human rights violations must also be anticipated so that civil defense does not create new vulnerabilities (Clayton and Thomson, 2016). This is in line with the modern defense paradigm that emphasizes the importance of the active role of citizens in dealing with various potential disturbances to the sovereignty and integrity of the nation. The civil defense posture also requires state institutions that have high credibility and are able to build trust in the community. If people do not trust the government, law enforcement officials, or other state institutions, then their involvement in the civil defense system will be difficult to achieve. Collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the media, education, and the private sector, is key to success. This cross-sectoral synergy is needed to ensure that efforts to strengthen civilian resilience truly touch all levels of society, as well as be able to respond to the challenges of an increasingly complex and dynamic era. It should be emphasized that the civil defense posture is dynamic and must always be adjusted to the transformation of threats and the changing social dynamics of society. In addition, in the context of globalization and the era of

digital connectivity, the civil defense posture must be able to respond to transnational threats through international cooperation. Villamil *et al.* (2020) presented the results of their study in the Colombian state that civilian or non-military play a major role in the formulation of national strategies in the digital realm. The combination of strict punishment and interactive training is the most effective strategy to reduce cyber threats from within the organization (Kim *et al.*, 2019). This collaboration is important to deal with common threats such as cross-border terrorism, digital radicalism, and cyberattacks that threaten peace and security.

The civil defense posture also contributes to the creation of a culture of national defense based on awareness, not coercion. People who feel part of the effort to defend their country will be more ready to be actively involved in every threat prevention and countermeasure effort. This is also the foundation for the realization of sustainable national security, based on social strength, and not solely on military power. The civil defense posture is not something static, but must be seen as an integral part of the national defense system and continuously evaluated and adjusted to the dynamics of threats and social developments. Modern challenges such as climate change, digital disinformation, and the potential for horizontal conflict require an update of civil defense strategies that are adaptive, data-driven, and supported by broad public participation. Its success depends on close collaboration between the government and the community, as well as the willingness of all parties to continue to strengthen the nation's social resilience. A country that is able to build a strong civil defense posture will have strong social capital to create non-military deterrence and maintain national security on a sustainable basis.

### **3.2. Sociological approach to non-military deterrence strategies**

Prevention or deterrence strategies have often been associated with the use of military force as the main tool to deal with external threats. The strategy of deterrence through arms deliveries, as NATO has done to Ukraine, shows a new form of *deterrence by denial* that does not rely on direct military threats, but on a real and sustained commitment to strengthen the combat capacity of allies in the face of aggression (Lupovici, 2023). However, in a modern era full of non-traditional threats such as disinformation, radicalization, and social instability, a military approach alone is no longer enough. Sociological approaches are becoming increasingly important, especially in the context of non-military deterrence strategies, as they are able to understand the social roots of potential threats and strengthen people's resilience to manipulation and polarization. This approach views security as a social construct that depends not only on military power, but also on the ability of society to maintain the stability and legitimacy of institutions that play a role in dealing with non-military threats

such as ideological, political, economic, social, and disinformation. This strategy not only relies on military strength, but also involves various elements of the nation, including ministries or institutions outside of defense, civil society, and other social institutions to build national resilience and national defense awareness.

The importance of the sociological approach in a non-military deterrence strategy lies in its ability to build social trust and state legitimacy. Regaining the trust of citizens is a challenge for post-war governments. Solar (2022) emphasizes that the military can gain new legitimacy in the eyes of the public despite having an authoritarian legacy, especially when it is considered effective in tackling crime and chaos. Political beliefs play a crucial role in explaining the potential for the recurrence of internal conflicts and shaping new dynamics between the state and society (Dyrstad *et al.*, 2021). Social legitimacy as part of the theory of political sociology is an important foundation in building effective deterrence. The concept of political legitimacy involves an ever-changing social network, which integrates various bases of legitimacy claims and builds patterns of social habits as power relations shift among competing groups (Dolan *et al.*, 2024). The development of cooperation between the civilian and military sectors is based on pre-established relationships and collaborations while maintaining the same role in times of crisis, including taking steps to encourage cooperation between various sectors (Larsson *et al.*, 2023). One of the functions of the sociological approach in building social legitimacy is to encourage the active participation of civil society. This approach emphasizes that the success of deterrence strategies does not depend only on military power, but also on citizens' awareness, active participation, and social solidarity in the face of threats such as disinformation, for example, community engagement programs in the formulation of security policies or disaster management can increase a sense of ownership and trust in state institutions.

In the face of the threat of disinformation and digital propaganda, the state needs to build social resilience by strengthening the critical capacity of society. This approach can also be realized through education and digital literacy. Educational institutions and the government have an important role as driving nodes. Military academies as educational institutions were established earlier than sociology as a branch of science (Segal and Ender, 2008). The educational curriculum in schools can be modified to include elements of modern threat-based civil defense. The government has a role to play in facilitating training as part of a routine agenda to maintain security and resilience at the local level. Education and training are not only reactive, but they are a key element in a long-term prevention system. For example, media literacy education programs in local schools and communities can help individuals recognize fake news, understand the political context, and reject divisive information. From a policy perspective, socio-based non-military deterrence strategies emphasize the importance of a just and inclusive social system. This approach assumes that national stability will be stronger if

it is built on the basis of social justice, equality in access to resources, and respect for diversity of identities in society. Countries that are able to provide basic services such as education, health, and security equally tend to be more resistant to social disturbances and ideological infiltration that can weaken national unity. The sociological approach emphasizes the importance of strengthening social resilience as the main line of defense in the face of today's threats. This includes public education that instills national values and awareness of disinformation, preparedness training to deal with social and natural disasters, and community strengthening through strong social networks. People are not only seen as objects that need to be protected, but also as active actors in maintaining the stability and security of their environment. In addition, this strategy involves non-military institutions such as civil society organizations, educational institutions, the media, and local communities as an important part of the national defense system. Through the involvement of these various elements in decision-making, the state can strengthen policy legitimacy and improve the collective ability to detect and respond to threats early. The sociological approach to non-military deterrence does not stand alone, but is also supported by multilateral diplomacy efforts. Given the many cross-border threats such as terrorism, climate change, cybercrime, and pandemics, cooperation between countries is urgently needed, especially in information exchange, policy alignment, and strengthening international norms. By prioritizing collaborative and humanistic principles, this approach not only maintains national security, but also contributes to regional and global stability. In an increasingly complex and uncertain world, social power can be the main bulwark in maintaining the integrity and sovereignty of the country.

### **3.3. Social legitimacy-based deterrence approach**

Social legitimacy in the defense sector has a crucial role in preventing non-physical threats such as the spread of disinformation. Levy (2021), states that military legitimacy is divided into two main aspects, extra-military legitimacy that comes from the support of the public and civilian authorities, and the intra-military legitimacy that develops within the military institution itself. These differences have the potential to disrupt national security stability, so it is important to create a balance between oversight from civilian authorities and the norms that apply within military institutions. In addition, social legitimacy also facilitates cooperation between the government, media, and digital platforms in dealing with disinformation issues more effectively. Social legitimacy is significantly influenced by factors such as institutional performance, representation of public interests, and public trust in political institutions (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2015). Social legitimacy ensures that communications from the government are trusted and followed by the public, thereby reducing opportunities for parties

who want to take advantage of the information gap to spread false narratives. According to Tyler (2006), legitimacy not only makes people obey the rules because they are afraid of sanctions, but also because they feel that the rules and authorities are fair, feasible, and worthy of being followed. Legitimacy in authoritarian government can be strengthened through improving social services provided to the community, good public service performance can support strengthening legitimacy more effectively (Cassani, 2017). Socio-political resilience has also become stronger because people who believe in the legal system and government are not easily divided by the sensitive issues that are often used in disinformation. If the legitimacy of the state is weakened, society becomes more vulnerable to information manipulation that can trigger conflict or socio-political instability.

The approach to deterrence or threat prevention has been largely based on the classical paradigm that emphasizes punishment as the main tool to prevent unwanted behavior. This paradigm is of the view that the threat of firm and real sanctions is able to prevent individuals or groups from committing harmful violations or actions. Alternatively, a deterrence approach based on social legitimacy is beginning to be developed and is considered more relevant in dealing with such non-physical threats. Legitimacy built through fair procedures and good relations between the public and legal authorities can increase compliance and cooperation, going beyond traditional deterrence models (Tyler, 2024). A deterrence approach based on social legitimacy offers advantages in building sustainable social resilience. In the long run, a society that has a high level of legitimacy towards the government will be stronger in dealing with disinformation, less easily provoked, and able to respond to social threats jointly and organically. This approach emphasizes the importance of public trust in the state as an effective form of deterrence. Social legitimacy here means public recognition and acceptance of state authority, both in terms of tradition, the charisma of leaders, and the legality of applicable rules. The level of public trust is an important foundation to prevent them from being influenced by misleading information or engaging in socio-political conflicts that have the potential to destabilize stability. Social legitimacy serves as an internal prevention mechanism within the community. Schoon (2022) highlights the importance of applying the concept of legitimacy comprehensively by involving aspects of acceptance, trust, and compliance with institutions. The legitimacy strategy used is usually adjusted to the renewal character of the innovation, given that different innovations demand different approaches to legitimacy (Bunduchi *et al.*, 2023).

When citizens feel that the state has legitimate and trusted authority, they voluntarily follow the rules and norms without having to face the threat of harsh punishment. Individual adherence to ethical norms is more influenced by the level of certainty of the detection of violations than by the severity of the sanctions that may be received (Merhi and Ahluwalia, 2018). This approach is different from punishment-based deterrence strategies, which are external in nature and emphasize the aspect of

coercion. Through social legitimacy, the state fosters healthy and cooperative relationships with the community, so as to grow awareness to maintain order and stability together. Public trust in the state is also an effective shield against the spread of disinformation. The deterrence approach based on social legitimacy is also able to reduce sociopolitical conflicts that have the potential to threaten state stability. When people feel that the government is acting fairly, transparently, and responsibly, they are more likely to resolve differences peacefully and constructively. Conversely, if the legitimacy of the state is weakened, society is vulnerable to fragmentation and conflicts can easily erupt, which ultimately disrupts national order and security. In its implementation, this social deterrence can be seen in various state efforts to build and maintain legitimacy through policies that are responsive to the needs of the community, fair law enforcement, and effective and transparent communication. For example, in the context of preventing juvenile traffic violations in Indonesia, the implementation of social deterrence through legal education and socialization has proven to be more effective than relying solely on punitive sanctions. This suggests that approaches that prioritize social legitimacy and trust deliver more sustainable outcomes.

This approach to social legitimacy-based deterrence has become particularly relevant in the modern era full of non-physical threats and socio-political complexity. The classical paradigm that relies solely on punishment is unable to answer challenges such as the spread of hoaxes, political polarization, and widespread public distrust. Therefore, building and maintaining social legitimacy is the main strategy to maintain national stability and security in a sustainable manner. Social legitimacy-based deterrence offers a new paradigm that is more adaptive and effective in dealing with non-physical threats such as disinformation and sociopolitical instability. Public trust in the state is not just a symbol, but a real and powerful form of deterrence. By strengthening social legitimacy, the state not only prevents violations and threats, but also builds a solid foundation for long-term social and political resilience. This approach replaces the classic paradigm of deterrence through punishment that is increasingly less relevant in the face of modern social change. The creation of sustainable social and political resilience requires the state to no longer rely on a repressive approach through sanctions, but rather to build citizen trust, implement fair governance, and encourage active community participation in governance processes (Stollenwerk *et al.*, 2021).

### **3.4. The strategic role of civil defense in non-military deterrence**

In the face of increasingly complex and not always military national security threats, a country's defense strategy needs to adopt a broader and more inclusive approach. One relevant and strategic approach is non-military deterrence, which is an effort to prevent aggression or disruption to the state

through non-physical forces by building deterrence based on social, psychological, and civilian forces. Civil defense plays a very important role as a vanguard in shaping the perception of national strength and readiness as a whole. Deterrence is classically often understood as a military force capable of providing a counter-threat to an opponent. But in its non-military form, deterrence works through the enemy's perception of the difficulties and uncertainties they will face if they try to weaken or attack the target country even without an armed response. One form of strong non-military deterrence is a society that is resilient, organized, and has the capacity to survive and rise from disruption. This is where civil defense becomes the main component in creating social-based deterrence. Civil defense works through strengthening public awareness and preparedness against various possible threats, including natural disasters, cyberattacks, disinformation, and social instability. The excessive application of civil defense has the potential to endanger individual freedoms and democratic principles, so a balanced policy is needed between maintaining security and protecting the rights of the community (Ljungkvist, 2024). Activities such as evacuation training, disaster education, community logistics organization, emergency communication systems, and accurate dissemination of public information all contribute to building public confidence and strengthening the social structure as the basis of the country's defense. The state's strategy in building non-military deterrence is realized through various policies and approaches to community development. The state can strengthen its civic education system, expand digital literacy, and build a network of resilient communities that are responsive to crises. This strategy not only prepares society for possible threats, but also creates a psychological effect on outsiders that society will not be easily confused or divided through disinformation or provocation.

At the heart of the concept of non-military deterrence is the belief that the power of civil society is capable of creating doubt for opponents to attack. If the community shows a high level of readiness in dealing with threats through education, training, and collective awareness, then the opponent will assume that their efforts will be in vain or even trigger a backlash from the community itself. In defense theory, deterrence is generally understood as an effort to instill fear in the opponent so that they do not carry out an attack. This deterrence is not based on the power of weapons or physical sanctions, but on the strength of civil society and the credibility of state institutions in the face of social, informational, and psychological pressures. This theory is supported by research conducted by (Morgan and Morgan, 2012), which states that deterrence in contemporary international politics no longer relies solely on military capabilities but also encompasses social, psychological, and institutional aspects. Furthermore, Non-military deterrence relies on social and psychological forces by instilling in the opposing side the belief that the community has mutual resilience, supported by the right information and a strong sense of nationalism, so that any attack or infiltration attempt will

end up failing and actually harming the attacking party. Non-military deterrence also places more emphasis on manipulating perceptions, shaping public opinion, and strengthening social norms to prevent undesirable actions (Miljkovic *et al.*, 2022).

One of the main pillars of non-military deterrence is social power. A solid unity of society, based on mutual trust to protect national interests, is a powerful shield in the face of all kinds of threats. Gustafsson and Mälksoo (2024) argues that a country's social power is seen through collective narratives, political memories, and shared identities, which can be leveraged as instruments to strengthen social cohesion and reduce vulnerability to external intervention. This social force includes the ability of the community to unite in the face of disinformation, polarization, and attempts to fight sheep that are often used by outsiders to weaken the internal stability of a country. In addition to social strength, the psychological resilience of the community also plays a central role in non-military deterrence strategies. People who have strong mental toughness are not easily influenced by propaganda or asymmetric threats. According to Unal and Uludag (2020), the success of deterrence strategies in asymmetric conflicts requires synergy between military forces and long-term political approaches, including constructive dialogue efforts, strengthening inclusive public policies, and building trust between the state and society. The implementation of non-military deterrence can be carried out through civilian training programs, the preparation of reliable public information systems, and the implementation of emergency simulations on a regular basis. Training programs can include education, social disaster preparedness, and communication system training so that public information can reach all levels of society quickly and accurately. In the current era of information technology, strengthening cyber resilience is one of the tangible forms of non-military deterrence. Taddeo (2018) states that classical deterrence theory has significant limits in the cyber context, as the theory's inability to explain ambiguity, multi-actors, and uncontrolled escalation in the digital world. Digital attacks such as hacking of important state systems, cyberattacks, and the spread of disinformation have become forms of aggression in the modern era. Lilli (2021) emphasized that an effective cyber deterrence strategy must take into account the active contribution of the private sector in building credibility and capabilities to prevent cyberattacks, as well as in building resilient and adaptive national security. The development of a national cybersecurity system and the improvement of people's digital literacy are an integral part of a non-military-based prevention strategy.

A country with a transparent government and fair law enforcement will be difficult to shake by those who intend to carry out unconventional aggression. This stability also creates public trust in the state, thereby strengthening legitimacy in every defense and security policy. The active participation of the community is the key to making this strategy truly effective. This means that deterrence efforts must develop from below through the participation of citizens in protecting their environment,

fighting hoaxes, and contributing to efforts to defend the country. Building non-military deterrence is not without challenges, one of the main challenges is the low public literacy against forms of non-physical threats such as disinformation, psychological warfare, and public opinion engineering. Social inequality, conflicts among community groups, and weak public trust in state institutions can reduce the strength of the deterrence built. Solving these various obstacles requires the active role of the government with a fair, open, and inclusive approach. Cooperation between countries is becoming increasingly crucial in strengthening non-military deterrence systems, especially in the digital era that penetrates national borders. Packa and Mares (2021) emphasizes the importance of political coordination and good resource management to strengthen civil-military cooperation in order to build an integrated national cyber force. Countries should cooperate in designing early detection systems against disinformation across national borders, sharing cybersecurity technologies, and formulating joint regulations to address transnational social threats. Governments and military institutions together with other countries need to establish political and technical coordination to build an integrated national cyber force and strengthen collective resilience in the face of cross-border threats.

## Conclusions

The civil defense posture is one of the main pillars in maintaining Indonesia's national security, which is comprehensive and involves all components of the nation. The pillars of national security, which include military, diplomacy, economic, socio-cultural, technological, and civil defense aspects, are integrated into a complete system. As part of the universal state defense system, civil defense involves not only military power but also the active role of civil society in dealing with various threats that can disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Civil defense appears as a strategic pillar that bridges the logic of state defense with the social reality of society. When people have disaster preparedness, have the capacity to survive and rise from disruption, and are able to respond in an organized manner to non-conventional threats, effective deterrence is formed. It is at the heart of a non-military deterrence strategy that a country's strength lies not solely in its military, but also in its social resilience and the strength of its civil society. A strong civil defense posture includes institutional aspects, human resource capabilities, responsive information and communication systems, and supporting infrastructure. A country that is able to build a civil defense based on local culture and the participation of the wider community will have a deterrence force that is difficult to match, even without relying on military force, but rather a force that grows out of deep solidarity.

Social legitimacy as part of the theory of political sociology is an important foundation in building effective deterrence. When state institutions are trusted and seen as legitimate by their citizens, the potential for interference from outside and within can be minimized through collective response and mutual awareness. The approach of military sociology teaches that defense is a social process, not just a technical problem. Non-military deterrence is effective when the public has high trust in state institutions and actively plays a role in maintaining security. In this context, the military is not only an armed apparatus but also an agent of social change, a public educator, and a facilitator of cooperation between the state and the people to build comprehensive national resilience. Cooperation between countries in this context also encourages policy harmonization in the fields of education, digital literacy, and civil society empowerment. The effort aims to broaden the global community's collective awareness based on the importance of maintaining a peaceful and just social order. Countries can support each other in designing joint programs that focus on strengthening the values of tolerance, mutual cooperation, and respect for differences, so that sociologically based non-military deterrence strategies do not stop at conceptual structures but are realized in concrete actions across borders.

From a European Union policy perspective, the findings of this study highlight the strategic importance of embedding civil defense and societal resilience within the European Union's evolving security governance framework. As the European Union increasingly confronts complex, trans boundary, and non-military challenges, the effectiveness of deterrence depends not only on regulatory capacity and military readiness but also on the degree of social legitimacy and public engagement embedded in security policies. The emphasis on civic preparedness, digital literacy, and community based resilience aligns with the European Union's whole of society approach, which recognizes citizens and civil society as active security actors rather than passive beneficiaries of protection. Embedding these sociological dimensions into policy design can enhance policy coherence across member states, reduce vulnerabilities exploited by hybrid threat actors, and strengthen trust in both national and institutions. In the long term, such an approach contributes to a more cohesive and adaptive European security environment, where deterrence is sustained through societal solidarity, institutional credibility, and coordinated cross-border action.

Non-military deterrence strategies based on a sociological approach not only strengthen the country's internal resilience but also open up a space for collaboration that strengthens solidarity between nations in the face of unconventional threats. This collaboration is an important foundation for the creation of sustainable peace and security, where social forces are seen as the main element of deterrence, replacing the dominance of coercive forces in the classical paradigm of defense. Thus, a civil defense posture based on social legitimacy is not only relevant but also urgent to be developed

as a key pillar of national security. Civil defense education and training designed to strengthen public trust in the state is a strategic instrument in dealing with a spectrum of unconventional threats. In the midst of global dynamics full of uncertainty, a strong country is a country that is able to activate the potential of its people as the main bulwark of national defense.

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