# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

For over five decades, Greenpeace has distinguished itself as one of the world's most confrontational and visible environmental organizations, earning a reputation for bold, direct action, and uncompromising advocacy. From its origins in the anti-nuclear movement of the early 1970s, Greenpeace has consistently adopted creative confrontation, non-violent direct action, and evidence-based exposure to challenge both governments and corporations that threaten the environment (DW, 2013). This confrontational ethos is not incidental but central to Greenpeace's identity and theory of change. The organization's history is marked by high-profile campaigns, from scaling oil rigs in the North Sea to block toxic dumping, to blockading whaling ships, and occupying corporate headquarters, that often bring it into direct conflict with powerful actors and, at times, the law itself (DW, 2013).

Greenpeace's approach is characterized by a combination of investigative research, public mobilization, lobbying, and, crucially, direct action that seeks to expose and disrupt environmental harm at its source. Investigations are used to uncover hidden or denied environmental abuses, often employing fieldwork, satellite imagery, and financial analysis to build irrefutable cases against polluters (Greenpeace Aotearoa, 2025). These findings are then amplified through creative protest, media engagement, and digital campaigns designed to provoke public debate and pressure decision-makers. The organization's willingness to physically

intervene serves both as a means of bearing witness and as a symbolic act to dramatize environmental injustice (Greenpeace Aotearoa, 2025; DW, 2013).

In recent years, the global conversation on sustainability has intensified, placing multinational corporations under unprecedented scrutiny for their environmental claims and business practices (Harvey, 2018). Unilever, as one of the world's largest consumer goods companies, has positioned itself as a leader in corporate sustainability, frequently promoting its commitment to reducing plastic waste and sourcing raw materials responsibly (Unilever, 2025). High-profile initiatives such as the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan and ambitious targets to reduce single-use plastics are central to this image (Zuno Carbon, 2025). However, mounting evidence from civil society organizations, notably Greenpeace, exposes a significant gap between Unilever's sustainability rhetoric and its actual environmental impact, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia, where the company's business model relies heavily on single-use plastic sachets and palm oil sourced from environmentally sensitive regions (Greenpeace UK, 2024; Chain Reaction Research, 2023).

Indonesia has emerged as a critical battleground in the global plastics crisis, with Unilever producing tens of billions of unrecyclable plastic sachets annually, a substantial portion of which is sold in Indonesia, contributing significantly to the country's plastic pollution problem (GAIA, 2023). Greenpeace's brand audits and investigative campaigns have repeatedly identified Unilever as a top plastic polluter, highlighting the company's role in exacerbating waste management challenges and environmental degradation in low- and

middle-income communities (Greenpeace UK, 2024). Despite Unilever's public commitments, the company has rolled back its most ambitious plastic reduction targets and continues to prioritize market strategies that externalize environmental costs onto society (Greenpeace UK, 2024).

Against this backdrop, Greenpeace Indonesia has emerged as a prominent and sometimes controversial actor in the fight against corporate greenwashing. This confrontational legacy is evident in Greenpeace's ongoing campaigns against Unilever, one of the world's largest consumer goods companies. Historically, Greenpeace has targeted Unilever for its role in deforestation linked to palm oil sourcing, as well as its reliance on single-use plastic packaging, particularly sachets that are nearly impossible to recycle and disproportionately pollute countries like Indonesia (International Supermarket News, 2024; Greenpeace UK, 2024). Notably, in 2008, Greenpeace activists scaled Unilever's London headquarters to protest rainforest destruction, an action that helped push Unilever to adopt more stringent palm oil sourcing policies (International Supermarket News, 2024). Yet, Greenpeace has continued to challenge the adequacy and sincerity of such commitments, arguing that industry certification schemes like the RSPO remain insufficient to halt deforestation and human rights abuses (International Supermarket News, 2024).

The organization's campaigns, ranging from brand audits and public protests to transnational advocacy and coalition-building, are designed not only to expose the disconnect between Unilever's sustainability claims and its operational realities but also to mobilize public pressure and push for systemic change

(Greenpeace UK, 2024; Zuno Carbon, 2025). Greenpeace's confrontational tactics in Indonesia have included high-impact direct actions, such as the "Break Free from Plastics" campaign, returning thousands of Unilever-branded sachets collected from polluted waterways to the company's offices, and staging public protests with giant installations of plastic waste. These actions are designed to visually and viscerally expose the gap between Unilever's sustainability rhetoric and its operational reality, making the environmental costs of corporate practices impossible to ignore. The campaigns are amplified through digital media, infographics, and coalition-building with local and international NGOs to maximize visibility and pressure (Greenpeace UK, 2024; Greenpeace Indonesia, 2022).

The research is crucial for several reasons. First, understanding the rationale behind these strategies is essential because they diverge from more conventional advocacy approaches, opting instead for direct action, creative confrontation, and public shaming (Greenpeace East Asia, 2025). This approach raises important questions about the effectiveness, legitimacy, and potential risks of such campaigns in a context where civil society organizations operate under significant constraints. Second, the controversy and boldness of Greenpeace's methods warrant scrutiny: Are these strategies chosen as a necessary response to the bigger challenge between multinational corporations and local communities? What are the internal and external factors that drive Greenpeace Indonesia to adopt these tactics? (Ramadhona & Widiastuti, 2021; Putri, 2024).

This research seeks to uncover the determining factor that influences Greenpeace Indonesia adoption of particular campaign strategies in denouncing Unilever Indonesia's greenwashing practices. While existing literature has extensively documented Greenpeace's role in environmental advocacy and its impact on policy and public awareness (Nurrachmawati, 2023; Suluh Gembyeng & Zainubi, 2022), there remains a significant gap in understanding the underlying rationale behind Greenpeace Indonesia's strategic choices, especially in the context of confronting powerful corporate greenwashing. Most studies focus on campaign outcomes or general TSM effectiveness (Ramadhona & Widiastuti, 2021; Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 2020), but seldom interrogate why Greenpeace opts for confrontational, evidence-based, and coalition-driven tactics against corporations like Unilever, whose economic and political power creates a complex battleground. This gap is critical because understanding the reasoning behind Greenpeace Indonesia's campaign strategies becomes essential to assess their effectiveness and legitimacy as a form of resistance, as well as to contribute to broader debates on environmental governance and social movement in developing countries.

The urgency of this research, therefore, lies not only in Indonesia's worsening environmental landscape but also in the imperative to understand the strategic calculus behind Greenpeace Indonesia's campaigns. By interrogating the reasoning behind these campaign strategies, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature on environmental activism to understand why do TSMs like Greenpeace Indonesia resort to controversial and confrontational tactics and what

does this reveal about the limitations and possibilities of civil society action in the face of corporate greenwashing and regulatory inertia (Ramadhona & Widiastuti, 2021; Putri, 2024; Greenpeace East Asia, 2025). Second, examining these strategies is urgent because they have direct implications for the effectiveness and credibility of environmental advocacy in Indonesia. In a context where regulatory enforcement is weak and corporate influence is pervasive, the ability of TSMs to shape public discourse and influence policy depends heavily on their strategic choices (Yonandi & Lie, 2025). Understanding why Greenpeace Indonesia adopts bold, sometimes polarizing, campaign strategies is therefore essential for assessing both the prospects and the pitfalls of civil society-led environmental governance.

In summary, this research foregrounds Greenpeace Indonesia not only as a pressure group but as a strategic actor whose campaign choices reflect broader tensions in the struggle for environmental justice. This research addresses the underexplored area by analyzing Greenpeace Indonesia's strategic decision-making, thereby providing insights into how environmental TSMs can navigate and challenge asymmetrical power relations in contemporary sustainability struggles. By focusing on the reasoning behind Greenpeace's campaign strategies, this study seeks to illuminate the dynamics of power, legitimacy, and resistance that define contemporary environmental activism in Indonesia.

## 1.2    Research Question

In light of the aforementioned research background, this research aims to answer the following question: **Why Greenpeace Indonesia adopts particular advocacy strategies in its campaign against Unilever's greenwashing in Indonesia?**

## 1.3    Study Objective

This research aims to examine the underlying factors that influence and drive Greenpeace's strategy in challenging Unilever's corporate greenwashing gambit in Indonesia.

## 1.4    Study Significance

### 1.4.1    Academic Significance

This research advances the academic understanding of how environmental NGOs like Greenpeace Indonesia operate as counter-hegemonic actors within complex power structures involving multinational corporations, government regulators, and civil society, specifically in the environmental activism landscape. Through critical theory and collective action framing approach to the case of Greenpeace's campaign against Unilever's greenwashing and deforestation-linked supply chains, the study contributes to the literature on environmental governance, NGO advocacy, and corporate greenwashing practices (Snow & Benford, 1988; Gramsci, 1971). It provides empirical evidence of how NGOs strategically deploy research, framing, and coalition-building to challenge dominant narratives and influence both policy and corporate

behavior in Indonesia as one of the world's most critical sites for deforestation and environmental risk. By situating Greenpeace's advocacy within the broader context of power relations, this study offers a nuanced framework for analyzing the interplay between corporate hegemony, regulatory structures, and civil society resistance.

### 1.4.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this research offers actionable insights for policymakers, NGOs, and corporate actors seeking to address greenwashing and strengthen environmental accountability in Indonesia. It demonstrates how Greenpeace's strategic combination of advocacy approaches ultimately expose the gap between corporate sustainability rhetoric and actual environmental performance, thereby shaping public opinion and encouraging regulatory scrutiny. For civil society organizations, the study highlights effective advocacy strategies, including the use of evidence-based campaigns and public mobilization, to pressure both companies and regulators toward genuine reform. For policymakers, the research suggests the need for robust legal frameworks and the political will to resist corporate lobbying and regulatory capture, ensuring that sustainability commitments translate into real environmental protection. Ultimately, this research supports the development of more effective interventions to safeguard Indonesia's forests and promote environmental justice.

## 1.5 Theoretical Framework

### 1.5.1 State of the Art

Transnational social movements, corporate greenwashing, and power structure dynamics as separate issues have been researched thoroughly by numerous scholars in separate works of literature. Though the three aspects are undeniably interlinked, an insignificant amount of integrated research is noticed in the field. Thereafter, the pre-existing literature is compared to signify this research position in filling the essential research gap. This research is mainly comprised of Greenpeace advocacy strategies, corporate greenwashing, and critical theory in environmental advocacy as elements that complement the research gap.

Numerous relevant studies have discussed Greenpeace as a transnational social movement in executing its environmental advocacy agenda. One of the literature is contributed by Siti Rokhmawati Susanto (2007) in her writing titled *The Transformation of Greenpeace Strategy in the 1990s: From Civil Disobedience to Moderate Movement* which traces back the history that forms Greenpeace up to its current presence and how the activism strategies usually take place. Although the study found that the movement has undergone a significant strategy shift to a more moderate approach and alignment with the power dynamics, a grounded portrayal of how Greenpeace drives its campaign in contemporary ecological concerns is lacking in discussion. This research, therefore, provides an extensive analysis of how Greenpeace's movement is linked

with rising environmental issues, especially done by corporations as a greater actor in a contemporary challenge.

As a frequently debated issue, greenwashing practice has also gathered a generous amount of literature. The findings show that the greenwashing practice has enabled MNCs to exploit market and consumer demand for sustainable products and gain competitive advantage without a genuine commitment to the environment and mostly driven by its power advantage in controlling the society as its market bases (Marquis and Toffel, 2011; Bowen and Aragon-Correa, 2014; Yang et al, 2020). While the set of literature has identified the issue of greenwashing practices among MNCs operating in emerging markets and the implications of merely symbolic environmental contributions, it leaves unanswered as to how greenwashing further elevates public scrutiny through social movements, which later will be integrated into the core of this research.

Critical theory is a key framework for seeing the overall social movement dynamics in strategizing its campaigns, specifically in the environmental issues, which is a unique angle that has yet to be explored deeply. Luke (2003) in his writing titled *Critical Theory and the Environment* tries to examine how critical theory is adopted to address environmental issues in the 21st century by criticizing the commodification of nature that is mostly perpetuated by capitalist societies that view the environment as their object for unlimited resource extraction and push environmental justice movements to demand for accountability

to MNCs and states. However, without necessarily crystalizing the implications, Luke's study was merely an inapplicable concept. This research generally extends the view of critical theory in the environmental struggle setting, specifically by a notable environmental justice movement, Greenpeace, on how it operates by being driven by power structure asymmetry.

By understanding the intersectionality of the power structure between the environmental movement and hegemonically powerful corporations and advocacy strategies, this research seeks to contribute to the existing research gap by intertwining the currently separated findings. This research will analyze how power structure asymmetry impacts the advocacy and campaign strategies taken by Greenpeace as an emerging environmental transnational social movement in fighting for environmental justice against the corporate practice of greenwashing through the lens of critical theory. In addition, this research's approach will focus on the advocacy strategy and its determining factors rather than solely on the policies and their implications, which will contribute to a newer perspective specifically on Greenpeace movements setting that was previously under-reviewed.

### 1.5.2 Critical Theory

Critical theory in its essence highlights the idea of freeing people from the manipulative economic system crafted by the power holders, which then is understood by most critical theorists as "emancipation". This

view is strongly derived from and influenced by Immanuel Kant's and Karl Marx's contributions to the systemic transformation idea in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Ferreira, 2018). Distinct perspectives and approaches of the theory are significantly contributed by key notable scholars of the theory to better understand the power dynamics. Originating from the Frankfurt School, its evolution is shaped by the works of Max Horkheimer, Jürgen Habermas, and Robert W. Cox. Max Horkheimer, a foundational figure of the Frankfurt School, established the theoretical distinction between traditional theory, which seeks to explain societal structures and critical theory and aims to critique and transform them. Max Horkheimer distinguished the two types of theories between problem-solving theory and critical theory. Problem-solving theory aims to refine the existing system by focusing on adjustments without necessarily challenging the foundational inequalities and *status quo*. On the other hand, critical theory is intended to expose and actively challenge the power structures by pushing for transformative change. Unlike positivist frameworks, critical theory emphasizes historicism and reflexivity by integrating material and ideational dimensions of societal structures. In his essay *Traditional and Critical Theory* (1937), Horkheimer emphasized the importance of reflexivity and historical analysis, asserting that theory must be oriented toward emancipation (Horkheimer, 1972). His later work with Theodor Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* critiqued the "culture industry," arguing that mass media and commodified culture serve as tools

for reinforcing domination under capitalism (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947). These findings are essential for understanding how systemic power perpetuates inequality and suppresses resistance.

Adding to the established view of Horkheimer, Jürgen Habermas as the second-generation Critical Theorist extended the framework by focusing on communication, rationality, and democracy. In *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), he distinguished between instrumental reason, which prioritizes efficiency and control, and communicative reason and seeks mutual understanding through dialogue (Habermas, 1984). Habermas introduced the concept of the public sphere, a space for rational-critical debate where citizens can challenge domination and influence policy (Habermas, 1991). His optimistic view of modernity contrasts with earlier Frankfurt School critiques, emphasizing that rational discourse and democratic processes offer pathways for societal emancipation. In understanding environmental justice better, Antonio Gramsci's hegemony concept is fundamental in making the manifestation of greenwashing practice crystal clear. Corporations tend to adopt superficial environmental initiatives to hide their unsustainable practices and to maintain their dominance through the notion of sustainability (Gramsci, 1971; Lyon and Montgomery, 2015). Hegemony is, therefore, portraying the ideological dominance that normalizes and legitimizes these exploitative practices that oftentimes manifest as greenwashing in the environmental landscape, where corporations' environmental contributions

are served merely as superficial and do not represent genuine efforts. Rather than just a passive resource, nature plays an active role in the social-political landscape. This perspective challenges the dualism of "nature versus society" prevalent in traditional environmental thought and instead promotes the idea of "emancipating nature", which is a concept that entails reshaping environmental and social structures to dismantle capitalist-driven exploitation that marginalizes vulnerable communities and degrades natural resources. Critical theory demands a systemic transformation between human and natural relations, especially by criticizing capitalist modes of production (Luke, 2003). David Harvey's concept of "accumulation by dispossession" in *The New Imperialism* also pointed out how capitalism exploits natural resources and marginalizes vulnerable communities, particularly in the Global South context.

Robert W. Cox, diverging from the Frankfurt School's focus on cultural critique, applied Critical Theory to international political economy. In *Production, Power, and World Order* (1987), Cox introduced the concept of historical structures, which link material capabilities, ideas, and institutions to explain how global power dynamics are sustained and contested (Cox, 1987). Drawing on Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Cox argued that dominant powers maintain control through a mix of coercion and consent, creating opportunities for counter-hegemonic forces to emerge. His focus on social movements and their ability to resist hegemonic systems makes his work particularly relevant to understanding

global advocacy. Robert W. Cox extensively incorporates critical theory in the realm of international political economy by seeing how power operates through the interconnection of social forces, state forms, and world orders. Dominant historical structures are secured by a combination of coercion and consent leading to a hegemonic setting between ideas, material capabilities, and institutions (Cox, 1987). Cox argues that global politics have to be seen as a collective construction through the intersection of state, sub-state, and trans-state forces in the economic and ideological sphere by paying attention to the range of spheres where change is needed in contemporary global politics. His famous assertion that "*Theory is always for someone and for some purpose*" is underlying how theory is inherently political and shaped by its purpose to challenge the absolute truth in the timeless logic of realism and liberalism (Cox, 1981).
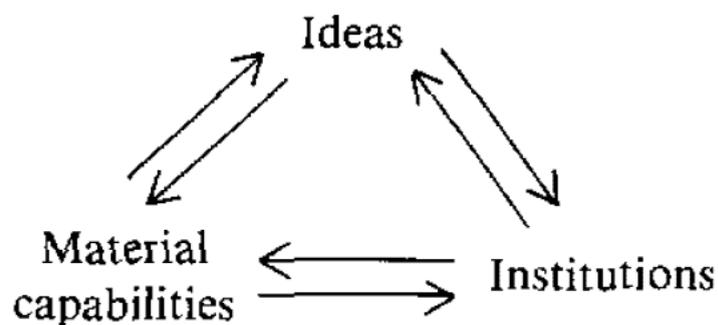


Figure 1.1 Structure forces
Source: Cox, 1981

The development of Cox's thinking is traced and put together in his work on *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (1987) which mainly underlines the historical and social basis of power dynamics in understanding the systemic inequalities in

global politics. The concept of historical structures linked the interrelation between production, power, and knowledge where it is believed that production systems shape societal power dynamics and the world order. It also further encompasses the interplay between ideas, material capabilities, and institutions. The alignment of these elements will foster a hegemonic structure that sustains power. On the contrary, the contradictions within these structures will allow transformative changes to take place. Antonio Gramsci's view on hegemony has heavily influenced Cox's perspective on how hegemony and hierarchies of power are set in the economic and political world arena, where the change in power relations is spurred by economic contradictions that are guiding transitions to fairer world order (Cox, 1977), which reflects Cox's core idea of how the global production system exacerbates inequities and creates fertile ground for ecological crisis. Through the hegemonic view, Cox developed the hegemony and counter-hegemony concept and explored how hegemony is steered by a combination of coercion and consent. As a counter-hegemonic resistance actor, social movements challenge the predominant ideologies and defend societal values by demanding an alternate world. Additionally, Cox heavily criticized the capitalist mode of production derived from the capitalist structure that enables inequalities and power asymmetry, where the global production system is highly interlinked with systemic social injustices, including environmental degradation, particularly in the Global South.

To better contextualize power structure asymmetry in driving environmental change, critical theory will be frequently encountered in this research to reveal the power structure asymmetry perpetuated by the built hegemony of MNCs in maintaining the power and influence in the market capitalist model through performative environmental contributions in the form of greenwashing. Social movements as counter-hegemony act as the marginalized community representation advocating for transformative change and demand for MNCs' responsibilities for better ecological practices that strategize their movement following the pre-existing power structure. Not only to elaborate the way dominant economic systems externalize environmental costs onto the Global South and perpetuate ecological harm while concentrating wealth and resources, this research will deliberately examine the power structure imbalance between social movements and MNCs that endorses transformative change attempted by social movements in the ecological context.

Among these scholars, Robert W. Cox's framework is the most aligned with the focus of this research, as it bridges macro-level critiques of power structures with the agency of social movements. Cox's analysis of hegemony and counter-hegemony provides a robust lens to study how corporations like Unilever maintain dominance through performative environmental actions such as greenwashing. His emphasis on historical structures by encompassing material practices, ideologies, and institutions offers a comprehensive way to analyze corporate environmental narratives

and their impact on global governance (Cox, 1987). Cox's focus on counter-hegemonic movements is also crucial for examining Greenpeace's strategies. As a social movement, Greenpeace actively challenges corporate hegemony by constructing alternative narratives, mobilizing resources, and leveraging transnational networks to expose greenwashing and advocate for genuine environmental accountability. His framework enables this research to critically analyze how Greenpeace's advocacy strategies disrupt dominant corporate discourses, particularly in the Global South, where systemic power imbalances are most pronounced. By applying Cox's insights, this research can effectively explore the interplay between corporate environmentalism, power structures, and the counter-narratives constructed by Greenpeace. His approach not only critiques the structural dynamics of global capitalism but also highlights the transformative potential of social movements in reshaping environmental governance. As the main agents of change, social movements counteract the hegemonic narratives and aim to advocate for alternative models of justice. This view shapes the importance of grassroots mobilization and transnational advocacy in exposing systemic power imbalances.

### 1.5.3  Social Movement Theory

Social Movement Theory examines how collective groups form, organize, and mobilize to challenge systemic issues or achieve societal change. Traditionally, it focuses on structural factors such as resource

availability, political opportunities, and grievances as the main drivers of mobilization. Its derivative, Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) emphasizes that successful movements rely on their ability to effectively acquire and deploy resources like funding, leadership, and organizational networks (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). This theory views social movements as rational actors strategically navigating their environments to optimize their impact. While RMT offers valuable insights into the logistical and operational aspects of movements, it has been critiqued for its neglect of cultural, symbolic, and identity-driven dimensions of activism. These limitations paved the way for alternative frameworks that better address the complexities of contemporary movements, especially in the post-industrial era. New Social Movement (NSM) Theory emerged as a response to the perceived gaps in traditional approaches, particularly their over-reliance on materialist explanations. Pioneered by scholars like Alain Touraine and Jürgen Habermas, NSM Theory shifts the focus to the cultural and identity-based aspects of movements. Unlike traditional movements that often pursue material changes, such as labor rights or political reforms, new social movements prioritize broader issues like environmental protection, gender equality, and cultural autonomy (Touraine, 1988; Habermas, 1981). These movements are characterized by their decentralized structures, participatory decision-making, and reliance on symbolic actions. Greenpeace, for example, exemplifies an NSM by centering its campaigns on ecological justice and leveraging media-driven

strategies to amplify its message. The NSM perspective highlights how movements mobilize around shared identities and values, reflecting broader societal shifts in the post-industrial world. Social movements can be categorized based on their goals and methods. Reform movements seek gradual changes within existing systems, while revolutionary movements aim for systemic transformation or regime overthrow. Resistance movements focus on opposing specific policies or developments, such as anti-globalization protests.

In today's globalized world, Transnational Social Movements (TSMs) have gained prominence. The blurred boundaries globally has allowed TSMs emerge when collective actors mobilize across national borders to challenge policies, corporate practices, or global governance structures. In his book titled *The New Transnational Activism* (2005), Sidney Tarrow conceptualized TSMs as collective actors that operate across national borders to challenge state policies, corporate practices, and global governance structures. Unlike traditional social movements sticking to the national contexts, TSMs tend to engage in cross-border activism, forming alliances with international organizations, advocacy networks, and grassroot actors to strengthen their influence to shift global norms beyond domestic boundaries. A critical component of Tarrow's framework is the political opportunity structure, which suggests that TSMs are shaped by external factors that either enable or constrain their activism. TSMs arise when political structures, such as international treaties, global governance

institutions, or shifting regulatory frameworks, create openings for transnational actors to actively intervene. However, these opportunities are often contested as states, corporations, and other dominant actors attempt to co-opt, resist, or reshape transnational activism to maintain control over global discourses and policy outcomes (Tarrow, 2005). In its development, the concept of scale shift is also arguably salient in observing how localized grievances is framed into broader transnational agenda through diffusion and coordination. Framing strategies are engaged to construct narratives that link local struggles to broader global concerns, including environmental justice, human rights, and corporate accountability. This measure cover symbolic protests, legal advocacy, and digital mobilization aiming to amplify resource mobilization and media strategies for a crystalized impact.

This cross border scope distinguishes TSMs from other movement types and underscores their importance in addressing systemic global challenges. While NSM theory emphasizes identity and culture, it does not fully explain how movements construct and communicate messages that resonate with diverse audiences. Collective Action Framing addresses this gap by focusing on the interpretive processes through which movements define issues, propose solutions, and mobilize support (Snow & Benford, 1988). Frames are tools of meaning-making that connect individual grievances to collective goals, aligning them with broader societal values. For example, Greenpeace constructs diagnostic frames to expose corporate

greenwashing, prognostic frames to propose sustainable alternatives, and motivational frames to inspire public action. These frames serve to clarify the movement's objectives while persuading individuals to join its cause. By shaping narratives and leveraging symbolic actions, movements use framing to generate collective identity and solidarity, ensuring their message resonates across diverse cultural and political contexts.

Collective action framing takes place as an essential concept in the social movement theory that aims to understand how certain movements construct values and meaning to attract social discourse and mobilize social participation. It originates from the framing theory Erving Goffman introduced in *Frame Analysis* (1974) to explain how individuals perceive and organize perceptions of certain values and try to make sense of the world surrounding them by acting on a systematized model based on what people believe to be true. A closer approach to social movements is contextualized and extended by David Snow and Robert Benford (1986, 1988) to provide a framework focusing on how social movements establish "collective action frames" in defining the problems they are addressing, coming up with solutions and campaign strategies, and mobilizing social participations. Ideology and shared values are important considerations that drive movements and participation. The concept of frame alignment was first introduced in *Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation* which is defined as a congruent and complementary positioning between individual and social movement

orientations, which includes values, beliefs, and ideologies. It is argued that frame alignment is the building block of movement participation due to its function to organize and guide such actions (Snow et al., 1986). To be functional, it is crucial to understand how people interpret values and make sense of their experiences, which is referred to as Goffman's idea that individuals and groups tend to experience confusion and uncertainty about what it is that is going on and why. The process of interpretation, as how they "frame" or present their cause, is central for social movements. Not only are they acting to make changes in the world, but they also shape the way people view the grievances they are fighting for, which defines framing as their core strategy to gather resources and maintain their movement sustainability. It is within their accommodation to make sure the grievances and issues they are fighting for are interpreted and explained in a way that intrigues the potential supporters' values to inspire actions to occur (Snow et al., 1986).

Frame alignment is, therefore, essential in driving a movement's participation and typically an interactional accomplishment. Snow et al. (1986) break the four types of frame alignment processes down: (1) frame bridging, (2) frame amplification, (3) frame extension, and (4) frame transformation. Frame bridging is defined as a process of connecting two or more ideologically congruent values but structurally unconnected between SMOs within the same field or at the individual level. This is vividly seen in the scenario where a group of people share common

struggles, but the organizational base to express the discontent is absent. Thereafter, collective action can only be formed when it is structurally connected with ideologically isomorphic movements. The process is commonly done through organizational outreach and information diffusion through networks, mass media, and direct mail, where SMOs reach out to potential supporters with a list of names relating to connecting common interests underlying the presumption of the congruency existence but untapped pools. However, it is misguided to assume that people's grievances are already there and easily tapped as if they are pertinent enough to support the movement. In most cases, grievances are shaped by organizations and figures, which is necessary to analyze what actually happens in micro-interactions (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). To build the shared grievances, movements persuade people, reframe issues, and build support. This gap is addressed in the next frame alignment process, which is frame amplification.

Frame amplification is a process of clarifying and invigorating how an issue is interpreted to make it more relevant and meaningful to one's life, especially due to indifferences, misleading, or uncertainty people experience towards the issue. Social movements need to highlight certain values to accumulate support and drive participation, which takes two forms: (1) value amplification and (2) belief amplification. Value amplification tries to identify and elevate certain values that are deemed to be important to the potential supporters, but have not yet motivated

collective action to run, where these values might have been suppressed, taken for granted, or overlooked due to a repressive hierarchy or the lack of organizational presence to address the determined values (Tilly, 1978; McCarthy, 1986; Zijderveld, 1979). This process is used to revive the importance of the values that lead to inspiring people to take part and start taking action. This is apparent in peace movement activists that amplify the fundamental values, such as justice and sanctity of human life, by focusing on democratic principles like equality and liberty and referring to the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence to better connect their cause to widely respected national values in the context of the US. Once values are validated by the people they are targeting, it becomes easier to rally people for petition signing or protest participation (Snow et al., 1986). Belief amplification, on the other hand, aims to reshape beliefs to better motivate people to take action. While value focuses on what a movement wants to achieve, belief focuses more on how people understand social causes and the effectiveness of taking such action. Social movements rely on the existing stereotypes to unify and neutralize sympathy and amplify the belief that collective action can eventually lead to a meaningful change, which makes people more likely to act, especially because some audiences agree with the social cause, but doubt their ability to make any changes. Linking movements to a moral duty to shared values is often done to frame the urgency of participation. It ensures that

movement participants not only feel their actions matter but also see the necessity of the action as a moral obligation.

However, the values that are frequently promoted by social movements might not necessarily resonate and be apparent within the potential participants. In that case, frame extension is needed to expand the movement's objective to cater to the interests and values that resonate with the potential participants, but may not directly relate to the foundational movement's initial goals. The process is seen in the movement's leader's attempt to incorporate auxiliary interests, like music events, and broaden the agenda to include social justice issues, like racism and inequality, to attract other groups of society that might be the potential adherences. In this way, the initial participation often stems back from material aspects, such as curiosity or social connections, and is mostly incidental. Over time, these motivations are redefined by a deeper alignment with the movement's goals. This process serves as an entry point or "hook" to invite more public participation as the movement's basis to operate by aligning interests and it works on short-term participation level. Hence, the process is necessary for reaching the frame transformation for long-term participation and deeper commitment to shaping the participant's interpretive frameworks to embrace the movement's foundational goals (Snow et al., 1986). Frame transformation, as the most fundamental process of frame alignment, seeks to reconfigure values and beliefs, as well as challenge participants to discard the pre-existing worldviews and

adopt new interpretive frameworks. A radical shift in interpretive frames is promoted to encourage individuals to adopt entirely new views that resonate with the movement's ideology as antithetical to conventional norms, where social movements reframe the misconceptions and "misframings" (Goffman, 1974). The success of this phase is highly contingent on the movement's persuasiveness in reshaping the values and beliefs rather than building the existing ones, especially when the objective is to counter the prevailing norms. According to Goffman (1974), this transformation, which he refers to as "keying", is changing a life event that is already meaningful from a specific standpoint to be reconstituted as value alignment.

Extending the process of frame alignment, Snow and Benford (1988) in *Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participation Mobilization* analyzed the core considerations that motivate social movements to engage in the framing efforts in driving participant mobilization. The framing core tasks comprised: (1) a diagnosis of social aspects as a problem and in need of solvency, (2) a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem, and (3) a call to action in engaging the corrective action (Snow and Benford, 1988; Wilson, 1973). The first two tasks' objective is to achieve consensus, while the latter aims to provide the motivational impetus for participation. Diagnostic framing allows problem identification and causality or blame attribution. On the other side, prognostic framing accommodates solutions to the identified problem through what is to be done in specific. The

consensus on the cause and solution, as explained previously, does not impetuously generate action and yield to mobilization. As a consequence, participation is extremely contingent upon the motivational frames that operate as action drivers. It is argued that the execution of the three aspects in connection severely affects the success of the movement's participant mobilization. Even so, mobilizing action does not always come side by side with consensus mobilization as convincing participants of the need and utility to be active is another challenge. Running on the substantive content, however, generates the risk of being seen as an overly mechanistic and nondialectical process considering there is no such thing as a *tabula rasa*, which makes it hard to pour alien ideas.

The final action to mobilize people is affected primarily by sets of constraints: the internal structure of the larger belief system and the relevance of framing effort to one's life. The nature of belief systems offers three core components that influence the efficacy of a movement's framing effort: (1) the centrality or hierarchical existence, (2) the range of the elements, and (3) the degree of interrelatedness among various elements. The first component elucidates the weakening of mobilization when the values promoted are of low hierarchical presence within the larger belief. It is often observed that certain values are agreed by the people, but not intensely felt and not salient enough in relation to other comparatively higher values in the hierarchy. The last two components show the likelihood of a movement being discounted the moment it is only

linked to one core belief that is of limited range. Expanding the value, such as in coalitions, might lead to frame overextension that diminishes the overall movement's preposition, which becomes another dilemma to be considered. The last set of influence is the phenomenological life world of the mobilization targets, which surrounds the movements' agenda relevance to the participants' life contexts. The three interconnectedly distinct constraints are (1) empirical credibility, (2) experiential commensurability and (3) narrative fidelity. Empirical credibility is an aspect that measures the compatibility of the framing and real-world events as well as the relatability of an advocated agenda to one's life experience. The question arises as to what key metrics are used to assess the credibility of one set of claims. This is highly subject to the way evidence is filtered, which is most likely through the personal experience of the participants in the experiential commensurability to assess the likelihood of success and feasibility. Lastly, narrative fidelity explains how framings need to resonate with the predominant cultural narratives that are part of one's cultural heritage, as reflected in the stories, myths, or folk tales, to align with the prevailing societal views. Thereafter, the mobilization attempt is not far from the influence of the three constraints, where at least one of the variables has to be met in order to drive consensus mobilization which raises the likelihood of mobilization to take place. This also means that the fulfillment of the three components

potentially results in a stronger mobilization feasibility, as the constraints are tackled and blockers are solved.

The interlink between Collective Action Framing and Critical Theory lies in their shared commitment to challenging dominant ideologies and power structures. Critical Theory critiques systemic domination by exposing how hegemonic forces maintain control through coercion and consent (Horkheimer, 1972; Cox, 1987). Similarly, Collective Action Framing enables social movements to construct counter-hegemonic narratives that question and disrupt these power dynamics. For instance, diagnostic framing aligns with Critical Theory's critique by identifying and exposing structural injustices, such as corporate greenwashing. Prognostic framing complements this critique by proposing actionable solutions that embody emancipatory goals. Motivational framing resonates with Critical Theory's transformative agenda by mobilizing collective action to challenge entrenched systems of power. Together, these frameworks illuminate how movements like Greenpeace construct and communicate counter-narratives that resist corporate hegemony while promoting systemic change. In this research, Critical Theory provides the overarching lens to critique the systemic domination of corporations like Unilever, while Collective Action Framing offers a practical framework to analyze Greenpeace's advocacy strategies. This integrated approach captures the interplay between power, resistance, and environmental justice in a globalized context.

**1.6    Concept Operationalization**

**1.6.1   Conceptual Definition**

### 1.6.1.1 Power Structure

Power structures refer to the hierarchical organization of power within societies, institutions, or systems, shaping how authority is distributed and exercised. These structures often privilege dominant actors, such as states, corporations, or international institutions, while marginalizing less powerful groups (Lukes, 1974). In the global context, power structures often favor dominant actors such as multinational corporations or industrialized nations. They perpetuate inequalities by centralizing control over resources and governance while marginalizing weaker actors (Tarrow, 2005; Davies, 2024). Critical theory critiques these structures as mechanisms of domination within capitalist systems, emphasizing their role in commodifying labor, nature, and social relations for profit (Luke, 2003). The hierarchy allows the more dominant class or the elites to control the power game and develop models that suit their interests based on the measurement of their sphere of influence and status with the dynamics of other superpowers. The high degree of total power they possessed is exploited as the justification to act upon the smaller powerholder that later acts as the victim. The elites set themselves up as deserving in evaluating other actors, particularly those in the Third World, as inferior outsiders easily be dominated

and exploited. These internalized beliefs are, therefore, weakening the freedom of social development and domestic policies fundamental for the well-being of the people as the weaker the actor, the higher the influence from external factors will be. As a result, the Third World communities rise together with the inherited past of the existing circumstances being the victim of power asymmetry, which later became a realization of the need to challenge the alienation of material, culture, and politics. The experience becomes the foundational basis for the demand for change (Kaplan, 1974).

### 1.6.1.2 Transnational Social Movement (TSM)

As Kuhn and Beam (1982) have stated "*Every social system is an organization*", social movement is viewed as an organization in social, political, economic, and cultural settings. It is a combination of actors and processes that targets the advancement of certain social causes and interests by creating social impacts in either positive or negative ways (Touraine, 1978). To that extent, social movement is understood as a collective mobilization advocating for a specific issue, value, and rights that form the identity within the socio-economic, political, and cultural dimensions. The vast development of technologies and the emergence of globalization have stimulated the rise of the global

economy, which later allowed the rise of transnational social movements.

Transnational activism, which later will be referred to as transnational social movement (TSM), is captured as networks of actors that are organized at local, national, and international levels happening in more than just a domestic setting (Smith, 2013). As Tarrow (2005) defined, TSMs are collective movements operating across national boundaries, engaging actors from multiple countries in sustained contentious interactions with state or non-state powerholders, such as international institutions or multinational corporations. Following the increased influence of global presence in the international political arena within states, social movements adjusted themselves to happen in a transnational setting to broaden their impact of advocacy. The most significant distinctive feature of TSM is its attempt to mobilize the manpower beyond national boundaries to define the global shared identities surpassing the traditional nation-state borders. This cross-border coordination distinguishes TSMs from localized movements, as they navigate complex geopolitical and institutional landscapes to achieve their goals. These movements exemplify globalization's dual role in connecting activism and amplifying its scope (Smith & Wiest, 2012).

**1.6.1.2 Collective Action Frame**

In advocating for changes and endorsing a set of values, TSM is executing its campaigns through thorough considerations to ensure the success rate of the message delivery according to how it deeply resonates with the people and to what extent the significance is. In determining its action, frame alignment is often important, which is the process by which social movements align their messaging with the values, beliefs, and experiences of potential supporters to mobilize participation (Snow et al., 1986). Frame alignment is necessary for shaping the public's perception and willingness to actively participate in championing social causes through the strategic frames done by TSM. As Snow et al. (1986) outlined, frame alignment is comprised of four important processes:

(1) Frame bridging: Connecting the disconnected groups of people with shared goals and grievances, but have yet to be united due to lack of accommodation.

(2) Frame amplification: Highlighting key values or beliefs to strengthen the movement's resonance to reach the untapped potential supporters pool.

(3) Frame extension: Extending the scope of the frame to cater to a broader audience by including additional intersectional issues.

(4) Frame transformation: Shift people's view upon an issue to better align with the movement's objectives and values.

Campaigns made by TSM oftentimes examine these metrics to be accommodated in order to raise the bar of significance and success, especially in shaping interpretive perceptions of values across individuals varying from diverse backgrounds. Effective frame alignment enhances resonance, increasing the movement's ability to mobilize resources and sustain advocacy efforts. In the context of transnational social movements, frame alignment is critical for building solidarity across diverse cultural and political landscapes (Benford & Snow, 2000).

### 1.6.2 Operational Definition

### 1.6.2.1 Power Structure

The power relation dynamics and their asymmetry are expanded in this research with the context of socio-economic and hegemonic power. The significant power gap is seen in Unilever's massive economic, social, and political power and Greenpeace Indonesia's limited political power and mass-powered movement. As a multinational corporation hailing from the West, Unilever holds a much significant power concerning Greenpeace Indonesia which moves the local communities within the marginalized and victimized developing countries highly dependent on capitalistic products. The exploitation of the environment through

commodification is exacerbated by greenwashing practices, where Unilever leverages power structures to project an image of sustainability while concealing harmful ecological activities. This research utilizes the concept to emphasize the environmental exploitation and socio-economic inequalities faced by marginalized communities in Indonesia while leveraging the confrontation attempt against the MNCs to amplify the greater good they deserved.

### 1.6.2.1 Transnational Social Movement (TSM)

Transnational social movement's cross-border operation in mobilizing social participation in championing a set of values is evident in their global presence. In the context of this research, Greenpeace, as a transnational environmental movement, has its worldwide influence spread by having regional branches in over 55 countries. The synchronized movement across countries has made the organization affirm its status as a TSM, which includes Greenpeace Indonesia, specifically operating in a region adhering to the standardized practice of the headquarters' strategy, while still adjusting to domestic contextual issues of Indonesia. As a part of greater TSM presence, Greenpeace Indonesia challenges the multinational corporation as non-state powerholders by complying with the values of Greenpeace and consistently representing the specific regional ecological concerns to signify the success of

generating a better world they desire by taking actions in as much region as possible. In this research, Greenpeace Indonesia represents TSM and will be referred to TSM afterward.

### 1.6.2.2 Collective Action Frame

Greenpeace Indonesia challenges the ecological crisis concern by executing campaigns reflecting on the movement's objectives by different means, which vary from digital movement to symbolic protests. In doing so, frame alignment is essential in this research to assess the movement's strategy in driving people's participation, aligning values, and determining the impactful desired campaign outcomes. Frame alignment is looked up to in uncovering the long crafting process behind the campaign and messaging strategy carried out by the movement considering the different aspects that affect the actual execution, especially to evaluate the narrative shaped by Greenpeace Indonesia in communicating the dire urgency of Unilever's misconduct on the environment and the greenwashing that targetted marginalized communities and disadvantage of the region's livelihood concerns. Later in this research, the collective action frame is defined as the strategy of Greenpeace Indonesia as a TSM in charge of challenging Unilever's greenwashing practice, from its establishment to its manifestation in society.

## 1.7    Research Framework

Unilever's performative environmental activism overshadowing the actual ecological damage to the locals

Greenpeace Indonesia attempts to counter the exploitation of Unilever's practices against the environment

**Why Greenpeace Indonesia adopts particular advocacy strategies in its campaign against Unilever's greenwashing in Indonesia?**

Holds power through the control of the market hegemony, capital, and social influence. Equipped with brand positioning strategy incorporated with "green" values.

**Imbalance of power**

Comparatively weaker position faced with greater hegemonic actor with smaller hegemony. Economically less powerful and the success of the advocacy depends on the masses and public responses. Most environmental issues are against the economic priorities, leading to significantly lower support and voices.

**Critical Theory**
(Cox, 1977; 1981; 1987)

**Social Movement Theory**

Global production system exacerbates inequities and creates fertile ground for ecological crisis.

**Transnational Social Movement**

Operates across borders, addressing issues that transcend national boundaries, such as climate change and corporate accountability

**New Social Movement**
(Habermas, 1981; Touraine, 1988)

The arise of modern movements prioritizing broader issues, such as environmental protection.

**Power Structure**
(Cox, 1977; 1981; 1987)

Dominant powers maintain control through coercion and consent, creating opportunities for counter-hegemonic forces to arise.

**Greenpeace Indonesia**

**Collective Action Framing**
(Snow & Benford, 1986; 1988)

Interpretive processes through which movements define issues, propose solutions, and mobilize support

Act as a **counter-hegemonic** forces to challenge Unilever's greenwashing gambit

Strategize its advocacy through framing in media portrayals and leading narratives to induce value alignment.

- Investigative Research and Evidence-Based Exposure
- Symbolic Direct Actions
- Strategic Framing
- Digital Campaign
- Coalition Building with Local Organizations
- Political Lobbying
- Public Education and Awareness Raising
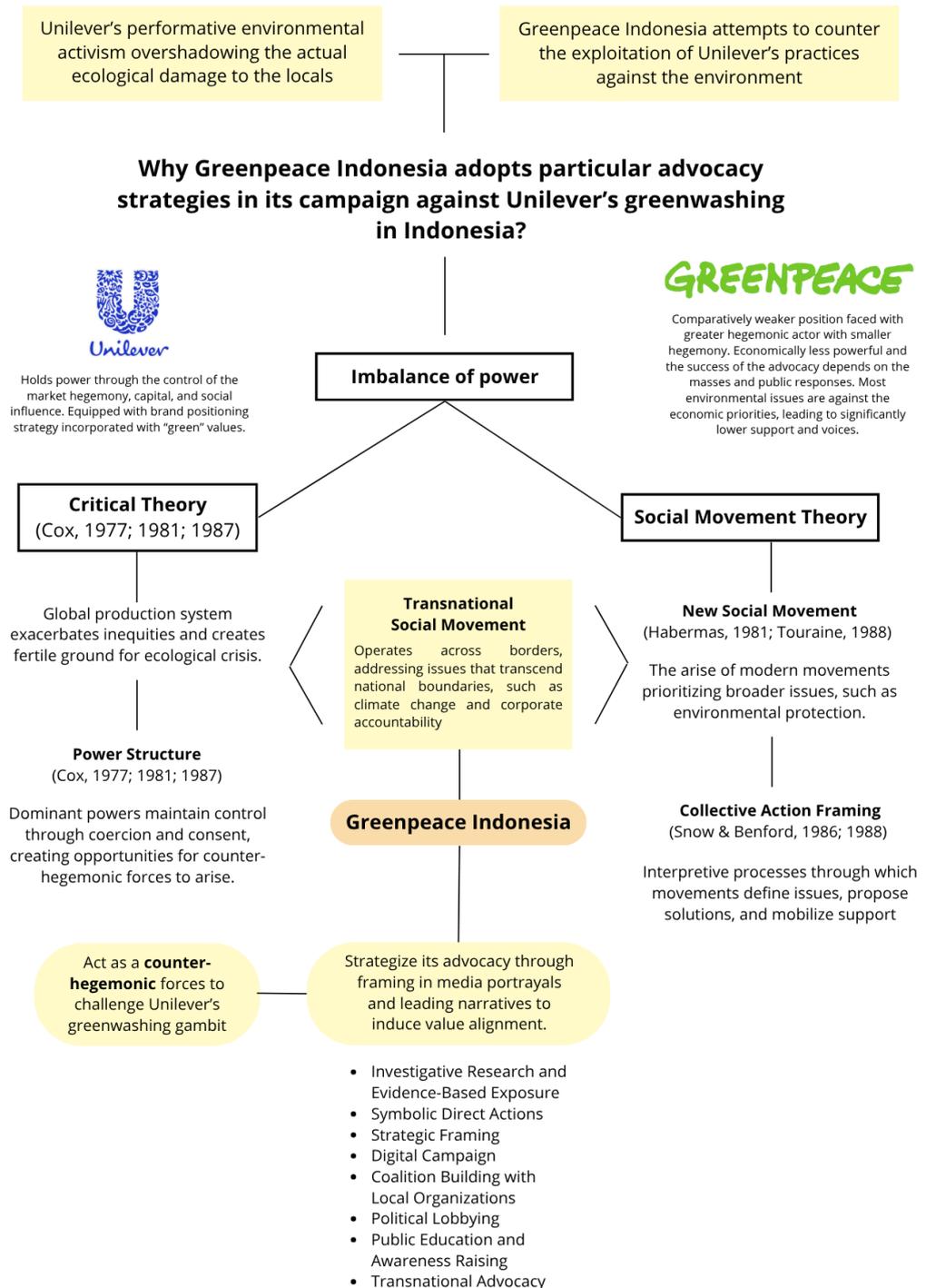- Transnational Advocacy

Figure 1.1 Research Framework

## 1.8    Research Argument

This research argues that the imbalance of power structures between Greenpeace Indonesia and Unilever is a significant determining factor that shapes Greenpeace Indonesia's determination to craft campaign strategies in addressing corporate greenwashing done by greater power holder, which in this case refers to Unilever, to fight for the local communities' livelihood and end the ecological damage as part of their keen interest. This power disparity is powered by Unilever's dominance in financial resources, control over environmental narratives, and influence within global markets and regulatory institutions that further maintain the hegemony and public's dependence, which elevates the necessity of challenge to prevent the misconduct of power. The presence of Greenpeace Indonesia is filling the absence of the challenger or being the counter-hegemonic actor by actively attempting to frame corporate greenwashing as a bigger issue through media portrayals and narratives to induce value alignment with the people in the region.

## 1.9    Research Method

### 1.9.1    Research Type

This research adopted a qualitative descriptive approach that focuses on providing a picturization of a phenomenon that has transpired in the present time in society (Moleong, 2007; Creswell, 2013). It aims to comprehensively address the research question of why Greenpeace Indonesia adopts particular advocacy strategies in its campaign against Unilever's greenwashing in Indonesia.

### 1.9.2  Research Site

To better contextualize the research setting in Indonesia, this research is done in Indonesia.

### 1.9.3  Research Subject

The primary subject of the research is Greenpeace Indonesia as the analyzed TSM executing particular campaigns and advocacies strategies to challenge Unilever's greenwashing practices.

### 1.9.4  Data Type

The data in this research is extracted from secondary sources, that are gathered indirectly from pre-existing sources in relation to the research subject, which mainly comes from the third party (Johnston, 2017).

### 1.9.5  Data Source

The secondary sources are generated by extracting data from third-party sources (Khuc, 2021), where includes articles, news, press releases, online documents, books, academic journals, and any other forms of information acquired on the internet, that are further thoroughly assessed by the author to be used accordingly in this research (Sugiyono, 2008).

### 1.9.6  Data Collection Method

To gather the data, a desk research technique is adopted to allow the author to garner data by analyzing the available data set in the publicly accessible literature, articles, news, video, and social media (e.g.

Instagram, X, and Youtube) in correlation with the examined research topic. This method integrates library research techniques that dig deep into literature research to extract relevant information (George, 2008) and internet research techniques that gather information from various online reliable sources and electronic journals (Hewson, Vogel, and Laurent, 2016).

### 1.9.7 Data Analysis Method

This research utilized the process tracing method to analyze the causal mechanisms and explain how specific outcomes are generated through detailed step-by-step analysis (Collier, 2011). Process tracing seeks to look over certain social phenomena by identifying the cause-effect. This method helped understand how Greenpeace strategizes its campaigns and movements in response to Unilever's greenwashing practices by tracing back the key events done by the research subject and the observed outcomes followed by linking them to the causal mechanisms that allow such outcomes to be generated (Beach and Pedersen, 2013).