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Functional Differentiation or Institutional Fragmentation? A Policy Analysis of the Establishment of Universitas Republik Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The inauguration of Universitas Republik Indonesia's (URI) Governor and Vice-Governor by President Prabowo Subianto on 22 July 2026, under Presidential Decree Number 80/P of 2026, triggered a polarized public debate: the government frames the policy as functional differentiation strengthening national leadership development, while Commission X of the House of Representatives (DPR RI) and several legal scholars describe it as a procedurally flawed instance of institutional fragmentation. This study asks (1) how URI's establishment can be mapped through William Dunn's public-policy cycle, (2) whether the fragmentation criticism is structural-permanent or procedural-temporary, and (3) how institutional-differentiation theory and the critical-education perspectives of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich can inform its evaluation. Using a qualitative, document-based policy analysis of a corpus of 34 official, legislative, media, and scholarly sources collected between 22 July and 18 August 2026, the study finds that URI's agenda-setting stage was strong and centralized, whereas the formulation and legitimation stages show a documented procedural gap: no establishment regulation of equivalent force to Ministry of Education and Culture Regulations 17/2014 or 7/2020 was located within the corpus, and Commission X reports it had not been substantively consulted. The fragmentation criticism is accordingly read as an apparent, correctable procedural gap rather than a demonstrated legal violation, while the functional-differentiation rationale remains theoretically defensible only if legal certainty, an explicit authority matrix, budget transparency, and academic independence are subsequently secured. The article concludes that URI's long-term legitimacy depends jointly on this procedural correction and on whether its future curriculum cultivates critical consciousness rather than technocratic compliance.

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INTRODUCTION

The administration of President Prabowo Subianto has placed the strengthening of human resources and the regeneration of national leadership among the strategic agendas of Asta Cita, its broader development framework (Mazda, Nurhayati, & Putra, 2025; Nugroho & Syarief, 2025). Within this framework, the government established the National Character-Building Education Management Agency (Badan Pengelola Pendidikan Kebangsaan, BPPK), an agency that oversees three units: the Center of Excellence Schools Management Agency, the Higher Education Management Agency, and the National Institute of Public Administration (Lembaga Administrasi Negara, LAN), whose mandate has been expanded to also foster employees of state-owned enterprises (BUMN), beyond its original focus on the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) (detik.com, 2026; K. P. dan K. R. Indonesia, 2020; U. R. Indonesia, 2026). The culmination of this initiative was the inauguration, on 22 July 2026 at the State Palace, of Air Chief Marshal (Ret.) Donny Ermawan Taufanto who also serves as Deputy Minister of Defense as Governor of Universitas Republik Indonesia (URI) and concurrently Head of BPPK, together with Prof. Yos Sunitiyoso as Vice-Governor, witnessed by Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka, based on Presidential Decree Number 80/P of 2026 (K. P. R. Indonesia, 2026). As groundwork prior to the launch, the government had run the Presidential Program for Future Leaders (P3MD) since 20 May 2026, attended by 399 new BUMN employees (Bisnis, 2026b).

URI's emergence quickly produced two opposing poles of public discourse. On one side, the government, through URI's Governor, frames the policy as an effort to consolidate a leadership-education ecosystem previously scattered across ministries and agencies covering elite boarding schools (Sekolah Garuda, Taruna Nusantara, Krida Nusantara, Pradita, the Del Institute of Technology, and roughly eighty other elite schools) without dissolving each institution's individual identity, and extending to the higher-education level and to the development of civil servants and state-enterprise employees (U. R. Indonesia, 2026; Public, 2026). On the other side, criticism has come from several directions that cannot be dismissed lightly. Commission X of the DPR RI, through Deputy Chair Lalu Hadrian Irfani and Chair Hetifah Sjaifudian, stated that it had not received a formal explanation regarding URI's legal basis, duties, functions, or budget source, and announced it would summon the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemdiktisaintek) after the August 2026 recess to request that explanation (Medcom, 2026). Former Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs and former Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Mahfud MD, criticized the procedural aspects of URI's establishment, arguing that leadership was appointed before the institution had a clear legal basis, a feasibility study, or clarity on location, faculties, fields of study, and budget nomenclature within the State Budget (APBN) matters he associated with the requirements of Ministry of Education and Culture Regulations Number 17 of 2014 and Number 7 of 2020 on the establishment of higher-education institutions (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2014, 2020; Times, 2026). Hikmahanto Juwana, Professor at the Faculty of Law, Universitas Indonesia, added that Presidential Decree 80/P/2026 regulates only the appointment of officials, not the legal umbrella for establishing the institution itself, unlike the establishment scheme of other service-affiliated higher-education institutions such as Universitas Pertahanan, the Indonesia Defense University (Kompas.com, 2026b; Mahasiswa, 2026).

As far as the authors have traced, initial public and academic commentary on URI settles into one of two positions: full endorsement of the government's official narrative, or treatment of procedural flaws as sufficient grounds for rejecting the policy, generally without a shared theoretical framework within which both arguments can be weighed proportionally. This constitutes an empirical gap, since no integrated assessment specific to URI has yet appeared in the accessible literature. A theoretical gap runs alongside it. Scholarship on higher-education institutional differentiation has traditionally relied on the foundational typologies developed by Birnbaum (1983) and Clark (1983), which distinguish legitimate structural differentiation from wasteful duplication but do not, by themselves, address the governance and legal-procedural dimensions that more recent comparative and institutional scholarship treats as equally consequential. This more recent line of work examines how organizations respond to competing institutional logics and reform pressures (Coe, Waring, Hedges, & Ashley, 2025; Matos et al., 2023), how public-policy design interacts with institutional differentiation across national higher-education systems (Alverdian, 2024; Lestari, Putri, Vasudevan, Zulham, & Endayani, 2026), and how governance arrangements converge or diverge across jurisdictions undergoing structural reform (Capano & Jarvis, 2020; Shattock, Horvath, & Enders, 2022). This article's contribution is to place URI's case within that broader and more recent governance literature rather than relying on 1983-era typologies alone and to combine it with Dunn's (2018) policy-cycle framework and the Freire–Illich critical-education dialogue, so that procedural criticism and functional-differentiation arguments can be evaluated within one coherent analytical space instead of as separate, mutually exclusive discourses (Dunn, 2018).

Three frameworks are used in layers. First, William Dunn's public policy theory supplies a map of the policy cycle agenda setting, formulation, adoption/legitimation, implementation, and evaluation together with six evaluative criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness (Dunn, 2018). This framework analytically separates two things often conflated in public debate: the quality of a policy's design and the quality of the procedure used to establish it. Second, higher-education management and governance theory, read alongside the more recent institutional-complexity and comparative-governance literature cited above, distinguishes legitimate institutional differentiation the creation of a new unit to fill a structurally unserved function from inefficient institutional duplication and overlapping mandates (Birnbaum, 1983; Capano & Jarvis, 2020; Clark, 1983; Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011). Third, Paulo Freire's philosophy of education, centered on conscientização and his critique of banking education, offers a lens for assessing URI's pedagogical substance rather than only its structural-legal aspects (Freire, 2000, 2004). This perspective is placed critically in dialogue with Ivan Illich's critique of the excessive institutionalization of education (deschooling), which warns of the risk of elitism and the reproduction of power hierarchies through closed leadership-education institutions (Illich, 1971).

Based on the discussion above, this research poses three questions: (1) How can the process of establishing URI be mapped and assessed through Dunn's policy cycle? (2) To what extent is the criticism of institutional fragmentation structural-permanent or procedural-temporary in nature, and on what grounds can this distinction be upheld? (3) How can perspectives from higher-education management and the critical educational philosophies of Freire and Illich enrich the evaluation of URI's design and developmental direction? This research aims to produce a balanced policy

evaluation grounded in an explicit theoretical framework, avoiding entrapment in purely rhetorical pro-contra polarization. Its significance lies in contributing to a stronger, legally and procedurally sound policy follow-up agenda, without disregarding the potential strategic benefits of consolidating the national leadership-education ecosystem.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative, document-based policy analysis design following Dunn (2018). The research design, document-search and selection procedure, coding framework, and inter-coder procedures are reported in full below to maximize transparency, auditability, and replicability.

Document Collection Period and Source Categories

Document collection covered the period from 22 July 2026 (the date of the Governor and Vice-Governor's inauguration) to 18 August 2026 (the cut-off date for this manuscript). Documents were retrieved from three categories of sources:

1. Official government and legislative portals: presidenri.go.id, setneg.go.id, setkab.go.id, kemhan.go.id, uri.ac.id, and dpr.go.id / emedia.dpr.go.id.
2. National legal databases: peraturan.bpk.go.id and peraturan.go.id, used to verify the text and legal status of Presidential Decree 80/P/2026 and Ministry of Education and Culture Regulations 17/2014 and 7/2020.
3. National mainstream news outlets and scholarly literature: located through iterative web searches and targeted academic database queries (see search procedure below).

Systematic Document-Search Procedure

A systematic search was conducted between 23 July and 18 August 2026. The following search strings were applied (Indonesian and English):

1. Indonesian: "Universitas Republik Indonesia"; "URI Prabowo"; "Gubernur URI"; "pembentukan URI"; "BPPK Prabowo"; "Keputusan Presiden 80/P 2026".
2. English: "Universitas Republik Indonesia establishment"; "Indonesia leadership university Prabowo"; "URI Indonesia higher education".

Searches were performed on Google News (filtered to the period 20 May–18 August 2026), the official portals listed above, and the legal databases peraturan.bpk.go.id and peraturan.go.id. For scholarly literature informing the theoretical framework, targeted searches were conducted in Google Scholar and Scopus using the terms "institutional differentiation higher education", "higher education governance Indonesia", "Dunn policy cycle", "Freire conscientização education", and "Illich deschooling", limited to peer-reviewed sources. No dedicated academic database search for empirical studies of URI itself was possible, because the institution had been established only weeks earlier and no peer-reviewed empirical literature on URI yet existed. The initial search yielded 87 unique documents (after removal of exact duplicates by URL and title). These were screened in two stages:

1. Title and abstract/lead-paragraph screening: 53 documents were excluded because they were near-duplicate wire reports republished with only cosmetic changes across outlets, pure opinion pieces without identifiable sourcing, social-media posts, or documents that did not address URI's establishment, leadership appointment, legal basis, or institutional design.
2. Full-text eligibility screening: the remaining 34 documents met the inclusion criteria and constituted the final analytic corpus.

Inclusion criteria were: (a) the document directly addressed URI's establishment, leadership appointment, legal basis, or institutional design; (b) it was published or issued between May and August 2026, or, for the comparator regulations and the France ENA/INSP case, was the primary legal instrument itself regardless of issue date; and (c) it originated from an official government or legislative source, a national mainstream outlet, or peer-reviewed and scholarly literature relevant to the theoretical framework. Exclusion criteria were: opinion pieces without identifiable sourcing, social-media posts, and near-duplicate wire reports. Wherever a factual or legal claim could be traced to a primary document (a regulation, decree, or official statement), that primary document was treated as authoritative over secondary media coverage of the same event.

The final corpus of 34 sources comprises: 11 primary legal or official documents (Indonesian and French), 10 national and international media reports, and 13 items of peer-reviewed or scholarly literature informing the theoretical framework and the discussion of Asta Cita and higher-education policy. Table 1 lists a representative subset of the primary and near-primary documents most directly analyzed, together with their analytical function. A complete list of all 34 corpus items appears in the References section; each item is tagged with its corpus category (Primary legal/official; Media; Scholarly).

Table 1. Illustrative Document Corpus And Analytical Function

Nu.	Document	Source (year)	Status	Analytical function
1	Keputusan Presiden RI No. 80/P/2026 tentang Pengangkatan Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur URI	Sekretariat Negara RI (2026)	Primary	Establishes the actual legal basis analyzed in Results/Discussion
2	Permendikbud No. 17 Tahun 2014 tentang Pendirian Perguruan Tinggi Negeri	Kemendikbud RI (2014)	Primary	Comparator regulation for the establishment procedure of a PTN
3	Permendikbud No. 7 Tahun 2020 tentang Pendirian, Perubahan, Pembubaran PTN	Kemendikbud RI (2020)	Primary	Comparator regulation for the establishment procedure of a PTN
4	Siaran pers pelantikan Gubernur dan Wagub URI	Sekretariat Presiden/Setneg (2026)	Primary	Confirms chronology, officials, ceremony
5	Wamenhan RI dilantik sebagai Gubernur URI	Kementerian Pertahanan RI (2026)	Primary	Confirms Governor's concurrent defense post
6	Tujuan Presiden Prabowo membentuk lembaga URI	Laman resmi URI, uri.ac.id (2026)	Primary/institutional	Government framing of URI's purpose and design
7	Komisi X Tegaskan RUU Sisdiknas dan Pembentukan URI Merupakan Proses Berbeda	DPR RI, emedia.dpr.go.id (2026)	Primary	DPR's own account of the oversight process and its limits
8	Komisi X DPR: Pembentukan URI Belum Pernah Dibahas	Kompas.com (2026)	Secondary	Corroborates Komisi X statement; adds hearing detail
9–10	Apa itu Universitas Republik Indonesia? (institutional profile; P3MD precedent)	Bisnis.com (2026a, 2026b)	Secondary	Institutional profile, BPPK structure, P3MD detail
11	URI hadir, pakar ingatkan potensi tata kelola pendidikan tinggi tumpang tindih	Medcom.id (2026)	Secondary	Commission X statement on lack of explanation
12	Kritik Mahfud MD soal URI	IDN Times (2026)	Secondary	Mahfud MD's procedural critique
13	Apa itu Universitas Republik Indonesia? Ini 6 fakta	Ruang Mahasiswa (2026)	Secondary	Hikmahanto Juwana's legal critique
14	Apa urgensi pembentukan Universitas Republik Indonesia?	Kalimantanpost.com (2026)	Secondary	Ceremony detail, attending officials
15	Décret n° 2021-1556 relatif à l'INSP	Légifrance, France (2021)	Primary (comparator)	Comparative reflection on ENA–INSP transition
16	L'INSP a pris la succession de l'ENA	Institut National du Service Public (2026)	Primary (comparator)	Comparative reflection on ENA–INSP transition
17	Prabowo Subianto–Gibran Rakabuming Raka Presidential Mission Document (Asta Cita)	Official campaign/presidential document (2024)	Primary	Basis for reading URI against Asta Cita's fourth mission

Coding Framework and Analytical Procedures

Documents were analyzed in four sequential steps. First, each document was open-coded into five descriptive categories whose operational definitions are as follows:

(a) Chronology: dates, sequence of events, and temporal markers related to URI's announcement, inauguration, or preparatory programs (e.g., P3MD).
(b) Legal basis: any reference to the legal instrument(s) claimed to authorize URI's establishment or the appointment of its leadership, including explicit statements of absence of such an instrument.
(c) Institutional design: statements describing URI's organizational structure, relationship to BPPK, relationship to existing agencies (LAN, Lemhannas, Kemdiktisaintek), intended functions, or academic architecture.

(d) Actor position: explicit statements of support, opposition, or conditional stance by named institutional or individual actors, coded according to the actor's institutional affiliation.
(e) Public reaction: media framing and secondary commentary that does not originate from a primary official or named scholarly source.

Second, coded segments were mapped onto the five stages of Dunn's (2018) policy cycle (agenda setting, formulation, adoption/legitimation, implementation, and evaluation) and onto his six evaluation criteria, in order to link each category directly to a specific analytical construct. The operational linkage between each theoretical construct and the observable evidence located in the corpus is presented as an explicit matrix in the Discussion section (Table 3). Third, factual claims were cross-checked against at least two independent sources; where a primary document and a secondary media report conflicted, the primary document was treated as authoritative, and the discrepancy was noted rather than silently resolved. Fourth, because this study was conducted by a three-member author team, triangulation took the form of investigator triangulation.

Inter-Coder Agreement and Resolution of Disagreements

Each of the three authors independently coded the entire corpus using the five-category framework described above. Prior to independent coding, the team held a calibration session on a subset of five documents to align interpretations of the operational definitions. After independent coding, inter-coder agreement was calculated as simple percentage agreement across all coded segments (total number of identically coded segments divided by total number of coded segments). Overall percentage agreement reached 87%. Disagreements clustered almost exclusively on the boundary between "actor position" and "public reaction" for secondary media reports that paraphrased named scholars. These disagreements were resolved through joint discussion until full consensus was reached; no unresolved disagreements remained in the final coded dataset. The procedure follows the small-team qualitative document-analysis approach described by Halkias, Neubert, Thurman, and Harkiolakis (2022). Formal Cohen's kappa was not computed because the coding scheme is multi-category and the unit of analysis is the segment rather than the whole document; percentage agreement after calibration was judged sufficient for a three-coder team of this size.

Analytical Techniques and Comparative Case

Analytical techniques comprised: (a) descriptive-comparative content analysis to map supporting and opposing arguments in a balanced manner; (b) mapping of Dunn's (2018) policy cycle and evaluation criteria onto URI's establishment process; (c) stakeholder analysis identifying the position and institutional interest of each actor; and (d) a bounded comparative institutional reflection using France's transition from the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) to the Institut National du Service Public (INSP), used solely to illuminate the legal-instrument question rather than to claim an equivalent legal or political context (Coe et al., 2025; Daniel, Harland, & Wald, 2024).

Stakeholder analysis followed a structured three-step procedure. Each actor identified in the coded corpus the Presidential Secretariat, URI/BPPK leadership, Commission X of the DPR RI, and the named legal scholars was classified according to (a) its institutional position (for, against, or conditionally supportive of URI's establishment), (b) the specific interest or mandate underlying that position, and (c) the type of document in which the position was expressed (official statement, legislative record, or media report), so that each stakeholder's position could be traced back to a specific, citable source rather than characterized impressionistically (Halkias et al., 2022). The French ENA-to-INSP transition was selected as the sole comparative case because it is the most closely analogous documented instance available to the authors of a state consolidating the selection, education, and placement functions for senior public officials into a single institution through an explicit legal instrument; the comparison is deliberately bounded to the question of legal-instrument design.

Limitations

This study has limitations that must be stated candidly. First, the policy under study was less than one month old at the time of writing, and no government regulation, presidential regulation, or academic statute specifically establishing URI was located within the documents accessed by the authors as of 18 August 2026. The absence of such an instrument in this corpus reflects the boundary of the search strategy described above; it does not by itself prove that no such instrument exists, since it may have been issued through a channel outside the sources searched, or not yet published in a publicly indexed database. This distinction is treated as material throughout the Results and Discussion sections, and the term "legal violation" is deliberately avoided in the authors' own analytical voice for this reason. Second, most secondary sources are drawn from mainstream media and, although cross-checked against official statements wherever possible, still require a critical stance toward potential framing bias; where such a source is the only publicly available record of a named actor's statement, it is retained and explicitly flagged as secondary. Third, medium- to long-term implementation data are not yet available, so any claim about URI's effectiveness or efficiency

remains prospective rather than empirically demonstrated. Consequently, the conclusions of this research are argumentative-analytical and tentative, open to revision once definitive implementing regulations and medium-term implementation data become available.

RESULTS

This section reports only the descriptive findings drawn from the coded corpus; their normative and theoretical interpretation is developed in the Discussion section below

Institutional Profile of URI and the BPPK Ecosystem

URI was established as part of the national education ecosystem managed by the Badan Pengelola Pendidikan URI was established as part of the national education ecosystem managed by the Badan Pengelola Pendidikan Kebangsaan (BPPK). Its leadership was inaugurated on 22 July 2026 under Presidential Decree Number 80/P of 2026, with Air Chief Marshal (Ret.) Donny Ermawan Taufanto serving as Governor of URI and concurrently Head of BPPK, and Prof. Yos Sunitiyoso as Deputy Governor of URI (Bisnis, 2026a). The inauguration was conducted directly by President Prabowo Subianto at the State Palace, witnessed by Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka and several ministers of the Red-and-White Cabinet (Kalimantanpost, 2026).

Unlike higher education institutions in general, which are led by a Rector under Law Number 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, URI's leader holds the title of "Governor," because the position's scope of responsibility covers more than one educational institution at once (U. R. Indonesia, 2026). The government has affirmed that BPPK and URI are not intended to replace the function of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemdiktisaintek), but rather have been designed to make the division of tasks more focused and non-overlapping (K. P. R. Indonesia, 2026; P. R. Indonesia, 2026; U. R. Indonesia, 2026).

Under BPPK, the government has designed the integration of three human-resource development pathways: (1) Sekolah Unggulan Garuda (Garuda Excellence Schools) at the senior secondary level, comprising both newly established schools and transformed existing schools; (2) Universitas Republik Indonesia at the higher education level; and (3) the Lembaga Administrasi Negara (LAN), whose function has been expanded from its original focus on civil-servant (ASN) development into part of a continuous leadership-cultivation ecosystem (Indonesia, Universitas Republik, 2026). These three pathways are coordinated by three implementing bodies the Badan Pengelola Sekolah Unggulan, the Badan Pengelola Perguruan Tinggi, and LAN all of which fall under the Governor of URI as Head of BPPK (Indonesia, Universitas Republik, 2026).

Mapping the Supporting Arguments

The supporting arguments identified in the corpus emphasize three points: (1) the urgency of cross-sectoral national leadership regeneration spanning government, civil service, and state enterprises; (2) efficiency through integrating development functions previously scattered across ministries and agencies, without dissolving the identities of already-operating units; and (3) the P3MD pilot program, running since May 2026, cited by government sources as evidence of initial operational readiness (Bisnis, 2026).

Mapping the Critical Arguments

The counter-arguments identified in the corpus can be grouped into four categories: (1) an apparent gap in the establishment instrument Presidential Decree 80/P/2026 regulates the appointment of officials, and no government regulation or presidential regulation specifically establishing URI as an institution was located within the documents accessed by the authors (Mahasiswa, 2026); (2) an unresolved question of fit with the procedure for establishing a higher-education institution under Ministry of Education and Culture Regulations 17/2014 and 7/2020, which require a feasibility study and clarity on location and faculties prior to the appointment of leadership; (3) the absence, as of the DPR's own account, of substantive consultation with Commission X of the DPR RI on URI's legal basis, governance, or budget, even though the policy is already underway (DPR RI, 2026; Kompas.com, 2026); and (4) ambiguity of nomenclature and governance, including criticism of the term "Governor," which is not the title used within the structure of Indonesian higher education or in comparable international practice, where the term "rector" is more common (Times, 2026).

Comparative Institutional Reflection

As a point of reflection, not a claim of direct equivalence, the transformation of France's École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) into the Institut National du Service Public (INSP) through the 2021 governance reform shows a structurally similar pattern: the merging of the selection, education, and placement functions for senior state officials into a single institution (France, 2021). The key difference lies in the strength of the legal umbrella: the INSP reform was established through a décret that explicitly regulated the dissolution of ENA and the establishment of INSP

as its successor institution, accompanied by a documented legislative and consultative process a stage of formal legitimation that, based on the corpus described above, does not yet have an equivalently documented counterpart in URI's establishment process as of the writing of this manuscript.

Mapping through Dunn's Policy Cycle

Applying Dunn's (2018) five-stage cycle to the coded corpus yields the following picture. The agenda-setting stage was strong and centralized under presidential authority, reflected in the speed of the decision and the high political visibility of URI's launch. The policy-formulation stage shows a documented gap, since the academic design curriculum, faculties, and academic structure had not yet been formulated at the time leadership was inaugurated, according to the sources reviewed. The adoption/legitimation stage displays the clearest procedural gap identified in this corpus: the legal instrument used is a Presidential Decree on the appointment of officials, a different class of instrument from the one ordinarily used to establish a new higher-education institution, and Commission X of the DPR states it had not yet been substantively consulted. The implementation stage has begun on a limited basis through P3MD, while the evaluation stage cannot yet be conducted, since the policy has been running for only a matter of weeks at the time of writing. Against Dunn's evaluative criteria, appropriateness the correctness of procedure and conformity with the applicable regulatory framework is the criterion for which the corpus shows the weakest documented fulfillment, while effectiveness and efficiency cannot yet be assessed for lack of medium-term implementation data.

Evidence Matrix Linking Research Questions, Sources, and Dunn's Criteria

Table 2 traces each research question to the specific analytical category, the corpus source(s) that generated the finding, the evidence extracted, and, where applicable, the relevant Dunn's evaluation criterion, so that the chain from source document to reported finding is auditable rather than asserted in narrative form alone.

Table 2. Evidence Matrix Linking Research Questions, Sources, and Analytical Criteria

RQ	Analytical category	Key source(s) in corpus	Extracted evidence	Dunn's criterion
RQ1	Agenda setting	Presidential Decree 80/P/2026; Setneg press release (2026)	Rapid, centralized presidential decision; high-visibility inauguration ceremony	Strong agenda-setting
RQ1	Formulation	URI institutional self-description (uri.ac.id, 2026); Bisnis.com institutional profile	Curriculum, faculties, and academic structure not yet formulated at time of writing	Weak appropriateness
RQ1	Adoption/legitimation	Presidential Decree 80/P/2026; DPR RI (2026); Kompas.com (2026)	Appointment instrument used in place of an establishment regulation; DPR reports no substantive consultation	Weakest documented appropriateness
RQ1	Implementation	Bisnis, 2026a, 2026b (P3MD records)	Pilot leadership program running since May 2026 with 399 participants	Effectiveness not yet assessable
RQ2	Legal-instrument gap	Times, 2026 (Mahfud MD); Mahasiswa, 2026 (Hikmahanto Juwana); Permendikbud 17/2014, 7/2020	No located establishment regulation of equivalent force; appointment and establishment instruments conflated in public debate	Appropriateness
RQ2	Functional-differentiation rationale	Indonesia, Universitas Republik, 2026	Consolidation of previously scattered leadership-education pathways under one coordinating body	Institutional-differentiation theory
RQ3	Curriculum substance	URI institutional self-description; absence of a published curriculum document in the corpus	Curriculum, faculties, and academic structure not yet formulated	Freire's *conscientização* (not yet assessable)
RQ3	Recruitment openness	Bisnis, 2026a, 2026b (P3MD participant profile)	Initial recruitment tied to ASN, BUMN, and affiliated elite-school pathways	Illich's risk of elitism

DISCUSSION

This section interprets the descriptive findings reported above. It is organized around the study's three research questions before turning to the study's theoretical and practical contribution, its limits of transferability, and its limitations. Critical-education perspectives (Freire, Illich, and Hasan) are treated explicitly as a prospective evaluative framework rather than as sources of empirical findings about URI's still-unformulated curriculum.

RQ1 Interpreting URI's Establishment through Dunn's Policy Cycle

The findings in the Results section indicate that the criticism of institutional fragmentation has a documented empirical basis and cannot be reduced to a matter of public communication alone. Within the corpus analyzed, the absence of a located establishment instrument equivalent in force to Ministry of Education and Culture Regulations 17/2014 and 7/2020, together with the DPR's own account of not having been substantively consulted, points to an apparent regulatory and procedural gap against Dunn's appropriateness criterion. This study deliberately avoids the term "legal violation" in its own analytical voice, since a finding of violation requires demonstrating both the absence of a required instrument and the existence of a specific norm that was breached, and the corpus available to the authors does not permit that demonstration with certainty; it permits the more measured claim that the publicly available documents indicate an apparent regulatory and procedural gap that requires further legal clarification, most authoritatively by the government itself or by a competent legal body. The argument that this gap is "temporary and correctable" can only be sustained insofar as the government takes concrete corrective steps in the near term; historical-institutionalist accounts of Indonesian education-policy fragmentation suggest that unresolved procedural gaps of this kind can harden into standing institutional practice rather than being corrected (Fakhridana & Azizah, 2026; Handoko, Firmanto, & Pajriyah Raharja, 2026), which is the risk Mahfud MD and other legal scholars in the corpus point to.

A closer reading of the two instruments most frequently invoked in this debate supports a more precise, rather than a broader, legal claim. Presidential Decree Number 80/P of 2026 is, on its face and as confirmed by the Presidential Secretariat's own announcement, an appointment instrument (Keputusan Presiden tentang Pengangkatan): it names Donny Ermawan Taufanto and Yos Sunitiyoso to specific offices. It does not, on the same face, purport to establish an institution, define its legal personality, or set its organizational statute. This is precisely the distinction that Indonesian higher-education law draws between an appointment instrument (instrumen pengangkatan pejabat) and an establishment instrument (instrumen pendirian lembaga): the two perform different legal functions even when they concern the same institution, and treating the former as if it already discharged the latter's function is the error this study seeks to avoid. Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 7 of 2020, for its part, governs the establishment and alteration of state and private higher-education institutions in order to improve access, equity, quality, and relevance. Whether URI, established under a distinct managing agency (BPPK) rather than directly under Kemdiktisaintek, falls within this regulation's scope, or whether its legal basis is intended to rest on a different instrument altogether such as a Presidential Regulation specific to BPPK's institutions is a question this study can identify but cannot resolve from the documents available; resolving it requires either an explicit statement from the government on which legal regime governs URI, or the establishment instrument itself, neither of which was located in this corpus. This is presented as an open legal question rather than a settled finding of non-compliance.

A parallel distinction is necessary regarding the DPR's role. In its own public statement, Commission X clarified that the RUU Sisdiknas (a DPR legislative initiative concerning macro-level education policy) and URI's establishment (an executive-branch policy not proceeding through DPR legislation) are two different processes with different legal bases and mechanisms, and that Commission X's planned engagement with Kemdiktisaintek is an exercise of its ordinary oversight function (fungsi pengawasan) toward a partner ministry, rather than the invocation of a specific statutory consultation requirement that URI's establishment is alleged to have bypassed (Kompas.com, 2026a; RI, 2026). This distinction matters analytically: political oversight and legally mandated consultation are related but not identical, and the corpus does not identify a specific statutory provision that makes DPR consultation a precondition for establishing an institution of URI's kind. What the corpus does show is that Commission X, as the DPR's substantive partner in education policy, had not received the comprehensive explanation of URI's legal basis, governance, and funding that it says it will now request. That fact is properly read as evidence of a communication and coordination gap between the executive and the legislature's oversight function a legitimate governance concern in its own right rather than as proof that a specific legal consultation requirement was violated. Collapsing the two readings, as some early commentary does, overstates what the available evidence supports.

RQ2 Structural-Permanent or Procedural-Temporary Fragmentation?

Beyond the procedural question, the remaining substantive issue is whether URI fills a structurally unserved function. Referring to institutional-differentiation theory as extended by more recent comparative-governance scholarship (Birnbaum, 1983; Coe et al., 2025; Greenwood et al., 2011), a new unit can be categorized as legitimate functional

differentiation if it serves a cross-level need that previously lacked a single vehicle in this case, leadership development integrating the secondary-school, higher-education, and civil-servant/state-enterprise levels, which had indeed been scattered across Lemhannas (the National Resilience Institute), LAN, and various service-affiliated or boarding schools separately. This argument has a rational basis; however, a rational design does not by itself eliminate the need for a clear legal umbrella and an explicit authority matrix, including a defined division of functions between URI/BPPK and Lemhannas and LAN, which already hold related mandates, so that functional differentiation does not turn into institutional duplication that produces wasteful state spending. Comparative-governance research further cautions that reforms of this kind converge on legitimacy only when the legal and consultative process is made equally visible to the institutional redesign itself (Capano & Jarvis, 2020) a condition this corpus does not yet show URI to have met. Table 3 summarizes how each theoretical framework used in this study links its central concept to an observable indicator and to the evidence located in the corpus.

Table 3. Theory–Concept–Indicator–Evidence Matrix

Theory	Key concept	Indicator	Evidence in this corpus	Interpretive status
Dunn's policy cycle & evaluation criteria	Appropriateness of procedure; agenda-setting strength	Presence/absence of an equivalent-force establishment regulation; record of DPR consultation	Presidential Decree 80/P/2026 (appointment only); no located establishment regulation; DPR statement of non-consultation	Weak fulfillment at formulation/ legitimation; strong at agenda-setting
Institutional-differentiation theory (Birnbaum, 1983; Clark, 1983; Greenwood et al., 2011)	Functional differentiation vs. duplication	Existence of a structurally unserved function; overlap with Lemhannas/LAN mandates	Government's stated rationale for consolidating scattered leadership-education pathways; unresolved authority matrix vis-à-vis Lemhannas	Rational basis present; authority matrix not yet documented
Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire, 2000, 2004)	*Conscientização* vs. banking education	Curriculum content once formulated; pedagogical orientation	Curriculum, faculties, and academic structure not yet formulated at the time of writing	Not yet empirically assessable; treated as an open, consequential question
Illich's critique of institutionalized education (Illich, 1971)	Risk of elitism and closed institutions	Openness/closedness of recruitment pathway	Initial recruitment tied to ASN, BUMN, and affiliated elite schools	Risk is plausible and design-dependent, not yet realized or foreclosed
Hasan's nurani-formation (Hasan, 1993) – prospective framework	Education as value added to culture; formation of ethical judgment	Curriculum content once formulated; emphasis on nurani vs. mere ilmu	Curriculum not yet formulated	Not empirically assessable; Indonesian conceptual vocabulary for future evaluation

Based on this synthesis, this research argues that URI's legal-procedural gap is serious but plausibly correctable if the government promptly: (1) issues an establishment regulation of equivalent legal force to Ministry of Education and Culture Regulations 17/2014 and 7/2020, or a legal umbrella at the level of a Presidential Regulation that explicitly governs URI's status, authority, and academic structure, and clarifies whether Permendikbud 7/2020 applies to URI or is superseded by a BPPK-specific instrument; (2) conducts substantive consultation with Commission X of the DPR RI as its working partner in education; (3) establishes a transparent budget nomenclature within the APBN; and (4) completes an academic feasibility study, including clarity on faculties, curriculum, and campus location. This argument does not negate the urgency of the criticism raised by Commission X and Mahfud MD; it affirms that concrete corrective steps, not merely an assurance that the issue will be resolved later, are a prerequisite for the functional-differentiation argument to be sustained both scientifically and politically. Whether the fragmentation criticism is ultimately structural-permanent or procedural-temporary therefore cannot be settled by this study alone: it depends on

whether these four conditions are met within a reasonable period, which is an empirical question for future monitoring rather than one this corpus can resolve.

Four interrelated risk-mitigation priorities follow directly from this analysis: legal certainty (issuance of adequate establishment regulations that state explicitly whether and how Permendikbud 7/2020 or an equivalent instrument applies to URI); clarity of the authority matrix (an explicit division of functions among URI/BPPK, Lemhannas, and LAN to avoid overlap); budget transparency (a clear APBN nomenclature that the DPR can oversee); and academic independence (assurance that curriculum and academic processes are managed according to the principle of academic freedom customarily upheld in higher-education institutions, rather than reduced to a short-term political instrument).

RQ3 A Prospective Evaluative Framework: Freire, Illich, and Hasan

Independent of the structural-procedural debate, URI's long-term value will ultimately be determined by its pedagogical substance. Because URI's academic structure, faculties, and curriculum had not yet been formulated at the time of writing, no empirical assessment of pedagogical orientation is possible from the present corpus. The critical-education perspectives of Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, and Fuad Hasan are therefore advanced here strictly as a prospective evaluative framework for future research, not as findings of the current study.

Freire affirms that genuine education is a liberating practice that cultivates critical consciousness (conscientização), not merely a one-way transfer of knowledge from educator to learner (banking education) that reproduces existing power relations (Freire, 2000, 2004). Applied prospectively to URI, the crucial question for future evaluation is whether the curriculum, once formulated and published, shapes leaders capable of critical and reflective thinking about power structures, or merely produces technocratic bureaucrats who are instrumentally loyal. Illich's (1971) critique of the excessive institutionalization of education supplies a complementary warning: exclusive formal educational institutions risk reproducing social hierarchies and restricting access to certain groups. This risk is design-dependent; URI's initial recruitment pattern through civil-service and state-enterprise pathways could remain closed if not accompanied by an inclusive and transparent recruitment design. Fuad Hasan, Indonesia's Minister of Education and Culture from 1985 to 1993, supplies an Indonesian conceptual vocabulary that operationalizes Freire's conscientização within the institutional context of state civil-service and leadership education: education is properly understood as a value added to culture through which human beings become enlightened and free, rather than a transmission of ilmu (knowledge) detached from the formation of nurani, the inner conscience that governs ethical judgment and conduct (Hasan, 1993).

Read together, Freire's conscientização, Illich's warning against closed institutions, and Hasan's nurani-formation standard converge on a single, testable question for URI's future: once its curriculum is formulated and made public, will it cultivate reflective, culturally grounded critical capacity, or default to a technocratic, loyalty-oriented training model that satisfies Asta Cita's language without meeting that substantive standard? Two concrete, empirically tractable indicators for future research follow directly from this framework: (1) whether URI's eventual admissions pathway remains confined to ASN, BUMN, and affiliated elite-school graduates or opens a transparent, competitive route for the wider public; and (2) whether its published curriculum, once available, can be coded against Freire's dialogical criteria and Hasan's nurani-formation standard rather than assessed only impressionistically.

URI's claim to legitimacy also gains conditional support from how closely its stated purpose maps onto the fourth mission of Asta Cita, which calls for strengthening human-resource development through science, technology, education, health, and the empowerment of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2026; Mazda et al., 2025). This interpretive strength is conditional rather than automatic: it depends on whether the government can demonstrate a coherent human-resource pipeline connecting URI's graduates to measurable leadership placements, curriculum content that operationalizes "science, technology, and education" as substantive academic capacity rather than short-course indoctrination, and transparent performance indicators that allow Commission X and the wider public to evaluate, within a reasonable timeframe, whether URI is in fact narrowing the human-capital gap Asta Cita identifies. Absent these conditions, the Asta Cita framing risks functioning as a legitimating label rather than a genuine implementation strategy.

Theoretical and Practical Contribution

This study contributes to higher-education governance scholarship by integrating procedural policy-cycle analysis with institutional-differentiation theory, showing that the appropriateness of a policy's procedure and the substantive merit of its institutional design require independent theoretical treatment rather than being read as evidence for or against one another. Practically, it identifies four concrete, monitorable conditions legal certainty, an explicit authority matrix, budget transparency, and academic independence that policymakers, legislators, and researchers can use as a checklist for assessing whether a contested institutional launch such as URI's converts into a defensible instance of functional differentiation or hardens into lasting institutional fragmentation. The critical-education framework (Freire–Illich–

Hasan) is offered as a complementary tool for subsequent curriculum-level evaluation once academic documents become available.

Limits of Transferability

These findings are bounded to the specific Indonesian higher-education governance context and to the instruments analyzed in this corpus. The France ENA/INSP comparison is offered only as a bounded illustration of legal-instrument design in a structurally similar reform and should not be read as a claim that URI's political, administrative, or historical context is equivalent to France's; any transfer of this study's conditions-based framework to other national contexts would require independent verification against those countries' own legal instruments and governance arrangements.

Balanced Evaluation and Study Limitations

As of the writing of this manuscript, most of the procedural criticisms raised by Commission X of the DPR, Mahfud MD, and Hikmahanto Juwana had not received a complete public response from the government, and Commission X reported that it planned to summon Kemdiktisaintek for an official explanation after the August 2026 recess (DPR RI, 2026; Kompas.com, 2026). Accordingly, the functional-differentiation argument developed in this article is conditional and not yet empirically proven; it is an argument about the potential rationality of the policy design, not a retrospective justification for the establishment process that has already taken place. Readers should weigh this article's conclusions against the methodological limitations stated in the Method section, particularly the boundedness of the document corpus and the still-unfolding character of the policy itself (Fakhridana & Azizah, 2026).

CONCLUSION

Based strictly on the documents examined for this study, and read together with the methodological limitations stated above, this analysis of URI's establishment yields the following answers to the three research questions posed in the Introduction. On the first question, the documents examined suggest that URI's establishment, mapped through Dunn's policy cycle, shows a strong, centralized agenda-setting stage, a formulation stage in which the academic design had not yet been completed at the time of writing, a legitimation stage in which no establishment instrument equivalent to Permendikbud 17/2014 or 7/2020 was located within the corpus and Commission X of the DPR reports it had not been substantively consulted, an implementation stage limited so far to the P3MD pilot, and an evaluation stage that cannot yet be conducted.

On the second question, based on the available evidence, the fragmentation criticism has a documented basis specifically at the formulation and legitimation stages and is more properly read as an apparent regulatory and procedural gap than as a conclusively demonstrated legal violation, given the boundedness of the corpus. Whether this gap is structural-permanent or procedural-temporary cannot be settled by this study alone; it depends on whether the government issues a clear establishment instrument and completes substantive DPR consultation within a reasonable period. In parallel, the idea of integrating cross-level leadership development has a rational basis in higher-education management theory, with the firm caveat that the rationality of the design does not substitute for a legally valid procedure.

On the third question, the documents examined suggest that URI's long-term value will depend on whether the institution, once its curriculum is formulated, cultivates reflective-critical leadership or reproduces a technocratic model, and on whether recruitment and governance remain sufficiently open to avoid institutional elitism. Because curriculum and admissions documents were not available during the study period, these perspectives are advanced as a prospective evaluative framework (drawing on Freire's conscientização, Illich's critique of closed institutions, and Hasan's nurani-formation standard) rather than as empirical findings of the present study.

Contribution

As detailed in the Discussion, this study's principal contribution is to show that procedural appropriateness and substantive institutional design require independent evaluation, and to translate that distinction into four monitorable conditions legal certainty, an explicit authority matrix, budget transparency, and academic independence that can guide both policy follow-up and future empirical research on URI. A complementary critical-education framework is proposed for subsequent curriculum-level evaluation.

Limitations

This study's conclusions are bounded by the recency of the policy under study, the predominance of media sources in the available corpus, and the absence of medium- to long-term implementation data at the time of writing, as detailed in the Method section.

Recommendations

Based on the available evidence, it would be prudent for the government, through BPPK and Kemdiktisaintek, to clarify promptly and, if needed, issue an adequate establishment legal umbrella that states explicitly how it relates to Permendikbud 7/2020, to open substantive consultation with Commission X of the DPR RI, to establish a transparent budget nomenclature, and to complete the academic feasibility study before expanding URI's academic operations. On the academic side, URI's curriculum design would benefit from a Freirean dialogical approach that cultivates critical consciousness, combined with an open recruitment mechanism that responds to Illich-style elitism concerns. Future research is advised once a definitive legal umbrella and medium-term implementation data become available, to test empirically rather than only argumentatively whether URI functions as effective institutional differentiation or develops into lasting institutional fragmentation. These conclusions are drawn strictly from the documentary corpus analyzed as of 18 August 2026 and should not be generalized beyond it without further evidence.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT
SS conceived the study, coordinated the documentary corpus collection, and drafted the manuscript. FAY conducted the coding, the Dunn policy-cycle mapping, and the comparative institutional analysis. B contributed the theoretical framing for the institutional-differentiation and critical-pedagogy discussion and critically revised the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
The authors declare that this research was researched, written, and edited without the aid of generative artificial intelligence tools, beyond standard reference-management and grammar-checking software.

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