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Politics and Green Financial Crime: Envisioning a Sustainable Democratic Future in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research investigates the link between environmental crimes and political corruption in Indonesia, focusing on findings by the Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK). PPATK reported that approximately 1 trillion Rupiah, derived from green financial crimes such as illegal logging and environmental exploitation, has been funneled into political campaigns ahead of the 2024 elections. These illicit financial flows threaten electoral integrity, environmental sustainability, and democratic governance. Utilizing a normative legal research method with legislative, conceptual, comparative, and futuristic approaches, this study identifies gaps in existing political funding regulations and oversight mechanisms. The findings reveal that the lack of transparency and accountability in campaign financing allows environmental criminals to influence policymaking, thereby weakening green policies and governance. To address this issue, the study proposes actionable solutions: strengthening independent oversight institutions, enforcing strict political financing transparency, adopting a risk-based approach to financial regulations, increasing public participation, and enhancing international cooperation. Collective action from civil society, policymakers, and global partners is imperative to safeguard Indonesia's democratic values and environmental heritage.

Keywords: Environmental Crimes; Green Financial Crime; Indonesia; Politics.

Introduction

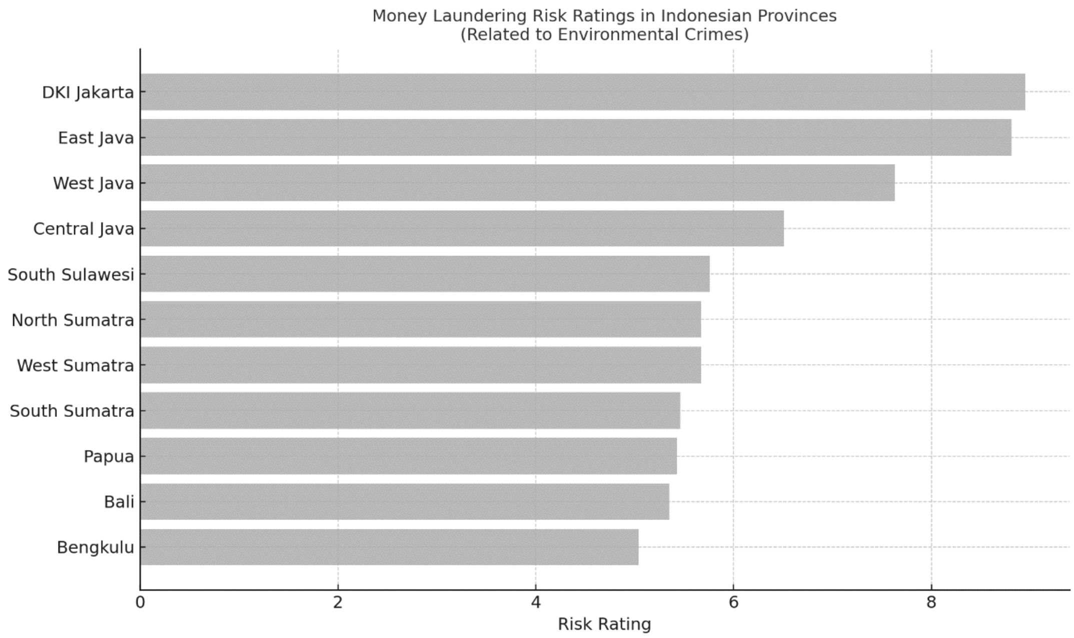
Cases of alleged corruption involving politicians continue to draw significant attention in Indonesia. The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), the leading body in combating corruption in the country, revealed that they have received crucial information from the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK). The PPATK, responsible for monitoring and analyzing financial transactions to identify potential illegal activities such as money laundering and terrorism financing, reportedly discovered suspicious transactions linked to the politician (Adhar et al., 2019). The disclosure of findings by the PPATK regarding green financial crime practices closely tied to political activities has highlighted the severe issues faced by the country.

Green financial crime refers to illegal activities that generate financial gains through the exploitation and destruction of the environment. This type of crime encompasses various unlawful practices, including illegal logging, which involves unauthorized deforestation and results in biodiversity loss; illegal mining, where minerals are extracted without proper permits, leading to significant environmental damage and pollution; and the illegal wildlife trade, which includes the clandestine buying and selling of endangered species, contributing to the decline of wildlife populations. Additionally, green financial crime also includes pollution and waste disposal practices, where hazardous materials are improperly discarded, contaminating ecosystems and posing health risks to the public. These activities not only cause environmental destruction but also yield substantial illegal financial profits, posing significant challenges to environmental conservation efforts and governance (Endriana et al., 2023).

The discovery of an illegal fund flow amounting to 1 trillion Rupiah originating from environmental crimes and used to finance political parties ahead of the 2024 elections has raised deep concerns about the integrity of the democratic process in Indonesia (Yahya, 2023). This case is not just about money laundering; it reveals how corrupt financial practices rooted in environmental crimes can undermine the foundations of democracy. Funds derived from environmental crimes such as illegal logging, the illegal trade of endangered species, and uncontrolled industrial pollution indicate irresponsible exploitation of natural resources (Spapens et al., 2018). The use of these funds to finance political parties demonstrates the potential for ethical and moral compromises in the political process and policymaking. It reflects how the flow of illegal funds from environmental crimes can influence political decisions, ultimately prioritizing the interests of specific groups over public welfare and environmental sustainability (Argandoña, 2006).

The involvement of illegal funds in campaign financing can lead political parties and, subsequently, policymakers to become beholden to interests that conflict with conservation efforts and green policies (Peoples & Both, 2022). This situation poses the risk that environmental policies may be tailored to protect or benefit contributors rather than serve the public interest and promote environmental sustainability (Bergenas & Knight, 2015). Moreover, this situation highlights significant weaknesses in Indonesia's financial and political oversight systems. The flow of illegal funds from environmental crimes into political parties underscores critical regulatory and oversight gaps, such as the lack of stringent enforcement of political financing laws, limited transparency in campaign funding, and inadequate monitoring of illicit financial flows. For example, the absence of a comprehensive mechanism to track donations to political parties allows funds from environmental crimes, such as illegal logging, mining, and palm oil plantations, to enter political channels unnoticed. Additionally, the weak enforcement of anti-money laundering regulations by financial institutions creates loopholes for illegal transactions to remain undetected. These deficiencies, coupled with minimal political accountability and insufficient coordination between oversight agencies like the PPATK and election commissions, enable the perpetuation of these practices and hinder efforts to combat environmental crimes effectively (Krishnan, 2014). This calls for urgent action to strengthen laws and regulations, enhance transparency in political funding, and ensure accountability regarding the sources and uses of funds in politics (Hamada & Agrawal, 2020).

Figure 1. Money Laundering Risk Rankings in Indonesian Provinces



Source: PPATK (2021).

PPATK's findings also reveal a high risk of money laundering (ML) in several provinces. Based on collected data, a total of 11 provinces in Indonesia face high risks related to money laundering associated with environmental crimes. In this risk ranking, the Province of DKI Jakarta recorded the highest average risk at 8.95. It is followed by East Java with an average risk of 8.81. West Java ranks next with a risk score of approximately 7.63, followed by Central Java with a risk level of around 6.51. Additionally, South Sulawesi recorded an average risk of around 5.76, while North Sumatra and West Sumatra have nearly identical risk scores, approximately 5.67. South Sumatra also noted significant risk with an average of 5.46. Meanwhile, Papua, Bali, and Bengkulu each recorded high-risk levels of about 5.43, 5.35, and 5.04, respectively. This data indicates that several provinces in Indonesia face serious challenges regarding the risk of money laundering linked to environmental crimes. This underscores the importance of enhancing oversight and law enforcement to address the issue effectively (PPATK, 2021).

PPATK firmly confirmed that funds originate from various destructive environmental crimes. The existence of funds from these crimes has raised significant concerns, and PPATK is currently working hard to prevent election activities financed by such illegal sources. Additionally, PPATK revealed that the amount of money generated from environmental crimes in 2022 increased significantly compared to previous years. This fact highlights the alarming growth of the problem, with the amount involved reaching trillions of Rupiah. This reflects the urgency to address and halt green financial crime practices that undermine both political and environmental integrity in Indonesia (Yahya, 2023). In this context, preventive measures and stricter law enforcement are essential to protect the values of democracy and environmental sustainability in the country. These findings not only discuss the implications for Indonesia's democratic order but also call for a reevaluation of existing political funding mechanisms and advocate for more transparent and accountable practices. Ensuring the integrity of elections and promoting a sustainable democratic future is crucial. By involving civil society, policymakers, and international partners, the need for collective action to address the interconnection between politics, democracy, and green financial crime is emphasized, ultimately protecting Indonesia's democratic values and environmental heritage.

The main issue in this study is the integration of green financial crime prevention within the framework of Indonesia's politics and democracy. Specifically, this research aims to understand how illegal funds from environmental crimes infiltrate political campaigns and influence policymaking, thereby undermining environmental sustainability and democratic integrity. The study seeks to identify gaps in current regulations and oversight mechanisms, assess the impact of this financial crime on political processes, and develop comprehensive strategies to enhance transparency, strengthen law enforcement, and foster international cooperation. The goal is to ensure a responsible and sustainable democratic future that effectively addresses the challenges posed by green financial crime. In studies related to green financial crime, various research works present different focuses and novelties that complement each other. This study examines the link between environmental crime and political corruption, with a focus on illegal financial flows resulting from environmental exploitation being channeled into political funding in Indonesia, particularly in the lead-up to the 2024 elections. This research reveals how weak transparency and oversight of political funding allow funds from illegal activities, such as illegal logging and mining, to influence democratic processes and environmental policies. The novelty of this study lies in uncovering the systematic relationship between environmental crime, political funding, and environmental policy degradation, while proposing solutions such as strengthening independent supervisory institutions, enhancing political funding transparency, and encouraging public participation.

Several articles have been written on the similar topic, some sample articles are described to propose the novelty of this article. First, Ruggiero (2022), explores how financial systems that ostensibly support sustainable economies often paradoxically facilitate activities that harm the environment. Emphasis on the role of tax havens and global financial networks in enabling environmental crime makes this study internationally relevant. Second, Sihabudin et al (2024), places greater emphasis on legal mitigation strategies for green financial crimes in Indonesia. Using a normative-juridical approach, this study identifies the limitations of conventional legal instruments in addressing money laundering derived from environmental crimes, such as illegal logging and mining. Third, Endriana et al (2023), focuses more on specific cases of financial crimes in the renewable energy and environmental sectors. This research highlights concrete data from Indonesia's PPATK regarding the significant transaction values of environmental crimes, while discussing cases of carbon and biodiesel fraud as tangible examples of the economic impacts of green financial crime. A comparison with these studies shows that the present research excels in highlighting the political and democratic dimensions of green financial crime, which are not thoroughly explored in other studies. While Ruggiero provides a global perspective, Sihabudin focuses on legal and institutional solutions, and Endriana presents concrete data and case studies. Thus, the novelty of this research lies in its integrated analysis of environmental crime, political funding, and the future of democracy, making it a more comprehensive study within the Indonesian context.

The contribution of this manuscript to the international discourse lies in its systematic analysis of the interplay between environmental crime, political corruption, and democratic governance, providing a unique perspective on green financial crime within the context of a developing democracy like Indonesia. While existing global studies predominantly focus on financial systems, legal frameworks, or sector-specific cases, this research expands the understanding of how illicit financial flows derived from environmental exploitation, such as illegal logging and mining, directly influence political funding and subsequently impact policy outcomes and democratic governance. By highlighting this often-overlooked link, the study sheds light on the erosion of democratic processes caused by weak governance, lack of transparency, and regulatory loopholes in emerging markets. These insights offer significant value to the international community, particularly for policymakers and researchers focusing on the intersection of environmental justice, financial regulation, and democratic integrity. Furthermore, the proposed solutions including the strengthening of independent oversight institutions, enhancing political funding transparency, and encouraging public participation are globally relevant and can inform strategies in other regions facing similar challenges. This research ultimately bridges the gap between environmental crime and its broader implications for political and policy structures, positioning it as a critical contribution to the global fight against green financial crime, particularly in emerging economies.

Problems

1. What is green financial crime, and how can "green money" or environmentally friendly funding become a source of problems?parks
2. How can democratic institutions be fortified to more effectively detect, prevent, and prosecute green financial crimes?
3. What specific policies can be implemented to enhance the collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society to combat green financial crime without stifling innovation and economic growth?

Methods

The study titled "Politics and Green Financial Crime: Building a Sustainable Democracy for Indonesia's Future" adopts a normative legal research method with legislative, conceptual, comparative, and futuristic approaches (Fernando et al., 2023). This research is descriptive-prescriptive in nature (Fernando et al., 2022). In normative legal research, a descriptive-prescriptive approach plays a key role in analyzing existing legal norms, identifying weaknesses, and proposing solutions. This approach has two main elements: descriptive analysis to explain the current legal frameworks and prescriptive recommendations to offer improvements. The descriptive part systematically explains the current laws governing green financial crime, such as environmental protection, anti-corruption, and political funding transparency in Indonesia. It identifies legal gaps that allow illicit funds from environmental crimes, like illegal logging and mining, to enter political funding. The prescriptive part provides forward-looking recommendations to address these gaps. This includes strengthening independent oversight bodies, increasing transparency in political funding, improving enforcement of environmental laws, and involving the public in monitoring processes. The collected data is analyzed using content analysis methods (Effendi et al., 2023). In this research, the legislative approach is utilized to understand and evaluate existing legal regulations related to politics and green financial crime in Indonesia. The conceptual approach aids in constructing a theoretical framework and defining key concepts related to the research topic. Through the comparative approach, this study compares the policies and practices in Indonesia with those of other countries to identify best practices and develop relevant recommendations. Meanwhile, the futuristic approach is employed to predict future trends and dynamics and to develop strategies that can support the realization of a sustainable democratic future in Indonesia within the context of politics, democracy, and green financial crime prevention.

Content analysis is applied to the collected data to systematically interpret and evaluate information, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues being researched. The methodology section should provide comprehensive steps on how the research was conducted, including the types of data needed, how to access such data, and how to analyze it. Specifically, data collection involves gathering information from legal documents, government reports, financial transaction records from the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK), scholarly articles, and case studies on green financial crime both in Indonesia and internationally.

Discussion

1. The Dark Trail of Green Financial Crime: When Green Money is the Source of Trouble

The history of green financial crime cannot be attributed to a single figure or origin but has developed alongside the growing global awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. This concept emerged from the recognition that financial activities can significantly impact the environment, such as illegal financing of deforestation, mining, and industrial pollution. Essentially, green financial crime encompasses crimes related to the financing or economic activities that harm the environment. Its history is closely tied to the evolution of global environmental and financial policies.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, global awareness of environmental issues grew rapidly, driven in part by publications like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962. This groundbreaking book played a crucial role in raising public awareness about the harmful effects of pesticides on the environment. Rachel Carson, a marine biologist and conservationist, detailed how pesticides, especially DDT, caused widespread ecological damage (Travis, 2012). She described their detrimental impact on birds, fish, and other wildlife, painting a future where continued pesticide use would lead to a silent spring devoid of bird songs. Carson's compelling narrative and rigorous scientific evidence challenged the prevailing use of pesticides in agriculture and sparked a national debate in the United States. The book's impact was profound, leading to policy changes, increased public scrutiny of chemical use, and ultimately the banning of DDT in the U.S. *Silent Spring* is regarded as a catalyst for the modern environmental movement, influencing subsequent environmental laws and inspiring generations of environmental activists worldwide. This publication emphasized the interconnectedness between human actions and the natural world and highlighted the need for more sustainable and ecologically sensitive practices (Parks, 2017).

During this period, the primary focus was on general environmental impacts rather than financial aspects. However, this rising awareness was foundational in understanding the link between the economy and the environment. In 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment marked one of the first major efforts to bring environmental issues to the global stage (Cooper & Fritz, 1992). Although this conference did not specifically address environmental financial crimes, it was a significant step in raising global awareness of environmental concerns. In the late 1980s and 1990s, significant growth occurred in the concepts of the green economy and sustainable finance in response to increasing concerns about climate change and environmental degradation (M. Larsen & Henderson, 2020). Initiatives such as the development of green bond markets and sustainable investments emerged, reflecting the need to integrate environmental policies into economic strategies. In the 2000s, international agreements like the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015) became pivotal in recognizing the financial sector's crucial role in addressing climate change (Dasgupta et al., 2016). These agreements demonstrated a global commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and highlighted the importance of the financial sector in environmental protection efforts.

By the 2010s, countries began implementing stricter policies and regulations related to green finance and environmental risk disclosures by companies and financial institutions. For instance, the European Union introduced the Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities, a comprehensive framework aimed at promoting transparency and consistency in sustainable finance (Steffen, 2021). This taxonomy provides clear criteria for determining whether an economic activity can be considered environmentally friendly. It was designed to help investors, companies, and policymakers make informed decisions that align with the EU's environmental goals, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable water and marine resource use, a transition to a circular economy, pollution prevention and control, and the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems. By establishing detailed criteria and thresholds, the EU Taxonomy aims to direct financial flows toward sustainable projects and investments, enhancing overall economic sustainability.

Besides the EU's Taxonomy, other countries and regions have developed their frameworks and regulations to enhance green finance. For example, China introduced the green bond endorsed project catalogue, outlining eligible projects for green bond issuance, while the United States saw initiatives like the establishment of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) (M. L. Larsen, 2023). The TCFD provides recommendations for companies to disclose information on financial risks and opportunities related to climate change, assisting investors in better assessing and valuing these risks. These measures reflect the growing recognition of the importance of integrating environmental considerations into financial decision-making. The aim is to promote greater accountability and transparency, ensuring that capital is allocated in a way that supports sustainable development and the transition to a low-carbon economy. By implementing these policies and regulations, countries address environmental risks and encourage innovation and resilience within their financial systems (Schuetze & Stede, 2020). Such initiatives represent tangible progress toward integrating finance with environmental sustainability goals.

While there is no single key figure credited as the pioneer of green financial crime, many academics, environmental activists, and political leaders have contributed to raising awareness and shaping policies related to this issue. Figures such as Al Gore, through his activism and the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, played a significant role in raising global awareness about climate change (Hasselmann & Barker, 2008). Gro Harlem Brundtland, who led the World Commission on Environment and Development, is another example of an influential figure impacting thought and policy related to sustainability (Ramakrishna, 1992). Overall, green financial crime is a growing and complex phenomenon that reflects changing global understandings of the relationship between finance, economics, and the environment. It continues to evolve, with policies, regulations, and practices adapting as our understanding of global environmental challenges deepens.

The shift toward sustainable finance and the green economy has redefined how investments and resource management are viewed. Initiatives like the United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) and the increasing role of multilateral financial institutions in funding green projects have strengthened the financial sector's role in environmental protection efforts (Muganyi et al., 2021). The private sector, including banks and institutional investors, has increasingly adopted investment strategies that incorporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors to identify long-term risks and opportunities (Zaccone & Pedrini, 2020). In the latter half of the 2010s, awareness of the importance of integrating climate risk into financial decisions grew. Initiatives such as the TCFD were established to enhance and guide the disclosure of climate-related financial information by companies (Tyagi, 2018). The goal is to help investors, lenders, and other stakeholders understand a company's material exposure to climate-related risks and opportunities. Additionally, the shift toward renewable energy and sustainable technologies gained momentum, driven by government policies, technological advancements, and declining production costs. This has created new investment opportunities in sectors such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, and green infrastructure. As the 2020s approach, new challenges have emerged in integrating financial aspects into achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Georgeson & Maslin, 2018). The focus has shifted beyond merely mitigating environmental impacts to creating inclusive and sustainable economic models. Sustainable finance has now become an integral part of the global discourse on achieving responsible and sustainable economic growth.

In Indonesia, the development of green financial crime is closely linked to global attention on environmental and sustainability issues. The concept of green financial crime refers to financial activities that potentially harm the environment, such as illegal financing of deforestation, mining, or environmentally damaging industries (Spapens et al., 2018). This issue is particularly significant in Indonesia, which has vast tropical forests and high biodiversity but also faces severe problems like deforestation, illegal logging, and pollution. In the early 2000's, awareness of the negative impacts of economic activities on the environment began to rise, prompting the Indonesian government to implement stricter regulatory and enforcement measures. These included more stringent environmental permit regulations and efforts to enhance transparency in the financial and corporate sectors. However, the development of green financial crime is also challenged by issues such as corruption, weak law enforcement, and a lack of awareness and capacity among financial institutions to identify and prevent environmental crimes.

Despite notable progress in addressing green financial crime, this issue remains a significant challenge in Indonesia. A key development has been the increased cooperation between the government, financial institutions, and Indonesia's active participation in various global environmental initiatives. The government recognizes the vital role of financial institutions in preventing illicit financial flows that fund environmentally destructive activities, such as deforestation, illegal mining, and unsustainable industrial practices. In recent years, the Indonesian government has started integrating sustainability principles into economic and financial policies as part of its broader commitment to fostering environmentally responsible and sustainable development. One concrete measure is the development of green bond markets, which serve as innovative financing tools to support environmentally friendly projects, such as renewable energy, forest rehabilitation, sustainable waste management, and low-carbon infrastructure development. Notably, the issuance of green sukuk, or Sharia-compliant green bonds, has marked a significant milestone. These financial instruments aim to attract both domestic and international investors committed to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.

The government has promoted sustainable investments by requiring financial institutions to assess the environmental impact of their funded projects and prioritize financing for initiatives that align with sustainability goals. To further strengthen these efforts, the government has engaged in active collaboration with international organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This cooperation focuses on reforming Indonesia's legal and regulatory frameworks to meet global standards, improving transparency, and enhancing accountability in environmentally impactful economic activities. Key measures include updating financial sector regulations, implementing advanced technologies to monitor suspicious financial transactions, and aligning national policies with international commitments on climate change and sustainable resource management. However, significant challenges persist. Weak law enforcement, high levels of corruption, and limited institutional capacity within financial sectors to identify and prevent green financial crime remain major obstacles. Furthermore, a lack of awareness among industry players regarding the environmental consequences of their economic activities continues to hinder progress. To address these issues, enhanced coordination among government agencies, financial institutions, private sector stakeholders, and civil society is critical. Moving forward, Indonesia must ensure that sustainability principles are effectively implemented across all aspects of economic and financial policymaking to achieve its long-term environmental and developmental goals.

2. Democracy and Dilemmas: Tackling Green Financial Crime in the Political Arena

Green financial crime and corruption are two interrelated concepts within the context of economic and environmental crime (Spapens et al., 2016). These practices often involve violations of environmental and financial laws, as well as the abuse of power for personal or organizational gain. Corruption, on the other hand, is the misuse of entrusted power for private benefit. This can include bribery, nepotism, and embezzlement. In the context of green financial crime, corruption often plays a role in facilitating environmental offenses. For instance, officials may accept bribes to overlook violations of environmental regulations or illegally grant permits for the exploitation of natural resources. These two types of crimes are interconnected because corruption allows perpetrators of green financial crime to evade detection and punishment. Corruption undermines the integrity of institutions responsible for protecting the environment and sustainably managing resources (Bergenas & Knight, 2015). Consequently, green financial crime not only harms the environment but also erodes public trust in governmental institutions and social justice.

Theories in the study of financial and environmental crime emphasize the relationship between power, regulation, and compliance. For example, the theory of 'regulatory capture' explains how corporations can influence and control regulatory agencies that are supposed to oversee them, often through corrupt practices (Baker, 2010). This leads to failures in oversight and law enforcement, which can facilitate green financial crime. It is important to understand that these types of crimes have significant impacts not only on the environment but also on the economy and society as a whole.

Table 1: Real-World Cases of Green Financial Crime Worldwide

Cases	Year	Location	Description	Legal Actions
Volkswagen Emissions Scandal (Dieselgate)	2015	Germany and Global	Volkswagen installed software in diesel vehicles to manipulate emissions tests, causing the vehicles to emit pollutants well above legal limits	Huge fines, legal settlements, compensation costs; executives indicted; this led to tighter emissions regulations globally
Samarco Dam Disaster	2015	Brazil	The collapse of the Fundão dam operated by Samarco caused the release of large amounts of toxic sludge, resulting in severe environmental damage and loss of life	Large fines, lawsuits, and extensive cleanup and compensation efforts are needed
Illegal Logging in the Amazon	Ongoing	Brazil, Peru and other Amazon countries	Illegal logging operations in the Amazon rainforest contribute to deforestation, biodiversity loss and carbon emissions, often linked to corruption and organised crime	International cooperation, stricter regulatory enforcement, and targeting of financial networks that support these activities

Trafigura Toxic Waste Disposal	2006	Ivory Coast	Trafigura dumped toxic waste in and around Abidjan, causing health problems and environmental damage	Fines and compensation claims; increased oversight of hazardous waste disposal practices

Source: Compiled from various sources.

The cases presented in Table 1 highlight significant examples of green financial crime and environmental disasters, emphasizing the importance of robust legal frameworks and effective law enforcement mechanisms. The Volkswagen Emissions Scandal (Dieselgate) underscores the need for corporate accountability and compliance with regulations, where substantial fines and stricter global emissions standards were enforced following the scandal. This case illustrates the role of punitive measures and environmental legal principles in deterring corporate misconduct (Mujkic & Klingner, 2019). The Samarco Dam disaster in Brazil points to the consequences of weak environmental protections, leading to major fines and lawsuits that reinforced the principle of strict liability in environmental law (Garcia et al., 2017). Illegal logging in the Amazon demonstrates the necessity for international cooperation and stringent environmental law enforcement to combat deforestation and biodiversity loss. The Trafigura Toxic Waste Dumping case highlights the severe health and environmental impacts of hazardous waste mismanagement, with legal actions underscoring the polluter pays principle (Dezalay & Archer, 2019). Finally, deforestation linked to palm oil production in Indonesia reflects the tension between economic development and environmental protection, with legal responses promoting sustainable practices and balancing growth with conservation. These cases affirm the critical role of legal frameworks in addressing environmental crimes and promoting environmental justice through effective enforcement and international collaboration.

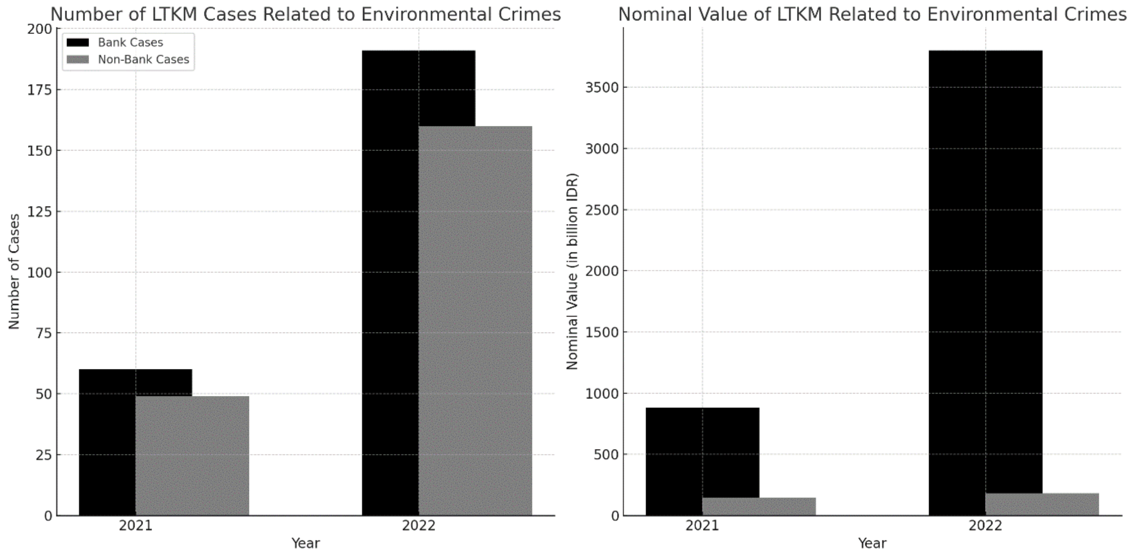
Green financial crime, which includes money laundering from illegal environmental activities, also poses a serious threat to political integrity and democracy. Such crimes not only cause significant environmental damage but also undermine the foundations of democratic governance by injecting illicit funds into political systems. As it evolves, green financial crime becomes a threat to global economic stability and security. Political donations stemming from illegal activities such as deforestation, illegal mining, and pollution can greatly influence policy-making processes. When politicians and political parties accept funds from criminal networks, there is a risk that policies will be crafted to support these illegal interests rather than serve the public interest or ensure environmental sustainability.For instance, policies might be designed to weaken environmental regulations, allowing for greater resource exploitation or overlooking illegal activities, thereby facilitating further environmental degradation. This can create a self-perpetuating cycle where environmental damage is exacerbated by policies that are meant to prevent it. Furthermore, the influence of illicit funds can erode public trust in political institutions and leaders, as the public perceives decisions being made based on corruption and the interests of a select few, rather than the welfare of the broader population.

Green financial crime can divert resources from essential public services and infrastructure, exacerbating social injustice and inequality. The lack of transparency and accountability in political financing allows such criminal activities to flourish, making it crucial to implement strong legal and regulatory frameworks to detect, prevent, and penalize green financial crime. Strengthening the integrity of political processes through greater transparency, independent oversight, and strict enforcement of environmental and financial laws is vital for safeguarding democracy and promoting sustainable development (Peoples & Both, 2022). Green financial crime also has extensive global consequences. It facilitates transnational corruption, disrupts international cooperation on environmental issues, and undermines global efforts to combat climate change and environmental degradation. This underscores the urgent need for stronger international regulations and cooperative frameworks to effectively address these crimes. By understanding these steps, policymakers and regulators can better target interventions to detect, prevent, and prosecute green financial crime, thereby safeguarding both the environment and the integrity of democratic institutions. The impact of green financial crime on politics and democracy carries significant global implications. Internationally, these crimes can facilitate transnational corruption, hinder international collaboration on environmental matters, and undermine global efforts to combat climate change and environmental degradation (Endriana et al., 2023). The ability of financial criminals to manipulate cross-border political processes highlights the need for stronger international regulations and cooperative frameworks to detect and prevent green financial crime. Without coordinated global action, efforts to address these crimes and their broad impacts on environmental sustainability and democratic integrity will remain inadequate.

3. Strategies and Policies to Strengthen the Linkages between Democracy and Green Policies in Addressing Green Financial Crime

The sharp increase in green financial crime funds revealed PPATK over the past year poses a significant concern for the country's economic and political integrity. According to the Suspicious Financial Transaction Reports (LTKM) published by PPATK, cases within this category experienced a notable surge from 2021 to 2022. In 2021, there were 60 LTKM cases related to environmental crimes in the banking sector, with a total nominal value of IDR 883.2 billion. However, in 2022, the number of LTKM cases in the banking sector increased sharply to 191, with a total nominal value reaching IDR 3.8 trillion. In addition, the report also highlighted an increase in non-banking LTKM cases, which rose from 49 cases in 2021 with a total nominal value of IDR 145.3 billion to 160 cases in 2022, amounting to a total nominal value of IDR 184.3 billion. PPATK further indicated that at least IDR 1 trillion from these environmental crime funds was funneled to political parties to finance the 2024 general elections (Vitorio Mantaelan, 2023).

Figure 2: *Nominal Value of LTKM Related to Environmental Crimes*



Source: PPATK (2021-2022)

Greenpeace's statement that the IDR 1 trillion figure represents only a fraction of the entire green financial crime landscape in Indonesia highlights the complexity and breadth of this issue. According to Greenpeace, this amount may only reflect the surface of the extent to which such practices occur, perpetuating a vicious cycle in Indonesia's democracy (Risalah, 2023). Policymakers are involved in political corruption by abusing their power to grant business licenses in the extractive sectors, such as coal mining, thereby facilitating environmental degradation. These policymakers form alliances with businesses in the extractive industries, resulting in conflicts of interest. For instance, funds from coal mining are used to finance presidential and local elections. This situation allows the environmental destruction by extractive industries to continue unchecked, undermining democracy. Consequently, the climate crisis and democratic crisis occur simultaneously. In 2022-2023, PPATK revealed numerous suspicious transactions carried out by legislative candidates listed in the 2024 General Election Permanent Candidate List (DCT). The total value of these suspicious transactions reached an alarming IDR 51.47 trillion, involving 100 legislative candidates. These suspicious activities encompassed all 100 DCT, with the total amount reaching IDR 51,475,886,106,483. Additionally, the 100 DCT were involved in suspicious cash withdrawals, with the total amounting to IDR 34,016,767,980,872. Leading up to the 2024 elections, PPATK also disclosed suspicious foreign transactions flowing into the accounts of 21 political parties. The number of foreign transactions increased from 8,270 in 2022 to 9,164 in 2023. Furthermore, PPATK recorded a significant increase in funding received by political parties from abroad, rising from IDR 83 billion in 2022 to IDR 195 billion in 2023 (Dwi, 2024).

In reality, green financial crime may occur on a far larger and more extensive scale than has been revealed, given its vulnerability to manipulation and the lack of transparency in political funding. The involvement of illicit funds in politics can create a cycle that is difficult to break, where political parties may continue to rely on unlawful sources to finance their campaigns. This is a profound issue, as it shows that illegal practices that harm the environment are not only a threat to natural ecosystems but also undermine the integrity of Indonesia's political and democratic processes. These illicit funds can influence policies made by political parties that receive them, making it increasingly likely that environmental interests and green policies are ignored. To strengthen the link between democracy and green policies in tackling green financial crime, comprehensive and multidimensional strategies and policies are essential. These strategies cover various aspects of governance, transparency, law enforcement, public participation, and international cooperation.

a. Enhancing Transparency in Political Financing

Transparency in political financing is crucial to prevent the infiltration of illegal funds derived from environmental crimes into the political system. This involves the implementation of stricter regulations to trace the origins of campaign funding and political donations. Policies such as mandatory reporting and independent audits of political party and campaign finances can play a significant role in improving accountability. By ensuring that all political contributions are transparently reported and independently audited, the opportunity for green financial criminals to manipulate the political process is significantly reduced. This transparency builds public trust and ensures that political decisions are made in the public interest and for environmental sustainability, not influenced by illegal financial contributions.

b. Strengthening Independent Oversight Institutions

Independent oversight institutions are essential for monitoring political and financial practices. These institutions must have sufficient authority and resources to investigate and prosecute abuses, safeguarding the integrity of democratic processes and environmental policies. Strengthening these institutions involves granting them the legal power, financial resources, and technical expertise needed to effectively oversee political and financial activities. Effective law enforcement that imposes severe penalties for environmental crimes and violations of political finance regulations must accompany this oversight. Ensuring that these institutions operate independently of political influence is crucial for their effectiveness. This independence allows them to conduct thorough investigations and take decisive action against those involved in green financial crime, upholding the rule of law and protecting the environment.

c. Integrating a Risk-Based Approach into Financial and Environmental Policies

Integrating a risk-based approach into financial and environmental policies involves comprehensive analysis of how economic and financial policies can indirectly impact the environment and facilitate green financial crime. This requires cross-agency collaboration, combining expertise from the financial, environmental, and law enforcement sectors to identify and address potential risks. A risk-based approach enables the identification of high-risk activities and sectors, allowing for targeted interventions to prevent green financial crime. By understanding the specific risks associated with various financial and environmental activities, policymakers can design more effective regulations and enforcement strategies. This approach ensures that resources are efficiently allocated, focusing on areas where the risk of green financial crime is highest, thus enhancing the overall effectiveness of regulatory efforts.

d. Increasing Public Participation and Awareness

Public participation and awareness are vital in combating green financial crime. Educational and public awareness campaigns about the impact of green financial crime and the importance of political integrity can help society better monitor and demand transparency from their political representatives. When the public is well-informed about the negative consequences of green financial crime, they are more likely to hold their leaders accountable and support policies that promote environmental sustainability and democratic integrity. Strengthening the role of civil society and the media in monitoring political and financial practices is a key step in this regard. Civil society organizations and the media can play crucial roles in exposing and reporting cases of green financial crime, fostering a culture of transparency and accountability. By empowering these groups, governments can enhance the effectiveness of their efforts to combat green financial crime.

e. Promoting International Cooperation

International cooperation is essential in addressing the transnational nature of green financial crime. This includes cross-border information exchange, uniform regulatory standards, and support for countries with limited oversight resources. Through international cooperation, countries can more effectively face the challenges posed by transnational green financial crime. By sharing information and best practices, countries can improve their understanding of how green financial crime operates and develop more effective strategies to combat it. Uniform regulatory standards help ensure there are no weak points in the global financial system that can be exploited by green financial criminals. Support for countries with limited oversight resources is also critical, as these countries often become targets for green financial criminals due to their weaker regulatory frameworks. By providing technical and financial assistance to these countries, the international community can help build their capacity to detect and prevent green financial crime.

When comparing legislation that has effectively regulated green financial crime, it is important to examine specific regulations, the countries that have implemented them, and the organizations overseeing their enforcement. In the European Union, the EU Anti-Money Laundering Directives, particularly the Fourth and Fifth Directives, extend oversight to include financial crimes linked to environmental offenses (Kumar, 2024). These directives require member states to enforce stringent anti-money laundering measures, ensuring that financial institutions conduct thorough due diligence and report suspicious activities. The European Banking Authority coordinates enforcement efforts across the EU, overseeing member states to ensure compliance with these directives and providing guidelines for effective implementation. This regulatory framework enhances transparency, accountability, and regulatory oversight, making it more difficult for illicit funds from environmental crimes to infiltrate the financial system. Through these measures, the EU aims to protect the environment and maintain the integrity of its financial system (Broek, 2015). The European Banking

Authority, responsible for coordinating enforcement across the EU, monitors member states as they implement these directives (Wiggins et al., 2014).

In the United States, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and the Lacey Act are key legal instruments. The FCPA, overseen by the Securities and Exchange Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice, addresses corruption issues related to environmental crimes abroad by U.S. companies (Erbstoesser et al., 2007). Meanwhile, the Lacey Act, enforced by the Fish and Wildlife Service, targets illegal trade in animal and plant products, including those related to financial crimes (Slobodian & Chatziantoniou, 2019). In the United Kingdom, the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA), monitored by the Financial Conduct Authority and the National Crime Agency, provides a legal framework for handling the proceeds of crime, including environmental crimes, by enabling the seizure of assets obtained through illegal activities (Yakubu, 2019). In Asia, particularly in Singapore, the Corruption, Drug Trafficking, and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act plays a crucial role in addressing money laundering related to serious crimes, including environmental offenses (Mugarura, 2016). The Commercial Affairs Department and the Monetary Authority of Singapore are responsible for regulating the Act (Alekseenko, 2022). Each of these countries and institutions has developed specific approaches to regulate green financial crime tailored to their legal context and needs. What they share is the recognition of the importance of tackling environmental financial crime as part of protecting the environment and maintaining the integrity of financial systems. By implementing these strategies, we can ensure that democracy and green policies reinforce each other in a joint effort to combat green financial crime, uphold the integrity of political systems, and promote environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

Green financial crime, an evolving phenomenon alongside the growing global awareness of environmental issues, has become a significant challenge to economic and political integrity, particularly in Indonesia. These crimes, which include offenses such as money laundering from illegal activities that harm the environment, not only devastate natural ecosystems but also undermine the foundation of democracy and fair political processes. This awareness began to take shape in the 1960s and 1970s, spurred by publications like Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring." Over time, the connection between economic activities and environmental impacts has become increasingly evident, especially with the emergence of green economy concepts and sustainable finance as responses to climate change. International agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement highlight the crucial role of finance in environmental protection efforts. By the 2010s, many countries began implementing stricter policies and regulations related to green finance and corporate transparency regarding environmental risks. In Indonesia, green financial crime is highly relevant due to significant issues such as deforestation, illegal logging, and pollution. Major challenges in addressing these crimes include corruption, weak law enforcement, and the lack of awareness and capacity among financial institutions to identify and prevent environmental crimes. In the political sphere, green financial crime poses a threat to political integrity and democracy. The flow of illicit funds into political campaigns and parties can influence policy-making, prioritizing the interests of criminal actors over public interest and environmental sustainability. This creates a democratic dilemma where the voices of the public and non-criminal actors become marginalized.

To address this issue, comprehensive and multidimensional strategies and policies are needed. These include enhancing transparency in political funding, strengthening independent oversight bodies, integrating risk-based approaches into financial and environmental policies, increasing public participation and awareness, and promoting international cooperation. Globally, various countries and organizations have developed specific approaches to regulate green financial crime, tailored to their legal contexts and needs. For instance, the European Union has the EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive; the United States has the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the Lacey Act; the United Kingdom has the Proceeds of Crime Act; and Singapore has the Corruption, Drug Trafficking, and Other Serious Crimes Act. Ultimately, green financial crime is a complex issue requiring coordinated efforts among multiple stakeholders, including governments, the financial sector, and civil society. By implementing effective strategies, we can strengthen the relationship between democracy and green policies, protect the integrity of political systems, and promote environmental sustainability.

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