

Mapping the South China Sea Conflict through the Dynamic Framework Theory on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Budi Setiawan^{1*}, Bayu Setiawan², Eri Hidayat³

Universitas Pertahanan RI

Corresponding Author: Budi Setiawan budisetiawan030897@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: South China Sea, Conflict, Dynamic Framework

Received : 10 April

Revised : 18 May

Accepted: 20 June

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of the South China Sea conflict hold the potential for certain levels of escalation. The complexity of the conflict in the South China Sea needs to be specifically unraveled through the theory of the dynamic framework for conflict prevention and peace. This involves identifying the components that trigger and drive the conflict, which can then serve as a reference for formulating measures to prevent the escalation of the conflict. In this study, the South China Sea conflict is the primary object of exploration using the dynamic framework theory for conflict identification. The dynamic conflict framework has interrelated components that can be synthesized to determine that the South China Sea conflict is in a critical situation

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the history regarding the South China Sea has been one of the roots of conflicts over the years. Various regional powers, including China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan, and Indonesia, compete for sovereignty over the diverse islands and natural resources. This competition has created a complex series of disputes that cross historical interpretations, national pride, and tactical advantages (Matondang et al., 2022). The South China Sea issue is driven by three factors: politics, economics, and strategy. These factors are the main motives for countries to fight for their sovereign rights in the South China Sea. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea clearly regulates the provisions for maritime control. Countries are entitled to territorial seas (12 miles from the baseline), contiguous zones (24 miles from the baseline), exclusive economic zones (200 miles from the baseline), and continental shelves that can extend more than 200 nautical miles (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, n.d.). As of March 4, 2004, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, recorded that out of 195 UN member countries, 145 countries had become parties to the 1982 Convention.

In 1969, Indonesia and Malaysia, and in 2003, Indonesia and Vietnam agreed on maritime boundaries in the Natuna waters. However, when discussing the boundaries of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), there is an overlap in sovereign rights to manage the natural resources within these areas. The complexity of overlapping EEZ areas between countries is further complicated by China's claim regarding the Nine-Dash Line (Arsana, 2011). According to the South China Sea map issued by Beijing, the Nine-Dash Line extends from the Paracel Islands to the waters around the Spratly Islands (Brown, n.d.). The inclusion of the Spratly Islands has caused disputes between China and Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, which also affect Indonesia's maritime territory.

Indonesia has never claimed any part of the South China Sea, which is disputed by China with the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. However, the waters now known as the North Natuna Sea overlap with the Nine-Dash Line unilaterally declared by China, which asserts control over almost the entire South China Sea (Firdaus, 2014, n.d.) As known, in 2013, the Philippines brought this dispute to the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and in 2016, the decision stated that key elements of China's historical claims, including the Nine-Dash Line, and its activities in Philippine waters, violated international law (Megawati & Arundhati, 2018). On the other hand, China argues that its claim to the South China Sea based on the Nine-Dash Line predates UNCLOS, and therefore UNCLOS cannot fault China's actions concerning the South China Sea.

In addition to claiming territory in the South China Sea, China also launched attacks using water cannons on Filipino supply ships for troops aboard warships (Taufani, 2023). This has drawn the involvement of the United States in the dispute over the South China Sea territory, leading to actions by the US, Japan, and Australia conducting joint naval exercises in the South China Sea off the west coast of the Philippines. Amid the involvement of alliance countries in the South China Sea territorial disputes, Indonesia also faces threats to its

territorial sovereignty, with foreign fishing vessels entering Indonesian waters to illegally catch fish (AFP, 2024). According to priority activity progress data up to the third quarter of 2023 from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries there were 40 foreign fishing vessels inspected or apprehended by the Directorate General of Marine and Fisheries Resources Surveillance. Specifically, 26 foreign fishing vessels were inspected and 14 were apprehended (Laporan Kinerja Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan Tahun, 2023) The tension in the South China Sea disputes has the potential for armed conflict.

Conflict can be defined as a process that begins when one party perceives that another has negatively affected something it cares about – a starting point for conflict (Wahyudi, 2016). Differences in perceptions of territorial boundaries in the South China Sea contribute to the acceleration of conflict escalation. Following the Philippines' victory in its case against China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (Juwana, 2016) China solidified regulations for coast guard operations effective from June 15, 2024. This enactment allows the country to take necessary actions, including the use of weapons when national sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction are illegally violated by foreign organizations or individuals at sea (Dianti, 2024).

During the escalating confrontation between the Chinese Coast Guard and Filipino forces, there has been an increase in the frequency and duration of Chinese vessels in Vietnam's Exclusive Economic Zone (Ridhotulloh, 2024). This tension poses a potential new conflict in the South China Sea. Additionally, disputes and tensions in the South China Sea have led to confrontations between two major powers, China and the United States (Ayudiana, 2023). The US does not claim ownership of these waters. However, Washington has positioned nine US military bases in several areas in the Philippines, including those facing the South China Sea. The Philippines, as one of the countries frequently at odds with China over issues in the South China Sea, plays a significant role in this context. The causes of conflict in the South China Sea are multifaceted (Wiranto, 2016), arising not only from overlapping claims of ownership but also from disputes over natural resources, interventions by other countries, and other triggering factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Dynamic Framework Theory

The complexity of conflicts, influenced by numerous factors, necessitates analytical tools to establish the interconnections among the various causal factors of conflicts (Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, 2023). Current conflict analysis tools are partial and static. The lack of interconnection between the sources of conflict and the actors involved has led to the development of complex, emotional, and escalating interest conflicts. The dynamic framework theory is used to bridge this gap (Malik, 2000). The dynamic framework theory serves as a conflict mapping tool. This mapping includes at least five main elements that must be analyzed in-depth: the escalation-de-escalation elements of conflict, the causal factors of conflict, conflict actors, stakeholders, and political policies. These five main elements are interrelated as a dynamic system because each element influences the others.

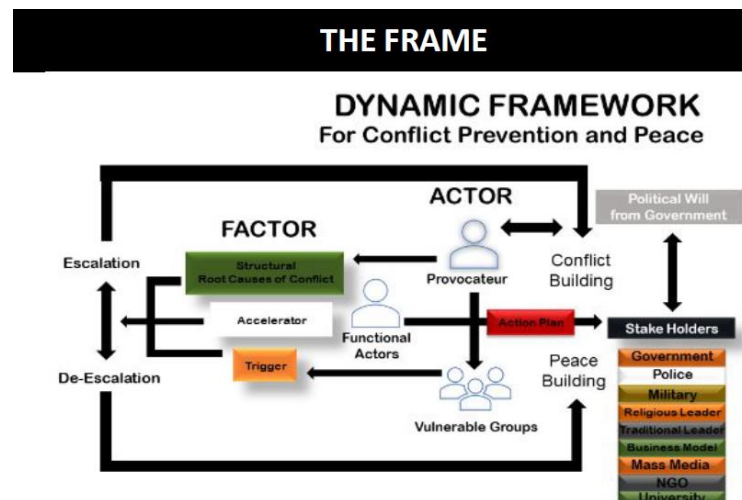


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Malik, 2012)

The implementation of conflict identification through the dynamic framework theory can be carried out by formulating the History of Conflict, Source of Conflict, Actors Involved, and Peace Process.

Conflict is an instrumental process in the formation, unification, and maintenance of social structures. It can establish and maintain boundaries between two or more groups. Conflict with other groups can reinforce the identity of a group and protect it from being absorbed into the surrounding social environment (Pratiwi et al., 2022). From a historical perspective, conflict is an essential aspect of the evolution of civilization, consistently occurring in the world within social systems such as states, corporate organizations, and even the smallest social systems. It has occurred in the past and is certain to occur in the future (Oleh Nur et al., 2016).

Each scale of conflict has its own background and developmental direction. Conflicts themselves stem from manifestations of social, political, economic, and cultural tensions or dissatisfaction with resolutions, as well as the presence of mobilizable resources (Ambarwati et al., 2021). A conflict involves multiple disputing actors. Actors are the individuals or groups that play roles in

the process leading to the outbreak of conflict. Actor analysis in conflicts explains the involvement of these actors and how their intervention in the conflict can become a trigger for its acceleration. In international conflicts, the intervention of other countries is one of the factors that can accelerate the escalation of the conflict (Sationo, 2019) The components influencing the level of conflict indication are then mapped in the form of assessments. The criteria for the component indicators of conflict according to the dynamic conflict framework are as follows: a score of 17.5-25 indicates a "Critical Situation," a score between 6-17 indicates an "Alert Situation," and a score of 1-5 indicates a "Notable Situation." The assessment indicators are based on evaluations of five components.

For the escalation-de-escalation level, the indicators are: Dispute (1); Tension (2); Crisis (3); Limited Violence (4); Mass Violence (5). Dispute at this level, signifies initial tensions or differences of opinion among the parties involved. Dispute indicates an escalation in tensions between the involved parties, which can trigger further escalation and may be influenced by the policies adopted by each party involved in the conflict. Increased tension contributes to the depth of the crisis; a crisis situation can be understood as a condition where tensions have reached a higher level, threatening to evolve into larger-scale violence or conflict. At the level of limited violence, violence has occurred on a localized or limited scale, with impacts narrower compared to mass violence. This condition is often referred to as open conflict, describing a situation where the conflict has reached a point where violence spreads widely and involves multiple parties or extensive regions.

In the component of conflict factors, there are several indicators: Triggers (5); Accelerators (3); Structure (1). Triggers are factors or events that directly cause conflict to occur. These can be actions, incidents, or situations that directly provoke or initiate conflict, a score of 5 indicates that triggers have a significant impact in sparking conflict. Accelerators are factors that speed up or worsen the development of conflict after it has been triggered. While accelerators may not initiate conflict, they escalate it or make the conflict more intense, a score of 3 indicates that accelerators have a significant impact in hastening conflict. Structure refers to systemic conditions or factors that underlie and enable conflict to occur. This can include social injustice, political tension, or economic inequality within society. Structure does not directly cause conflict but provides conditions that allow conflict to develop, a score of 1 indicates that structure has a lower impact compared to triggers and accelerators, but it remains important in the long-term context.

Involvement of conflict actors is one of the components that significantly influences the escalation of conflicts, with the following indicators: Provocateur (5); Vulnerable Groups (3); Functional Actors (1). Provocateurs are entities or individuals actively triggering or exacerbating conflicts with specific intentions. They engage in provocative actions that can escalate conflicts. A score of 5 indicates that provocateurs have a very significant impact on conflict development. Vulnerable groups are groups or individuals susceptible to the negative impacts of conflict. They may not directly initiate conflict but are

vulnerable to becoming victims or seriously affected by the consequences of ongoing conflicts. A score of 3 signifies that the role of vulnerable groups is significant in the context of social and humanitarian impacts of conflicts. Functional actors are entities or individuals playing crucial roles within society or the conflict, such as community leaders, non-governmental organizations, or government agencies with specific roles in mediation, negotiation, or conflict resolution. A score of 1 indicates that the role of functional actors in triggering conflict is relatively smaller compared to provocateurs and vulnerable groups but remains crucial in efforts for resolution and conflict mitigation.

Conflict resolution often considers the willingness of stakeholders, indicated by several factors: Conflict Stakeholders (5); Hostile Relationships (4); Ambiguous Relationships (3); Tactical Alliances (2); Strategic Alliances (1). Conflict stakeholders refer to parties with direct interests in the ongoing conflict, linked directly to its dynamics. A score of 5 indicates a high level of involvement and influence from these conflict stakeholders. Hostile relationships describe relationships filled with hostility or conflict between different stakeholders in the conflict situation. A score of 4 indicates significant tension among involved parties. Ambiguous relationships refer to unclear or ambiguous relationships among conflict stakeholders. These relationships may lack clarity in terms of goals or alliances, potentially affecting conflict dynamics unexpectedly. A score of 3 indicates that the clarity of relationships among stakeholders is still unclear. Ambiguous alliances reflect tactical or temporary relationships among parties to achieve common goals within the conflict context. These alliances may form for temporary strategic interests and can change with the development of the conflict. A score of 2 indicates the strategic relevance of these alliances in conflict resolution. Strategic alliances have long-term impacts and can significantly influence conflict dynamics. A score of 1 indicates that these alliances have a significant strategic impact on the conflict.

Furthermore, considering the component of political will of authorities with the following indicators: Pro-Conflict (5) & Pro-Peace (1). After assessment, a specific overview of the South China Sea conflict situation will be obtained. Pro-Conflict indicates a tendency or policy of authorities to support or take actions that worsen or prolong conflicts. A score of 5 indicates strong support for options or actions that can increase tension or escalate conflicts. Pro-Peace describes a tendency or policy of authorities to support or take actions aimed at promoting peace, mediation, or conflict resolution. A score of 1 indicates low support for options or actions that can reduce tension or reconcile conflicts. After using these indicators for assessment, a specific understanding of the South China Sea conflict situation will be gained, including how authorities are involved and manage the conflict dynamics based on the political preferences or tendencies of each involved country.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive research, which directly engages with the object through an exploration of grant tour questions, thereby clearly identifying the issues. Through this research model, the researcher will explore an object (Rusli, 2021). In this study, the South China Sea conflict is the main object to be explored using the conflict dynamic framework identification tool by investigating the history of the conflict, sources of conflict, conflict actors, and the ideal peace process. This research aims to gain a better understanding of the object (Fadli, 2021), specifically the conflict map in the South China Sea region.

The exploration of the object will be conducted through the collection of both empirical (Djunaedi, 2021) and theoretical literature, analyzed from the perspective of the dynamic conflict framework. The analysis in this study will delve deeply into the relationships between relevant texts objectively and systematically (Syawie & Sumarno, 2015). Through the process of data collection and specific analysis using the conflict dynamics framework, the South China Sea conflict will be dissected into each indicator by assigning specific scores to indicate the level of conflict. In this study, the literature corpus will be dissected and analyzed as a cohesive unit of mutually influencing components. Thus, this research aims to fulfill the reconstruction of the complex reality of the South China Sea conflict.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Escalation-Deescalation

The South China Sea region, throughout the 1990s, became the most frequently highlighted security issue. This area is a basin bounded by both large and small countries such as China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Burma, and Taiwan (Harini, 2012). Within the South China Sea, there are the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands. However, studies on the South China Sea conflict in the Spratly Islands have gained more prominence because they involve multiple countries simultaneously. According to conflict sources, the South China Sea conflict cannot be separated from the issue of the need for vital resources such as oil, fish resources, and busy shipping lanes (Pamungkas, 2016). Oil is the main target for China because since the early 1990s until now, China has become one of the top ten largest importers in the world. This status means that China must always strive to obtain a sufficient supply of oil from abroad to keep its economy running and growing. The presence of oil and natural gas in this area makes China's involvement in the South China Sea conflict inevitable (Usman & Sukma, 1997)

Based on Glasl's escalation theory (Jordan, 2000), conflict escalation is the process of increasing conflict intensity and violence. The nine levels of escalation are extracted into three main levels. The first level (win-win), from a historical perspective, can trace the South China Sea conflict back to 1279 (Erbas, 2022). Over time, control over the area has shifted several times. One of the most significant moments in the history of the South China Sea conflict occurred in

1947, with the nine-dash line declaring that the area within the dashed lines is Chinese territory (Sungkar, 2022).



Figure 2. Territorial Map (FPCI Chapter, 2020)

In the conflict map of the South China Sea region, the involvement of conflict actors can be delineated as follows, the Paracel Islands in the northern part of the South China Sea involve China, Taiwan, and Vietnam, all of which claim ownership of these islands. Additionally, four ASEAN countries – namely, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, and Malaysia – are vying for the Spratly Islands in the southern part of the South China Sea and have agreed upon rules as the legal basis to be followed. This legal basis is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982, which emphasizes territorial sovereignty in the South China Sea extending 12 nautical miles from the coast and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extending 200 nautical miles. This agreement aims to reduce friction among these countries and prioritize respect for their sovereign territories in the South China Sea to jointly manage the natural resources within, thus maintaining a win-win escalation process that does not harm other countries (Ardiansyah et al., 2018).

Efforts to achieve a win-win process have also been pursued at the level of international arbitration, which ruled that China has no rights to the disputed waters. This decision is binding, but the Arbitration Court has no power to enforce it. The South China Sea dispute case handled by this court was unilaterally filed by the Philippine government to test the validity of China's claims, among other things, based on UNCLOS 1982 (Setyo, 2020). However, on the other hand, China remains steadfast in its decision not to comply with the ruling. Peaceful means have also been agreed upon by Southeast Asian countries, with ASEAN calling for a peaceful resolution of the South China Sea dispute in accordance with international law, including the UN law of the sea referenced by the international arbitration court. The parties strive to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes peacefully, without threats or use of force, through friendly consultations and negotiations directly with sovereign countries, in

accordance with universally recognized principles of international law (Pompeo, 2020).

Tensions in the South China Sea escalated in early May 2014 when China's Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil rig began drilling operations within Vietnam's EEZ and continental shelf. Previously, in May 2009, China issued a statement regarding the nine-dash line, asserting indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and adjacent waters, and sovereign rights and jurisdiction over these waters and the seabed beneath (Gde et al., 2022). As a manifestation of intrigue, the involved countries find it difficult to resolve the conflict at the first (win-win) or second (win-lose) levels, where one party must win and the other must lose.

The presence of UNCLOS as a win-win solution is not as smooth as desired, as China insists on maintaining the map they created in 1947. This tension is expected to rise between China and the Philippines, or the United States, which has military assets in the South China Sea (Mastro, 2020). The Philippines' position, as affirmed by President Rodrigo Duterte, is willing to share natural resources with Beijing in the South China Sea, despite the court ruling favoring the Philippines (BBC News, 2016). Currently, China's ambitions in the South China Sea worry Australia, its Indo-Pacific allies, and the United States. In response, Australia, the United States, and Japan have agreed to increase military exercises in the Philippines (Mercer, 2024). Strengthening military efforts by the alliance in the South China Sea region indicates the potential for third-level (lose-lose) escalation, where both parties will suffer losses and there is no way out. Military activities in the South China Sea show indications of limited violence, violence occurring at a certain intensity level or being successfully contained to a certain scale (Violence & Author, 1969). In the security context, each country continues to seek peaceful processes while maintaining defense efforts in the military field. In the escalation-de-escalation component, the South China Sea conflict reaches an indication of limited violence and is given a scoring of four.

Conflict Factors

Every interest has goals in the form of fulfilling basic needs, whether these are socially or environmentally available. The simpler the dimension of basic needs being pursued by conflicting interests, the simpler and quicker the problem-solving process can be achieved. However, John Burton in *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (1990) mentions that conflicts stem from basic human needs (Iqtisaduna, 2015). The dimension of basic human needs in conflicts of interest always undergoes a process of complexity. The need for wealth can evolve into a need for power, status, and identity. The complexity of these conflict sources influences how conflict management institutions must be created and operated (Gwejangge, 2023).

The South China Sea is considered an important area because of its strategic aspects that directly or indirectly affect the surrounding regions or countries (Koessetianto et al., 2024). The sources of conflict are divided into three main components (Zainal et al., 2017) interest, which is something that motivates the involved parties to act or not act. In the South China Sea conflict, this interest can be described as the desire to take control over territorial claims. The South China

Sea, with its rich resources around and deep within the area, holds lucrative fisheries, and oil and gas reserves that US officials estimate to be at least equivalent to Mexico's oil reserves and potentially the second-largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia—making it one of the most strategically important and contested seas of the 21st century. National interests over maritime areas and archipelagos in the South China Sea contain vast natural wealth, including oil and gas reserves and other marine resources (Junef, 2018), influencing countries' emotions in making national policy decisions.

Emotions manifest through feelings that can take the form of anger, hatred, and rejection. Rejection of conflicting territorial claims, increased military activities, artificial island construction, and treatment of fishermen and patrol boats become sources of friction and tension in the area (International Crisis Group, 2021). Values are the hardest conflict component to resolve because values are intangible and cannot be clearly expressed; they lie at the core of beliefs about right and wrong, good and bad, guiding actions in decision-making. The South China Sea dispute is also influenced by the implications of values held by countries, in the form of politics, economics, and security. The conflict sources significantly influence the occurrence of conflicts in the South China Sea region. Sharp differences in interests, emotions, and values make it difficult to find peaceful resolutions (Ambarwati et al., 2023).

Economic factors, which are important in the South China Sea conflict amidst future natural resource limitations, are a cause of increasing conflict tensions. There will come a time when every superpower will strive for resource-rich areas as new sources of national income (Ika Fahrika et al., 2020). This trigger is categorized as having the potential for large-scale conflict. In this context, conflict factors are identified with a scoring indicator of five or in a triggering condition. The factors causing disputes or conflicts between countries are dominated by factors capable of escalating conflict in the South China Sea region.

Conflict Actors

The South China Sea conflict involves several countries, including China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. Each country has overlapping territorial claims. This dispute involves various interests from countries outside the region. Alliances such as AUKUS, formed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, aim to counter China's hegemony in the South China Sea (Idrus et al., 2021). Additionally, interventions from several countries continue to evolve and can be identified through defense cooperation pacts. Various interested countries form groups to protect their interests.

In the South China Sea conflict, Southeast Asian countries are involved as a medium for reconciliation. These inter-country groups are an indication of invisible groups, which, at undetermined times, can become conflict actors. These invisible groups are often overlooked and not considered primary factors, yet they play important roles or have significant impacts on the conflict. The uncertainty of the invisible groups' alignments in the conflict means that the involvement of these country alliances can be categorized as one of the factors accelerating the South China Sea conflict escalation, given a score of five as a condition likely to speed up the conflict.

Stakeholders

Efforts to resolve the South China Sea dispute have been undertaken through various mechanisms, including bilateral negotiations, multilateral dialogues, and international arbitration. However, significant progress in resolving this dispute remains limited (United Nations, 2023). Some countries, such as the Philippines, have brought the dispute to the International Arbitration Court and received rulings supporting their claims. These diplomatic efforts have resulted in peace agreements in the form of Memorandums of Understanding between the involved countries. Economic interests are the most dominant issue in the South China Sea dispute because this area has abundant natural resource reserves. This drives countries, including Indonesia, to seek solutions to resolve the dispute. Indonesia itself has used preventive diplomacy by holding dynamic workshops in various ASEAN countries, such as Malaysia, Brunei, Laos, and Vietnam, to try to resolve tensions with China regarding unilateral claims over several areas in the South China Sea (Al Jazeera, 2023).

In the reality of the South China Sea conflict, the stakeholders are international organizations consisting of various countries. As we know, these countries bring their national interests based on the theory of national primacy law (Firdaus, 2014). Hence, stakeholders become polarized into many parts. Although international law has accommodated the basic principles of international cooperation, the existence of stakeholders is viewed as a gray area of polarization between the U.S. conducting joint military exercises and China with its allied countries continuously strengthening strategies to achieve their interests. This further obscures the direction of willingness to resolve the conflict peacefully and can thus be categorized as an indicator with a score of three.

The Government's Political Will

The United States has been assertive in solidifying its position as a superpower in the Pacific, discreetly supporting the Philippines' claims in the South China Sea. Following minor incidents with the Philippines and Vietnam, China adopted an aggressive stance by seizing control of the Spratly and Paracel Islands and establishing naval bases there (U.S Embassy, 2023). They even expelled Filipino fishermen from Scarborough Shoal, which is 200 miles off the coast of Palawan. China's aggression didn't stop there; they bolstered their naval fleet with the aircraft carrier "Liaoning" and used Chinese fishermen as proxies in their strategic maneuvers. These aggressive actions have been protested by the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei, and the United States.

Beyond military might, China has also sought to divide the consensus among ASEAN countries. Through economic assistance, China has successfully persuaded Laos and Cambodia to refrain from raising the issue (Priambudi, 2022). The political will of the rulers is challenging to identify because, in the international system, there is no fully binding and sovereign government. International law only accommodates fundamental principles for conducting inter-state cooperation (Rizkiyanto, 2022). While international law indeed regulates peaceful resolution mechanisms and humanitarian law demonstrates a commitment to upholding humanistic values in dispute resolution, indications of potential violence persist concerning the South China Sea conflict. The political will of the authorities can be observed through the actions of international courts

in addressing the South China Sea conflict. Although these courts strive for peace, they also prepare for military strength, reflecting a complex dynamic where peace efforts are intertwined with military readiness.

Overall, the conflict indicators, assessed through the dynamic conflict framework theory, are rated twenty-one, categorizing the situation as critical. This critical stage indicates a point where the conflict has the potential to escalate into military tension and aggressive actions, which can negatively impact peace efforts. In a critical situation, the course of the conflict is significantly influenced. Mapping the South China Sea conflict using the dynamic conflict framework theory provides insights into the components accelerating conflict escalation. The South China Sea conflict could transform into an open conflict if the countries involved do not consider the conflict indicators explained in the dynamic conflict framework theory.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conflict identification can serve as a guideline for formulating resolution strategies that adhere to the principles of international law, thereby preventing the occurrence of open (armed) conflict. The dynamic conflict framework illustrates the interconnection between various elements of the conflict. The sources of conflict can influence the number of actors involved in the South China Sea dispute, and the escalation is also affected by various other components. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the South China Sea conflict comprises a history rated five, and differences in perceptions among the countries involved in the dispute widen the existing problem gap.

The conflict factors, rated five, include strategic interests, natural resource aspects, and policies adopted by the parties involved, which prolong the South China Sea conflict. The involved actors, rated five, indicate that the number and types of actors influence the conflict dynamics in the South China Sea. The willingness of stakeholders, rated three, reflects the readiness of the countries involved to participate in applying peace principles. Political will, rated three, indicates the existence of international political will based on the alignment of the interests of the countries involved in the South China Sea dispute. When accumulated, these points total twenty-one, equating to a critical situation. This critical situation needs to be highlighted by parties involved in the South China Sea conflict.

The critical situation in the South China Sea conflict refers to a stage where the conflict has the potential to involve tension, military actions, and negatively valued peaceful approaches. This critical situation in the South China Sea demands serious attention and action from all involved parties. Efforts to manage the conflict must involve intensive multilateral diplomacy, adherence to international law, and mechanisms to prevent military escalation. The complex dynamics of the conflict require a comprehensive approach, considering the various factors and actors involved, and prioritizing dialogue and regional cooperation.

FUTURE STUDY

The limitations of this study prevent the presentation of specific data from the perspectives of each country involved in the South China Sea conflict. Therefore, the researcher recommends conducting further research on prevention strategies that align with general international principles and their relation to the resolution of the South China Sea conflict.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you to the Indonesian Defense University for being an educational institution that fosters understanding of defense and security. Special thanks to Ichsán Malik for his contributions to the dynamic framework theory.

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