

# Historical Institutionalism in Indonesia's REDD+ Climate Policy: Navigating the Interplay between Forest and Climate Governance Institutions

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Received: 07 July 2024 Accepted: 04 December 2024

## Abstract

This paper examines the relevance of 'path dependence' in Indonesia's climate governance, particularly in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). This paper employs a conceptual model based on historical institutionalism, which explains the role of institutional structures and processes and the importance of critical junctures in reshaping them. This study explains how specific past events and practices shape institutions and their role in managing REDD+ climate policy in Indonesia. This study maps the development of Indonesia's REDD+ programs during Indonesia's democratic transition, highlighting its impact on forest governance reform. This paper argues that the institutional transformation of forest institutions creates institutionalized obstacles to the process of REDD+ implementation. The findings suggest that the interplay between forest and climate policy (REDD+) institutions reflects power asymmetries and leads to institutional continuity (re-equilibrium) and discontinuity of forest and climate institutions respectively.

Keywords: Indonesia; Climate Policy And Governance; Forest Governance; Historical Institutionalism; REDD+

## Introduction

Indonesia has faced deforestation and general environmental degradation since the last few decades. In the period 2015-2020, the rate of deforestation in Indonesia reached 650 Kha per year. Approximately 30.8 million hectares of tree cover had been lost between 2001 and 2023, which produced 22,2 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions<sup>1</sup> Indonesia has committed to reduce its emissions through *the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation of forests, plus conservation, sustainable forest management, and the enhancement of forest carbon stock* (REDD+), under the United Nations Framework for Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC). The centrepiece of this effort is a commitment to reduce GHG emissions, following Indonesia's current NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution), by 31.89 percent by 2030, or by 43.20 percent conditionally.<sup>2</sup> Since 2007 Indonesia has been running about 86 REDD+ initiative programs as part of various collaborations under multilateral and bilateral agreements.<sup>3</sup> Like Brazil and Colombia, Indonesia is one of the REDD+ powerhouses, but improving forest governance requires policy and institutional transformation.<sup>4</sup> However, the impact of its actions to cut the GHG emission remains limited.<sup>5</sup> Deforestation and forest degradation have continued in Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> Hence, these conditions make Indonesia as an important case study for REDD+ implementation compared to other REDD+ house countries.

Various studies indicate that the way in which the policymaking process is institutionalised makes Indonesian climate policy distinctive.<sup>7</sup> Other studies address the lack of coordination among domestic institutions, overlapping responsibility and conflicting policies between them, and even the lack of clarity about leading sectors on policy implementation, which are especially evident in the context of REDD+ between the Task Force (later REDD+ Agency).<sup>8</sup> The role of institutions has become the central focus of many studies of REDD+ implementation. However, there is a limited number of studies addressing the historical path of institutional development. This study thus contributes to Indonesian climate governance (REDD+ institutional) analysis, emphasising how historical trajectories of Indonesian forest institutions have influenced current Indonesian climate governance, particularly in the case of REDD+ institutions.

### **Historical Institutionalism: Critical Juncture and Path Dependence**

Historical institutionalism highlights the relations between past events and practices in determining the development of institutions that influence political and economic outcomes.<sup>9</sup> Historical institutionalists define institutions as both formal and informal procedures, routines, norms, and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of a polity.<sup>10</sup> Institutions are composed of people, and as relations among them develop over time, they may impose a degree of ‘path-dependence’ upon the actions of policymakers. As Fioretos et al.<sup>11</sup> recognized, political actor preferences, patterns of power relations, and forms of resources are shaped and encouraged by temporal processes and the sequences of events.

Path dependence and critical junctures are the main concepts that illuminate the development of historical institutional analysis, and which help to explain changes in political phenomena through time<sup>12</sup>. Path dependence refers to processes through which once institutions are established, they tend to persevere over long periods and thus limit opportunities for actors to bring about change.<sup>13</sup> These social processes contribute to positive feedback loops in institutional development, or the increasing return process: “An increasing return process describes the probability of further steps along the same path increases with each move down that path.”<sup>14</sup> Consequently, these institutions and related behaviours are locked into a path or trajectory of historical development.<sup>15</sup> Established political actors determine how increasing return occurs since they designed existing institutions and maintain them, providing them power and benefits.<sup>16</sup> However, Pierson argues that preconditions for increasing returns include the allocation of political authority and the condition of power asymmetries, the limited time of reform actors, and the strength of the status quo.<sup>17</sup>

Critical junctures are short historical sets of events and crises that have significant effects on current political outcomes.<sup>18</sup> Crises provides moments where new ideas may be adopted and new institutions created, leaving path-dependent political legacies and introducing discontinuity.<sup>19</sup> The Asian financial crisis and the subsequent downfall of Suharto constitute one such example.<sup>20</sup> Here, a juncture is an intersection of various trajectories, intertwined with other transformations, creating the possibility of a new course of development.<sup>21</sup> Historical institutionalists believe that critical junctures highlight the impacts of short periods of change when powerful actors or agents may affect political outcomes.<sup>22</sup> However, critical junctures may refer to deviations in the otherwise path-dependent practices in historical institutional analysis. Thus, some critical junctures even (in the longer term) reinforce current trajectories despite their destabilising potential.

The Indonesian REDD+ project coincided with fundamental changes in the institutional structure of forest governance through decentralization policy.<sup>23</sup> This policy impacts central and regional relations, particularly in redefining the position of forest institutions, and the development of REDD+ institutions in Indonesia. Consequently, explaining both institutional paths is necessary to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Indonesia’s REDD+ institutional design. Historical

institutionalism can thus be used to analyse how REDD+ implementation in Indonesia has related to forest institutions that have existed since the Dutch colonial period.

## **Methods**

This study is based on a systematic literature review and original data gained from semi-structured interviews, government reports, international organization documents, NGOs, fieldwork notes, and media (printed and online). Semi-structured interviews were conducted from July to December 2018 in Jakarta, and three sub-national provinces with REDD+ projects representing specific regions of Indonesia: East Kalimantan (Borneo), Jambi (Sumatera), and East Java (Java). The 75 interviewees were selected based on their linkages to the research area. They included government officials, international agency representatives, legislators, scholars, business sector practitioners, NGO activists, and locals. Key questions guided the interviews, but other questions were also probed by the researcher and participants to get more detailed information. Additionally, the data have been updated and crosschecked through data triangulation from various sources to unearth and clarify similarities and differences. Interpretation of data uses both emic and ethic approaches, which refer respectively to the people's point of view and the researcher's frame of analysis.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Historical Development of Indonesia's Forest and Climate Policy (REDD+) Institutions**

This section discusses how particular trajectories intersect in complex social settings to constitute a new juncture in forest governance in Indonesia (see figure.1). A series of events is highlighted to provide the historical context to the possible evolution of domestic institutions. In conjunction with the development of Indonesia's climate change policy (REDD+), tracing the institutional process of Indonesia's forestry sector is necessary to understand how the context of forest institutions interacts with the Indonesian climate policy institutions, including possible institutional convergence between them. This interplay refers to a set of processes that illustrate how an action in one institution has impacts on another institution, resulting in harmony or disharmony between them.<sup>25</sup> The point of interplay is located in several policies and related programs (see figure 1), including the REDD+ strategy and REDD+ related policies, such as the forest moratorium and one map policy initiative.

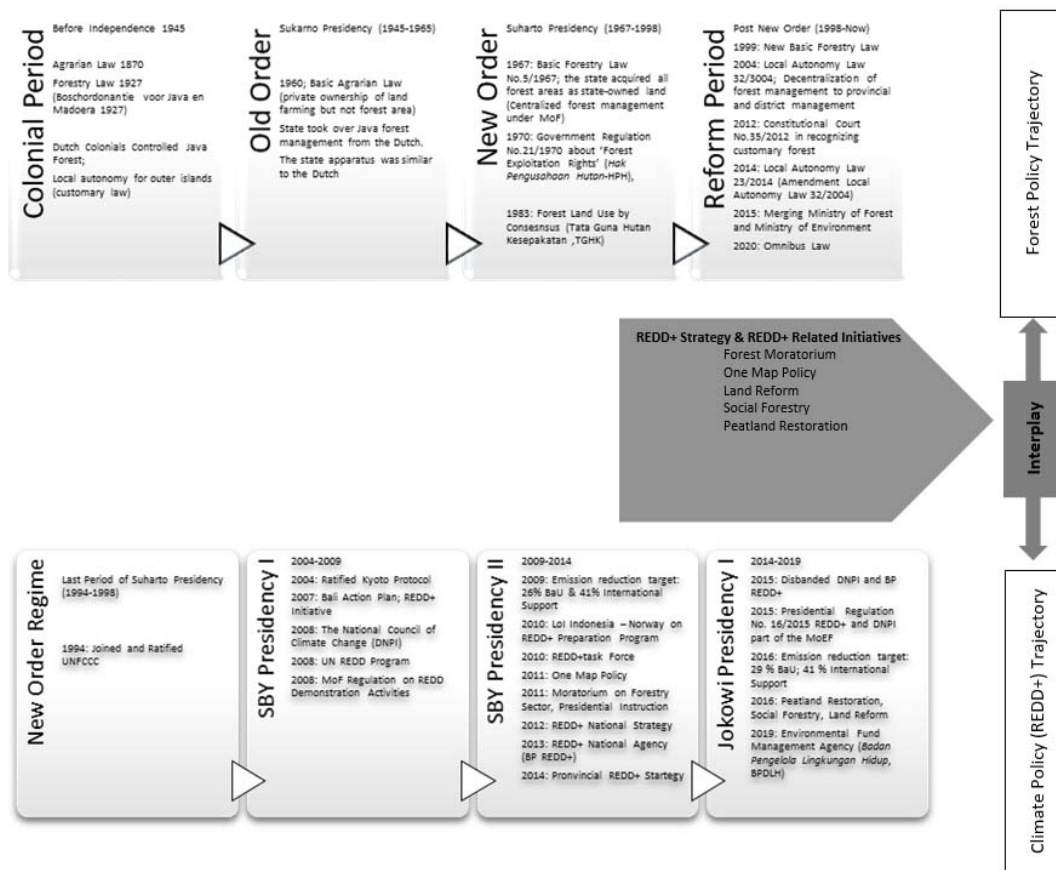


Figure 1: Interplay between Historical Path of Indonesia’s Forest and Climate Policy (REDD) Institutions.  
 Source: result of interview and analysis.

### The Historical Development of Indonesia’s Forest Institutions

The Dutch colonial government designed and implemented a centralistic policy through the Agrarian Law 1870 and Forestry Law 1927 that focused on Java and Madura (*Boschordonantie voor Java en Madera* 1927). The land and the forest area within these two islands belonged to the state (*Staatsdomeinverklaring*) and was managed by the colonial authority.<sup>26</sup> However, the Dutch colonial administration relegated forest management in the outer islands beyond Java to local rulers and communities through local customary law.<sup>27</sup> The Dutch colonial government also promoted conservation by limiting local community activities in forest areas.<sup>28</sup> However, forest policies were also shaped by political and economic interests. Government and the private sector cooperated to exploit forest resources, particularly in expanding agriculture, wood industry, and industrial extraction.<sup>29</sup> Hence, the colonial forestry approach became the basis for the next stage of forest institutions in this archipelago.

#### Post-Colonial (Old Order Regime)

Following Indonesia’s independence from the Dutch in 1945 and the short period of Japanese occupation, there were no fundamental transformations in forest management.<sup>30</sup> The new Sukarno government retained the Dutch colonial approach to forestry management and even employed the

same administrative structure.<sup>31</sup> The Basic Agrarian Law 1960 retained and strengthened the notional autonomy of the outer islands in managing their own land and forest area; still this law allocated a significant authority to the central government to administer local forests.<sup>32</sup> The effort to centralize forest management occurred alongside with massive deforestation in the 1950s, as forestry institutions were getting established through the Central Forest Service.<sup>33</sup>

### **New Order Regime**

The centralisation of forest sector management continued under the New Order. Suharto issued the Basic Forestry Law of 1967, which declared the central government's control of around 143 million hectares of forest area or nearly 70% of the country's land area.<sup>34</sup> This law helped his regime to strengthen its supremacy by doling out forest concessions and creating forest institutions that accommodated cronyism and the interests of private capital.<sup>35</sup> This Law deprived indigenous people of rights, which some see as a significant land grab in agrarian history<sup>36</sup> or the greatest act of state territorialisation.<sup>37</sup> By utilizing forestry sector, Suharto initiated market-oriented development programs, in particular covering the agriculture sector, wood processing industries, and mining exploration.<sup>38</sup> In doing so, Suharto developed a foreign and domestic capital investment policy in 1967 and 1968.<sup>39</sup> These policies provided foreign and domestic capital with huge timber concessions and guaranteed political and security stability through a military-bureaucratic authoritarian approach.<sup>40</sup> Through this Law, the Ministry of Forestry (MoF) controlled and managed everything related to the forestry sector, creating the MoF as one of powerful ministries for decades.<sup>41</sup>

### **Reform and Post-reform Period**

The reform period provided significant changes in Indonesia's forest institutions. President Habibie, as Suharto's successor, approved the Regional Autonomy Law No. 22/1999 and the Law on Fiscal Decentralization No.24/1999 to fulfil public demands for fairness and balanced relations between local and central government. The central government also introduced a new Basic Forestry Law and involved local governments in managing the forestry sector. However, as the MoF was the agency that drafted this Law, this seemed to be an effort of the central government to restore its supremacy over forest sector management<sup>42</sup>, impacting the overlapping authority structure among the various level of governments in arranging forestry activities and heightening tensions between state and non-state actors, including environmental NGOs, communities and business groups.<sup>43</sup> In response to this fluidity, a new Regional Autonomy Law no.32/2004 provided a wider role for regional governments over natural resources management.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, this decentralisation contributed to massive deforestation, as the district governments issued massive logging permits and concessions for agriculture plantations and mining explorations.<sup>45</sup>

Regarding the pitfall of decentralization, Widodo's presidency introduced the new Regional Autonomy Law No.23/2014, which revoked the roles and the authority of district governments and revived the exclusive power of the central government over forest sector management. This action is a justification to preserve and conserve forestry sector which has been lack of management under the previous of regional autonomy mechanism. President Widodo's policies, have thus perpetuated the old centralistic pattern, which follows that of Suharto, who believed that economic growth generated political legitimacy.<sup>46</sup> Hence, infrastructure and investment became a major focus of the Widodo regime to increase connectivity and boost economic growth. Rather than seriously addressing environmental issues, *Nawacita* or the development programs of Widodo support investment and business interests.<sup>47</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that the central government preserves control of natural

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resources to support such policies and programs.

## **Indonesia REDD+ Trajectories**

### **The Origins of Indonesia's Climate Policy Institutions**

The Conference of the Parties (CoP) of the UNFCCC 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 in Bali was significant for Indonesian policies on forest and climate governance. The Bali Action Plan and Bali Road Map generated from this CoP modified the original idea of RED (Reducing Emission from Deforestation), making it REDD+, and persuaded the developing countries (non-annex1 countries) to participate in this scheme.<sup>48</sup> REDD+ offers an instrument for distributing payments from various climate funds to the parties that have acted on forest protection and sustainable forest management.<sup>49</sup> In responding to this incentive, the Indonesian government established the National Council of Climate Change (*Dewan Nasional Perubahan Iklim*, DNPI), charged with formulating national climate change policy and strategies, including the REDD+ preparation.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the Norwegian government through NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) has an important role in developing REDD+ in Indonesia. The Letter of Intent (LoI) between these two countries formulated the National Strategy of REDD+ covering institutions and processes, laws and strategic programs, cultures and paradigms, and multi-stakeholder involvement.<sup>51</sup> This LoI led to the restructuring of institutional design of forestry sector management in Indonesia, such as establishing the REDD+ Agency and Peatland Restoration Agency and some related policies above.

These events created a critical juncture for institutional transformation in forest governance, highlighting REDD+'s potential to transform forest management. Pierson<sup>52</sup> and Capoccia and Kelemen<sup>53</sup> emphasise that junctures are critical because they place institutional arrangements on paths or trajectories, which later become difficult to alter. REDD+ and its related programs and policies (see figure 1) generated an intersection between various paths of forest institutions, leading to possibilities of a new path for forest governance institutions in Indonesia. Those policies and programs provide a new institutional design for Indonesian forest institutions, which replaced the domination of previous institutions, involved new actors, and created new institutions. However, it later become challenging to reach the policy goals due to the persistence of the original institutions that had established the earlier path dependence.

### **Institutional Design of REDD+ and related initiatives**

In the context of institutional preparation, Indonesia established the REDD+ Task Force to prepare the institution of REDD+ and to enable coordination between agencies. This task force mainly consisted of non-bureaucratic personnel: activists, scholars, and technocrats. This is believed to be more efficient and effective in running the REDD+ program<sup>54</sup>, beyond neopatrimonialism, which has been entrenched in Indonesian forestry bureaucracy since the New Order regime.<sup>55</sup> Other institutions also participate, such as the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) and the Ministry of Forestry (MoF). Furthermore, a Presidential Decree in 2013 created the Indonesian REDD+ Agency (*Badan Pengelola REDD+*, BP REDD+) at ministerial level, which reports to the President.<sup>56</sup> As it was responsible for the coordination and control of REDD+ implementation in Indonesia, this agency became a key to forest governance reform, especially in building coordination between agencies<sup>57</sup>.

During SBY's presidency, the forest moratorium and one map initiative directly responded to the implementation of REDD+. These initiatives are part of the Letter of Intent (LoI) between Norway and Indonesia, designed to facilitate cooperation on REDD+ preparation in Indonesia.<sup>58</sup> The

forest moratorium focuses on the re-arrangement of forest zone and territory, evaluation of forest concessions and permits, and sustainable forest governance.<sup>59</sup> The one map policy initiative aims to resolve the differing boundaries on the different maps used by various state agencies, companies, and customary communities. It aims to reform, coordinate, and consolidate geospatial data used in accelerating national development. In this context, path dependence led to REDD+ becoming an endogenous factor, and an important influence on policy implementation and coordination of state agencies at multiple levels. Thus, the institutional transformation of forestry has been linked to international climate change governance in the context of the REDD+ scheme. These initiatives stemmed from SBY's environmentalism, an endogenous factor in Indonesian forest management. However, this new institutional design in forest governance has faced challenges at the practical level, especially in terms of the high density of collective institutions involved.<sup>60</sup> As actors from these institutions have obtained certain benefits, these new institutional designs have reaped resistance. Hence, in line with Pierson<sup>61</sup>, the density of forestry institutions promotes continuity and inhibits reform of the sector.

In the one map initiative, conflicting interests among state agencies have been influential in policy design; this is not only the domain of forestry agencies, such as the MoF/MoEF, but also mining, agriculture, housing, and homeland affairs.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the inclusion of customary forest areas within the one map initiative is difficult, despite the constitutional court No.35/2012 and the REDD+ safeguards emphasising the rights of indigenous people. One indigenous participant said that they have presented an indicative map of customary law to several ministries, such as the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Geospatial Agency, but to this day it is still unclear whether the customary forest area is included in the map as proposed.<sup>63</sup> According to the Archipelagic Indigenous Peoples Alliance (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, AMAN), One Map online portal does not include the map proposed by indigenous groups, and this portal has limited access for public, such as CSOs.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Current Institutional Design of the REDD+**

Under Widodo's presidency, there have been significant changes in REDD+ implementation. The REDD+ Agency and DNPI were disbanded in 2015, transferring their responsibilities and functions to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF). Furthermore, the MoEF established a Directorate General of Climate Change Control (*Direktorat Jendral Pengendalian Perubahan Iklim*, DJPPI) through Ministerial Regulation in 2015 to continue the tasks and the authority of the REDD+ Agency and the National Council of Climate Change as well. From this date, this new directorate did not have the same level and authority as its predecessor. This raises many questions. Previously, the development of Indonesia's REDD+ implementation was considered progressive, given its activities at national and regional levels.<sup>65</sup> However, policy changes and demonstration projects have slowed; only 20 of 86 projects have been active so far.<sup>66</sup>

However, Widodo continues to execute REDD+ plans and programs, such as peatland restoration, social forestry, and land reforms. In this respect, REDD+'s institutionalization has shown progress at the national level, but not the sub-national level. Of the three provinces in this research, only REDD+ in East Kalimantan maintains its activities, as it has a Local Board for Climate Change (*Dewan Daerah Perubahan Iklim*, DDPI) that manages programs.<sup>67</sup> The sustainability of climate change programs relies on several international funding sources and agencies, although East Kalimantan has the highest per capita income of any province in Indonesia. In contrast, in Jambi and East Java some projects have halted, and there is no clarity regarding their continuation.<sup>68</sup> However, the Indonesian government through the MoEF justified their success in reducing deforestation rate

between 2014-2022.<sup>69</sup> Remarkably, Indonesia terminated the LoI with the Norway government due to the lack of commitment from the Norway to provide the REDD+ payment.<sup>70</sup> Here, some participants consider that the institutional transformation of the climate (REDD+) institutions, from the REDD+ Agency and the National Council of Climate Change to the MoEF, explains the REDD+ scheme's lost momentum. At this point, REDD+ in Indonesia has not yet made a significant contribution in reducing emission from the forestry sector.<sup>71</sup>

## Discussion

The structure and activities of REDD+ institutions in Indonesia are consequences of actions by powerful agents such as the Ministry of (Environment and) Forestry. Some studies have argued that the end of the Suharto regime was a critical juncture that initially led to a significant change in political structure from military authoritarianism to democratic consolidation in Indonesia,<sup>72</sup> while others have argued that not much has changed. Some say that this transition period experienced difficulties dealing with state-business relations, which were inherent in Indonesia's political system since the New Order period.<sup>73</sup> This transition explains the development of new democratic governance institutions, including decentralization reforms in particular sectors.<sup>74</sup> At this juncture, indeed REDD+ provided major shifting in policy and practices.<sup>75</sup>

In the context of forest institutions, such events, especially the demand for political, administrative, and economic reforms, created the potential for a new path for decentralization of forest governance in Indonesia.<sup>76</sup> The logic of path dependence illustrates how endogenous decentralization has led to the institutional transformation of forest sector management through the New Basic Forestry Law 1/1999 and Regional Autonomy Law 32/2004. Although the introduction of REDD+ as an exogenous factor offered the opportunity to strengthen the idea of decentralisation of forest management through Indonesia's REDD+ strategy and some related programs, this opportunity for change encountered difficulties in realization. In various studies, it has been noticed that the relation between national and sub-national is complicated.<sup>77</sup> The old pattern of institutions, especially the centralistic national government, wanted to retain its position and make regional autonomy subordinate to central power.<sup>78</sup>

### Institutional REDD+ Transformation

The presence of the REDD+ scheme in Indonesia created a critical juncture for forest governance. However, according to the parallel trajectories of climate policy and forest institutions in figure 1, the latest institutional transformation of forest institutions has led to a new phase of institutional development and processes of REDD+ in Indonesia. Institutional actors, particularly the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, have attempted to rework the climate policy agenda in a manner consistent with their own institutional objectives. Path dependence suggests that institutional change is difficult to accomplish, and conversely, difficult to oppose once established.<sup>79</sup>

Efforts to preserve ineffective structures may become prevalent in some political and policy transformations.<sup>80</sup> The logic of path dependence clearly shows how institutional continuity has occurred in forest management, despite a critical juncture pushing the institutional transformation to some extent, as exemplified by the merging of the MoF and the MoE, and the folding of the REDD+ Agency and the National Council of Climate Change into the MoEF. The new path of forest management has strengthened the power of this ministry in extending its authority. Here, the process of increasing return or positive feedback occurred alongside opportunities from the current set of events as discussed below.



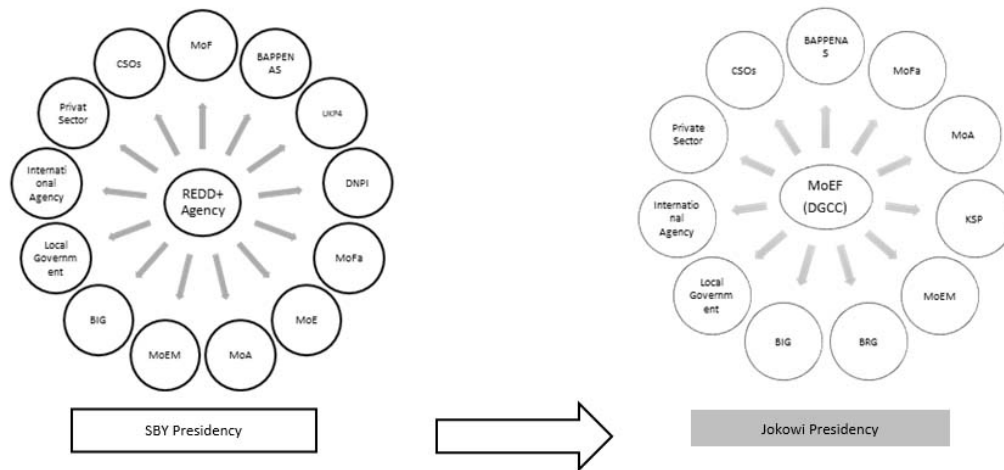


Figure 2: REDD+ Institutional Transformation.

Source: Constructed based on interviews and analysis

Notes: BRG (Peatland Restoration Agency), CSO (Civil Society of Organization), DNPI (National Council of Climate Change), DGCC (Directorate General of Climate Change), MoEM (Ministry of Energy and Mineral), MoF (Ministry of Forestry), MoE (Ministry of Environment), MoEF (Ministry of Environment and Forestry), MoFa (Ministry of Finance), BIG (Geospatial Information Agency), BAPPENAS (National Development Planning Agency), KSP (the Office of the Presidential Chief of Staff), UKP4 (Presidential Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight).

There have been two significant events shaping institutional relations between national and sub-national levels (vertically), and among several agencies at the national level (horizontally). These relations reflect how power asymmetry occurred through several events and led to the path dependence (continuity) of forest institutions in Indonesia. Firstly, in vertical relations, the decentralisation trend has been reversed; there is now a re-centralization policy through the 2014 Regional Autonomy Law. The dominant actor in Indonesian forest institutions, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), has regained its authority regarding the distribution of governmental functions and authorization, such as planning and licensing, and management and monitoring of forest resources.<sup>81</sup> The local forest agency (*Dinas Kehutanan Kabupaten/Kota*) as a representation of local authority has been sidelined and so has the enactment of this new Regional Autonomy Law. All of its functions and responsibilities were instead given to the Forest Management Unit (*Kesatuan Pengelola Hutan*, KPH) as the representative of central government (the MoEF) at the local level.<sup>82</sup>

This effort is not the first one. In the beginning of decentralisation of forest governance in the 2000s, the central government sought to retain control of forestry management, particularly through the overlap between the Regional Autonomy Law 1999 and Basic Forestry Law 1999.<sup>83</sup> These events constituted a loop of positive feedback, in which the condition of institutional changes locks in at the same path. Several interviewees considered that this policy resulted in a diminished sense of responsibility on the part of regional governments, as the central government assumed control. The devastating series of forest fires in 2015 and 2019 illustrate how this institutional transformation can affect forest management at the ground level. Lassa (2015)<sup>84</sup> considered that one of the main problems in forest fire management is the lack of a unified incident command system both at local and national levels. In addition, the shuffle of responsibilities between local and central government has caused additional problems.

Secondly, in the case of horizontal relations, as the dominant actor among forest institutions in Indonesia, the position of the MoEF has been increasingly strengthened by disbanding the National REDD+ Agency and the National Council of Climate Change (DNPI). All the tasks and the functions of these two climate change institutions have become part of the MoEF, with the establishment of the Directorate General of Climate Change under the MoEF (See figure 2). The REDD+ Agency, by contrast, was originally mandated by the REDD+ criteria and part of the LoI between the Norwegian and the Indonesian governments and intended to resolve the institutional stickiness (status quo) of the forest institutions, and to reform forest governance in Indonesia.<sup>85</sup> However, due to changes in Indonesia's domestic policies, there are doubts about the authority and capacity of this directorate to act independently. Since this directorate is under the MoEF, some interviewees doubted its ability to coordinate with other institutions, even among other directorates within the MoEF, exemplifying such issues as weak coordination among state agencies in the implementation of Indonesian REDD+.

The lack of coordination and rivalry among related state agencies, both at the national and sub-national levels, is reflected in the obstacles to effective forest governance. At this juncture, REDD+ related initiatives are also affected by power struggles within state agencies. Although the agencies give the appearance of formal coordination, at a practical level, they adhere to their own respective protocol frameworks<sup>86</sup>, rendering effective coordination and cooperation between them problematic in Indonesia.<sup>87</sup> Some participants from the sub-national level have felt the impact of this fragmentation among national state agencies since the beginning of the REDD+ initiative. Fragmentation was particularly noticeable among the MoF, Bappenas, and the REDD+ Task Force (later to become the REDD+ Agency).<sup>88</sup> Consequently, REDD+ implementation was undermined by competition among these agencies and exacerbated by a lack of coordination.

Power contestation among the actors in forest governance institutions has created inter-agency tensions, and the current REDD+ institution has paradoxically provided more space for the MoEF to preserve its authority through REDD+ implementation. Since state institutions such as ministries have different functions and divisions, they tend to compete and develop incompatible state strategies.<sup>89</sup> Although the MoEF has taken over these tasks, the overlapping responsibilities and competition among state agencies remains, particularly between the MoEF and BAPPENAS, as illustrated in the disagreement about the methods to be used in measuring GHG emissions at ground level<sup>90</sup>. Interviewees from the three provinces in the study suggested that the differences between these methods have confused local government agencies, since both methods come from the central government and must be followed. In addition to the issues of REDD+ implementation at the ground level, the national level still has a problem relating to data and method consolidation between state agencies<sup>91</sup>, as acknowledged by the Norwegian assessment, despite its optimism about REDD+'s progress in Indonesia.<sup>92</sup>

A key criticism of Indonesia's policy response is that the effort to retain central authority as reflected at the beginning of the political transition, both through the Forestry Law 41/1999 and Regional Autonomy Law 32/2004<sup>93</sup>, has resulted in 'pseudo-decentralization'.<sup>94</sup> This effort can be interpreted as a response to the massive issues of forest exploitation and corruption by the local authority at municipal and provincial levels. There have been about 300 corruption cases against the heads of regional governments since 2005, and some of these relate to forest concession permits. This has become a justification for the central government to retain jurisdiction over the sector (including the REDD+ implementation) through the enactment of Law 23/2014.

Consequently, there has been a significant shifting of REDD+ institutions in Indonesia, particularly as the role of the REDD+ Agency as central coordinator has moved to the MoEF (see figure 2). Thus, all REDD+ mandates will once again be based in this ministry. The MoEF continues to function as the dominant agency in the forestry sector and has reasserted its authority and created

a new equilibrium of forest institutions in Indonesia. Paradoxically, the presence of REDD+, which should have provided a fundamental change in forestry governance, has instead reinforced a pattern of institutional status quo, a frequent outcome of path dependence. Although historically contingent exogenous and endogenous factors provide the context for institutional transformation, a country's distinctive institutional legacy determines the preferences of the main actors in carrying out institutional development.

## Conclusion

The lens of historical institutionalism shows how Indonesia's climate policy and governance response to REDD+ has occurred in parallel with other domestic institutional developments. It highlights the wider international context of Indonesia's political transition and how the interplay between domestic and international factors can shape policy outcomes within different countries. As the REDD+ scheme is an international policy initiative, it can be represented as an exogenous factor for the institutional development of forest governance in Indonesia. However, endogenous forces also influence the actual process of policy implementation. The REDD+ scheme's interaction with domestic processes of forest management since the reform period created a critical juncture, particularly in the wake of the CoP 13 in Bali, 2007. This juncture led to the possible institutional transformation or even a discontinuity of the status quo around forest governance in Indonesia. However, Indonesia's current political transition, particularly under the Joko Widodo presidency, has reverted to the older political status quo, in which political centralization and authoritarian government are the basis of the new political equilibrium. In this respect, the enactment of Regional Autonomy Law of 23/2014 has provided a framework for re-centralization of political institutions, including in the context of forestry sector management.

Since the beginning of the reform period, therefore, efforts to retain the institutional status quo have been embedded in specific legal reforms. Paradoxically, the presence of REDD+ and related initiatives created a potential critical juncture in a short time frame, which encouraged the transformation of forest governance and potentially put the MoF (later it becomes MoEF) in an unfavourable position vis-à-vis other climate change institutions. However, a decade into the future during the following presidential regime has witnessed the influence of path dependence, in which Joko Widodo's new developmentalism is continuing the trajectory of the New Order's developmentalism. Domestic political considerations and inter-institutional rivalries provided the impetus for powerful domestic actors, particularly the MoEF, to create new laws and policies to further their interests and preferences.

The intersection between exogenous and endogenous factors reveals how the institutional transformation of forest governance in Indonesia is shaped by the interaction of these two sources. Ironically, the REDD+ implementation process highlights and was affected by such processes. As the logic of path dependence highlights, distinctive historical legacies are crucial in shaping such outcomes, and manifest in the creation of institutional rules and procedures that reflect and shape the preferences of actors involved in forest and climate governance. In Indonesia's case, this has meant a return to the status quo and the sub-optimal implementation of the well-intentioned REDD+ scheme. As such, the Indonesian experience holds important lessons for both agents of international governance and for their domestic counterparts. As the findings and analysis of this study reveal, the historical trajectories of institutions need to be considered in addressing social or institutional transformation, such as in the case of forestry and climate governance in Indonesia.

## Acknowledgment

The author (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9857-6312>) gratefully acknowledges support from all participants who took part in this study, School of Social Sciences, the University of Western Australia, the Indonesia Endowment Education Fund (LPDP), and Monash Herb Feith Indonesian Engagement Centre, Monash University.

## Notes

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Apriwan

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