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DEKAN FAKULTAS KEHUTANAN UNIVERSITAS GADJAH MADA  
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TIM PEMBIMBING DISERTASI BAGI DWI LARASWATI

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3. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 67 Tahun 2013 tentang Statuta Universitas Gadjah Mada (Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2013 Nomor 165, Tambahan Lembaran Negara Nomor 5454);
4. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014 tentang Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi (Lembaran Negara Tahun 2014 Nomor 16, Tambahan Lembaran Negara Nomor 5500);
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6. Peraturan Majelis Wali Amanat Universitas Gadjah Mada Nomor 4/SK/MWA/2014 tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kelola (*Governance*) Universitas Gadjah Mada sebagaimana telah diubah dengan Peraturan Wali Amanat Universitas Gadjah Mada Nomor 3 Tahun 2017 tentang Perubahan Ketiga atas Peraturan Majelis Wali Amanat Universitas Gadjah Mada Nomor 4/SK/MWA/2014 tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kelola (*Governance*) Universitas Gadjah Mada;
7. Keputusan Rektor Universitas Gadjah Mada Nomor 526/P/SK/HT/2008 tentang Penataan dan Penetapan Kembali Izin Penyelenggaraan Program Studi di Universitas Gadjah Mada;
8. Keputusan Rektor Universitas Gadjah Mada Nomor 11 Tahun 2016 tentang Pendidikan Pascasarjana;

9. Keputusan Rektor Universitas Gadjah Mada Nomor 1349/UN1.P/SK/HUKOR/2016 tentang Pengangkatan Dekan Fakultas Kehutanan Universitas Gadjah Mada Periode 2016-2021.

MEMUTUSKAN:

- Menetapkan : KEPUTUSAN DEKAN TENTANG TIM PEMBIMBING DISERTASI BAGI DWI LARASWATI
- KESATU : 1. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Maryudi, S.Hut., M.For. Jabatan Pembimbing Utama  
2. Dr. Muhammad Alif K. Sahide, S.Hut., M.Si. Jabatan Pembimbing Penyerta I  
3. Emma Soraya, S.Hut., M.Sc., Ph.D. Jabatan Pembimbing Penyerta II
- dalam penyusunan disertasi Program Studi Doktor Ilmu Kehutanan atas nama Dwi Laraswati, NIM. 18/436452/SKT/00190, dengan judul: *"The Role of Organized Interest Groups in Forest-Environmental Governance in Indonesia."*
- KEDUA : Tim pembimbing bertugas membimbing mahasiswa Program Studi Doktor Ilmu Kehutanan Fakultas Kehutanan Universitas Gadjah Mada atas nama Dwi Laraswati sampai menyelesaikan penyusunan dan pertanggungjawaban disertasinya.
- KETIGA : Biaya yang timbul sebagai akibat diterbitkannya keputusan ini dibebankan pada Rencana Kerja dan Anggaran Tahunan Program Studi Doktor Ilmu Kehutanan Fakultas Kehutanan Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- KEEMPAT : Keputusan ini berlaku pada tanggal ditetapkan sampai dengan selesainya segala sesuatu yang terkait dengan pembimbingan disertasi bagi Dwi Laraswati.

Ditetapkan di Yogyakarta  
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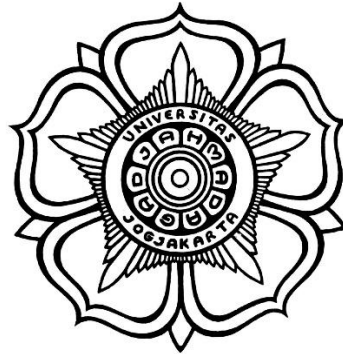


Dr. Budiadi, S.Hut., M.Agr.Sc.  
NIP. 19700518 199512 1 001

Tembusan:

1. Ketua Program Studi Doktor
  2. Ketua Departemen Manajemen Hutan
  3. Kepala Kantor Administrasi
  4. Bendahara Pengeluaran Pembantu Anggaran DAMAS
  5. Yang bersangkutan
- di lingkungan Fakultas Kehutanan Universitas Gadjah Mada

DEVELOPING AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR  
ASSESSING THE ROLES OF ORGANIZED INTEREST GROUPS  
IN POLICY MAKING PROCESSES– INSIGHTS FROM  
INDONESIAN FOREST GOVERNANCE



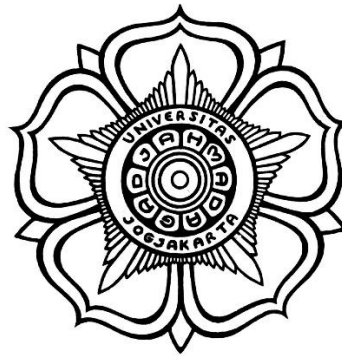
Dwi Laraswati  
18/436452/SKT/00190

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Faculty of Forestry  
Universitas Gadjah Mada  
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submitted by:

Dwi Laraswati

18/436452/SKT/00190

has been defended in front of the examining team on July 19, 2021

Promotor



Prof. Dr. Ahmad Maryudi

Head of Examiner



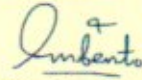
Dr. Dwiko Budi Permadi

Co-Promotor 1



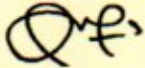
Dr. Muhammad Alif K. Sahide

Examiner 2



Dr. Suripto

Co-Promotor 2



Dr. Emma Soraya

Examiner 3



Prof. Dr. Mohammad Naiem

Examiner 4

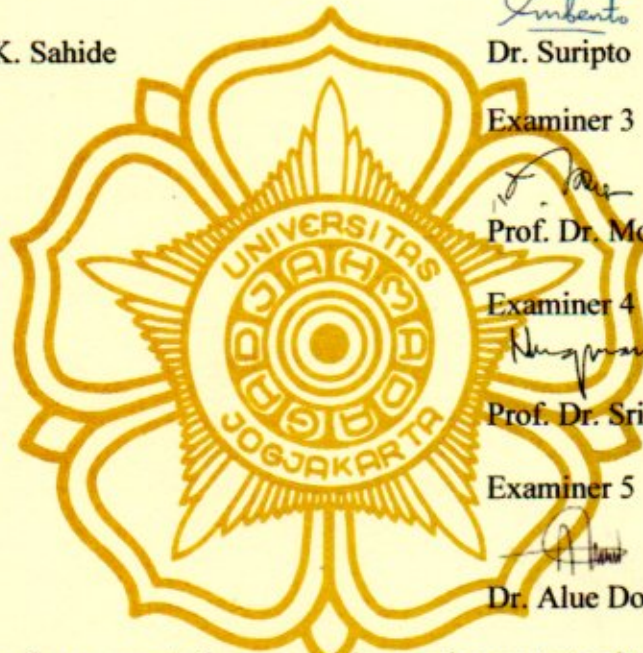


Prof. Dr. Sri Nugroho Marsoem

Examiner 5

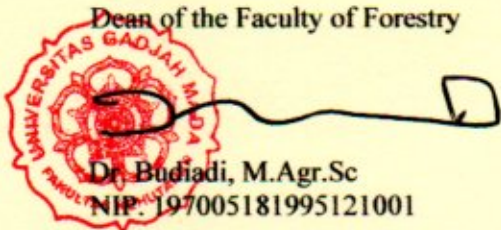


Dr. Alue Dohong



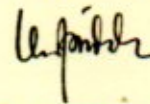
This dissertation has been accepted as one of the requirements to obtain a Doctorate (Dr.)  
July 29, 2021

Dean of the Faculty of Forestry



Dr. Budiadi, M.Agr.Sc  
NIP. 197005181995121001

Head of the Doctoral Study Program



Dr. Ir. Eny Faridah, M.Sc  
NIP. 196602271990032001

### **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is original, there is no work that has ever been submitted to obtain a degree at a university. Work or opinion written or published by another person and referred to this dissertation is mentioned in the bibliography.

Yogyakarta, July 21, 2021



Dwi Laraswati

## **Preface**

The desire for conducting this research is because of seeing the significant growth of NGOs in recent decades including in Indonesia, and the evolution of their roles including conducting actions in contrast to the traditional conceptions and their benevolent claims. I personally see that NGOs ideally should play the main role to advocate the interests ‘voice of voiceless peoples’ in top political processes where those peoples can not achieve. I was highly motivated to examine NGOs using a realistic/ empirical-based approach in order to capture which roles they actually undertake.

In truth, I could not have achieved my current level of success without strong support groups. First of all, my family, who supported me with love, understanding, and patient.

I also would like to give my warmest thanks to my promoters, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Maryudi, Dr. Muhammad Alif Kaimuddin Sahide, and Dr. Emma Soraya for the guidance, supervision, and advice during my study in Master and Doctoral Degrees for four years.

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*“Several favourite bits of advice for young researchers; you have to be, willing to, ready to, eager to, work very very hard”.*

(Kip Thorne, A Nobel Laurete in physics)

## ***Intisari***

*LSM saat ini memainkan peranan penting dalam proses pembuatan kebijakan kehutanan/ lingkungan. Beberapa dari mereka telah mengubah pendekatan mereka untuk menjadi mitra pemerintah. Konsepsi tradisional LSM memandang mereka sebagai perwakilan masyarakat sipil. Meskipun demikian, terdapat LSM yang melakukan tindakan yang bertentangan dengan konsepsi tradisional dan klaim kebajikan mereka. Studi ini fokus pada pengembangan kerangka analisis yang sesuai dengan fenomena yang berkembang dalam tata kelola hutan/ lingkungan. Penelitian ini mengadopsi teori Organized Interest Groups (OIGs)/ kelompok kepentingan terorganisir dari konsep demokrasi. Studi ini bertujuan untuk: i) mengkonseptualisasikan kembali LSM sebagai kelompok kepentingan yang terorganisir, ii) mengembangkan kerangka analisis untuk menilai peran kelompok kepentingan yang terorganisir, dan iii) melakukan uji coba penerapan kerangka analisis tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dan data dikumpulkan melalui studi pustaka dan analisis sumber sekunder lainnya, wawancara, pengalaman pribadi, dan observasi.*

*Studi ini menemukan bahwa konsepsi LSM telah mengalami stagnasi pada deskripsi normatif; formal, swasta, berorientasi nirlaba, sukarela, otonom atau independen dari pihak lain, didanai oleh donor eksternal, dijalankan oleh staf atau anggota profesional, dan mengejar tujuan bersama untuk mendorong pembangunan. Namun pada kenyataannya LSM seperti aktor politik lainnya, memiliki kepentingan sendiri, dan cenderung mengejar kepentingan diri sendiri dalam setiap tindakan yang mereka lakukan. Studi ini mengembangkan RIF untuk memenuhi urgensi pengembangan konsepsi berbasis empiris pada LSM. RIF berakar pada dua peran dasar OIGs: sejauh mana mereka mewakili kepentingan kelompok tertentu dalam masyarakat dan sejauh mana mereka mampu memberikan pengaruh politik pada pemerintah. Kerangka analisis ini menghasilkan beberapa kategori dan jenis OIG, termasuk mereka yang bertindak di luar kepentingan bersama. Dengan menggunakan empiris dalam tata kelola hutan/ lingkungan Indonesia, RIF akhirnya mampu mengungkap keragaman jenis OIG.*

## **Abstract**

The roles of NGOs have become more prominent in forest/environmental policy making processes. NGOs maneuver their approaches to being partners of the government. The traditional conceptions of NGOs view them as civil society representatives. Nonetheless, empirical literature detects NGOs conduct actions in contrast to the traditional conceptions and their benevolent claims. This study focuses on developing an analytical framework fitted with the evolving phenomena in forest/ environmental governance. This study adopted theories of organized interest groups from a democratic political system. This study aims to: i) reconceptualize NGOs as organized interest groups, ii) develop an analytical framework for assessing the roles of organized interest groups, and iii) test the applicability of the analytical framework. This study employed a qualitative approach, and data were collected through literature review and other secondary sources analyses, interviews, personal experiences, and observations.

The conceptions of NGOs have been stagnated on the normative descriptions; formal, private, non-profit oriented, voluntary, autonomous or independent from other parties, funded by external donors, run by professional staff or members, and pursuing common goals to foster development. NGOs are however like other political actors in reality, have ordinary self-interests, and tend to pursue self-interests in every action they conduct. This study established RIF to meet the urgency of the development of empirical-based conceptions on NGOs. RIF is rooted in two basic roles of OIGs: the extent to which they represent the interests of particular groups within society and exert political influence on governments. This framework results in several categories and types of OIGs, including those who act beyond common interests. Using empirics in Indonesia's forest/ environmental governance, RIF is able to disclose the diversity of OIGs' types.

## List of publications and the candidate's contribution

### Principal publications:

The principal publications are publications included in the results of this dissertation. This dissertation has three principal publications as follows:

1. **Laraswati, D.**, Rahayu, S., Sahide, M.A.K., Soraya, E., Pratama, A.A., Fisher, M.R., Maryudi, A., 2020. The anachronistic category of non-government organisations: Moving from normative to empirical-based definitions for identifying organized interest groups in forest policymaking. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 112, 102106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2020.102106> (Scopus Q1)

This paper is positioned as the first result in this dissertation. As the first author of this paper, the candidate designed the idea of the paper, prepared the manuscript, and did revisions. The candidate technically reviewed literature regarding evolving NGOs definitions and conceptions.

2. **Laraswati, D.**, Krott, M., Sahide, M.A.K., Soraya, E., Pratama, A.A., Rahayu, S., Giessen, L., Maryudi, M., 2021. Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance. *MethodsX*, 101335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2021.101335> (Scopus Q2)

This article constitutes the second result of this dissertation. The author developed the framework, consulted with other authors, prepared the manuscript, and led the peer-review process.

3. **Laraswati, D.**, Krott, M., Sahide, M.A.K., Fisher, M.R., Soraya, E., Pratama, A.A., Rahayu, S., Giessen, L., Maryudi, M., 2020. An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance'. (Scopus Q1)

This manuscript is still under review in the *Environmental Science and Policy Journal* (Elsevier). This manuscript contributed most in this dissertation, from the background, theoretical approach, methods, third result and conclusion. Data collection and analysis was mainly conducted by the candidate. She designed and developed the research. She also prepared the manuscript enhanced with comments and inputs from other authors.

### Supporting publications:

The supporting publications are publications not included in the result part of this dissertation, as follows:

4. **Laraswati, D.**, Rahayu, S., Pratama, A.A., Sahide, M.A.K., Soraya, E., Maryudi, A., 2020. Private forest in facing the timber legality regime in Indonesia: The NGOs' role. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science 449, 012053 (Scopus Indexed Proceeding)

As the first author, the candidate developed the idea of the paper and prepared the manuscript. This paper contributed to strengthen the background of this study and the case selection.

5. Maryudi, M., **Laraswati, D.**, Sahide, M.A.K., Giessen, L., 2021. Mandatory legality licensing for exports of Indonesian timber products: Balancing the goals of forest governance and timber industries. *Forest Policy and Economics* 102384. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2020.102384> (Scopus Q1)

The candidate contributed to discussions related to developing the paper, providing knowledge and insight about the issue within the paper. This paper is used to strengthen the background of this study and the case selection.

6. Hasyim, Z., **Laraswati, D.**, Purwanto, R.H., Pratama, A.A., Maryudi, A., 2020. Challenges facing independent monitoring networks in the Indonesian timber legality assurance system. *Forest Policy and Economics* 111, 102025. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2019.102025> (Scopus Q1)

The candidate contributed to discussions related to developing the paper, providing knowledge and insight about the issue within the paper. This paper is used to strengthen the background of this study and the case selection.

7. **Laraswati, D.**, Rahayu, S., Pratama, A.A., Soraya, E., Sahide, M.A.K., Maryudi, A., 2020. Problem-method fit in forest policy analysis: Empirical pre-orientation for selecting tested or innovative social-qualitative methods. *MethodsX*, 100794. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2020.100794> (Scopus Q2)

This paper supported the method development scholarship prior to research examination. The candidate collected the data, prepared the manuscript, and did revisions.

8. Rahayu, S., **Laraswati, D.**, Pratama, A.A., Sahide, M.A.K., Permadi, D.P., Maryudi, A., 2019. Research trend: Hidden diamonds – The values and risks of online repository documents for forest policy and governance analysis. *Forest Policy and Economics* 100, 254-257. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2019.01.009> (Scopus Q1)

This paper supported the method development scholarship prior to research examination. The candidate engaged in designing the research and collecting data, and prepared for the manuscript.

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## **Abbreviations**

FLEGT VPA: Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade –Voluntary Partnership Agreement

IKM: *Industri Kecil Menengah*

LPSM: *Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat*

LSM: *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*

MFP: Multi-stakeholders Forestry Program

MoEF: Ministry of Environment and Forestry

MoT: Ministry of Trade

NGOs: Non-governmental Organizations

OIGs: Organized Interest Groups

ORNOP: *Organisasi Non Pemerintah*

Pokja PPS: *Kelompok Kerja Percepatan Perhutanan Sosial*

RIF: Representation-Influence Framework

SVLK: *Sistem Verifikasi dan Legalitas Kayu*

TREE: Timber Regulation Enforcement Exchange

WALHI: *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Over the past few decades, NGOs have been experiencing significant growth in the Global South (Brass et al., 2018) and their roles become more prominent in forest/environmental policy making processes (Ariti et al., 2018; Ayana et al., 2018; Foo, 2018; Gupta and Koontz, 2019). In their initial emergence, NGOs played more as ‘watchdogs’, actors that criticize and counterbalance the government actions on excessive exploitation over natural resources to foster development (Slavíková et al., 2017). Nonetheless, their roles recently have been showing metamorphosis and becoming more diverse. Some NGOs maneuver their actions, strategies, and approaches to being partners of the government, as ‘gap-filling’ of the government works which they could not do alone (Rahayu et al., 2020; Maryudi et al., 2020).

The traditional conceptions of NGOs view them as benevolent actors of development with noble characters (Mitlin et al., 2007; Arvidson, 2008). NGOs are touted as ‘alternative development agents’ that pursue and serve ‘public goals’ (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Banks et al., 2015), while governments are not able to provide the fulfillment. NGOs enjoy ‘the privileged label’ as civil society representatives (Levine, 2002), confessing as the voices of voiceless communities (Mercer, 2002; Rahman, 2006; Jad, 2007), and on their behalf seeking to influence policy making processes (Holmén and Jirström 2009).

Nonetheless, empirical literature detects NGOs' evolution; NGOs conduct actions in contrast to the traditional conceptions and their benevolent claims. NGOs discourage indigenous people rights (see Myers and Muhadjir, 2016), become a political vehicle of other powerful actors (see Harrison, 2017), play safe as quasi-government (see Ma, 2002), misappropriate public aids to accumulate self-benefits (see Smith, 2012), work as renters in international trade (see Meyer, 1995) and act as ‘comprador’ to succeed international actors interests (see Hearn, 2007). Bryant (2002) mentions such NGOs with ‘false prophets’ or ‘mutants’. Lane and Morrison (2006) urge to analyze NGOs’ roles and actions in more critical ways, empirically proving whether they still maintain their original soul as civil society representatives or not.

It is quite dilemmatic dealing with a misfit between the conceptions of NGOs and the growing realities. The conceptions of NGOs still follow normative-classical traditions while the empirics of NGOs have been indicating significant evolution. Accordingly, this study attempts to bring us moving away from the pitfall of normative conceptions to more realistic conceptions including not naively agreeing

with NGOs' claims. This study hence focuses on developing an analytical framework fitted with the evolving phenomena in forest/ environmental governance. To develop the analytical framework, this study attempts to make innovation with the adoption of the concepts of organized interest groups in a democratic political system from developed democracy tradition. NGOs are also called organized interest groups, groups that basically should articulate the interests of the groups they represent/ members and based on common interests seek to influence the government decisions (Williamson, 1989; Krott, 2005). This study applies the concepts with adjustments in order to fit with the Global South context.

This study uses empirics of NGOs working on Indonesia's forest/ environmental issues to test the applicability of the framework since Indonesia is the third largest democratic country in the world, included in the top twenty countries with rapid growth of NGOs in recent decades (Brass et al., 2018), increasingly shows close cooperation among NGOs and the government (Antlöv et al., 2010), and has varying NGOs species. More specifically, this study uses NGOs prominently involved in timber legality and social forestry policies. Both are focal policies in Indonesia's forest/ environmental governance for the last few years, where may types of NGOs working there. The timber legality is a policy instrument with the aim to eradicate illegal logging and its associated trade, and has been formally implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry since 2009. With the policy, Indonesia has been recognized as the first country in the world which freely circulates timber products in the European Union markets without due diligence processes (Maryudi and Myers 2018). Meanwhile, the social forestry program is basically part of the development visions of Presiden Joko Widodo in the Nawacita program in 2014. It aims to improve ecological conditions in unproductive forest areas and at the same time social-economic conditions of communities who live in surrounding forest areas. It has been ambitiously planning with a target of 12.7 million ha to be distributed to the communities (Rahayu et al., 2020).

## 1.2. NGOs' development in Indonesia's forest/ environmental issues

The emergence of non-government organizations (NGOs) working on forest/ environmental issues began in the early 1960s. It was the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) as the first international NGO cooperating with the Ministry of Forestry (MoF) Indonesia- now the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF)- to conserve Rhino species in the Ujung Kulon National Park. Meanwhile, the signals of the birth of national environmental NGOs embarked on since the late 1970s. In that period activists and environmentalists fretted over Soeharto's leadership styles which excessively exploited natural wealth e.g. timber from forests to accelerate economic development (Nomura, 2008; Peluso et al., 2008; Dibley and Ford, 2019), arbitrarily did repressive actions to civilians who counter

his policies (Collins, 2007), and cultivated corruption and collusion with his allies (Humphreys, 2006). Those eventually triggered the activists and environmentalists to establish *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia* (WALHI) in 1980, the first national NGO concerning environmental issues and human rights.

Following the formation of WALHI, NGOs gradually flourished though facing restrictions and obstacles from Soeharto's regime. Until the early 1990s, Potter (1996) noted that there were 300 NGOs involved in the WALHI's network. However, the name 'NGOs' or '*Organisasi Non-Pemerintah*' (ORNOP) at the period was stereotyped as 'anti-government political institutions' and 'confrontational organizations'. NGOs were figured out as antagonistic characters and behaviors, the government with the legal-authoritative power accused and threatened them over their protests and provoking actions. The government-NGO relations at the period were profiled as 'loggerheads' (Siwach, 2013). NGOs therefore preferred calling themselves '*Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat*' (LPSM) or '*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*' (LSM) rather than 'ORNOP', sounded as public service delivery agents to avoiding the government accusations and threats.

Environmental NGOs in Indonesia started their glory age after the fall of Soeharto's regime in 1998 when Indonesia moved from an authoritarian to a democratic political system, known as the Reformation Era (Aspinall, 2013). They have been experiencing a bombastic explosion in numbers 'like bamboo shoots and mushrooms spread after the rains' (Okamoto, 2001). As many as 420.381 community-based organizations are formed and registered in the Ministry of Law and Human Rights<sup>1</sup>. This number continues to increase, about 50 to 100 new organizations are registered within a day.

The shift from an authoritarian to a democratic political system also means opening up spaces for NGOs to engage in forest/ environmental policy making processes (Okamoto, 2001; Peluso et al., 2008). The relationship between NGOs and the government is increasingly becoming more romantic and symbiotic. Such as in the case of timber legality policy, NGOs have been touted as one of the most active actors in whole stages of the policy making process, from policy development (Maryudi et al., 2020), policy implementation (Hasyim et al., 2020; Laraswati et al., 2020), to policy evaluation (Maryudi et al., 2021). In the social forestry case, NGOs are also envisaged as one of the key parties contributing to the acceleration of social forestry implementation hand-in-hand with the national and local government officials (Rahayu et al., 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2019/08/01/18223501/kemendagri-420381-ormas-terdaftar-di-indonesia>

### 1.3. Problematization and research objectives

There are phenomena leading to the evolution of NGOs' roles, however, the traditional conceptions of NGOs still hold on the normative descriptions and characterizations about NGOs which obscure true roles, actions, and activities done by NGOs. Reconceptualization of NGOs is therefore becoming a scientific urgency, to innovate NGOs' concepts to more correspond with the evolving phenomena, particularly in forest/ environmental governance. Referring to the backgrounds, the concepts of organized interest groups may deserve to be applied to innovate and advance the NGOs' concept. The concepts lead us to view NGOs using more political and realistical senses. Reconceptualization of NGOs as organized interest groups also encourages us to move away from the normative senses of NGOs, the term of 'NGOs' therefore would be replaced with organized interest groups afterwards.

An applicable analytical framework is entailed to empirically prove to what extent organized interest groups undertake their roles in forest/ environmental policy making processes. However, international literature on organized interest groups is still based on cases in developed democracy in the Global North context which has different governance and political architecture with us. Literature on organized interest groups in the Global South context is very limited. There is a study related to organized interest groups in the Global South by Thomas and Hrebenar (2008), but it only still reviews interest groups in general aspects such as the characteristics of interest groups, the form and extent of the interest groups in the political systems, the role of as a valuable analytical tool, and challenges faced by interest groups in the political systems. This study therefore needs to develop a new analytical framework which is able to capture the current realities in forest/ environmental governance in the Global South context. The framework can be developed from the basic roles of organized interest groups in a democratic political system; the extent of representing the interests of target groups/ members and influencing the government's decision of forest/ environmental policies.

Prior to the use of the framework for broader contexts and cases, the applicability of the framework needs to be tested. The testing is meant to verify whether this framework is working or able to assess the empirics and also to know the limitations of the framework. As mentioned, empirics in timber legality and social forestry policies are used to test the applicability of the framework with considerations both are focal policies in Indonesia's forest/ environmental governance in recent years (ibid).

According to above statements, this study therefore aims to:

1. reconceptualize NGOs as an organized interest groups in policy making processes
2. develop an analytical framework for assessing the roles of organized interest groups in policy making processes
3. test the applicability of the analytical framework by mapping organized interest groups involved in two forest policy and governance cases in Indonesia

#### 1.4. Position of the study in forest policy science

Forest science and policy science initially emerged as separate disciplines. Forest science was focussing on the productivity and profitability of forests, while policy studies were the application of political science. Toward the 1990s, deforestation occurred in almost all parts of the globe. Mono discipline forest science was not able to disentangle the underlying causes of the problem. Forest policy science was created as the response to the urgency, to provide inputs and offer solutions on forest-related problems. In its development, forest policy science became an independent sub-discipline. At the first phase, it still focused on providing (normative) contribution to real world policy problems/ practical problems, and lack of attention to theory development, known as the ‘science for policy’ phase (de Jong et al., 2012).

The recent evolution of forest policy science then led to theory-building, ‘science of policy’. It directly links to policy science studies, and is characterized with development in theories, frameworks, models, and typologies. Forest policy scholars increasingly use policy theories and frameworks to strengthen their analysis and build their arguments. In line with the trend of ‘critical theories’ in policy science, forest policy science currently also adopts approaches leading to interpretative policy analysis; criticizing policies, governance, and arrangements, rather than focussing on empirics (de Jong et al., 2012). Forest policy science at the current stage applies interdisciplinary political, sociological, and other social theories to describe forest policy making processes and the outcomes. Advanced forest policy analysis is even able to create new theories and frameworks based on the existing empirics (Maryudi and Sahide, 2017). Weber (2012) reflects that forest policy scholars can select between three alternatives in conducting studies on forest policy science: relying on and applying existing theories, combining several theories in new contexts, or creating new theories based on their experiences and findings.

Forest policy is however a social bargaining process for regulating conflict of interests with regard to forests (Krott, 2005) with the focus on who benefits and

who loses from the process (Byron, 2006). Actors compete with each other to succeed in their interests by manifesting power to influence the outcomes of the policy in order to in accordance with their preferences. Actors and their power relations accordingly become the key points of analysis in forest policy. Organized interest groups are one of the actors involved within the forest policy making process, meaning that their interests are contested within the process. If their interests are successfully accommodated in the policy outcomes, they can be said as the actor who wins the process. The concern is also that if they become the winning actor, but in fact they do not represent the interests of any groups within civil society, the policy programs- resulted from the policy making process- may be less fitting and effective when applied at the ground. This study is therefore essential to be done to unravel the true roles and actions of organized interest groups.

#### 1.5. Dissertation arrangement

This dissertation is written based on submitted and published publications (publications-based dissertation). The published publications remain being cited in this dissertation. The details of the publications are provided in the Annexes. Following this introduction (Chapter 1), this dissertation continues with the theoretical approach (Chapter 2), methods (Chapter 3), results and discussions (Chapter 4), and ends up with conclusions (Chapter 5). The theoretical approach chapter explains concepts of organized interest groups in a democratic political system as the basis for developing the new analytical framework. The method chapter explains procedural methods and how data were collected. The result and discussion chapter present brief results and discussions of the constitutive papers written by the candidate. Finally, the conclusion chapter links the results gained and suggests further studies related to this topic.

## CHAPTER II THEORETICAL APPROACH

The concept of organized interest groups was written by the candidate in the paper ‘**An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance**’, currently under review in Environmental Science and Policy Journal (Elsevier). The details can be seen in Annex 3.

This study applied the concept of organized interest groups (OIGs) in a democratic political system. OIGs can be defined as organizations/ groups that articulate the interests of the members/ particular groups within society and based on the interests influence governments to achieve common goals (Salisbury, 1969; Knoke, 1986; Krott, 2005; Berry and Wilcox, 2015; Beyers and Braun, 2014; Cook et al., 2017). OIGs are one of the pivotal elements in the democratic political system in terms of counterbalancing what the governments do and preventing them from being overly powerful (Dahl, 1982; Williamson, 1989).

This study assessed the roles of OIGs in policy making processes. Basically, the term “role” cannot only be associated with ‘involvement’ but also ‘influence’ from the involvement process (Betsill and Corell 2001; Mustalahti et al. 2017). Aurenhammer (2017) also argues that actors’ roles can be measured from what and how the actors are able to influence other actors. This study is however straightforward to what is meant with ‘roles of OIGs’, refers to two; i) representing the interests of the members/ particular societal groups they represent (the groups) and ii) exerting political influence on the governments based on the common interests. In relation to the first role, interests are actions orientation by actors (Krott, 2005) that can be economy, politics, social, and others (Wesołowski, 1962). In the context of Indonesia, not all OIGs have members. Instead, they usually have target groups- particular social groups that OIGs claim to represent. The target groups can be financial supporters, forest user groups, or other groups. Ideally, OIGs should represent the interests of the members/ target groups. However, it is possible that OIGs may pursue self-interests/ certain individual interests within the OIGs in light of OIGs being composed of rational individuals who tend to pursue self-benefits (Olson, 1971).

The second role is that OIGs should exert political influence on the governments in terms of advocating the common interests (Krott, 2005). This role basically aims to support the implementation of the first role. ‘Political influence’ is a case linked with power distribution (Krott, 2005). The success of power distribution can be analyzed from; resources, lobbies, and the final outcomes. Resources manifested by

OIGs can be intellectuality, size of members and/ or powerful members, networks/ allies, and money (Gulbrandsen and Andresen, 2004). Political influence exists when OIGs manifest resources to the governments through lobbies and result in alteration of the government's behavior/ action in accordance with their preferences (Michalowitz, 2007). Lobbies can be done formally and informally. Formal ways include active participation in policy-making processes. Informal ways include personal relations and communications with the top-level governments. The latter way is usually more effective rather than the former one (Krott, 2005). In Indonesian cases, not all OIGs are interested in lobbies. Some may be apathetic from the political arena, only enjoying their roles as public service delivery. This kind of OIGs may never be a powerful/ influential OIG.

In a democratic political system, the nature of government-OIGs relationship can be distinguished into pluralist and corporatist systems. First, the pluralist system allows a wide range of actors competing for political access and influence (Binderkrantz and Pedersen, 2019), and the government tends to maintain a great aloofness to OIGs and to limit space for negotiation (Krott, 2005). Among OIGs in this architecture may compete to represent the same particular societal groups. Each OIG should make great efforts to engage in policy-making processes, convince the government that their views are in line with and matter for achieving public goals. Ultimately, OIGs in this system act not limited to members' goals but also promote broader societal goals (Binderkrantz and Pedersen, 2019).

Second, in the corporatist system, the government tends to open access for OIGs to involve in public decision-making processes (Krott, 2005; Williamson, 1989). OIGs in this setting are viewed as representatives of certain particular societal groups (Binderkrantz and Pedersen, 2019). However, the corporatist system may reduce OIGs' autonomy. Government with its power may organize OIGs and impose tacit sanctioning behavior; the government creates and maintains the relationship, selected OIGs are granted with the privilege to organize interests on behalf of the government, and OIGs should adhere to the rules and regulations established by the government (Hsu and Hasmath, 2014).

The division of the pluralist and corporatist system by no means that the relationship between the government and OIGs is a static one. The relationship can change from one system to another depending on the political dynamics. In addition, applying the OIG theories for analyzing NGOs is also by no means to discount the classical conception of NGOs. This attempts to innovate the concepts to more correspond with the evolving phenomena where NGOs also pursue and act beyond common interests which the traditional concepts do not embrace. NGOs will no longer be seen as actors who work sincerely for noble goals but they are envisaged as like other interest groups e.g. business associations who pursue self-interests. By

standing on this position, for the empirical analyses this study decided to replace the term 'NGOs' with 'OIGs' to move away from the normative senses of NGOs.

As explained in the background, the government and OIGs recently hand-in-hand in Indonesia's forest/ environmental policy making processes. This kind of situation reflects corporatism rather than pluralism. This study accordingly developed hypotheses as follows:

**H1: OIGs exist which lead to being ideal OIGs**

OIGs that do both on the one side representing the interests of the groups and on the other side are able to exert political influence on the government.

**H2: OIGs exist which obey the government**

OIGs that serve the government and influence the groups to follow the government's preferences. These OIGs are basically used as a government tool to succeed in its goals.

**H3: OIGs exist which are pragmatic OIGs**

OIGs that neglect both representing the interest of the groups as well as exerting political influence on the government, but remaining to enjoy their label as OIGs.

**H4: OIGs exist which are professional OIGs**

OIGs that do not represent the interests of the groups but exert political influence on the government. The OIGs represent beyond the groups' interests and attempt to succeed those interests by exerting political influence on the government.

**H5: OIGs exist which keep their authenticity as the representation of common interests**

OIGs that do represent the interests of the groups but do not/ are not able to advocate those interests to the government. These OIGs have attempted to fulfill the claim as interest representation of particular groups within society but are powerless.

### CHAPTER III METHODS

The candidate has written two papers related to methods in forest policy and governance. The first is **‘Research trend: Hidden diamonds – The values and risks of online repository documents for forest policy and governance analysis’** published in *Forest Policy and Economics* (Elsevier). This paper addresses the values and risks of the use of repositories in forest policy and governance research. This paper allows the use of repositories for forest policy and governance studies with the main precondition the researchers have had clear objectives on the types of materials relevant to their studies (the detail is provided in Annex 8). **The second is ‘Problem-method fit in forest policy analysis: Empirical pre-orientation for selecting tested or innovative social-qualitative methods’** published in *MethodsX* (Elsevier). This paper maps varying research methods for forest policy and governance studies and more broadly for social-qualitative inquiries. This map is fruitful for the rapid appraisal particularly for beginner researchers before deciding on relevant research methods for their studies. These two papers helped the candidate to further select the methods used for implementing her research (the detail is provided in Annex 7).

This dissertation adopted a qualitative approach to disclosing phenomena based on the context (Bryman, 2001). This dissertation was designed mainly composed of two; literature and empirical studies. The literature study was carried out in examining objectives 1 and 2, while empirical study was conducted to answer objective 3.

#### **Objective 1: Reconceptualizing NGOs as an organized interest groups in policy making processes**

The stages in examining objective 1 include: i) strategically searching and reviewing the literature mentioning definitions/ conceptions of NGOs (see Table 1), ii) strategically reviewing the literature addressing the NGOs’ actions contrast to the conceptions of NGOs, iii) enhancing the literature review with document analysis, empirical observations, and practical experiences, and finally iv) building arguments to reconceptualize NGOs as OIGs.

#### **Objective 2: Developing an analytical framework for assessing the roles of organized interest groups in policy making processes**

The steps in assessing objective 2 are: i) strategically searching and reviewing the literature related to how to measure the interest representation and influence of NGOs/ OIGs, ii) enhancing the literature with the author knowledge, insights, and

experiences, iii) developing the criteria and operational indicators (see Table 2), and ultimately iv) proposing the categories and types of OIGs.

Table 1. Selected literature containing definitions/ conceptions of NGOs

No.	Title of Publication	Authors
1	The politics of government-NGO relations in Africa	Bratton, 1989
2	In search of the non-profit sector: The question of definitions	Salamon and Anheier, 1992
3	Neither merchant nor prince: A study of NGOs in Indonesia	Sinaga, 1993
4	Confronting the classification problem: Toward a taxonomy of NGOs	Vakil, 1997
5	The Role of NGOS in the Process of Empowerment and Social Transformation of People With Disabilities	Lang, 2000
6	Mission impossible? Defining nongovernmental organizations	Martens, 2002
7	“We don’t tell people what to do”: An examination of the factors influencing NGO decisions to campaign for reduced meat consumption in light of climate change	Laestadius et al., 2014
8	Local environmental NGO roles in biodiversity governance: A Czech-German comparison	Slavíková et al., 2017
9	NGOs and international development: A review of thirty-five years of scholarship	Brass et al., 2018

Table 2. Selected literature used for developing the criteria and operational indicators

No.	Title of Publication	Authors
1	Accountability in practice: Mechanisms for NGOs	Ebrahim, 2003
2	Forest policy analysis	Krott, 2005
3	Different groups, different strategies: How interest groups pursue their political ambitions	Binderkrantz, 2008
4	Environmental governance: The challenge of legitimacy and effectiveness	Hogl et al., 2012
5	The accountability cube: Measuring accountability	Brandsma and Schillemans, 2012
6	The interest group society	Berry and Wilcox, 2015
7	Challenges facing independent monitoring networks in the Indonesian timber legality assurance system	Hasyim et al., 2020
8	The politics of government-NGO relations in Africa	Bratton, 1989
9	Confronting the classification problem: Toward a taxonomy of NGOs	Vakil, 1997
10	NGOs' self-defeating quest for autonomy	Sanyal, 1997
11	NGO Influence in the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol: Compliance, flexibility mechanisms, and sinks	Gulbrandsen and Andresen, 2006
12	Beyond civil society: An organizational perspective on state-NGO relations in the people's Republic of China	Hsu, 2010
13	Gaining access or going public? Interest group strategies in five European countries	Dür and Mateo, 2013
14	Lobbying in the European Union: Interest groups, lobbying coalitions, and policy change	Klüver, 2013

### **Objective 3: Testing the applicability of the analytical framework by mapping organized interest groups involved in two forest policy and governance cases in Indonesia**

Objective 3 is the empirical study, and triangulation was applied to ensure validity and reliability of the data and information (Bryman, 2001). The data and information were gathered from primary and secondary sources (Kumar, 2009). The empirical study was conducted from 2019 to 2020. The procedural steps in this empirical study include: i) selecting policy cases, ii) selecting the OIGs working on the policy cases, iii) collecting data (interviews, the candidate experiences, observations, and secondary sources analysis), and iv) mapping OIGs into the framework.

#### *Selection of policy cases*

As mentioned in the background, this study used cases of timber legality and social forestry policies where both are touted as prominent policies in recent years (ibid). Selection of policy cases is entailed to minimize the number of OIGs' analyzed in light of the huge number of OIGs in Indonesia. More importantly, the selection is required to measure the extent of OIGs' roles in influencing the government, in regards to which policy they exert influence and whether they are able to influence the government in policy making processes either in the form of policy creation or policy change.

In the context of timber legality, the policy creation is the establishment of initial regulation of the Indonesian timber legality assurance system (locally known as Sistem Verifikasi dan Legalitas Kayu- SVLK) i.e. the Ministry of Forestry Regulation No. P.38/2009, which was launched by the Ministry of Forestry (now as the Ministry of Environment and Forestry- MoEF) in 2009. This regulation keeps changing frequently to improve the legality standards in order to comply with FLEGT standards. In 2020, the SVLK however faced obstacles regarding its termination from export requirements with the issuance of the Ministry of Trade (MoT) Regulation No. P.15/2020. This has called for pros and cons from many parties. The cons' parties have made cohesive allies to lobby the government to revoke the ministry regulation. This regulation finally was revoked through the MoT Regulation No. P.45/2020. The policy change that this study means is the replacement of the MoT Regulation No. P.15/2020 with No. P.45/2020, returning the SVLK as the export requirement.

Different from the timber legality, 'the government' in social forestry limits the MoEF. Accordingly, the context of regulations assessed was only the MoEF regulations. To measure the extent of the role of OIGs in influencing the MoEF, this study assessed their influence in the MoEF regulations No. P.83/2016 and No.

P.39/2017, the regulations created to formalize social forestry programs in Indonesia, boosting social forestry as national priorities. The former regulates general social forestry schemes in Indonesia, while the latter limits social forestry programs in Java Island. In the social forestry case, this study did not analyze the policy change because no changes were available for these two regulations during the research period.

### *Selection of OIGs*

This study used OIGs prominently working in timber legality and social forestry policies. Based on personal knowledge and secondary sources, as many as 60 OIGs were identified, OIGs that are predominantly engaged in either or both policies. Some OIGs were excluded due to not being registered as Indonesian legal entities. Series of consultations with senior activists who have been prominently active in those issues were conducted to confirm the list of OIGs, and the list of OIGs was 55 OIGs. The candidate then contacted the OIGs to confirm their involvement in either or both issues, and also asked their availability for further interviews. From this process, 10 OIGs were excluded since they are either not relevant to our topics or no longer active in the focal issues. At the final stage, validation was conducted during interviews by asking the interviewees to mention the OIGs engaged in the focal issues. This study finally assessed 40 OIGs from the civil society sector (public OIGs) and 5 OIGs from the private sector (economic OIGs).

### *Data collection*

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, experiences and observations, and secondary sources analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with interviewees from the OIGs, government officials, individual activists, and academia. The interviewees from OIGs include varying positions and levels from advisory board, chairman/ executive director, ex-chairman/ ex-executive director, vice-chairman/ vice executive director, secretary of organization, program director/ division coordinator, program manager/ coordinator, staff/ member, and also ad hoc staff, 56 interviewees. The two interviewees from the government sector, one is ex Director General for Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership and another is Director General for Forestry and Environmental Planning the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF). The interviewees from activists include individual activists who have been actively engaged in both issues. In addition, there is also one interviewee from academia who have involved in the timber legality policy development at the initial phase (see Table 3). Interviews were carried out through face-to-face meetings, phone/ WhatsApp calls, Skype, and Zoom, according to the interviewees' preferences. Interviews were looking informations mainly related group arrangements of OIGs, accountability mechanisms provided by OIGs to the group

they represent, autonomy of OIGs to the government, and also how do they influence the government. Some who could not be interviewed were asked to fill out a questionnaire instead.

Data and information from the interviews were further triangulated with the candidate's personal experiences, direct observations (See Table 4), and secondary sources analysis. The candidate have worked in one of the selected OIGs (OIG No. 8) for one and a half years. Direct observations conducted by the candidate include series of seminars, meetings, and also public consultations either held by OIGs or other which invited OIGs. The candidate positioned her self as passive observer during processes, observing what are being concerns of OIGs and also their nature/behaviour such as whether they are in opposition to the government works or follow the government will. Secondary sources analyzed include annual reports of OIGs (activities and financial reports) which are usually available in their official website, activities of OIGs posted in their official websites, regulations related to timber legality and social forestry, and also literature (journals, books, grey literature, and others) related to the study context.

#### *Mapping OIGs into the framework*

The next stage is mapping the OIGs' positions into the framework that has been developed. The detailed illustration of how to map the OIGs into the framework is presented in the next chapter sections 2 and 3. This study limits on mapping OIGs, only testing the applicability of the framework, the empirics provided in this study therefore are not too deep. The position of this study is to be a 'stimulant' for further studies on each OIG.

Table 3. Type and level of informants

<b>Type of Informant</b>	<b>Level of informant</b>	<b>Number of informants</b>
OIG	Advisory board	8
	Chairman/ Executive director	22
	Ex-chairman/ Ex-executive director	1
	Vice-chairman/ Vice executive director	1
	Secretary of organization	1
	Program Director/ Division coordinator	7
	Program manager/ coordinator	6
	Staff/ Member	9
	Ad hoc staff	1
Government official	Ex-director general	2
Activist	The activist who engage in government bodies	2
	The activist who becomes a scholar	2
	The activist who is still active in social-environmental movement	2
Academia	Academia who led the timber legality policy development	1

Table 4. List of observations conducted by the first author

<b>Type of observation</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Held by</b>	<b>Date</b>
Seminar	The issuance of the Ministry of Trade regulation No.15/2020; Removing legality requirement for wood products export	OIG No. 17	May 14, 2020
Meeting	Progress update and evaluation on social forestry permit issuance	Directorate of Social Forestry Area Preparation, Ministry of Environment and Forestry	June 11, 2020
Meeting	Data matching of social forestry farmers	OIG No. 34	July 14, 2020
National discussion	Timber regulation enforcement exchange (TREE)	Directorate General of sustainable forest management, Ministry of Environment and Forestry and Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP)	July 23-24, 2020
Public consultation	The communication strategy development of the Indonesian timber legality assurance system for international scale	Directorate General of sustainable forest management, Ministry of Environment and Forestry Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP)	September 10, 2020
Public consultation	Revising the Ministry of Environment and Forestry regulation on the Indonesian timber legality assurance system (SVLK)	Directorate General of sustainable forest management, Ministry of Environment and Forestry Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP)	September 16, 2020
Seminar	The contribution of social forestry to Indonesia's food sovereignty	Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada where OIG No. 34 as one of the speakers	September 17, 2020

## CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results and discussions are generated from the papers that have been written by the author. Point 4.1 is a brief result of the paper ‘**The anachronistic category of non-government organizations: Moving from normative to empirical-based definitions for identifying organized interest groups in forest policymaking**’ (see Annex 1). Part 4.2 is about RIF and extracted from the method article ‘**Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance**’ (see Annex 2). The last is the empirical results, the details are provided in the paper ‘**An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance**’ (see Annex 3).

### 4.1. Reconceptualization of NGOs as OIGs in policy making processes

Based on the review of literature, the conceptions of NGOs have been experiencing stagnation. NGOs are perpetually characterized with normative features: *formal, private, non-profit oriented, voluntary, autonomous or independent from other parties, funded by external donors, run by professional staff or members, and pursuing common goals to foster development* (Bratton, 1989; Salamon and Anheier, 1992; Sinaga, 1993; Vakil, 1997; Lang, 2000; Martens, 2002; Laestadius et al., 2014; Slavíková et al., 2017; Brass et al., 2018). Such characterizations thus obscure the diverse interests, roles, and real activities of NGOs.

#### 4.1.1. ‘Non-profit’ and ‘pursuing common goals’?

The feature ‘non-profit’ profiles NGOs as ‘philanthropists actors’, caring to the communities without seeking self-profits at all. With the descriptor ‘pursuing common goals’, NGOs also gain a privileged label as civil society representatives; advocating for social justice, human rights, and nature safeguards. They are figured out as ‘likely angel’ (Sinaga, 1993), the ‘honest broker’ (White, 1999), and the ‘prophet’ (Bryant, 2002). However, some argue that NGOs are similar to other interest groups, having self-interests intrinsically embedded and manifested in actions they do, and the interests could contradict with the public interests (Seliger, 2003; Scherer et al., 2014).

Pieces of evidence are found in regards to NGOs also acting in their own self-interests. NGOs accumulate profits from fundraising programs created and impose certain values and norms to communities (Fatem et al., 2018), become a political campaign vehicle of other political actors (Nurrochmat et al., 2014), pursue high political positions (Götz, 2008), and use the organization to accelerate personal

careers (Weber and Christophersen, 2002). Regarding this, Krott (2005) argues that NGOs intentionally camouflage their true interests to gain legitimacy from the government and also the public. Seeing these facts, the features ‘non-profit’ and ‘pursuing common goals’ therefore cannot be attached to all NGOs. NGOs, however, like ordinary political actors who pursue their self-interests.

#### 4.1.2. Independent from the government and other entities?

The prefix ‘non’ in the term ‘non-government’ means that ideally, NGOs should be independent entities from the government. However, Brass (2017) argues that the relationships between NGOs and governments have become increasingly blurred. Many NGOs transform themselves (McGann and Johnstone, 2005) to working in close cooperation with the governments and also other powerful actors e.g. business groups which potentially reduce their autonomy (Bebbington et al., 2013; McGann and Johnstone, 2005; Antlöv et al., 2012; Wu, 2003). NGOs have engaged at varying stages of policymaking processes from policy development, policy implementation, to policy evaluation (Ariti et al., 2018; Ayana et al., 2018). In some cases, the governments are powerful over NGOs, and manifest controls. The governments have mobilized NGOs to be their service delivery agents in implementing its policy programs at the ground levels (see Thin et al., 1998; Maryudi, 2017; Myers et al., 2017; Maryudi and Myers, 2018).

NGOs are often assumed and proclaim themselves as independent from other entities. However, some NGOs are unavoidable to be financially dependent on the other entities such as donors, in order to keep themselves survive. Such conditions compel NGOs to work under monitoring and controls by donor agencies and must comply with the donor demands (Wallacea, 2004). NGOs are demanded to produce certain outcomes/ outputs basically used for the extension of the power of the donors (Rahman and Giessen, 2017). Many projects of NGOs then become just ‘programmatics’ and also unsustainable when the financial support ends (Barber and Bowie, 2008). These phenomena are increasingly viewed as ‘normality’ in the NGOs’ praxis, but principally break the NGOs’ claim as independent organizations and as the representation of civil society interests.

These pieces of evidence in the literature have proven that the conceptions of NGOs have been anachronistic to evolving realities. We thus need to shift away from the normative-classical conceptualization of the NGO. We should reconceptualize distinctive realistic thinking about them. Innovations on concepts and frameworks about NGOs must be evolved in concert using critical and interdisciplinary approaches, to diversify types of NGOs ranging from benevolent and philanthropist NGOs to NGOs conducting actions beyond them. To conclude, I argue that NGOs, like other political actors, have ordinary self-interests, and tend to pursue self-

interests in every action they conduct. NGOs therefore deserve to be called organized interest groups. The replacement of the term ‘NGOs’ to ‘OIGs’ particularly for critical academic analysis is therefore urged in order to move away from the normative characters of NGOs.

In the following part, this study offers a new analytical framework to clarify the OIGs roles in policy making process using critical approaches, embracing NGOs’ actions beyond the pursuit of common interests.

#### 4.2. Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for assessing the roles of OIGs in policy making processes

This part presents RIF that has been developed to check or clarify the NGOs' conceptions and their proclamations as representatives of particular groups within society. To move away from the normative senses of NGOs, the term ‘NGOs’ in this framework is replaced with ‘OIGs’. This framework is able to capture OIGs diversity including those acting beyond the pursuit of common interests. RIF is developed using two basic OIG roles in a democratic political system, i) representing the interests of particular groups within society (called ‘the groups’) and ii) based on their common interests, exerting political influence on governments to achieve common goals. The two roles are converted to be X and Y dimensions, where the X dimension represents the first role and the Y dimension represents the latter. This framework divides OIGs into three categories based on their claims as representatives of particular social groups, i) en route to fulfilling the claims, ii) breaking the claims, and iii) opposing the claims. Based on the meeting of X and Y dimensions, RIF presents nine types of OIGs in forest/ environmental governance.

##### 4.2.1. Developing criteria and operational indicators

###### *X dimension: Representing the groups’ interests*

The extent to which OIGs fulfill this role can be analyzed from group arrangements and accountability mechanisms. Group arrangements explain which groups OIGs represent and how they are recruited. The groups might be members (Binderkrantz, 2008), and/ or target groups (Krott, 2005; Berry and Wilcox, 2015) e.g forest farmers and individual financial supporters. An OIG may have both members and target groups (Hasyim et al., 2020). Members and target groups might take the form of individuals or organizations (Binderkrantz, 2008). In Indonesian cases not all OIGs are membership-based organizations. For membership organizations, there are two recruitment systems: upward and downward. The upward system recruits members among those who, with mutual interests from the beginning, form a group to achieve common goals. The downward system recruits members using persuasive methods such as modern marketing methods (Krott, 2005).

Accountability analysis assesses whose interests an OIG represents (Berry and Wilcox, 2015; Hogg et al., 2021). Analysis of accountability mechanisms comprises tools and processes of accountability. Tools of accountability include reports on finances as well as performances and activities (Ebrahim, 2003). Processes of accountability include democratic participation forums to discuss and evaluate OIG's conduct and performance either through formal or informal ways (Brandsma and Schillemans, 2012).

*Y dimension: Political influence on the government*

The criteria used for analyzing the political influence are autonomy and power distribution. Autonomy analysis is to prove whether OIGs are independent of the government. This can be seen from who finances (Bratton, 1989) and establishes the OIG (Vakil, 1997), whether or not government representatives exist in the body of the OIG (Sanyal, 1997) and the OIG implements formal tasks from the government (Bratton, 1989; Hsu, 2010).

Power distribution shows the success or failure of an OIG in influencing the government. It analyzes resource manifestation, lobbying, and the outcomes. Resources of OIGs include knowledge and information, powerful members and/ or membership size, access and networks/alliances, and finances (Gulbrandsen and Andresen, 2004). Analysis of lobbying finds whether an OIG lobbies the government or does not. This is entailed since not all OIGs in Indonesia are interested in lobbying/ nor interested in influencing policy processes. OIGs that are interested in lobbying may use varying strategies to influence the government; formally participating in policy-making processes, building personal relations and communications with targeted official governments, and mobilizing public opinion such as demonstration (Klüver, 2013; Dür and Mateo, 2013). An OIG can be said to be powerful or carries 'political influence' when it is able to result in policy changes or policy creation. OIGs which do not conduct lobbies may never be powerful or influential OIGs. Criteria and operational indicators are provided in the following table.

Table 5. Criteria and operational indicators in RIF

Dimension	Criteria	Operational Indicators
X	Group arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Group type</li> <li>● Recruitment system</li> </ul>
	Accountability mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Activity and performance reports</li> <li>● Financial reports</li> <li>● Democratic participation forums</li> </ul>
Y	Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial resources</li> <li>● Founder of the organization</li> <li>● Existence of government representatives within OIG bodies</li> <li>● Whether or not they implement formal tasks from the government</li> </ul>
	Power distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manifesting resources</li> <li>● Lobbying</li> <li>● Outcomes</li> </ul>

(Source: Laraswati et al., 2021<sup>2</sup>)

#### 4.2.2. Procedures to plotting OIGs into X and Y dimensions

X and Y dimensions are each divided into three zones (+), (±), and (-). In the X dimension, zone (+) means OIGs that represent the groups' interests, OIGs that are **en route to fulfilling their claim** as representatives of particular groups within society. Zone (±) is a place where OIGs do not represent the groups' interests; OIGs that are **breaking their claim** as representatives of particular groups within society. Zone (-) consists of OIGs that manipulate the groups to pursue their self-interests, OIGs that are **opposing their claim** as representatives of particular groups within society. Each zone has two sides—right and left—to draw stratified and varied positions of OIGs, the extent to which they fulfill their role in representing the groups' interests (see Table 6).

<sup>2</sup> Laraswati, D; Krott, M; Sahide, MAK; Soraya, E; Pratama, AP; Rahayu, S; Giessen, L; Maryudi, M. 2021. Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance. *MethodsX*. 101335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2021.101335> (Output of the study; See Annex 2)

Table 6. A guidance to plot OIGs in the X dimension

Criteria	Operational indicators	X (+)		X (±)		X (-)	
		Right	Left	Right	Left	Right	Left
Group arrangements	Group type	Members	Members	Target groups	Target groups	Target groups	Target groups
	Recruitment system	Upward	Upward	No recruitment	No recruitment	Downward	Downward
Accountability mechanisms	Activity and performance reports	Provided to the all groups	Provided to part of the groups	Open	May open	Open	No
	Financial reports	Provided to the all groups	Provided to part of the groups	Open	Close	May open	No
	Democratic participation forums	Provided to the all groups	Provided to part of the groups	No	No	No	No

(Source: Laraswati et al., 2021<sup>3</sup>)

In Y dimension, zone (+) means OIGs that are successful in exerting political influence on the government. Zone (±) is a place where OIGs are not interested in influencing policy-making processes or unable to result in political influence on the government. Zone (-) is a place for OIGs that are controlled or driven by the government. Each zone of Y is divided into two sides—upper and lower (See Table 7).

<sup>3</sup> Laraswati, D; Krott, M; Sahide, MAK; Soraya, E; Pratama, AP; Rahayu, S; Giessen, L; Maryudi, M. 2021. Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance. *MethodsX*. 101335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2021.101335> (Output of the study; See Annex 2)

Table 7. A guidance to plot OIGs in the X dimension

Criteria	Operational indicators	Y (+)		Y (±)		Y (-)	
		Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Autonomy	Financial resources	Non-government	Non-government	Non-government	Non-government	Government	Government
	Founder	Non-government	Non-government	Can be government or non-government	Can be government or non-government	Government	Government
	Government representative	No	No	May exist	May exist	Exist	Exist
	Implementing formal task	No	No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No
Power distribution	Manifesting resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No
	Lobbying	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
	Outcomes	Policy creation	Policy change	No	No	The behavior of OIGs is dependent on individual government	The behavior of OIGs is dependent on institutional government

(Source: Laraswati et al., 2021<sup>4</sup>)

#### 4.2.3. Categories and types of OIGs in forest/ environmental governance

The relative position of OIGs in X and Y dimensions reflects the categories and types of the OIGs. There are three main categories of OIGs in forest/ environmental governance, OIGs that are 1) en route to fulfilling their claim as the representation of particular groups within society, 2) breaking their claim as the representation of particular groups within society, and 3) opposing their claim as the representation of particular groups within society. These three categories result in nine types of OIGs in environmental governance (see Figure 1). These types of OIGs explain the diversity of OIGs, capturing from OIGs that are still in a route of the groups' interests (common interests) to OIGs that are utilized by the government to succeed

<sup>4</sup> Laraswati, D; Krott, M; Sahide, MAK; Soraya, E; Pratama, AP; Rahayu, S; Giessen, L; Maryudi, M. 2021. Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance. *MethodsX*. 101335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2021.101335> (Output of the study; See Annex 2)

its interests/ the government tools. The following sub-chapter shows how the RIF works to analyze the roles of OIGs in Indonesia’s forest/ environmental governance.

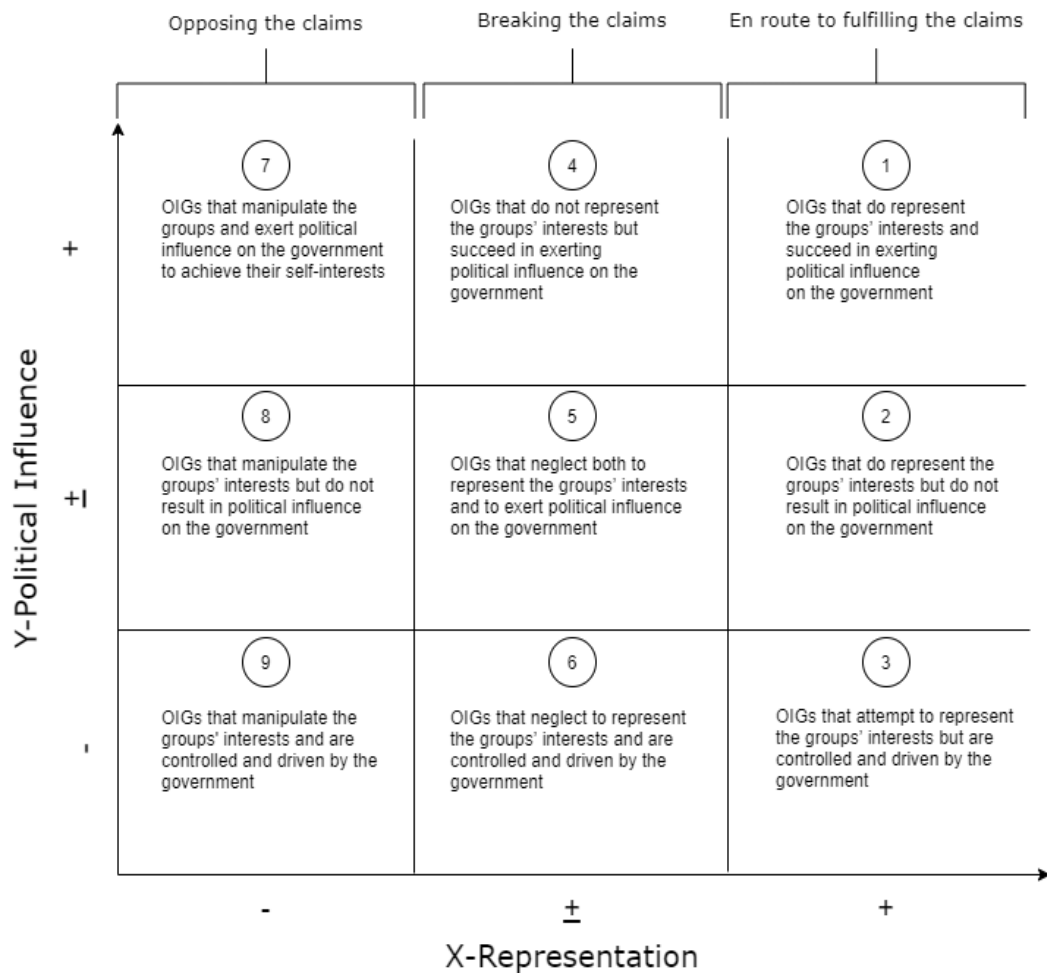


Figure 1. Categories and types of OIGs in forest/ environmental governance  
(Source: Laraswati et al., 2021<sup>5</sup>)

#### 4.3. The map of OIGs’ roles involved in timber legality and social forestry policies in Indonesia

From 45 Indonesia’s environmental OIGs analyzed, not all of them are distributed in category en route to fulfilling the claim as the representation of the groups'

<sup>5</sup> Laraswati, D; Krott, M; Sahide, MAK; Soraya, E; Pratama, AP; Rahayu, S; Giessen, L; Maryudi, M. 2021. Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance. *MethodsX*. 101335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2021.101335> (Output of the study; See Annex 2)

interests. Some are placed in the category of breaking the claim, and few are opposing the claim (see Figure 2 and 3). All hypotheses proposed in this study are empirically proven. This means that RIF is able to capture the diversity and evolving of NGOs' roles including those who act beyond common interests.

This part does not evaluate one by one of the selected OIGs but extracts some examples instead to show how an OIG can be placed in the position and what it does mean (see Annex 3 for more detail of results).

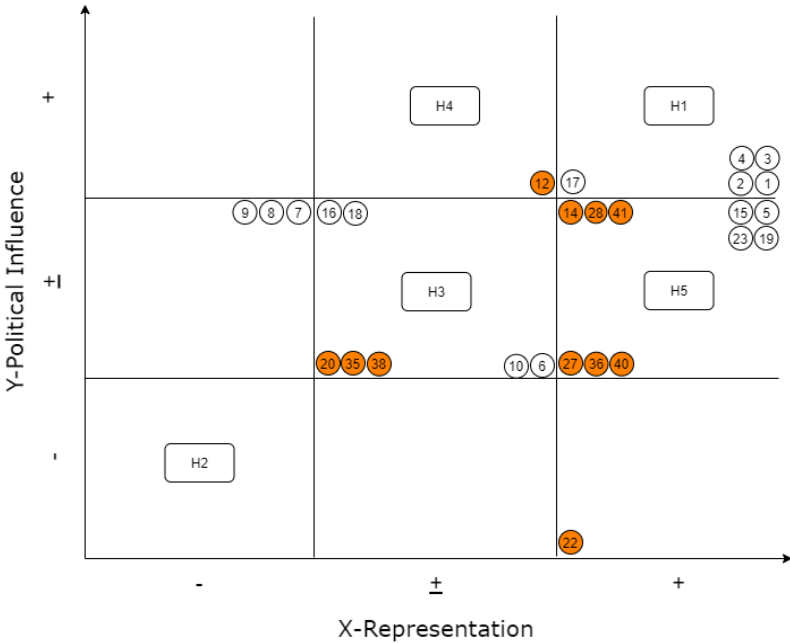


Figure 2. The roles of OIGs in the timber legality policy in Indonesia. Brown circles are OIGs that engage in both focal issues. White circles are OIGs that work in the timber legality issue.

(Source: Modified from the paper submitted by the candidate<sup>6</sup>)

<sup>6</sup> ‘An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance’ under review in Environmental Science and Policy Journal (Elsevier); See Annex 3

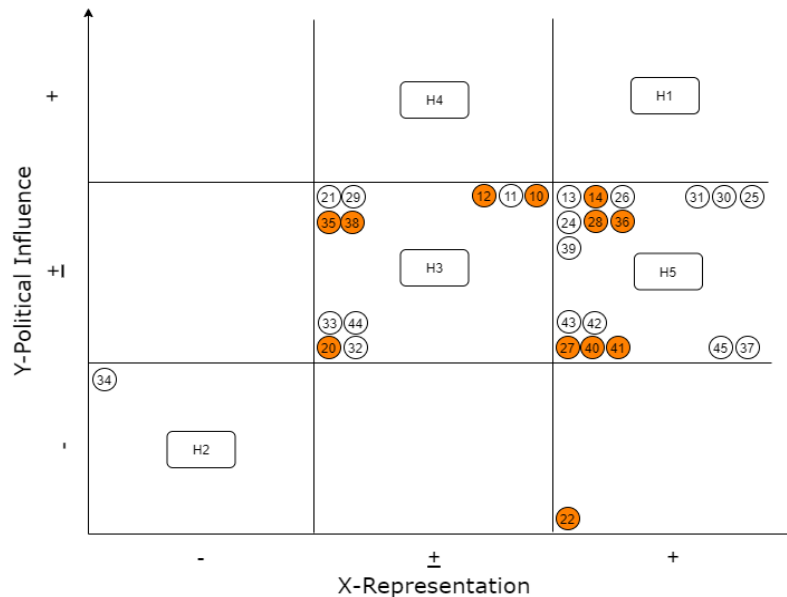


Figure 3. The roles of OIGs in the social forestry policy in Indonesia. Brown circles are OIGs that engage in both focal issues. White circles are OIGs that work in the social forestry issue.

(Source: Modified from the paper submitted by the candidate<sup>7</sup>)

#### 4.3.1. En route to fulfilling the claim

This category is a place for OIGs which have direct links to their constituents, en route to fulfilling the claim as the representatives of particular groups within society. They do represent the groups' interests though not necessarily succeed in exerting influence on the government. This category comprises Types 1, 2, and 3.

Type 1 means the ideal type of OIGs, where OIGs represent the interests of the groups and succeed to exert influence on the government based on the groups' interests

This type proves Hypothesis 1. There are 5 OIGs classified in Type 1, and all are OIGs working on the timber legality policy. OIGs 1-4 are the same, economic OIGs who have members as their constituents. The members voluntarily join the OIGs because they have mutual interests from the beginning in regards to their business sustainability. These OIGs deliver reports of their activities, performances, and finances to the members regularly. The members are also provided chances to

<sup>7</sup> 'An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance' under review in Environmental Science and Policy Journal (Elsevier); See Annex 3

criticize and evaluate the reports through regular meetings. They also select their leaders directly and democratically. As said by the senior advisor of OIG 1, *“we has an national meeting consists of activities such as the election of the management and advisory boards, the amendments to the organizational mandates according to evolving realities, the preparation of 5-year goals and strategic plans which are then elaborated at the annual work meeting/ annual work operations, and accountability reports on the overall technical and financial performance of the management”*. OIGs 1-4 therefore are placed on the right side X(+) accordingly, fully representing the interests of their members.

Based on the analysis in the Y dimension, these four OIGs occupy the lower Y(+). Their influence is true in the context of the SVLK policy change. They altogether made a cohesive alliance particularly with OIG 17 to lobby the President through delivering open letters and other ‘political ways’ (such as personal communications) to revoke the Ministry of Trade regulation No.15/2020, a regulation which removes SVLK from timber export requirements. As said by the chairman of OIG 3, such action were carried out due to they (the alliance) felt discouraged by the SVLK revocation from the timber export product requirement. She said that *“we engaged in the long processes of the SVLK policy development, needing a decade to establish the SVLK and going through hard challenges to reach an in regards to the SVLK system. We mind if the SVLK is revoked just like that”*. After the alliance’s lobbying and protests, the regulation was later revoked and replaced with the MoT regulation No.45/2020.

Type 2 is a place for OIGs that keep both their authenticity as the representation of the groups’ interests and their autonomy from the government, but are unable or not interested to influence the government
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Type 2 is the evidence for Hypothesis 5. Most OIGs analyzed are included in this type- 21 OIGs. In addition, some OIGs working on both focal issues experience position movement e.g. OIG 36. This OIG is a membership-based organization. It has few numbers and also target groups consisting of small-scale industries and communities who live surrounding forests. Based on the explanations of its executive director, this organization has three mechanisms of accountability including; accountability to its donors, internal accountability (where executive board is accountable to the committee), and accountability to its members through such a democratic forum namely *‘Musyawarah Anggota’* or regular meeting for members. This organization is nonetheless able to provide accountability mechanisms (financial and activity reports and democratic forums) to its members and donors but not to target groups, therefore, it is placed on the left side of X(+). This means that this OIG is not yet fully represented the groups’ interests.

The movement of OIG 36 occurs on the Y dimension. In the timber legality issue, it is positioned in the lower Y(±) while in the social forestry policy it moves to the upper Y (+). This OIG in the timber legality policy only focuses on facilitating forest farmer groups and small-scale industries (*Industri Kecil Menengah-IKM*) in timber legality assessment processes. It is not interested to exert influences on the SVLK policy making process at the national level. Meanwhile, in the case of social forestry it plays more diverse roles, facilitating the communities to obtain social forestry permits as well as making allies with other OIGs to advocate social forestry policy, particularly social policy for Java Island. However, this OIG is relatively a small OIG and not powerful enough to influence the government (i.e. the Ministry of Environment and Forestry-MoEF). The social forestry policies basically have been issued as part of political campaigns of the current President, which only coincide with the OIG's expectation. The Ex Director General for Planning and Environmental Partnership said that *"it would be a lie if they (OIGs/NGOs) claimed they had influence on P.39 (a MoEF regulation for regulating social forestry in Java Island). I typed the policy draft by my hand"*.

Type 3 comprises OIGs that basically are created to represent the interests of the groups but controlled by the government

Only 1 OIG was found in Type 3 i.e. OIG 22. Although engaged in both focal issues, this OIG does not experience any movement. This organization is a chamber organization initiated when the IV Indonesian Forestry Congress was held in 2006 with the main mandate is to improve forest governance. This organization has formal (selected) members including representatives from government, private, civil-based organizations, and grassroots communities. This OIG claims that decisions it takes represent 'public' interests. However, the fact is that this OIG is only able to be accountable to its formal members both in finances and activities. One of its member representative from communities said that *"this organization tends to follow what the government wants"*. This shows that 'representation' within the body of this organization is still under question. In addition, there is no sufficient information accessible for public such as official website of this OIG. Accordingly, it occupies the left side of X(+), partially representing the groups' interests.

Instead of influencing the government, this OIG shows behaviours co-opted by the government. It is currently led by the leader from the MoEF representative. In certain condition, it also receives financial aid from the MoEF as said by the Chairman. Decisions and actions taken by this OIG lately tend to follow the MoEF will, no hard critics to the government at all. These behaviour shows that this organization is still under the MoEF control, hence located on the lower of Y(-).

#### 4.3.2. Breaking the claim

This category shows OIGs which break the claim as the representatives of particular groups within society. They do not represent the groups' interests but some succeed in exerting influence on the government. OIGs in this category are basically unable to provide democratic forums as accountability processes. This category includes Types 4, 5, and 6. However, none of the OIGs are placed in Type 6.

Type 4 consists of OIGs which do not represent the groups' interests at all but some success in influencing the government

Type 4 proves Hypothesis 4. Only 1 OIG is identified in this type i.e. OIG 12. This OIG concerns both timber legality and social forestry issues. It is a non-membership organization but has target groups such forest user groups. This OIG is one of prominent OIGs that mainly plays a role in organizing and distributing grants/ funding to smaller/ local OIGs. It regularly provides annual reports (activities and finances) on its official website as open access. This means that this OIG is able to provide accountability tools. Accordingly, it is placed on the right of X(+).

This OIG also experiences a movement in the Y dimension. In the case of timber legality, it is placed in Y(+) zone. This OIG involved since the beginning of the SVLK initiation. It orchestrated policy development processes of the SVLK; facilitated the establishment of its system and standards, the bilateral negotiations between the government of Indonesia and the government of the European Union under the FLEGT VPA agreement, and also organized finances during the processes. Some informants (illegal logging issue activist and the executive director of OIG 23) confirmed that the emergence of the Indonesian timber legality policy cannot be separated from the roles of some key individuals within this organization. However, in the case of social forestry, this OIG is not interested in influencing in the policy development of P.83/2016 and P.39/ 2017. The coordinator of social forestry project even said that "*this social forestry should not exist*". She explained that the role of this organization more focuses on supporting the social forestry implementation in some regions, providing fundings for its networks/ partners either NGOs or community groups working at the ground levels.

Type 5 is likely seen as the pragmatic OIGs. OIGs which neglect both representing the groups' interests and exerting influence on the government

Hypothesis 3 can be proven by Type 3. As many as 14 OIGs are included in this type. Some are concerned about both issues and also experience a dynamic in their position. OIG 35 as an instance, it was initially a membership organization

(*Perkumpulan*) in 2005 but shifted to be a non-membership organization (*Yayasan*) in 2010 with the main reason is “*not easy to gather people*” said by the Ex Executive Director which currently serves as the Senior Advisor. This OIG has also target groups that are communities living in surrounding forests. However, it is placed on the left X( $\pm$ ) because it is only able to provide activity reports on its official website, no financial reports available for the public to check. The information regarding its finances is only provided for audit processes by public accountant. Unlike OIG 12, this OIG is basically a smaller/ local OIG, it is common that the smaller OIGs the more weak management of information due to limited resources they have.

Based on the Y dimension, this OIG moves from the lower to the upper Y( $\pm$ ). It is placed lower in the timber legality case due to it only provided assistance and facilitation to forest farmer groups in private forests and small-scale industries to conduct the SVLK assessment processes. The Senior Advisor revealed that the involvement of this organization in the SVLK due to multi-stakeholder approach is a necessary for them. At that time, legality became the main issue regarding forest governance. This organization participated to foster community-based forest management (private forest) to get appreciation from market. In other words, this OIG is basically not interested in influencing policy-making processes at national levels. Meanwhile, in the context of social forestry policy, it is more actively involved in the policy consultations. The Senior Advisor is engaged in the national social forestry acceleration team (*Kelompok Kerja Percepatan Perhutanan Sosial-Pokja PPS*) created by the MoEF. This position enables to have direct access to influence policy decision at the national level, to lobby/ advise the top official government on social forestry. Nonetheless, he asserted that “*decisions made by the MoEF on social forestry currently are a form of intensification of state control in the management of natural resources*”. The architecture of the existing social forestry currently is still far from what he expects.

In this type, OIGs also exist which only focus on conducting research, e.g. OIG 33 from the case of social forestry. Through its research, it claims to advocate for marginalized people to obtain land tenure rights. This organization has long been engaged in fostering agrarian reform in Indonesia. According to the accountability analysis, this OIG however is unable to provide any accountability mechanisms accessible for the public, it therefore is placed on the left X( $\pm$ ). In addition, this OIG basically does not agree with the current social forestry architecture. The Secretary General of this OIG said that “*for us, it is still agrarian reform, because social forestry is the provision of access, not tenure rights*”, this OIG is hence not interested in engaging in social forestry policy-making processes, and placed in the lower Y ( $\pm$ ). However, this OIG remains to be cooperative when asked for providing advisories and consultancies regarding social forestry implementation.

### 4.3.3. Opposing the claim

This category reflects OIGs which oppose the claim as the representatives of particular groups within society. They manipulate the groups to be their followers. This category includes Types 7, 8, and 9. However, none of the OIGs are placed in Type 7.

Type 8 is a place for OIGs which manipulate the groups' interests and are unable/interested to influence the government

There are 3 OIGs categorized in Type 8, OIGs 7-9 working on the timber legality issue. These three OIGs are initially international-affiliated organizations which currently registered as Indonesian OIGs. These organizations conduct crowd funding activities, attracting people in public area using modern marketing methods to become their members through regular donation mechanisms (or also called as financial supporters). In the terms of accountability, they send activity reports to the financial supporters regularly via emails. Financial reports (accumulative and general financial reports) are usually uploaded on their official websites provided on the annual report documents where public can access freely. Nonetheless, the financial supporters are not facilitated with evaluation forums/ mechanisms to check the allocation of their money in detail and to criticize the OIGs' activities. Therefore, these OIGs only provide accountability tools for the financial supporters, they are accordingly placed on the right X(-).

In the context of timber legality, OIG 7 is one of the leading organizations in conducting monitoring on forest crimes in Indonesia. It makes a coalition with other OIGs since 2004 (especially local OIGs in Sumatera, Kalimantan, and Papua Islands) to do such monitoring. This OIG sometimes also provides funding for the works of the coalition. The results of monitoring and investigation activities are used as advocacy materials to influence the government decisions/ actions. For instance, in 2005, the coalition conducted monitoring on permits issued for forest plantation concessions (*Hutan Tanaman Industri-HTI*) which contribute to increase deforestation rate. Based on the permit analysis conducted, the coalition found that there were discrepancies in permit data between those issued by the Regent and the Governor. Some permits were issued beyond the authority of the Regent and Governor. The coalition then advocated this discrepancy to the Minister of Forestry (now as MoEF), to revoke those permits (the Coordinator of Eyes on the Forest).

Meanwhile, the role of OIG 8 in this case focuses on raising illegal logging issues to the public. Since the early 2000s, together with its international network, it pressured the Indonesian government to tackle illegal logging using provoking

campaigns and actions. This OIG can be said playing more as ‘watchdogs’, always keeping distance from the government bodies and using hard strategies in criticizing the government policies leading to environmental degradation. With this nature, it is eventually difficult for this OIG to result in influence to the government decisions. Furthermore, OIG 9 in the timber legality context was engaged in the initial step of timber legality policy development. At that time, this OIG also was not yet registered as an Indonesian OIG. This OIG assisted the government to develop the definition and standards of the Indonesian timber legality system. Unfortunately, the definition and standards developed by this OIG were not adopted because they are considered too 'northern oriented' so less fitting into the Indonesian context (Information from the Chairman of OIG 38). Overall, these three OIGs show actions to influence the government though not resulting in influence, they therefore are located on the upper of Y(±).

Type 9 is a place for OIGs which manipulate the groups' interests, and on the other side are driven by the government
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Only OIG 36 fits Type 8. This OIG is recognized by other OIGs as the prominent OIG in the social forestry particularly in Java Island. This organization claimed advocating forest farmer groups in order to get legal access for utilizing forests. Based on the statements of the Chairman, this OIG is as a membership organization with ‘three layer’ arrangement; 1) a formal organization in the form of *yayasan* specifically playing the role in influencing the national policy, 2) a movement consisting of several (representative) members which has not yet legally registered but undertake the main role to mobilize and organize the forest farmer groups, and 3) the forest farmers groups at the grassroots level as the subject of social forestry. In terms of accountability, evidence regarding accountability mechanisms provided by this organization for the groups (representative members and farmers) is very limited. The internal structure and financial and activity reports are not clear in this organization. The chairman said that “*this organization is the one NGO without donors*”. Instead of showing its role as the representative of the farmers, actions taken by this OIG tend to pursue a government-affiliated person who initiated the social forestry for Java Island. This person acts as the founder and also the senior advisor of this OIG. Both (this OIG with the person) made coalition to gather the forest farmers. They altogether encouraged the farmers to create cooperative used for capital in running social forestry. Lately, this OIG helped that person actions to incorporate social forestry in the Omnibus Law/ Job Creation Law 2021. This OIG supported him with providing empirical data used for lobbying to the MoEF. Overall, this OIG shows the behaviour and actions following that person orientation.

## **CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS**

We have been witnessing phenomena where the roles of NGOs are increasingly expanded and diverse in forest/ environmental governance. However, NGOs by many scholars are still characterized under the normative-classical features as non-profit seeking institutions, autonomous from other entities, and also agents striving for common goals. Such descriptors camouflage the true roles, interests, and activities of NGOs. We further need to shift away from the normative and idealistic conceptualization of NGOs to realistic ways. NGOs are like other political actors that have, organize, and also pursue self-interests in their actions and conduct. The conceptions of NGOs therefore need to evolve in concert to unravel 'the camouflage and the blanket of NGOs' particularly for forest/ environmental policy studies which strongly emphasize beyond the normative, and encourage the use of solid empirical evidence, including in the development of definition and conceptual frames. For further academic analysis, this study therefore encourages the adoption of the term 'OIGs' to reconceptualize NGOs.

This study has established RIF to meet the urgency of the development of empirical-based conceptions on NGOs. RIF is developed based on the adoption of concepts of OIGs in a democratic political system. RIF is rooted in two basic roles of OIGs: the extent to which they represent the interests of particular groups within society and exert political influence on governments. This framework enables results in several categories and types of OIGs, including those who act beyond common interests. The three categories include: en route to fulfilling the claim, breaking the claim, and opposing the claim. The first category includes OIGs in Types 1, 2, and 3, and the proposed names of the types respectively are Ideal OIGs, Authentic OIGs, and Compliant OIGs. The second category consists of Types 4, 5, and 6, with the names Professional OIGs, Pragmatic OIGs, and Technocratic OIGs. The last category is composed of Types 7, 8, and 9 which are Extensional OIGs, Proxical OIGs, and Obedient OIGs.

Using empirics in Indonesia's forest/ environmental governance, RIF can disclose the diversity of OIGs' types. Not all OIGs can fulfill the claim as the representation of the members/ target groups. Many also break the claim and some oppose the claim. Hypotheses proposed in this study are empirically proven, this shows that RIF is working to analyze the roles of OIGs beyond the normative conceptions. The diversity of OIGs, also implies that we need to pay more attention to select which OIGs that we can rely on them to advocate our interests in environmental and forest protection.

Other than aiming to contribute to ‘science of policy’, this study may also contribute to ‘science for policy’. In the Indonesian context, OIGs are intermediary actors that can advocate certain interests to the government. Forest science recently face challenges particularly in advocating forest science products (which may be able to better forest conditions) to be adopted by the government. Forest scientists can build coalitions with OIGs and then advocate the forest science products altogether to the government. RIF can contribute in terms of OIGs selection, the forest scientists should collaborate with OIGs which are powerful, able to influence the government.

Before applying RIF, the researcher should learn about i) the political system/ architecture of the country and ii) policy cases analyzed. The first is important to understand the government-OIGs relationship whether pluralism or corporatism. The use of RIF in other types of the political architecture needs further development and adjustment of the operational indicators since RIF is developed based on the Indonesian context. The second aims to provide a more specific context within the country and also to limits the number of OIGs to be analyzed, such as this study assesses OIGs involved in timber legality and social forestry policies.

While having promised, this study still needs improvement and advancement as below. First, this study focuses on the development of the RIF, the empirics provided therefore are not too deep, only used to test the applicability of the RIF. Therefore, this study encourages further studies to assess the empirics to disclose the dynamics and diversity of OIGs more deeply. RIF has limitations in terms of analyzing OIGs undertaking roles within a network, difficult to determine which OIG is powerful/ influential within that network. Further research can innovate the operational indicators of RIF to be able to disentangle the real powerful OIG within a network without bias. This can start from research about the roles of OIGs within formal multistakeholder/ chamber organizations (formal network) either created by the government or other actors and also informal (noninstitutionalized) networks. In analyzing OIGs, RIF also has not to employ how the government views OIGs. This is meaningful to scrutinize which OIGs are categorized as the government’s quasi and always keep the distance from the government. Further studies should pay more attention to this to ease autonomy analysis. In addition, grassroots (members and/ or target groups) views also have not been examined in this study, whether they are satisfied with OIG’s roles and conducts for them. This is critical for further empirical studies in applying RIF, strongly validating whether OIGs do represent their interests. The development of RIF in this study has not arrived at checking the diversity of interests that OIGs pursuing in undertaking their roles. Further studies can also elevate RIF by identifying the color of interests of each OIG. Finally, RIF is developed using qualitative method, it is encouraged for further research to innovate it with applying quantitative analysis in plotting OIGs in the X and Y dimensions, to obtain more randomized positions/ configurations.

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# **ANNEXES**



# The anachronistic category of non-government organisations: Moving from normative to empirical-based definitions for identifying organized interest groups in forest policymaking

Dwi Laraswati<sup>a</sup>, Sari Rahayu<sup>a</sup>, Muhammad A.K. Sahide<sup>b</sup>, Emma Soraya<sup>a</sup>, Andita Aulia Pratama<sup>a</sup>, Micah Fisher<sup>b</sup>, Ahmad Maryudi<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Center of Forest Policy & History Studies (Sebijak Institute), Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup> Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

NGOs take many shapes and forms, operating at various governing scales and levels. As a categorical form, NGOs often emerged as benevolent philanthropists or as antagonistic actors. Relative to governments, NGOs are envisioned to fill a void of unmet public services, exposing shortcomings, or in extreme cases, gain notoriety by applying aggressive campaigns in confrontational ways. However, more recent manifestations of NGOs are maneuvering political strategies in more elegant and reflexive ways that do not always match their more classical categorizations. Notwithstanding the proliferation of literature indicating the evolving role of NGOs, the theorizing of existing definitions and the usage of NGO as a category in the scientific literature remain anachronistic, recalling a particular imaginary of a rather simplistic idea. Indeed, as a category of analysis, the academic literature and associated political commentary refer to NGOs in normative terms that invoke benevolent, independent, and non-profit agents striving for common goals to foster societal betterment. We argue that such normative definitions of NGOs no longer reflect the empirics, and indeed obscure the overall role that such actors perform. By more closely examining NGO activities and the strategies they employ to achieve political goals, we argue that NGOs, like other interest groups, are highly political actors that pursue self-interests in ways that we might not otherwise recognize.

## 1. Introduction

The portfolios and roles of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in environmental/forest policymaking has gained increasing prominence in recent years, resulting in more diverse positions taking on more focal influence in the past few decades (Mustalahti et al., 2017; Satyal, 2018; Hasyim et al., 2020). Although many NGOs initially emerged to provide counterweights to governments or to point out their deficiencies, NGOs have increasingly taken on these more diverse roles in the form of including policy advisor, researcher, consultant, and even policy executor in some cases (Ayana et al., 2018).

The growing body of scientific literature has begun to capture the phenomenon of NGOs' evolving roles. Nevertheless, the existing definitions and frameworks available to theorize and conceptualize NGOs through the lens of these evolving processes, have not evolved accordingly. Classical definitions in the scholarly literature continue to be employed, which describe the features and roles of NGOs as stagnates

(Opoku-Mensah, 2008), distinguishing them only from government institutions, political parties, or business groups (Baur and Schmitz, 2012). We observed the application and continued reuse of this explicit definition through a particular scientific research tradition (e.g. Bratton, 1989; Salamon and Anheier, 1992; Sinaga, 1993; Vakil, 1997; Lang, 2000; Martens, 2002; Laestadius et al., 2014; Slavíková et al., 2017; Brass et al., 2018). In each of these manifestations, NGOs continue to be described in normative terms with the following features: *formal, private, non-profit oriented, voluntary, autonomous or independent from other parties, funded by external donors, run by professional staff or members, and pursuing common goals to foster development*. Such descriptions are yet to systematically articulate or incorporate dynamics unfolding in praxis, obscuring the key elements of diverse interests, roles, and activities of NGOs.

This short contribution discusses a more strategic approach for articulating these elements, characterizing the many manifestations that current NGOs are currently involved in, and what they do. As a short

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [ahmad\\_maryudi@ugm.ac.id](mailto:ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id) (A. Maryudi).

science critique piece, we thus set out to trigger more detailed frameworks that can capture the often-overlooked factors listed below. Meanwhile, our review emerges from a strategic literature and document analysis (Rahayu et al., 2019), enhanced with empirical observations and practical experience. In this commentary, we thus raise several questions regarding the roles and activities of NGOs, comparing and contrasting what NGOs formally promise to perform, with the actual activities they undertake. We conclude by proposing a more contextualized definition of NGOs, one that more closely reflects contemporary trends, and discuss the implications for forest policy analysis going forward.

## 2. Serving public goals or pursuing self-interests?

Many NGOs have long been envisaged as philanthropists focusing on public service delivery or promoting a noble principle; showing little interest in the particulars of the policy atmosphere (Banks and Hulme, 2012). In the current literature, NGOs continue to be regarded in the same light, through descriptors as ‘non-profit’ and ‘striving for common goals’. More often than not, this discursive idea invokes the ‘likely angel’ (Sinaga, 1993), the ‘honest broker’ (White, 1999), or the “prophet” (Bryant, 2002); that live by their ideals (Jepson, 2005) to deliver ‘a thriving civil society’ (Hulme and Edwards, 1997: 6). As opposed to governments, NGOs are thus often viewed as an agent of development. As a result, NGOs also enjoy a privileged status as the representation of civil societies, speaking out about social injustices, advocating for human rights, and working to alleviate poverty. In addition, NGOs have increasingly gained social and political recognition of being the voice of, and safeguards for nature (Jepson, 2005).

Empirical evidence however, increasingly point to the ways these premises have been broken, that many NGOs have failed to live out their high public expectations, and in turn, calls for an increasing attention to complicating overall NGO legitimacy, transparency, and accountability (Ossewaarde et al., 2008). Seliger (2003) for example, argues that NGOs are no different from other interest groups. Their behavior, both international and domestic NGOs, increasingly mirror ordinary political actors, mobilizing resources to maintain self-sustenance and coordinating their interests under a heterogeneity of other actor interests (Scherer et al., 2014). NGOs, like other political actors, have self-interests which are not always congruent with so-called public interests.

There have been a bulk of scientific literature in recent years about NGOs acting in their own self-interests, such as driven by the accumulation of profits (Nurrochmat et al., 2014) repurposing for fundraising goals or imposing certain values and norms (Fatem et al., 2018), pursuing high political positions (Götz, 2008), and using the organization to promote individual personal careers (Weber and Christophersen, 2002). Despite not specifically referring to NGOs, Krott (2005: 69) instead identifies this process through the notion of associations, arguing that such associations represent the interests of their members to lobby politicians. Echoing this premise, we more explicitly make the connection by considering NGOs as such an interest group. For example, forestry is often a conflict-laden policy arena, in which actors tend to disguise their true interests with more normative statements of intent (Krott, 1990). In this sense, ‘serving the common goals’ might be used by NGOs intentionally to camouflage their true interests to gain legitimacy from the public. In fact, this strategy is regularly employed by other political actors, such as government institutions, which promote a normative concept of morality to stand for specific goals they want to advocate (Oppenheim, 1987). We thus argue here that NGOs, like other policy actors, potentially have self-organizational interests which are not always congruent with public interests.

## 3. What is the ‘non,’ when teaming up with government?

Although the previous section highlighted the philanthropic NGO,

in other forms, NGOs also emerged as an antagonistic actor, gaining notoriety for their aggressive campaigns, and employing confrontational approaches to stop or reverse policies of social inequality or opposing actions that result in negative environmental impacts (Murphy-Gregory, 2018; Paul, 1998; Slavíková et al., 2017). For instance, among the headlines of illegal logging and tropical deforestation, images of NGO-supported rallies calling for boycotts of tropical timber and plantation expansion pose a serious threat to producing countries. This is especially true in the current trade wars of the European Union sourcing palm oil from Indonesia, in which NGOs have long advocated to influence international trade networks. Humphreys (2006) reveals how international NGOs threaten government institutions to seek their ‘own mechanisms’ to promote forest conservation. Keck and Sikkink (1998) has called this the “boomerang” effect, whereby a local actor can communicate with an international network or coalition of NGOs that thereafter pressure national governments to reconsider and change their policies. Even the less antagonistic forms of NGOs that promote forest certification, for example, also attempt to nullify government roles in forest policymaking (Cashore et al., 2004). Such is the strategy that place NGOs in ‘loyal opposition’ to governments. In short, from the benevolent to the outspoken, NGOs align behind the scene in unlikely places with a variety of actors that certainly are firmly positioned within the broader constellation of explicitly policymaking actors.

The ‘non’-prefix, which is presupposed as the defining character of the NGO, highlights a very different reality when viewed from the perspective of interests. The role and relationships of NGOs and governments have become increasingly blurred, in some instances in the form of a direct challenge to some and in strategic alignment with others. In fact, the past few decades have seen the increasingly complex spectrum of the way NGOs operate in achieving their political goals. Although some may begin as a reflection of their idealistic definitional characteristics, many transform and shift away from these classical static models (McGann and Johnstone, 2005). Furthermore, the growing empirical literature has indeed pointed to the occurrence of NGOs becoming co-opted by, affiliated with, or at least working in close cooperation with other policy actors, such as governments and business groups (Bebbington et al., 2013; McGann and Johnstone, 2005; Antlöv et al., 2012; Wu, 2003). For instance, NGOs have increasingly taken on the role of working as intermediaries or as service delivery agents of governments. This is especially true in Indonesia with the recent expansion of social forestry programs and legality verification initiatives in Indonesia (Thin et al., 1998; Maryudi, 2017; Myers et al., 2017; Maryudi and Myers, 2018). In these cases, and elsewhere, NGOs have increasingly taken on a central role in translating policy and preparing documentation for implementation across stages of policymaking that include agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (Ariti et al., 2018).

## 4. Independent of whom?

In many cases, NGOs are often perceived or proclaim themselves as independent from other entities, distancing themselves from political standpoints. Central to this notion is that they must establish their credibility and legitimacy of representing a specific constituency or idea. With impartiality and neutrality, they are expected to work more effectively and be more flexible in delivering services to society. As described in the previous two sections, the increasing boundedness of NGOs to broader political processes and interests also distinctly affects their independence. Indeed, NGOs are less and less likely to be described as local spontaneous outfits that embody their grassroots ideals, due to the changing political economy of the role of NGOs. Our interactions with NGOs across our work indicate an increasing difficulty to remain solvent without broader alliances. Funding streams for project works often require upfront financing and sophisticated accounting systems to be able to survive. Amidst this scaling up of management

among NGOs also affects their overall independence to be more flexible in reacting to local needs. The smaller NGOs that remain are often beholden to networks of joint-ventures or heavily guided through administering interventions by parent organizations.

As a result, more and more NGOs exhibit decreasing autonomy. They are heavily influenced by other entities, notably donors or at least some trickle down of the new arrangements imposed by international counterparts. The local smaller NGOs express that they have increasingly become entrepreneurial entities, having to be more opportunistic to access funding and financial aid in order to survive. Many NGOs have now to work under the close monitoring and controls by donor agencies and must comply with certain conditionalities (Wallace, 2004). They are pressurized to produce certain outcomes/ outputs, and work for an extension of donors. As a result, almost all the local NGOs we come in contact with introduce creative accounting systems that allow them to do the mission of their work through the more project-oriented requirements imposed by the project model (see also Li, 2016 in the project system in Indonesia). These processes are not only true in terms of financial support, but over time also touches upon the very organizational fabric, programmatic approaches, and their ideologies, which in turn shape political views and positions (Barber and Bowie, 2008). Though these factors have long been true, they are increasingly becoming the new normal, breaking the fundamental perception of NGOs as an independent entity representing society-interests.

## 5. Conclusion

Notwithstanding the rich empirical studies on NGOs and their role in policy-making processes, the notion of the NGO by policy scholars is still characterized under the normative-classical model, a definition that considers the NGO as a not-for-profit institutional pillar of independence, one which consists of agents striving for common goals that foster development and progress. Despite the contrary evidence, many NGOs also conveniently hide behind these simplistic and essentialized claims. We are continuing to witness an immense transition and fragmentation of NGOs in terms of their roles and strategies for pursuing specific policy agendas. Some NGOs have themselves escaped the classical classifications and are increasingly of being regarded as, and regarding themselves, as “mutant” organizations occupying multiple spaces and functions (Bryant, 2002). Surely the small grassroots NGO working in confined rural areas as compared to multinational outfits that function more like powerful management consultants. We thus view the timely need to shift away from the normative and idealistic conceptualization of the NGO to define distinctive new ways for thinking about them. The empirical-based definitions can be formulated in various ways, to reflect the contexts, aims and focus of specific scientific studies. In this commentary, we thus argue that NGOs, like other institutions having ordinary interests, can be defined as political actors that organize and pursue self-interests in their actions and conduct.

To reiterate, by no means are we saying that these changes are not being captured by empirical studies. We have to this point cited plentiful studies that effectively and powerfully highlight such changes. Rather we seek to point out the limited upstream conceptualizations that help us to think about the NGOs. Instead of the normative and blanket definitions that no longer seem to keep various organizations under the same umbrella we have highlight the imperative for reviewing, adjusting, and adapting empirical studies to build timely theorization among future studies, particularly in the often contentious and contradictory phenomenon unfolding in forest policy studies. Fruitful and critical forest policy analysis goes beyond the normative, and strongly encourages the use of solid empirical evidence, including in the development of definition and conceptual frames.

We close by offering some broad ideas for approaching future typologies and frameworks. Much of our literature tradition falls under two broader theoretical camps, which guide us in cross-disciplinary typologies for moving forward. The first is in the area of examining

NGOs as consisting of actors, powers, and interests, those that negotiate, control, withhold and mobilize all power sources available to them (Krott et al., 2014; Sahide et al., 2018). The other research traditions come from a broader genealogy of research examining power relations, namely those that engage with the material and discursive, embodied through concepts of powers of access and exclusion (Ribot and Peluso, 2003; Hall et al., 2011; Myers et al., 2017; Susanti et al., 2018; Pratama, 2019). Nevertheless, we encourage typologies to expand into multi-disciplinary territory, engaging on concepts such as the politics of scale, the interlinkages of networks, and more. Even in writing this paper we found difficulty in categorizing the activist and the benevolent NGO, the aggressor, the facilitator, or the quiet philanthrope. Indeed, given the advances in the literature on the empirics of the NGOs, theorizing about the scale and ways of thinking about such institutional structures and roles of the NGO require that the theoretical and frameworks evolve in concert.

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## Method Article

# Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance



Dwi Laraswati<sup>a</sup>, Max Krott<sup>b</sup>, Muhammad A.K. Sahide<sup>c</sup>, Emma Soraya<sup>a</sup>,  
Andita A. Pratama<sup>a</sup>, Sari Rahayu<sup>a</sup>, Lukas Giessen<sup>d</sup>, Ahmad Maryudi<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Sebijak Institute (Research Center for Forest Policy & History), Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup>Chair of Nature & Conservation Policy, Georg August Universität Göttingen, Germany

<sup>c</sup>Forest & Society Research Group, Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia

<sup>d</sup>Chair of International Tropical Forestry, Technische Universität Dresden, Germany

## A B S T R A C T

This paper outlines Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups (OIGs) in environmental governance. This framework is created to check OIG claims as representatives of particular groups within society, to capture OIG diversity, including those acting beyond the pursuit of common interests. The development of this framework used two basic OIG roles—the extent of OIGs in representing group interests and exerting political influence on governments. This framework proposes three main categories of OIGs based on their claims as representatives of particular social groups, en route to fulfilling the claims, breaking the claims, and opposing the claims. Finally, this framework is able to present types of OIGs in environmental governance.

- RIF is an applicable framework for analyzing the roles of organized interest groups
- This framework proposes categories and types of OIGs based on the extent of their role-fulfillment in representing particular groups within society and exerting political influence on governments
- This framework captures the actions of OIGs beyond the pursuit of common interests

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## A R T I C L E I N F O

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\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [ahmad\\_maryudi@ugm.ac.id](mailto:ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id) (A. Maryudi).

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## Specifications Table

Subject Area:	Environmental Science
More specific subject area:	Environmental policy and governance
Method name:	Representation-Influence Framework (RIF)
Name and reference of original method:	Not applicable
Resource availability:	Not applicable

## Method details

Organized interest groups (OIGs) play pivotal roles in democratic life as vehicles for citizen engagement in political processes. OIGs should adopt roles that represent the interests of particular groups within society and advocate for those common interests to governments through the exertion of political influence [1,2,21]. However, evolving phenomena indicate the existence of OIGs which deviate from their core roles and no longer represent the interests of the groups they represent [3,22]. An OIG, however, consists of rational individuals who tend to pursue self-interests and private goals [4]. We are therefore encouraged to develop an analytical framework to check OIG claims as social representatives of particular groups, to capture their diversity including OIGs which act beyond the pursuit of common interests. We established RIF to assess the extent of the OIG role in environmental governance.

In developing RIF, we adopted a theory-driven qualitative strategy [5] with an empirical-analytical approach [2]. This approach departs from the assumption that specific sociopolitical events follow certain patterns that can be interpreted with specific political theories [6]. We applied theories of OIGs from the Western tradition and developed those theories with respect to Global South contexts. Based on the theories, we determined that OIGs should take roles i) representing the interests of particular groups within society (called 'the groups') and ii) based on their common interests, exerting political influence on governments to achieve common goals. We used these two roles as the basis for developing our framework. We change the two roles into X and Y dimensions, where the X dimension represents the first role and the Y dimension represents the latter. In the following, we developed criteria and operational indicators to assess the extent of OIG fulfillment of the two roles, and place OIGs in the X and Y dimensions.

### Criteria and operational indicators

*Representing the groups' interests (X dimension)* – To measure the extent to which OIGs fulfill this role, we first check group arrangements and accountability mechanisms. Group arrangements explain which groups OIGs represent and how they are recruited. The groups might be comprised of members [7], or target groups [2,8] such as forest user groups and financial supporters. It is possible for OIGs to represent members and target groups simultaneously [23]. The groups also might take the form of individuals or organizations [7]. We analyze the group's recruitment since not all OIGs in the Global South are membership-based organizations. While for membership organizations, there are two systems of recruitment: upward and downward. The upward system recruits members among those who, with mutual interests from the beginning, form a group to achieve common goals. The downward system uses persuasive methods, such as modern marketing [2]. We analyze accountability mechanisms provided by OIGs to the groups. Accountability analysis evaluates the means by which actors represent their interests [8,9]. Accountability mechanisms explore the tools and processes of accountability. Tools of accountability include reports on finances and performances and activities [10]. Processes of accountability include democratic participation forums to discuss and evaluate OIG's conduct and performance. These can manifest formally or informally [11].

*Political influence on the government (Y dimension)* – In this section, we analyze autonomy and power distribution. Autonomy analysis aims to explain an organization's self-monitoring and self-regulation [12]. This analysis is key to ensuring that OIGs are independent from their governments. We analyze financial resources [13], founders of the organization [14], the existence of government representatives within their bodies [15], and whether or not they implement formal tasks from the

**Table 1**  
Criteria and operational indicators to place OIGs in the X and Y dimension.

Dimension	Criteria	Operational Indicators
X	Group arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group type</li> <li>• Recruitment system</li> </ul>
	Accountability mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity and performance reports</li> <li>• Financial reports</li> <li>• Democratic participation forums</li> </ul>
Y	Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial resources</li> <li>• Founder of the organization</li> <li>• Existence of government representatives within OIG bodies</li> <li>• Whether or not they implement formal tasks from the government</li> </ul>
	Power distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manifesting resources</li> <li>• Lobbying</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>

government [13,16]. Meanwhile, to disclose the success of OIG power distribution, we analyze their resource manifestation, lobbying, and the outcomes. Resources of OIGs may include knowledge and information, powerful members and membership size, access and networks/alliances, and finances [17]. Related to lobbying, we analyze whether OIGs lobby or do not. Not all OIGs in the Global South lobby their governments, nor are they necessarily interested in influencing policy processes. Some prefer to focus on providing services at the ground level [18]. OIGs that are interested in lobbying may use inside or outside means or combinations of the two [24]. Inside lobbying directly influences the government by formally participating in policy-making processes or informally through personal relations and communications with targeted official governments. Outside lobbying indirectly influences the government by mobilizing public opinion [19] through demonstrations [20] and other agents to influence policy-making processes. Finally, analyzing outcomes is the key determinant of whether an OIG can be said to be powerful or not, and whether or it carries 'political influence'. The outcomes of lobbying can be policy changes or policy creation. In this analysis, OIGs which do not conduct lobbies may never be powerful or influential OIGs. Criteria and operational indicators are resumed in Table 1. Following the development of criteria and operational indicators, we provide procedures and guidelines to place OIGs within our framework.

#### *Procedures to plot OIGs into the framework*

Based on OIG theories, two basic OIG roles should not be assumed to be equivalent. OIGs should attempt to fulfill the first role then continue to pursue the second. In other words, the X dimension becomes the more fundamental basis for grouping OIGs. In this way, we should first look for the OIGs' position in the X dimension. That position includes three zones: X (+), X ( $\pm$ ), and X (-) (see Table 2.a). The first zone consists of OIGs that represent groups' interests, OIGs that are **en route to fulfilling their claim** as representatives of particular groups within society. The second zone is a place where OIGs do not represent the groups' interests. They are **breaking their claim** as representatives of particular groups within society. The last zone is a place for OIGs that manipulate the groups to pursue their self-interests. These OIGs are **opposing their claim** as representatives of particular groups within society. Each zone is represented on two sides—right and left—to obtain more stratified and varied positions of OIGs. Table 2.a provides a guideline to find relative position of OIGs in the X dimension.

After determining the relative position of OIGs in the X dimension, the next step is to find the relative position in the Y dimension. Similar to the former dimension, we divided the Y dimension into three zones: Y (+), Y ( $\pm$ ), and Y (-) (see Table 2.b). The first zone is a place for OIGs that are successful in exerting political influence on the government. The second zone is a place where OIGs do not result in political influence on the government. The last zone is a place for OIGs that are controlled or driven by the government. We also divided each zone into two sides—upper and lower. Guidelines to place OIGs in the Y dimension are provided in Table 2.b.

**Table 2.a**

A guidance to place OIGs in the X dimension.

Criteria	Operational indicators	X (+)		X ( $\pm$ )		X (-)	
		Right	Left	Right	Left	Right	Left
Group arrangements	Group type	Members	Members	Target groups	Target groups	Target groups	Target groups
	Recruitment system	Upward	Upward	No recruitment	No recruitment	Downward	Downward
Accountability mechanisms	Activity and performance reports	Provided to the all groups	Provided to part of the groups	Open	May open	Open	No
	Financial reports	Provided to the all groups	Provided to part of the groups	Open	Close	May open	No
	Democratic participation forums	Provided to the all groups	Provided to part of the groups	No	No	No	No

**Table 2.b**

A guidance to place OIGs in the Y dimension.

Criteria	Operational indicators	Y (+)		Y ( $\pm$ )		Y (-)	
		Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Autonomy	Financial resources	Non-government	Non-government	Non-government	Non-government	Government	Government
	Founder	Non-government	Non-government	Can be government or non-government	Can be government or non-government	Government	Government
	Government representative	No	No	May exist	May exist	Exist	Exist
	Implementing formal task	No	No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No
Power distribution	Manifesting resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No	Can be Yes or No
	Lobbying	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
	Outcomes	Policy creation	Policy change	No	No	The behavior of OIGs is dependent on individual government	The behavior of OIGs is dependent on institutional government

The meeting between the X and Y dimensions finally results in nine OIG positions as presented in Fig. 1. These positions configure the extent to which OIGs fulfill their roles in representing the groups' interests and exerting political influence on the government. We propose these positions as categories and types of OIGs in environmental governance.

#### Examples of operationalizing the framework

To test the operationalization of our framework, we extract some examples of the OIGs from the main paper. We plot two extremely polarized OIGs types, specifically Types 1 and 9. We use selected OIGs that are eminently represented in timber and social forestry policies, where those have been included as prominent forest-environmental policies in Indonesia in recent years.

First, we locate a public OIG involved in timber legality policy in Type 1, on the left side of X (+) and the lower position of Y (+). This OIG is located thusly due to it: has formal members and

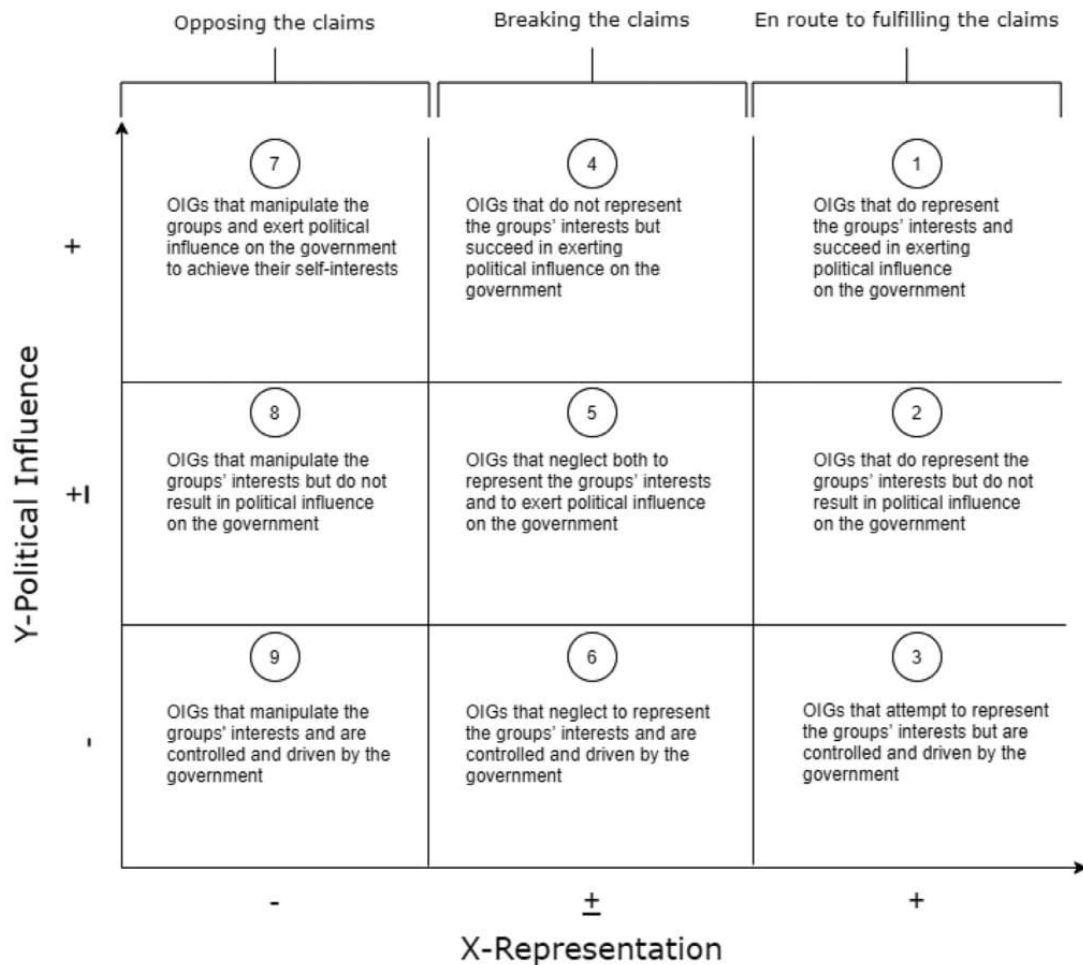


Fig. 1. Categories and types of OIG in environmental governance.

also target groups i.e. forest farmers, fishers, and indigenous people, ii) uses the upward system for recruiting the members, provides activity/performance and financial reports to its members and target groups, but its democratic participation forums are available exclusively to its members. This OIG is plotted in the lower position of Y (+) because it is institutionally autonomous from the government (in this case the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry), financed by international donors, and established by some environmental activists who concern on forest governance themes. Its leaders, members and target groups come from the civil society, and it does not implement any formal government tasks. Together with its international networks, it released a phenomenal report about the practices of illegal logging in Tanjung Puting and Leuser National Parks to the government of Indonesia and internationally. It has conducted active lobbying to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and also provided advisories and consultancies during the policy development process. This OIG is therefore recognized by other stakeholders as one of the creators of the timber legality policy in Indonesia.

Second, there is one OIG working on the social forestry policy position in Type 9, to the left side of X (-) and at the lower position of Y (-). This OIG recruits forest farmers as its members (downward system) and advocates for their acquisition of social forestry permits to manage forests. We find very limited information about this OIG on its official website, nor clear accountability mechanisms available for its members. This OIG therefore falls to the left side of X (-). Furthermore, this OIG is placed in the upper of Y (-) because we find the existence of the government-affiliated individual as

the creator and at the same time the senior advisor of this organization. The behavior of this OIG tends to pursue that individual preferences, for instance, establishing cooperatives for forest farmers who have obtained social forestry permits.

In summing up, our framework, the Representation-Influence Framework (RIF), aims to clarify the extent to which OIGs are undertaking their roles in environmental governance. RIF is rooted in two basic roles of OIGs in a democratic political system: the extent to which they represent the interests of particular groups within society and the extent to which they exert political influence on governments. This framework enables results in several categories and types of OIGs which represent the OIG diversity in environmental governance. The operational indicators that we have developed are based on our empirical experiences in Indonesian environmental governance. For use in other empirics and contexts, these indicators may need further adjustment and development.

### Declaration of Competing Interests

The Authors confirm that there are no conflicts of interest.

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# Environmental Science and Policy

## An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance --Manuscript Draft--

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<b>Corresponding Author:</b>	Dwi Laraswati Gadjah Mada University: Universitas Gadjah Mada INDONESIA
<b>First Author:</b>	Dwi Laraswati
<b>Order of Authors:</b>	Dwi Laraswati Max Krott Muhammad A.K. Sahide Emma Soraya Andita A. Pratama Sari Rahayu Micah R. Fisher Lukas Giessen Ahmad Maryudi
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<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>The traditional conceptions and claims of NGOs have profiled NGOs as civil society representatives, as benevolent philanthropic actors of development in the global south. Nonetheless, recent phenomena indicate NGOs acting in opposition to their benevolent claims. This paper attempts to move away from the normative concepts of NGOs, to develop an analytical framework fitted with the current empirics in environmental governance. Using theories of organized interest groups in a democratic political system, we analyze the extent of NGOs fulfilling their roles as organized interest groups, where they should take roles representing the interests of particular groups within society and exerting political influence on the government based on those common interests. We use empirics from Indonesian environmental governance, and our framework is entitled the 'Representation-Influence Framework (RIF)', which assists in establishing more coherent typologies of organized interest groups. Analyzed from the perspective that NGOs claim to serve as representatives of particular groups within society, we established three overarching categories of organized interest groups, i.e. Heading to fulfilling the claim, Breaking the claim, and Opposing the claim. In more detail, our framework results in nine typologies of organized interest groups i.e. Ideal, Authentic, Compliant, Professional, Pragmatic, Technocratic, Extensional, Proxical, and Obedient. In this way, we provide some pathways to begin deconstructing the common simplifications and misunderstandings about NGOs.</p>
<b>Suggested Reviewers:</b>	Jennifer N. Brass Indiana University Bloomington brassj@indiana.edu  Sabaheta Ramcilovic-Suominen Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) sabaheta.ramcilovic-suominen@luke.fi  Dodik Ridho Nurrochmat Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) dnurrochmat@ipb.ac.id
<b>Opposed Reviewers:</b>	

December 24, 2020  
Editor-in-Chief  
Environmental Science & Policy Journal

Dear Editor,

On behalf of all authors, I would like to submit a research paper titled “**An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance**”. This paper departs from a dilemma with the formal claim and normative concepts of NGOs as civil society representatives. NGOs and their roles have been experiencing evolution, acting beyond the benevolent concepts. We, therefore, should innovate those traditional concepts and do not take the NGOs’ claims for granted.

In this paper, we develop an analytical framework/ typology to capture the diversity of NGOs in current empirics in environmental governance. We use theories of organized interest groups (OIGs) in a democratic political system to clarify which roles that NGOs fulfill as OIGs, where they should take roles representing the interests of particular groups within society and based on those common interests exerting political influence on the government to achieve common goals. Using empirics from Indonesian environmental governance, we found several typologies of OIGs starting from ideal OIGs to government-dependent OIGs, and also other typologies of OIGs along this continuum. We believe this paper is novel and has a significant contribution to the field of environmental policy and governance. We highly hope that this paper warrants consideration in your journal. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Dwi Laraswati

PhD Candidate of Forest Policy and Governance  
Center for Forest Policy & History Studies (Sebijak Institute), Universitas Gadjah Mada,  
Yogyakarta, 55281 Indonesia

## **Highlights**

- Traditional conceptions of NGOs have no longer caught up with the empirics
- We clarified the concept of NGOs as civil society representatives
- We developed an analytical framework to capture the diversity of NGOs
- We developed typologies of NGOs in environmental governance

## **An analytical framework for analyzing organized interest groups: Insights from Indonesian environmental governance**

### **Abstract**

The traditional conceptions and claims of NGOs have profiled NGOs as civil society representatives, as benevolent philanthropic actors of development in the global south. Nonetheless, recent phenomena indicate NGOs acting in opposition to their benevolent claims. This paper attempts to move away from the normative concepts of NGOs, to develop an analytical framework fitted with the current empirics in environmental governance. Using theories of organized interest groups in a democratic political system, we analyze the extent of NGOs fulfilling their roles as organized interest groups, where they should take roles representing the interests of particular groups within society and exerting political influence on the government based on those common interests. We use empirics from Indonesian environmental governance, and our framework is entitled the 'Representation-Influence Framework (RIF)', which assists in establishing more coherent typologies of organized interest groups. Analyzed from the perspective that NGOs claim to serve as representatives of particular groups within society, we established three overarching categories of organized interest groups, i.e. Heading to fulfilling the claim, Breaking the claim, and Opposing the claim. In more detail, our framework results in nine typologies of organized interest groups i.e. Ideal, Authentic, Compliant, Professional, Pragmatic, Technocratic, Extensional, Proxical, and Obedient. In this way, we provide some pathways to begin deconstructing the common simplifications and misunderstandings about NGOs.

**Keywords: NGOs, Interest Groups, Representation, Influence, Environmental Governance**

### **1. Introduction**

We are living in the age where the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dramatically proliferates (Brass et al., 2018) and the roles of NGOs become more pivotal in environmental policy-making processes (Ariti et al., 2018; Ayana et al., 2018; Foo, 2018; Gupta and Koontz, 2019). NGOs in the initial emergence were eminently viewed as hard-opposition to governments regarding misuses and mismanagement of natural resources. The term 'non' reflects clear antagonistic characters with the predominant role as 'watchdogs'; ensuring state-led development complying with environmental norms (Slavíková et al., 2017). Nonetheless, NGOs and their roles have been evolving, many NGOs transform their political position to more romantically cooperate with governments in a wide range of levels from policy development to policy implementation (Rahayu et al., 2020; Maryudi et al., 2020).

The early/ traditional conceptions of NGOs also see them as organizations that are "voluntary", "non-profit seeking", "independent", "non-partisan" and "a-political" (Martens, 2002). NGOs have been profiled as sweetheart actors of development in the global south (Mitlin et al., 2007; Arvidson, 2008). NGOs are viewed as philanthropist agents that serve 'public goals' (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Banks et al., 2015)- promoting good governance, protection of biodiversity and ecosystem, sustainable development, protection of indigenous people rights, poverty reduction, and equity and justice- where governments cannot provide the fulfillment. With these conceptions, NGOs claim and enjoy 'the privileged label' as civil society representatives (Levine, 2002; Holmén and Jirström 2009), as the articulation of voices of marginalized citizens (Mercer, 2002; Rahman, 2006; Jad, 2007), and on their behalf seeking to influence decision-makers within political processes (Holmén and Jirström 2009). Recent phenomena also show symptoms of NGOs acting

oppositely to their benevolent claims. NGOs impose discourses and norms leading to communities exclusion (see Fatem et al., 2018; Myers and Muhadjir, 2016), act as a political vehicle of their beneficiaries (see Harrison, 2017; Nurrochmat et al., 2014), become more as quasi-government rather than as counterbalance (see Ma, 2002), manipulate and misuse aids to self-benefits (see Smith, 2012), play as the supplier of goods in meeting global supply chain (see Meyer, 1995) and do activities as comprador to influence domestic policies (see Hearn, 2007). Critique also emerges from Bryant (2002), who mentions 'false prophets' or 'mutant' NGOs, where NGOs are polarized in two categorizations i.e. truly altruistic actors and profit-seeking organizations.

It is a problem that the traditional conceptualization of NGOs has not caught up yet with the evolving phenomena (Laraswati et al., 2020b). This paper attempts to move out from the pitfall of normative concepts of NGOs and does not take the NGOs' claims for granted. Here, we develop an analytical framework/ typology fitted with the current empirics in environmental governance in particular. We borrow theories of organized interest groups in a democratic political system from the western tradition where NGOs are included as organized interest groups and tailor the theories to suit with global south context (section 2). We analyze to what extent NGOs fulfill their roles as organized interest groups, whether they really articulate the interests of the groups they represent and advocate those common interests into governments (Williamson, 1989; Krott, 2005). This paper uses NGOs in Indonesian environmental governance as an illustration of analysis. Indonesia is the third largest democratic country in the world. Referring to Brass et al. (2018), Indonesia has been one of the southern countries experiencing a bombastic explosion of NGOs' number and one of the most-prevalent countries in the NGOs' studies in recent decades. In addition, the space for NGOs' engagement in democratic governance in Indonesia currently is more open, even to engage in the government body (Antlöv et al., 2010).

## **2. Analytical Approach**

### **2.1. Theoretical propositions: Organized interest groups (OIGs) rather than non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**

Organized interest groups (hereafter referred to as OIGs) are commonly defined as organizations that articulate the interests of particular groups within societies and seek to influence governments based on the groups' interests (Salisbury, 1969; Knoke, 1986; Krott, 2005; Berry and Wilcox, 2015; Beyers and Braun, 2014; Cook et al., 2017). OIGs are one of the essential elements in democratic political life in terms of citizens' representation and participatory instrument in political processes. This departs from the basic assumption that the less citizen engagement (political and social) the greater the pathology of the democratic system; the greater the engagement the healthier the practice of the democratic system (Jordan and Maloney, 2007). OIGs are used as channels or avenues to express citizens' preferences, to check on what governments do and to avert them from being overly powerful, to provide multiple perspectives on public issues to be solved, and to empower powerless citizens within political processes (Dahl, 1982; Williamson, 1989).

The fundamental role of OIGs within a democratic political system is representing the interests of a particular societal group, i.e. as 'a valuable route to participation'. Organizations that are formed to represent particular interests ultimately have membership as the masters (Williamson, 1989). Interests here are defined as actions orientation adhered to by actors (Krott, 2005). Interests of OIGs can be economic, political, social, moral, cultural, and others (Wesołowski, 1962). In doing their actions, OIGs may not always represent common interests but may also represent self-

interests. Common interests are the interests democratically collected from the groups that OIGs represent. This departs from the assumption of OIGs' classical theories that individuals with mutual interests- which can be better achieved through collective action- will form a group that serves as a vehicle for the transmission of their common interests (Salisbury, 1984; Moe, 1981; Jordan and Maloney, 2007). While self-interests are the interests owned by certain or selected individual/s within an OIG, or also called 'selective interests'. *'The logic of collective action'* (Olson, 1971) points out that individuals within a group are rational individuals (particularly in economical senses), and will logically pursue self-interests. They do not act to achieve common interests; they may influence others to achieve their own goals.

The second sight rests on how OIGs attempt to influence the government and governance to implement the common interests (Krott, 2005). This role should advance OIGs' role to realize participation of particular society in political processes, but OIGs practically may exert influence on the government beyond on behalf of common interests (Williamson, 1989). Hence, this role is not a sequence of interest representation but should be seen as two separate things. 'Influence' of OIGs referring to Krott (2005) is basically as a case linked with power distribution, and the power of OIGs is a dependent variable that is related to resources. Gulbrandsen and Andresen (2004) divide the resources of OIGs into four categories; intellectual base, membership base, political base, and financial base. Intellectual base is more about knowledge and information which are used by OIGs to provide advisory and consultancy. Membership base is a case related to the members as the basis of political legitimacy. Political base is regarded as access and network/alliance with other actors. Financial base is the financial resources of OIGs used to sustain themselves and to support government works. When OIGs manifest resources to other actors and are able to alter the other actors' behavior or action in accordance with their preferences, OIGs can be said to be powerful and 'influence' exists (Michalowitz, 2007). In Klüver (2013) language, the 'influence' of OIGs is understood as "*the ability to shape political decisions in line with their policy preferences*". Influence of OIGs is exerted through an action called lobbying. OIGs lobby the government using formal and informal ways. Formal ways include participating in policy-making processes and in programs of the government. While informal ways are such as building personal relations and communications with the top-authoritative governments, and this way is considered more productive to result in influence (Krott, 2005).

The government-OIGs relationship often contrasts into pluralist and corporatist systems. *First*, the pluralist system is characterized by a wide range of actors competing for political access and influence (Binderkrantz and Pedersen, 2019), and the government tends to maintain a great aloofness to OIGs and to limit space for negotiation (Krott, 2005). The OIGs' architecture in this system is less structured, and among OIGs may compete to represent the same particular societal groups. The number of OIGs in political processes is relatively high, they thus tend to be powerless. OIGs in this system cannot expect to be involved in policy-making processes only based on representativeness but need to convince that their viewpoints really matter for public goals. In this setting, it is expected that OIGs will be more likely to promote broad societal benefits rather than to the self-interests of their members (Binderkrantz and Pedersen, 2019). *Second*, in the corporatist system, the government provides more access for OIGs to cooperate and to become its partners in public decision-making processes (Krott, 2005; Williamson, 1989). OIGs in this system are viewed as representatives of particular societal groups, and they should advance the views of these groups with the logic that the representatives of different interests are incorporated in public policy-making and political decisions made by the concentration of interests (Binderkrantz and Pedersen, 2019). However, the corporatist system is prone to the risk of OIGs' autonomy reduction. Government with its power may manage OIGs and implement tacit sanctioning behavior; the government creates and maintains the relationship, selected OIGs are granted with the privilege to organize interests on behalf of their constituents to the government,

and these OIGs must adhere to the rules and regulations established by the government (Hsu and Hasmath, 2014).

This paper, while applying the theories of OIGs in a democratic political system, is by no means to discount the traditional concepts of NGOs. We intend to advance and innovate the stagnate concepts of NGOs in order to more correspond with the evolving phenomena in democratic environmental governance; that NGOs practically also pursue and act beyond public interests which the traditional concepts of NGOs do not embrace. NGOs' action is intrinsically political, and they thus have become important political actors in the third world (Clarke, 1998). In order to move out of the normative senses of NGOs, we replace the term 'NGOs' with 'OIGs' hereafter.

## 2.2. Analytical framework: Representation-Influence Framework (RIF)

The analytical framework of this paper was co-submitted alongside a MethodsX paper on the Representation-Influence Framework (RIF) that provides detailed operationalization. We have also presented the MethodsX paper as an appendix to this paper. In our framework, we analyze the extent of OIGs fulfilling two basic roles of OIGs i.e. i) representing the interests of particular groups within societies (hereafter called 'the groups'), and ii) exerting political influence on the government to achieve common goals based on those common interests. Representing the groups' interests is illustrated as the X dimension while the political influence on the government is illustrated as the Y dimension.

Following the theoretical propositions, representing the groups' interests is more fundamental rather than exerting political influence on the government. Thus, representing the groups' interests (X dimension) becomes the first basis to categorize OIGs. We categorize OIGs into three main groups; heading to fulfilling the claim/ X (+), breaking the claim/ X ( $\pm$ ), and opposing the claim/ X (-). We continue to analyze the extent of exerting political influence on the government (Y dimension). We divided the extent of OIGs in fulfilling the second role into three stratifications; successful in influencing the government/ Y (+), unsuccessful in influencing the government/ Y ( $\pm$ ), and on the contrary driven by the government/ Y (-).

To test our framework, we hypothesized that OIGs at one end fulfill their roles, representing their groups' interests and succeed in exerting political influence on the government. At the other end, an OIG may instead play as a government tool to influence the groups to follow government preferences. There are also several types of OIGs along this continuum (see Fig. 1).

### **H1: OIGs exist which lead to being ideal OIGs**

These OIGs are located in area X (+) and Y (+). They do both on the one side representing the interests of the groups and on the other side are able to exert political influence on the government.

### **H2: OIGs exist which are obedient to the government**

These OIGs are located in area X (-) and Y (-). They serve the government and influence the groups to follow the government's preferences. These OIGs are fully controlled by the government and used as a government tool to succeed in its interests.

### **H3: OIGs exist which are likely be pragmatic OIGs**

These OIGs are located in area X ( $\pm$ ) and Y ( $\pm$ ). Their actions are likely to be self-interests driven. They neglect both representing the interest of the groups as well as exerting political influence on the government.

#### H4: OIGs exist which are professional OIGs

These OIGs are located in area X ( $\pm$ ) and Y (+). They do not represent the interests of the groups but exert political influence on the government. The OIGs represent beyond the groups' interests and attempt to succeed those interests by exerting political influence on the government.

#### H5: OIGs exist which keep their authenticity as OIGs

These OIGs are located in area X (+) and Y ( $\pm$ ). They do represent the interests of the groups but do not/ are not able to advocate those interests to the government. These OIGs have attempted to fulfill the claim as interest representation of particular groups within societies but they are powerless.

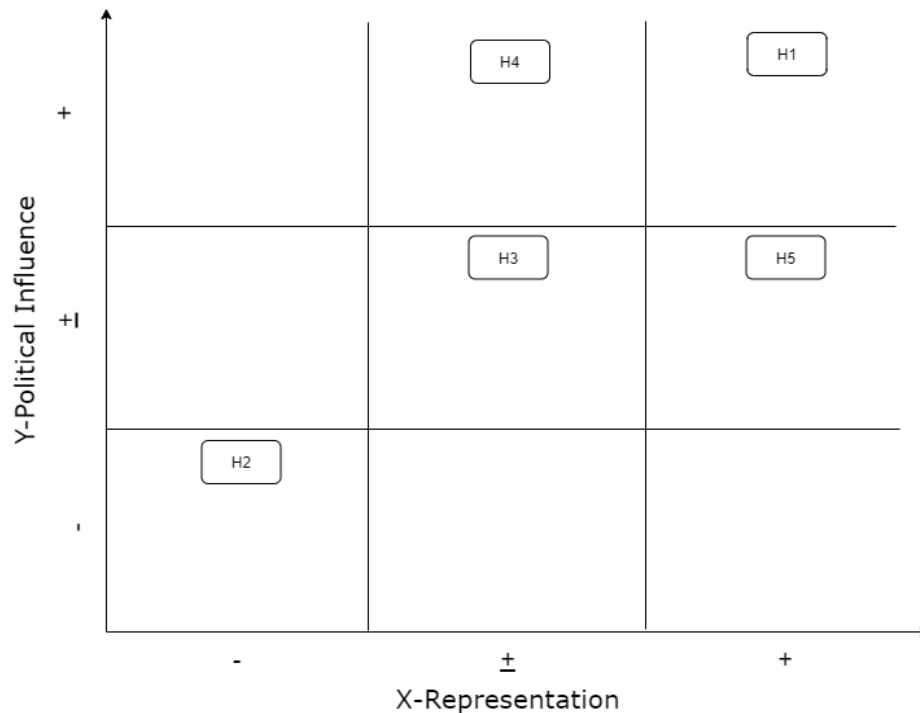


Fig. 1. Analytical framework and illustration of the hypotheses

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Selection of OIGs

We use selected OIGs prominently working in timber legality and social forestry policies. These two policies are prominent policies within the last few years (Maryudi and Myers, 2018; Galudra, 2019; Wulandari and Kurniasih, 2019). Based on personal knowledge and secondary sources, we identified 60 OIGs that are predominantly engaged in either or both timber legality and social forestry. We refined the list by excluding five foreign OIGs that have not registered as Indonesian legal entities. We consulted the refined list of several senior activists who have been prominently active in those issues. We were advised to include some new OIGs and exclude some from the initial list. At this stage, our list contained 55 OIGs. We further contacted the OIGs and asked whether they have engaged in either or both issues. At this stage, we also asked about their availability for further interviews. The final list is 45 OIGs since 10 OIGs advised that they are either not relevant to our topics or no longer active in the focal issues. We also validated this final list during the data collection stage (interviews), by asking the interviewees to name the OIGs that

are engaged in the focal issues. 40 OIGs originate from the civil society sector (referred to as “public OIGs”), while 5 originated from the private sector (referred to as “economic OIGs”). The complete list, categorization, and coding are provided in Supplementary Material 1.

Table 1. Type of OIGs and their working area

Type of OIG	Number of OIG working on		
	Timber legality	Social forestry	Both focal issues
Public	10	18	12
Economic	5	0	0

### 3.2. Data collection

#### 3.2.1. Interviews

The first author conducted semi-structured interviews based on the proposed analytical framework. Due to the highly political nature of this research, we started the interviews by using a list of general stimulating questions, revolving around general views on forest policy and governance, social and environmental activism in Indonesia before further probing with the core questions. This approach was employed to facilitate ease of communication and to encourage interviewees to provide more details in comfortable settings (Maryudi and Fisher, 2020). We used face-to-face meetings, phone/ WhatsApp calls, and other online platforms for meetings e.g. Skype and Zoom, according to the interviewees’ preferences. Only four OIGs were unavailable with the interview modes; we sent and asked them to fill questionnaires instead.

In selecting the informants from the selected OIGs, we consulted some activists and requested the contacts. We also asked the early interviewees the appropriate contacts of the selected OIGs. Most of our interviewees were at the high level (director/ chairperson, members of advisory boards, or program managers) of the OIGs. In some cases, we interviewed more than one source depending on the level of information completion. We also interviewed government officials, individual activists, and academia who are related to or engaged in the timber legality and social forestry issue, to triangulate the statements of the OIGs’ informants. The complete list of interviewees is provided in Supplementary Material 2.

Table 2. Type and level of informants

Type of Informant	Level of informant	Number of informants
OIG	Advisory board	8
	Chairman/ Executive director	22
	Ex-chairman/ Ex-executive director	1
	Vice-chairman/ Vice executive director	1
	Secretary of organization	1
	Program Director/ Division coordinator	7
	Program manager/ coordinator	6
	Staff/ Member	9
	Ad hoc staff	1
Government official	Ex-director general	2
Activist	The activist who engage in government bodies	2
	The activist who becomes a scholar	2
	The activist who is still active in social movement	2
Academia	Academia who led the timber legality policy development	1

### 3.2.2. Experience and observation

In order to further triangulate the data and information from the interviews, we used personal experience and direct observations. The first author has worked in one of the selected OIGs, starting from February 2016 to July 2017. The third and the last author have close relationships with some OIGs that include personal relations, advisory and consultancy, as well as project implementation. The fifth author has conducted an internship program in one of the OIGs examined from May to August 2017. The sixth author has been conducting research on the roles of CSOs in the policy processes of social forestry since 2017. In addition, the first author conducted observations by attending seminars and meetings where some of the selected OIGs were also engaged in.

Table 3. List of observations conducted by the first author

Type of observation	Topic	Held by	Date
Seminar	The issuance of the Ministry of Trade regulation No.15/2020; Removing legality requirement for wood products export	OIG No. 17	May 14, 2020
Meeting	Progress update and evaluation on social forestry permit issuance	Directorate of Social Forestry Area Preparation, Ministry of Environment and Forestry	June 11, 2020
Meeting	Data matching of social forestry farmers	OIG No. 34	July 14, 2020
National discussion	Timber regulation enforcement exchange (TREE)	Directorate General of sustainable forest management, Ministry of Environment and Forestry and Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP)	July 23-24, 2020
Public consultation	The communication strategy development of the Indonesian timber legality assurance system for international scale	Directorate General of sustainable forest management, Ministry of Environment and Forestry Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP)	September 10, 2020
Public consultation	Revising the Ministry of Environment and Forestry regulation on the Indonesian timber legality assurance system (SVLK)	Directorate General of sustainable forest management, Ministry of Environment and Forestry Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP)	September 16, 2020
Seminar	The contribution of social forestry to Indonesia's food sovereignty	Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada where OIG No. 34 as one of the speakers	September 17, 2020

### .2.3. Secondary sources

We first strategically checked the official websites of the OIGs, we conducted content analysis of the OIGs' profiles- historical backgrounds, vision and missions, values, annual reports, and other relevant information. We also analyzed national-scale regulations and other documents related to the timber legality and social forestry issues. In addition, strategic literature analysis was used to strengthen the analysis (Rahayu et al., 2019; Laraswati et al., 2020a).

## 4. Results

We illustrate how we place OIGs into our framework in this part. Based on our analysis, 45 selected OIGs are distributed into three groups; heading to fulfilling the claim, breaking the claim, and opposing the claim. We do not explain one by one of our selected OIGs with the paper length consideration. We take some OIGs as the illustration instead.

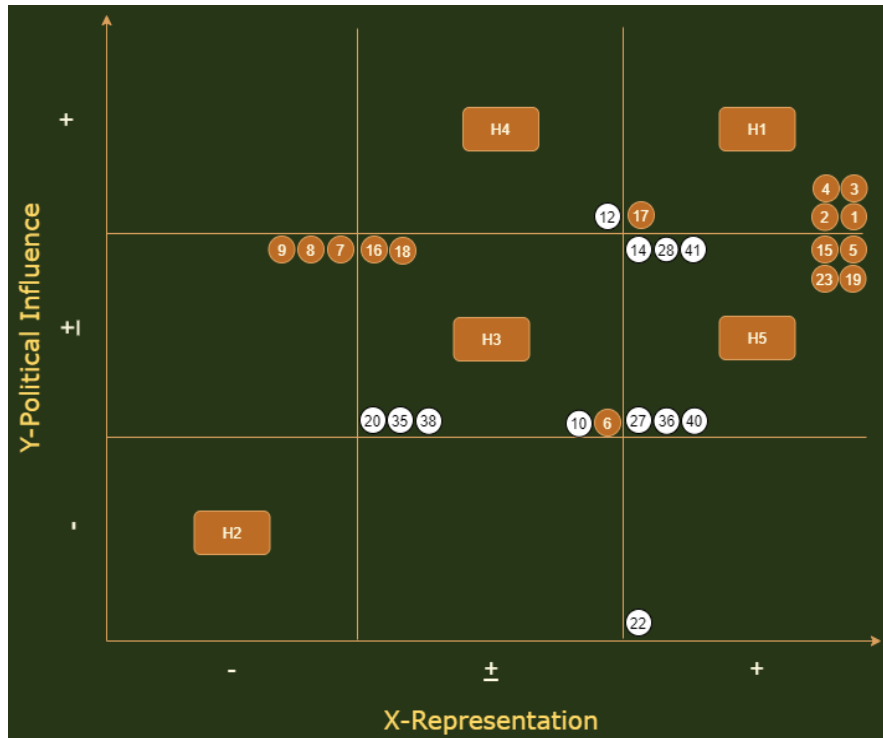


Fig. 2.a. Illustration of OIGs in achieving their roles in the timber legality issue in Indonesia. White circles are OIGs that engage in both focal issues. Brown circles are OIGs that work in the timber legality issue.

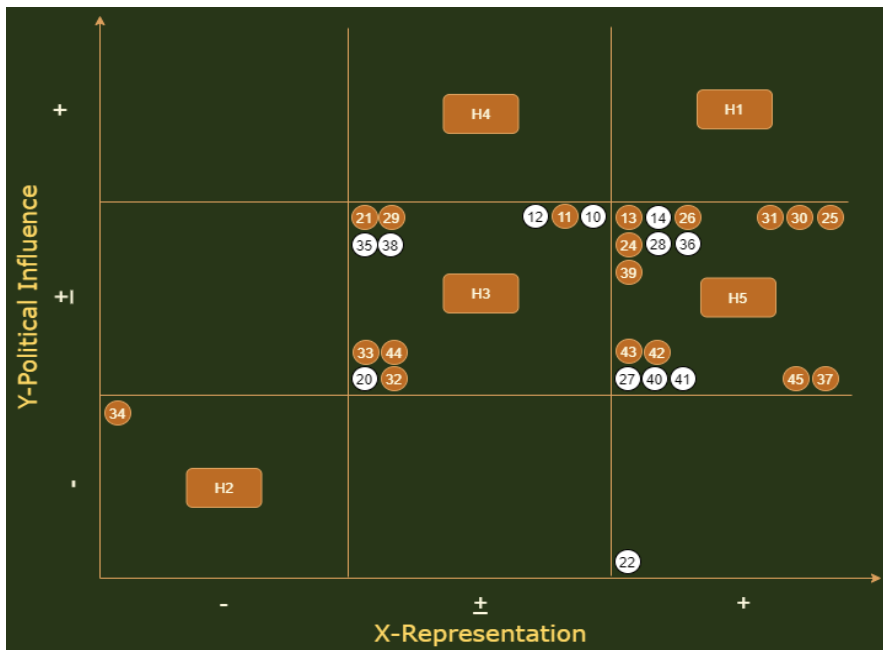


Fig. 2.b. Illustration of OIGs in achieving their roles in the case of social forestry policy in Indonesia. White circles are OIGs that engage in both focal issues. Brown circles are OIGs that work in the social forestry issue.

#### 4.1. First group: Heading to fulfilling the claim

This group consists of OIGs who head to fulfilling their claim as 'civil society representatives', OIGs which do represent the groups' interests though not necessarily successful in exerting political influence on the government. OIGs in this group have a direct link to particular groups within societies. These OIGs are distributed in the X (+) with stratifications of the Y dimension.

##### *Relative position in the X dimension*

Most OIGs in Indonesian environmental governance are included in this group. From 45 OIGs analyzed, there are 27 OIGs placed in X (+); 9 OIGs from the timber legality issue, 11 OIGs from the social forestry issue, and 7 OIGs from both focal issues. From those 27 OIGs, only 11 OIGs are able to achieve the right side of X (+), the rest are located on the left side of X (+). OIGs placed on the right side of X (+) are membership-based OIGs and the engagement of the members is based on the mutual interests they have from the beginning, and the OIGs are able to provide financial reports, activity/ performance reports, and evaluation forums to the members. For example, OIGs 1 to 5 which are economic OIGs in the timber legality issue (see Fig. 2.a), have regular members meetings per year, three years, or five years (depending on the policies of each organization) for organizational leaders to report the financial reports and organizational activities. On average every five years, there is also a change in the leadership seats of the OIGs, and the members can elect the candidates democratically. Another example comes from the social forestry issue, OIG 37 as one of public OIGs (see Fig. 2.b), its members are forest farmers groups. This OIG is also able to provide financial reports, activity/ performance reports, and evaluation forums to its members via regular meetings similar to the aforementioned OIGs.

The left side of X (+) is occupied by OIGs that have members and also target groups (more than one type of group they represent). These OIGs are able to provide financial reports, activity/ performance reports, and also evaluation forums to their members, but are unable to provide those accountability mechanisms to their target groups. Although some of them upload financial and activity reports on their websites, there are no mechanisms for their target groups and public to criticize their conduct. For instance, OIG 17 in the case of timber legality (see Fig. 2.a), a public OIG and membership-based organization. Besides representing its members, this OIG also claims to advocate the interests of farmers, fishers, and indigenous people. Nonetheless, this OIG is only able to provide accountability mechanisms to its members. Furthermore, OIG 36 in the social forestry issue ( Fig. 2.b) is also membership-based OIG and also claims to fight for forest user groups. In fact, this OIG is only able to provide accountability mechanisms to its formal members.

##### *Relative position in the Y dimension*

Viewed from the Y dimension, most OIGs of this group are located in Y ( $\pm$ ), meaning that most of them are autonomous from the government but not powerful. Position in the Y dimension is not static, specifically for OIGs working on both focal issues, in one issue an OIG can place in the top of Y but in another issue may locate in the lower of Y. From our analysis, we found as many as 21 OIGs placed in Y ( $\pm$ ), 4 OIGs from the timber legality issue, 11 OIGs from the social forestry issue, and 6 OIGs from both issues, and these OIGs are distributed in the top and lower of Y ( $\pm$ ).

OIGs in the top Y ( $\pm$ ) are autonomous OIGs that manifest resources and do lobbies to the government but fail in resulting either policy change or policy creation. This is well exemplified by OIG 5 in the case of policy change of the timber legality (see Fig. 2.a). This OIG has utilized its access to the Coordinating Ministry for Economy to lobby the Ministry of Trade to revoke the

legality certification document (called as V-legal document) from export requirements though exporting to countries that do not require the document. Initially, this OIG has succeeded in influencing the Ministry of Trade to issue a policy that excludes the document from the requirements, but finally, the policy has been changed again by the Ministry because of many protests emerged over the policy change. Furthermore, in the case of social forestry, OIG 14 locates at the top of Y (+) (see Fig. 2.b). This OIG manifests money to fund social forestry programs and has a powerful individual who provides advisories to the government- this person is frequently mentioned by almost all other stakeholders due to his intensive engagement in developing social forestry schemes even long before the formal social forestry policy existed in Indonesia. Nonetheless, this OIG solely is unable to show influence on the social forestry policies. The emergence and the development of the social forestry policies- which allocates 12.7 million hectares of land to forest communities- are mainly due to the political will of the government, as one of the political campaigns of the current president. This OIG does not engage in designing the political campaign therefore cannot be said as an influential OIG.

The lower of Y (+) is a location where OIGs are still autonomous from the government, may manifest resources, but are not interested to do lobbies to the government. OIG 36 in the timber legality policy as the illustration, only focuses on assisting the woodcraft industries in assessment processes to obtain the legality certification document (V-legal document). One of the other examples is OIG 45 in the social forestry policy. This OIG works to help its members- forest farmer groups- to obtain land use permits from the social forestry schemes provided by the government, to manage lands after obtaining the permits, and to obtain financial funding to manage the lands.

In the Y (+) position, we only found 5 OIGs located in this zone and all work in the timber legality issue. OIGs placed in the Y (+) are powerful OIGs; they manifest resources, do lobbies, and result in outcomes of either policy change or policy creation. All five OIGs are placed in the lower of Y (+), they only are able to result in policy change of the timber legality. They altogether have made a cohesive alliance to thwart the government's policy which excludes the legality verification document (V-legal Document) from the listed requirements for exporting timber products. They have lobbied the Ministry of Trade to repeal the policy change on the timber legality. OIG 17 in particular, has also made a strong alliance with other OIGs- including with an international organization that focuses on timber legality investigation- to pressure the Indonesian government to return the timber legality policy to maintain V-legal document as one of the requirements for exports though exporting to countries that do not require the document as a commitment on FLEGT-VPA to European Union.

The position of Y (-) is occupied by the one OIG 22. This position describes OIGs that are dependent on the government. OIGs fully lose their autonomy when they are financed and/or established by the government with the existence of intensive controls. If an OIG is established by the government without controls anymore, or consists of government representatives in their bodies, or is formally mandated to implement the government works, it may not lose its autonomy but only lose its flexible behavior. In this case, OIG 22 is a chamber organization that generally works in forest governance including in both focal issues in Indonesia. It was created by multiple stakeholders including representatives from government, private, CSOs, and communities which then become its members. These OIGs are financially dependent on the government and also now led by a leader from the government representative. The direction of this OIG now tends to strengthen and follow the government's will. Based on these facts, this OIG is thus placed in the lower Y (-), meaning that it is not autonomous from the government anymore or under the government controls.

#### 4.2. Second group: Breaking the claim

OIGs placed in this group are OIGs that break their claim as civil society representatives. These OIGs are non-membership based organizations (no members' recruitment, specifically in Indonesia usually in the form of foundation), instead, some of them may have target groups but remain unable to provide good accountability mechanisms to them. Good accountability of non-membership OIGs in Indonesia are mirrored from the relation between OIGs and donors, almost all Indonesian OIGs are financially dependent on international donors. While to their target groups, they may only be able to provide financial reports and activity/ performance reports. Thus, they essentially do not represent the interests of particular groups within societies, their activities may only coincide with public goals. When they seek to influence the government, thus cannot be said as on behalf of civil society interests. In this framework, they are placed in the X ( $\pm$ ) with different stratifications of the Y dimension.

#### *Relative position in the X dimension*

We found 14 Public OIGs in the X ( $\pm$ ); 3 OIGs from the timber legality, 6 OIGs from the social forestry, and 5 OIGs that engage in both focal issues. Of those 14 OIGs, 4 OIGs are positioned on the right side of X ( $\pm$ ) and 10 OIGs are placed on the left side of X ( $\pm$ ). OIGs on the right side of X ( $\pm$ ) are able to provide both financial and activity/ performance reports to their target groups or public. For instance, OIG 12 is a conservationist OIG working on biodiversity conservation, and some of its programs target forest user groups, especially the programs related to social forestry. Referring to the Indonesian regulations regarding OIGs' accountability, Indonesian OIGs are only mandated to be assessed by public accountants for their financial condition. There is no obligation for OIGs in Indonesia to report their conduct to public. However, some OIGs including OIG 12 provide annual reports (which consist of finance and activities) through their official websites where everyone can access freely. Meanwhile, OIGs distributed on the left side of X ( $\pm$ ) are OIGs without the ability to provide financial reports to public, only providing activity reports. One example is OIG 20 which also works in both focal issues. On its official website, this OIG only displays information related to an overview of organization establishment, projects/ programs, and publications of the programs.

#### *Relative position in the Y dimension*

According to the Y dimension, most OIGs in this group are classified in the Y ( $\pm$ ) i.e. 13 OIGs, and distributed in the top and the lower of Y ( $\pm$ ). The meeting between X ( $\pm$ ) and Y ( $\pm$ ) is a very neutral zone in our framework. We only found 1 OIG which moved from Y (+) while in the timber legality to Y ( $\pm$ ) in the social forestry. This means that only one OIG has been a powerful OIG, its power only matters in the timber legality context.

As aforementioned in the previous group, OIGs at the top of Y ( $\pm$ ) constitute OIGs that have good autonomy to the government, are endowed with resources, conduct lobbies to the government but have no outcomes either policy change or policy creation. We take an example of OIG 18 from the timber legality case. This OIG is a public OIG that focuses on forest crime investigation. This OIG was formally involved as part of a coalition of the five powerful OIGs in the previous group to revoke the timber legality policy change (involved in publishing an open letter to the President of Indonesia). But this OIG cannot be said as influential, the name of this OIG is not frequently mentioned by other actors unlike OIG 17. The leader of this OIG also said that this organization indeed has been vacuum in the legality issues for a while. One another example from the social forestry case is OIG 29. This OIG is an OIG working on providing registration of customary territories. This OIG utilizes its data and information to lobby the government to be able to expand the customary areas. Nonetheless, of the approximately 7 million hectares of

customary management areas proposed by the OIG, only about 600 thousand hectares can be accommodated by the government. This OIG, therefore, is not powerful to the government.

The lower of the Y ( $\pm$ ) position consists of OIGs that still keep their autonomy from the government but do not conduct lobbies/ are not interested to exert influence on policy processes, OIG 6 as an example in the timber legality issue. This OIG is more likely a professional consultant institution with the form of a foundation. It works to provide paid services to clients mainly to privates to achieve legal and sustainable certifications including the Indonesian timber legality certification. In the social forestry case, OIG 33 is one of the examples. This OIG leads to be a research institution that focuses on advocating agrarian reform for marginalized people in Indonesia to obtain property rights on lands. This OIG basically does not agree with the current social forestry architecture from the government where the lands granted by the government are using a permit scheme not property rights. However, this OIG remains to be cooperative when asked for providing advisories and consultancies regarding social forestry implementation.

The one OIG that places in the Y (+) in this group is OIG 12 though only in the timber legality context. This OIG has facilitated the policy development of the Indonesian timber legality, including the establishment of the timber legality system (namely SVLK) and the bilateral negotiation between the government of Indonesia and the government of the European Union on the FLEGT-VPA and also organized funding during the processes. The emergence of the Indonesian timber legality policy cannot be separated particularly from the roles of some powerful individuals within this organization.

#### 4.3. Third group: Opposing the claim

This group consists of OIGs who oppose their claim as civil society representatives. These OIGs claim to have members, but their recruitment mechanisms tend to use downward mechanisms- persuade people to join in their organizations e.g. using modern marketing methods and others. OIGs in this group attract people to become their members basically to succeed in their goals. These kinds of OIGs usually are not able to provide full accountability mechanisms to their members. They may only be able to provide financial reports, activity/ performance reports to the target groups or public but are unable to provide evaluation mechanisms for the target groups or public to criticize their conduct. They are thus placed in the X (-) with varying stratifications of the Y dimension.

##### *Relative position in the X dimension*

We identified 4 OIGs placed in this group; 3 OIGs working on the timber legality and 1 OIG engaging in social forestry. Three of them are able to achieve the right side of X (-) and one left is positioned on the left side of X (-). OIGs placed on the right side of X (-) are OIGs that are able to provide activity/ performance reports to their attracted members such as OIG 7, 8, and 9. They are international-affiliated organizations that decided to become Indonesian OIGs. OIG 7 focuses on biodiversity and wildlife conservation, OIG 8 more engages in environmental campaigns and investigation, and OIG 9 leads to protect forests and the ocean. These OIGs conduct crowdfunding to accumulate money to support their programs. They do conservation/ environmental campaigns in public areas to attract and persuade people to become their financial supporters regularly (such as per month or per year with a certain amount of money). They then send their activity reports to the attracted members, but the attracted members remain never know the accountability of their donated money in detail. However, OIG 7 and 8 provide annual reports i.e. financial and activity reports through their official websites while OIG 9 does not.

The one OIG positioned on the left side of X (-) is OIG 34. This area is characterized by the inability of OIGs to provide accountability mechanisms. Different from the three previous OIGs, this OIG is not affiliated with an international organization. This OIG persuades forest farmer groups to engage in a network/ movement claimed to advocate their interests to obtain permits for managing lands of the social forestry schemes. This OIG is unable to show their accountability to the forest farmer groups they persuade and to public, very limited information related to this OIG on its official website.

#### *Relative position in the Y dimension*

Looking at the Y dimension, OIGs in this group are distributed in Y (+) i.e. OIG 7, 8, and 9, and Y (-) i.e. OIG 34. OIGs in the Y (+) are autonomous OIGs, endowed with resources, conduct lobbies, but do not result in preferable outcomes. In the context of timber legality, OIG 7 is a leading independent monitoring coalition for deforestation monitoring and investigation to ensure forest-related corporations complying with the timber legality regulations. This OIG also supports funding for the works of the coalition and then advocates findings from the field to the national government. OIG 8 has done lobbies through outside lobbies by way of raising illegal logging issues using media campaigns. Meanwhile, OIG 9 has engaged since the very initial step of the timber legality policy development. This OIG has assisted to develop the definition and standard of the Indonesian timber legality system. In general, these three OIGs do lobbies, therefore, are located at the top of Y (+). Furthermore, the position of OIG 34 is at the top of Y (-), this OIG is dependent on a person affiliated as a government official in the Ministry of Forestry and Environment, one of the main designers of the social forestry policy. This person is involved as the founder and becomes the senior advisor of this OIG. Although this OIG also claims that its institution is not supported by any other donors unlike common public OIGs in Indonesia- not financially supported by the individual government- its dependent behavior can be reflected from the very close cooperation and coordination with the government person.

## **5. Discussions and conclusions**

In this paper, we endeavored to develop an analytical framework to assess the roles of NGOs in forest/ environmental policy-making processes. NGOs are, as most of the traditional and normative conceptualizations viewed, as a-political and non-partisan focusing on benevolent promises (Martens, 2002; Brass et al., 2018). We have witnessed the proliferation and evolution of NGOs at both international and domestic levels with diverse profiles, activities, interests, and strategies to influence policy-making processes. Bearing this in mind, we used the conceptualization of OIGs that articulate specific interests of the group in governments' policy-making (Williamson, 1989; Krott, 2005; Cook et al., 2017). We encourage the use of OIGs terminology rather than NGOs to move out from the normative concepts to be more caught up with empirics, particularly for academic analysis. We specifically developed a heuristic typology to differentiate more between the wide array of existent OIGs based on two basic roles of OIGs within a democratic political system, the extent to which they represent their constituents and the extent they can exert political influence on the government.

We hypothesized OIGs in between two extreme categories. At one end, an OIG fulfills their roles, representing their groups' interests and succeeding in exerting political influence based on those interests to the government. At the other end, an OIG may instead play as a government tool to succeed its interests, this type of OIG is used by the government to influence their groups to follow government preferences. Indeed, there are several types of OIGs along this continuum. We tested our hypotheses, trying to configure and locate the Indonesian OIGs engaged in the timber legality and social forestry policies. We found that in general, most OIGs are heading to fulfilling the claim

i.e. representing the groups' interests and succeed in exerting political influence on the government based on common interests. We also found that only a few OIGs are at the extreme position, i.e. opposing the claim, becoming the government agent rather than a participation vehicle of civil societies, a worse case of the relationship between OIGs and the government. Finally, we also found some other OIGs distributed in other positions in our framework. These findings prove that our framework is working and can be used to clarify the claim of OIGs in democratic environmental governance.

The empirics from Indonesian OIGs encourage us to make some clarifications on the roles of OIGs in democratic governance. We, therefore, propose typologies of OIGs based on the extent they fulfill their roles in representing the groups' interests and in exerting political influence on the government. We classify OIGs into three main groups with a total of 9 typologies. The first group i.e. heading to fulfilling the claim consists of ideal OIGs, authentic OIGs, and compliant OIGs. **Ideal OIGs** are OIGs that do represent the interests of particular groups within societies and succeed in exerting influence on the government based on common interests. **Authentic OIGs** are OIGs that do represent the interests of particular groups within societies though do not necessarily succeed in advocating them to the government. **Compliant OIGs** are OIGs that attempt to represent the interest of particular groups within societies but more accommodate the interests of the government in fact. The second group i.e. breaking the claim includes professional OIGs, pragmatic OIGs, and technocratic OIGs. **Professional OIGs** are OIGs with high resources and capacities that are able to influence the government but the exerted influences are not based on the interests of any particular groups within societies. **Pragmatic OIGs** are OIGs that ignore both representing the interests of particular groups within society and exerting political influence on the government. **Technocratic OIGs** are OIGs that enjoy their actions by themselves and at the same time implement the government interests. The third group i.e. opposing the claim contains dominant OIGs, extensional OIGs, and obedient OIGs. **Extensional OIGs** consist of OIGs which are affiliated or part of international organization networks that have high capacities and resources to influence domestic policies. **Proxical OIGs** are OIGs that are also established by their international affiliations but do not succeed to influence domestic policies. **Obedient OIGs** are OIGs that have no independence at all from the government and are used to achieve government goals, Eldrig (1989) mentioned such roles as 'arm of government'.

Without discouraging existing typologies of OIGs, we contribute these typologies to also can be used by other disciplines other than environmental governance. While having promised, we understand that our framework still needs improvement and advancement. We further may need to use quantitative analysis for plotting OIGs' positions in the X and Y dimension, to visualize more randomized positions. We also faced challenges in putting OIGs which are indicated powerful particularly when they are interconnected in a network, difficult to parse which one is really powerful. Strong triangulation with other actors engaged in the same issue therefore is entailed



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**Declaration of interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:



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Supplementary Material 1: The complete list, categorization, and coding of OIG

Code of OIG	Name of OIG	Focal issues		The type of OIG
		Timber legality	Social forestry	
1	APHI	✓		Economic OIG
2	APKINDO	✓		Economic OIG
3	ISWA	✓		Economic OIG
4	ASMINDO	✓		Economic OIG
5	HIMKI	✓		Economic OIG
6	The Forest Trust	✓		Public OIG
7	WWF Indonesia	✓		Public OIG
8	Greenpeace Indonesia	✓		Public OIG
9	The Nature conservancy Indonesia	✓		Public OIG
10	WRI	✓	✓	Public OIG
11	IDH		✓	Public OIG
12	KEHATI	✓	✓	Public OIG
13	Samdhana Institute		✓	Public OIG
14	Partnership	✓	✓	Public OIG
15	FWI	✓		Public OIG
16	ICEL	✓		Public OIG
17	Kaoem Telapak	✓		Public OIG
18	Auriga	✓		Public OIG
19	JPIK	✓		Public OIG
20	LATIN	✓	✓	Public OIG
21	RMI		✓	Public OIG
22	DKN	✓	✓	Public OIG
23	LEI	✓		Public OIG
24	FKKM		✓	Public OIG

25	AMAN		✓	Public OIG
26	HuMa		✓	Public OIG
27	YLBHI	✓	✓	Public OIG
28	WALHI	✓	✓	Public OIG
29	BRWA		✓	Public OIG
30	KPSHK		✓	Public OIG
31	JKPP		✓	Public OIG
32	Epistema Institute		✓	Public OIG
33	Sajogyo Institute		✓	Public OIG
34	Yayasan Kehutanan Indonesia		✓	Public OIG
35	JAVLEC	✓	✓	Public OIG
36	ARUPA	✓	✓	Public OIG
37	Serikat Petani Pasundan		✓	Public OIG
38	KARSA	✓	✓	Public OIG
39	WARSI		✓	Public OIG
40	SS PUNDI	✓	✓	Public OIG
41	JIKALAHARI	✓	✓	Public OIG
42	SAMPAN		✓	Public OIG
43	LBBT		✓	Public OIG
44	SCF		✓	Public OIG
45	Perkumpulan Bantaya		✓	Public OIG

Supplementary Material 2. A: The complete list of OIG interviewees

Code of OIG	Name of OIG	Interviewee's Position	Time	Platform
1	APHI	Advisory board	June 16, 2020	Zoom
2	APKINDO	Assistant for Raw Materials, Production and Marketing	June 9, 2020	Zoom
3	ISWA	Chairman	May 22, 2020	WhatsApp call
4	ASMINDO	Chairman	May 20, 2020	Zoom
5	HIMKI	Chairman of organization division	June 4, 2020	WhatsApp call
6	The Forest Trust	Staff	October 2, 2020	Questionnaires
7	WWF Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of policy and advocacy</li> <li>• Program coordinator</li> <li>• Ex-CEO</li> <li>• Coordinator fundraising program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 9, 2020</li> <li>• May 20, 2020</li> <li>• June 11, 2020</li> <li>• 16 January 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WhatsApp call</li> <li>• WhatsApp call</li> <li>• Face to face</li> <li>• WhatsApp call</li> </ul>
8	Greenpeace Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public engagement and action manager</li> <li>• Action team leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 19, 2020</li> <li>• May 22, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skype</li> <li>• Skype</li> </ul>
9	The Nature conservancy Indonesia	Senior advisor	January 16 & May 21, 2020	Zoom
10	WRI	Forest legality analyst	May 19, 2020	Zoom
11	IDH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director</li> <li>• Program Manager Landscapes and Commodities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 17, 2020</li> <li>• January 15, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom</li> <li>• Zoom</li> </ul>
12	KEHATI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program director on sustainable palm oil</li> <li>• Program coordinator on social forestry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 5, 2020</li> <li>• May 7, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skype</li> <li>• Zoom</li> </ul>
13	Samdhana Institute	Director	May 11, 2020	Skype
14	Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program director on sustainable governance</li> <li>• Specialist consultant on social forestry issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 2, 2020</li> <li>• May 12, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skype</li> <li>• Zoom</li> </ul>
15	FWI	Chairman of the governing body	January 15 & May 15, 2020	WhatsApp call
16	ICEL	Researcher	May 26, 2020	Questionnaires
17	Kaoem Telapak	Chairman	May 17, 2020	Skype

18	Auriga	Chairman	May 13 &16, 2020	Skype
19	JPIK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chairman</li> <li>Advisory board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 11, 2020</li> <li>January 15, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom</li> <li>WhatsApp call</li> </ul>
20	LATIN	Program director	May 7, 2020	Skype
21	RMI	Executive director	May 21, 2020	Skype
22	DKN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government representative in the OIG</li> <li>Civil society representative in the OIG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January 20, 2020</li> <li>January 15, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WhatsApp call</li> <li>WhatsApp call</li> </ul>
23	LEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive director</li> <li>Staff (engaged in the SVLK policy processes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 19, 2020</li> <li>June 10, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom and Questionnaires</li> <li>Zoom</li> </ul>
24	FKKM	Chairman	February 11, 2020	WhatsApp call
25	AMAN	Secretary general in political affairs	January 18 & June 19, 2020	WhatsApp call
26	HuMa	Executive director	May 14, 2020	Skype
27	YLBHI	Chairman of knowledge management	May 18, 2020	Zoom
28	WALHI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert staff in social forestry issue</li> <li>Expert staff in social forestry issue</li> </ul>	June 3, 2020	Zoom (both together)
29	BRWA	Chairman	June 8, 2020	Zoom
30	KPSHK	Director	May 9, 2020	Zoom
31	JKPP	National coordinator	May 12, 2020	Skype
32	Epistema Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive director</li> <li>Ex-expert staff in social forestry issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 13, 2020</li> <li>May 13, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionnaires</li> <li>Questionnaires</li> </ul>
33	Sajogyo Institute	Secretary of the foundation	May 7, 2020	Zoom
34	Yayasan Kehutanan Indonesia	Executive director	May 15, 2020	WhatsApp call
35	JAVLEC	Advisory board	June 12, 2020	Zoom
36	ARUPA	Chairman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 3, 2018</li> <li>April 11, 2019</li> <li>February 21, 2020</li> <li>April 9, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face to face</li> <li>Face to face</li> <li>Face to face</li> <li>Skype</li> </ul>

37	Serikat Petani Pasundan	Advisory board	June 22, 2020	Zoom
38	KARSA	Executive director	February 21, 2020	Face to face
39	WARSI	Advisory board	May 13 & 16, 2020	Zoom
40	SS PUNDI	Advisory board (ex-director)	May 14, 2020	Zoom
41	JIKALAHARI	Coordinator	May 18, 2020	Zoom
42	SAMPAN	Director	June 27, 2020	Zoom
43	LBBT	Executive director	June 30, 2020	Zoom
44	SCF	Secretary	May 6, 2020	Zoom
45	Perkumpulan Bantaya	Executive director	May 21, 2020	Zoom

Supplementary Material 2. B: The complete list of non-OIG interviewees

No.	Interviewee	Time	Platform
1	Ex-director general of social forestry and environmental partnerships (the issuance of the national social forestry policy)	June 8, 2020	Zoom
2	Academia who led the process of the timber legality policy development	June 3, 2020	Phone call
3	Ex-director general of forestry and environmental planning (the issuance of social forestry policy in Java) and also as Lecturer in the first author's faculty	February 2020 (and also regularly attending his courses from 2017-2018)	Face to face
4	Senior activist for social-related forest issues	April 7, 2020	Skype
5	Scholar activist of social forestry issues	June 19, 2020	Zoom and phone call
6	Scholar activist of environmental movement	June 6, 2020	Zoom
7	Activist for legality and forest governance issues	Mei 27, 2020	Zoom
8	Senior activist for social-related environmental issues	June 26, 2020	WhatsApp call

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## Private forest in facing the timber legality regime in Indonesia: the NGOs' role

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# Private forest in facing the timber legality regime in Indonesia: the NGOs' role

D Laraswati<sup>1\*</sup>, S Rahayu<sup>1</sup>, A A Pratama<sup>1</sup>, E Soraya<sup>1</sup>, M A K Sahide<sup>2</sup> and A Maryudi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Forestry, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author's e-mail address: dwi.laraswati101094@gmail.com

**Abstract.** Private forest becomes a role model of sustainable forest management in Indonesia. Not only it is able to rehabilitate critical lands, but it also significantly contributes to meet the community daily needs and wood-based industries due to using agroforestry system as its management practice. However, in 2009 the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) of Indonesia decided to implement a timber legality assurance system as a mandatory instrument including for private forest. However, the administrations and procedures are complicated. Private forest thus faces new challenges to obey the complication of the system. NGOs are often mentioned as the most contributing actor in solving private forest difficulties. This paper thus attempts to shed light on the challenges faced by private forest because of the timber legality policy and how NGOs take their role.

## 1. Introduction

Private forest is envisaged as a forefront role model of sustainable forest management in Indonesia. It is privately managed by the communities as the owner, and commonly uses agroforestry system as its management practice which integrates seasonal plants with trees in the same space and time to result in high productivity of land [1]. Initially, private forest development in Indonesia has been used to rehabilitate critical lands, but currently it significantly contributes to meet the community daily needs as well as wood-based industries. Specifically to wood-based industries, the private forest becomes one of the promising sources to produce wood raw materials [2]. Timber production of private forest in Indonesia reaches more than 2 million cubics per year allocated for producing e.g. construction wood, furniture, pulp and paper, and others [3].

However, since the establishment of the Indonesian timber legality assurance system called SVLK (*Sistem Verifikasi dan Legalitas Kayu*) as a mandatory instrument, all timber harvested from private forest must be assured its legality through a set of assessment process. This is envisaged not taking sides to the private forest farmers, in which most of the farmers are rural communities with low capacity, encountering difficulties to accomplish the complication of SVLK process. The farmers reckon burdened by the costs that must be paid upfront before the assessment process conducted [4]. Even worse, despite the legally certified timber has been acquired, the timber premium price promised is still



uncertainty in the market [5]. The farmers with all limitations therefore inevitably entail assistance or guidance from other actors in facing these challenges.

In the growing literature, NGOs are touted as one of the major actors of the SVLK implementation [6, 7, 8], including supporting private forest farmers in the SVLK assessment process [9]. Their capability to gain and mobilise resources e.g. money, access and knowledge are indicated being primary capital in supporting the farmers in facing timber legality challenges [10,11]. Therefore, questions regarding what are challenges faced by private forest associated with timber legality implementation? which NGOs supports them? and in what forms they support? are will be answered by this paper. This paper is divided into five parts, this is the introduction, continued with overview of the timber legality assurance system in Indonesia, challenges faced by private forest on the timber legality implementation, NGOs and its roles, and conclusion.

## **2. Overview of the timber legality assurance system in Indonesia**

The Indonesian timber legality assurance system namely SVLK (*Sistem Verifikasi dan Legalitas Kayu*) was established by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) Indonesia in 2009 through P.38/Menhut-II/2009 application [12]. This establishment was triggered by massive illegal logging practice that has been occurring over the past few decades, significantly causing environmental degradation and widespread corruption and collusion between bureaucrats and businessmen [13]. While the voluntary market-based instruments i.e. sustainability-based certifications touted to improve forest governance has been intricate and so low uptake [14].

Moreover, the SVLK establishment and development are also inseparable from the influence of timber products consumers' countries e.g. the European Union (EU). The EU requires that all timber products imported to them must be from legal sources and sustainably managed [6]. In the early 2000s, the EU initiated Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) promoted through a bilateral Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the EU and exporting countries. The VPA becomes legally binding upon signature and ratification by both parties. The exporting countries agreed to cooperate under the FLEGT scheme are obliged to establish the national legality assurance system. As compliance on the FLEGT, the SVLK was eventually established and applied as a mandatory system for all forest management units, industries, traders and timber depots, and all export destinations [15]. In its development, the SVLK has been revised several times from the initial law P.38/Menhut-II/2009 to the latest P.30/Menlhk/Setjen/PHPL.3/3/2016 in order to conform to the FLEGT standards [14].

The implementation of SVLK is complex, multiple actors are engaged and interact in the SVLK system. Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) as regulator, the verification bodies (VBs) as party who conducts the SVLK assessment process, the national accreditation committee as accreditor to the VBs, civil society as independent monitor of the whole of SVLK process, and forest management units (FMUs) and industries as object of the policy [12]. This multiple actors' inclusion aims to preserve transparency and credibility of the SVLK, and the EU acknowledges that the SVLK system has been corresponding with the FLEGT standards. As a proud achievement, the SVLK eventually succeeded in becoming the first national legal system that obtains FLEGT license in 2015 [16]

However, despite FLEGT license has been obtained, the main goals of the SVLK to better forest governance as well as to improve community prosperity [15] have not been fully achieved. Within a decade many studies report that the SVLK implementation generally leads to less effective and efficient [17]. Illegal logging and trade remain to occur, and collusion and corruption are still mushrooming [18]. In addition, the SVLK is also only benefiting to some parties such as well-established FMUs and large wood-industries. In opposite, the SVLK becomes a big challenge for parties who have limited capacities and resources such as private forest [17].

## **3. Challenges of private forest on the timber legality implementation**

The SVLK endorses two types of certification i.e. sustainable forest management certificate namely *sertifikat pengelolaan hutan lestari* (S-PHPL) and timber legality certificate or *sertifikat legalitas kayu* (S-LK) [16]. According to the latest version of the SVLK Law (P.30/Menlhk/Setjen/PHPL.3/3/2016),

private forest is only obliged to obtain S-LK, and the assessment process is not proposed by individual private forest farmers but through farmers' groups [19]. The S-LK will be reached when a private forest group has already complied with legal compliance standards in gaining timber forest products. However, as long as 10 (ten) years of the SVLK implementation, legally certified area of private forest in Indonesia has just reached < 1% (less than one percent) of the total area, only as many as 42,672 hectares of 34.8 million hectares [20]. This indicates that obtaining the S-LK is not an easy task for private forest.

Economic and institutional factors become the main challenge for private forest. Economically, most of the private forest farmers in Indonesia are relatively low income. They utilise seasonal plants to meet their daily needs, while the timber is reserved for greater needs e.g. children education costs. With the enforcement of SVLK as a mandatory instrument, the private forest farmers' burden increases. They have to pay the assessment process costs upfront (start from 10 million rupiahs depending on the area to be certified) while the premium price promised after obtaining S-LK has not fully reliable. In addition, based on P.30/Menlhk/Setjen/PHPL.3/3/2016, the S-LK is only valid for 10 years from the time of issuance. After that, surveillance must be carried out at least once in two years after obtaining the S-LK, and the estimated cost is around 70-80% of the cost of the initial assessment process [20]. Therefore, private forest farmers need financial aid to sustainably obey the SVLK assessment process.

Regarded with institutional factor, readiness of private forest farmers' groups currently has not able to be independent in facing the SVLK assessment process. Most of them are low-level education so their knowledge, access, and experience regarding SVLK administration are relatively limited. While the assessment procedures are complicated, and the requirements are difficult. For instance, the forest farmers' group is asked to make a location map of their private forests [21]. This is difficult for the farmers, so they eventually are reluctant to do the SVLK assessment process. Therefore, intensive assistance from other capable actors becomes necessary. Other actors such as local government and non-government organisations can support them through e.g. providing consultations associated with the SVLK assessment process, and facilitating organisation training to increase the capacity of the farmers [20].

#### 4. NGOs and its roles

Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) are defined as organisations that are formal, voluntary, non-profit oriented, private, independent/non-partisan, and aim to promote common goals [22, 23, 24]. According to their concerns, there are NGOs focusing on environmental issues, human rights, development and others [25]. While based on working area, NGOs can be recognised as local NGOs, national NGOs and international NGOs.

In the case of SVLK, at least thirteen NGOs involved [19]. Some of them identified are environmental NGOs (ENGOS) such as Javlec (Java learning centre) and Arupa (*Aliansi rimbawan untuk penyelamatan alam*). Arupa and Javlec are local NGOs based in Yogyakarta. Both focus on the social-related forestry issues e.g. right and access of community, equity and related others. They contribute a lot to the development of private forests, particularly in Java Island.

In general, the NGOs' role in the SVLK assessment process can be divided into two main categories i.e. facilitating to obtain financial aid from donor and providing assistance to improve the farmers' group capacity [9, 19, 20]. In obtaining financial aid from international donors, NGOs currently have a greater opportunity. Most of the international development aid e.g. official development assistance (ODA) funds from the EU countries to southern countries is distributed via NGOs [26]. For instance, cooperation between Javlec and other ENGOS to improve effectiveness of the SVLK successfully gained financial support from the Department for International Development (DFID) Germany via Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP) II application in 2014. The project used nine private forest units as a learning model in districts such as Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, Temanggung, Bantul, Gunungkidul, Blitar, Tulung Agung, Nganjuk, and Trenggalek. The total area successfully certified was 5,443 hectares with beneficiaries of 18,447 families. This implies that the role of NGOs as facilitator related to obtaining funding indeed matters. However, Javlec remains to assert that the forest farmers' groups cannot always

depend upon donor aid, due to it is limited and temporary. More importantly, the farmers' group should be empowered in such a way so they can forward cover the surveillance costs independently [27].

Related to providing assistance, the private forest farmers' groups assisted by NGOs intensively are more successful in achieving certification compared to groups assisted by the government [19]. NGOs are envisaged more dynamics in conducting assistance, applying different processes and strategies depending on the communities' culture and needs. In October 2011, three private forest units in Java assisted by Arupa successfully obtained S-LK with the total area is above 2,000 thousand hectares and with beneficiaries of 7,000 families in districts such as Blora, Wonosobo, and Gunungkidul. Arupa said that in assisting the private forest farmers' group, they focus on three points i.e. 1) institutional preparation, 2) business management according to sustainable forest management, and 3) building capacity and support from multiple actors [9].

First, in the institutional preparation, mapping of private forest farmers' groups becomes a primary priority. This will determine whether the existing groups should be maintained or need to establish new groups. For instance, Arupa does not initiate a new private forest farmers' group in Semoyo village in Gunungkidul, but relies on the existing group namely *Serikat Petani Pembaharu* (SPP). Arupa and the group discussed strategies to be used inclusively together with the village government in order to evading overlapping with the existing village programs. But in other cases, Arupa facilitated the establishment of a new farmers' group. As for a new farmers' group need to be assisted in establishing a management board, making group rules, and preparing group legality [9].

Second, in 2015, Arupa hosted community business development training entitled "scaling up legality verified private forests and small and medium wood industries to increase supply for FLEGT licensed timber and timber products" in collaboration with the Indonesian Ecolabel Institute (LEI) and supported by the European Union (EU). The participants are the certified forest farmers' groups surrounding Yogyakarta. The purpose of the training is to encourage the acceleration of community business through increasing business institutional capacity and preparing a business plan for the private forest management unit or *Unit Manajemen Hutan Rakyat* (UMHR). The participants are expected to understand the format of professional business institutions for UMHR, able to see the potential of goods and services in their groups, and understand and draw up their business plan [28]. Arupa also adds that sustainable forest management principles should be implemented to ensure the business sustainability. Specifically for private forest, the principles comprise area management, annual felling ration, private forest development, logging or harvesting of private forests, marketing or post-production, environmental and social management, and forest management plans [9].

Lastly, Arupa conceives that capacity building, and support from multiple actors will foster the success of assistance activities and institutional sustainability of private forest management. Capacity building can be improved through training activities, and the topics proposed can include training of administration and management, finance, private forest inventory, and mapping. However, sometimes the private forest farmers' group needs additional training such as business unit, carbon accounting, saving and loan, and making organic fertilizer, depending on the conditions. In conducting the training, Arupa usually applies Training of Trainer (ToT) system, in which managers or members assumed have more capacity will be facilitated to be a trainer. Skills and knowledge of the farmers thus can be faster improved, and this will result in the effectiveness and efficiency of capacity building process [9].

## 5. Conclusion

The Indonesian timber legality assurance system called SVLK appears as a big challenge for private forest. Not easy for private forest farmers with low-level income and education to obey the SVLK system. They face unsupportive economically and institutionally conditions, which eventually call other actors to assist them. NGOs exist as problem solver over economic and institutional problems of private forest. There is an NGO that has success stories in facilitating private forest farmers' group to obtain financial aid from an international donor i.e. Javlec, while Arupa reaps achievements in assistance programs to capacity building. In running their role, NGOs likely tend to collaborate with other NGOs

and actors, how they collaborate, what are their common interests may offer a new area for research as they are beyond the scope of this paper.

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# Mandatory legality licensing for exports of Indonesian timber products: Balancing the goals of forest governance and timber industries

Ahmad Maryudi<sup>a,d,\*</sup>, Dwi Laraswati<sup>a</sup>, Muhammad A.K. Sahide<sup>b</sup>, Lukas Giessen<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Sebijak Institute (Center for Forest Policy & History Studies), Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

<sup>b</sup> *Faculty of Forestry, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia*

<sup>c</sup> *TU Dresden Department of Forest Sciences Institute of International Forestry and Forest Products, Dresden, Germany*

<sup>d</sup> *Dala Institute, Jakarta, Indonesia*

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## ABSTRACT

The government of Indonesia implements a Timber Legality Verification System (*Sistem Verifikasi Legalitas Kayu/SVLK*) as an instrument to improve forest governance and secure better trade linkages to foreign markets. It obliges all exports to be legally verified. Nonetheless, legality licensing has become increasingly controversial in the past decade because export policies keep changing whether to require the licensing for all types of products and scales of manufacturing. This paper discusses the pros and cons of mandatory legality licensing for exports. While overall there is a compelling argument that Indonesian exports have tended to increase in aggregate terms, different types and scales of forest industries have had different experiences with legality licensing. More specifically, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are experiencing with significant technical and financial burdens in contrast with the consummate ease with which larger manufacturers engage in legality. However, a complete termination of legality licensing for all exports, as was promoted and ruled on in early 2020, might not be the best viable solution. We argue that the termination will not necessarily result in a boost for SMEs, nor will such a decision solve challenges faced by small operators in engaging in global markets. Such a measure could also be viewed as a violation of the country's Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the European Union (EU). Instead, we recommend revisions to the legality systems and its policies, addressing the key issues and challenges that SMEs face and identifying support mechanisms for SMEs to navigate adverse impacts. In deregulating the legality policy, the Government of Indonesia will also need to establish communication and dialogues with the EU to explore the potential of opening new negotiations on any recommended amendments.

## 1. Introduction

The Indonesian timber legality assurance system (*Sistem Verifikasi Legalitas Kayu/SVLK*) is implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) and is envisioned as a governance reform that serves as an instrument to tackle illegal logging (Hasyim et al., 2020; Tacconi et al., 2019; Laraswati et al., 2020). The policy was also anticipated to help improve the reputation of Indonesian timber products with the far-reaching aim of securing better trade linkages that helped to access markets and boost exports (Winkel et al., 2018). To further support these goals, Indonesia signed and ratified a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU), which obligated all the country's timber exports (both to EU and non-EU markets) to provide legality licensing.

Mandatory legality licensing for exports has nonetheless been an increasing source of controversy, centering on are centered on the issue of its accessibility by different types of manufacturers and the implications for markets and trades. Since it began implementation in 2012, a series of regulatory changes governing exports of forest products began to revisit issues of scope, types of products covered, operations, and timeline to enforce compulsory requirements of legality licensing (Section 2). Export legality licensing was recently reinforced through Regulation P.45/2020 after being briefly overruled in early 2020. It however continues to spark the negative feedback. A network of industry and trade observers has since penned an open letter to the President of Indonesia to reconsider mandatory legality licensing on downstream industries (see *Gramedia Post*, 2020), signaling further contentious policy developments.

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [ahmad\\_maryudi@ugm.ac.id](mailto:ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id) (A. Maryudi).

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This commentary paper discusses the pros and cons of mandatory legality licensing for exports. Centering around analyses of lessons learned from the serial regulatory changes, this paper observes the potential implications of a termination of legality licensing policy (if implemented) from a governance and trade perspective. The paper also explores policy options and recommendations for relevant legality-related policymakers to help guide them in exercising better policies to achieve the dual goals of maintaining commitments on improving forest governance while fostering improvements in national timber industries.

## 2. Legality licensing for exports: the storyline

Formally legislated in 2009, MoEF's SVLK regulations oblige forest/timber production operations (upstream) and processing industries (downstream) to obtain a legality certificate demonstrating that their operations are conducted legally. Nevertheless, it took three years for the Ministry of Trade (MoT) to start legality licensing for exports. The provisions of these legality licenses (V-Legal) are a custom document for exports of timber products (processed and finished products, including rattan), and was first regulated in Regulation 64/2012. This regulation authorized legally verified manufacturers to use the legality licenses for conducting exports. However, exports of non-legally verified products were still allowed with inspections conducted prior to shipments (See Table 1).

Phased implementation schedule was introduced at the end of 2013, and delays were introduced until January 2015 for full-fledged legality licensing of exports on furniture and handicrafts by small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and artisans. The legality licensing was then further relaxed, culminating in an October 2015 policy that no longer required SMEs to submit legality stipulations for exports on several products (notably furniture and handicrafts). Administrative, technical, and financial burdens experienced by SMEs and artisans in engaging in legality licensing were behind the relaxation of the export policy.

The legality licensing regulation went through another change in the following year. As stipulated in Regulation No. 25/2016, the licensing policy was reinforced for all exports, including furniture and handicrafts. This was driven by the preparation of FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) Licensing, with which Indonesian timber products would be able to freely enter EU markets (Maryudi et al., 2015). The mandatory legality licensing for all exports was further sanctioned in Regulation 84 in December 2016 following the first shipment of FLEGT-Licensed Indonesian timber products. The fact that Indonesian products were granted with "green lane" access to EU markets appeared enough to persuade the reinforcement of mandatory legality licensing. Legality licensing for SMEs was to be subsidized to address concerns about their financial burdens.

In February 2020, as stipulated in Regulation 15/2020, the legality license was removed from the requirements of exports of timber products. The regulation only required verification and technical checks of the administrative information on exports. Regulation 15 aimed at simplifying procedures on exports of timber-based products and fostered investments on the national timber-based industries and exports. It was issued as a part of the government stimulus packages to navigate the potential adverse impacts of COVID-19. The origin of Regulation 15/2020 dated back to the MoEF-MoT "contract" in late 2018, which aimed to revise Regulation 84/2016 by "splitting" it into two complementary regulations, i.e., P15/2020 (focusing on verification/technical checks prior to shipments) and a new (revised) MoEF regulation on legality licensing.

Regulation 15/2020 came after extended policy advocacy conducted chiefly by the Indonesian Furniture and Craft Industry Association (*Himpunan Industri Mebel dan Kerajinan Indonesia, HIMKI*). Other forest/timber-related industry associations have formally expressed their confidence on the previous regulations (provisions of mandatory legality licensing for exports). Nevertheless, the regulation was later revoked,

**Table 1**  
Key regulations regarding mandatory legality licensing for exports.

Trade regulation	Date	Key features	Mandatory degree	Motives/Reasons
64/2012	October 22, 2012	Mandatory legality licensing for exports of processed and finished products (e.g. furniture) & rattan, but inspection still allowed for primary products (non-furniture)	Partial	Supporting enforcement of MoEF legality regulations and promises of better access to EU markets
81/2013	December 27, 2013	Phased implementation schedules of mandatory legality licensing, furniture products starting a year after regulation issuance	Partial	Allowing SMEs & artisans (mostly furniture) getting ready for mandatory V-Legal
97/2014	December 24, 2014	Legality Self Declaration replacing legality licensing for exports of furniture and crafts (by small and medium registered exporters)	Partial	Easing administrative & financial burdens on SMEs and artisans
89/2015	October 19, 2015	Exports of several products (mostly furniture) not required to use legality license, only statement raw materials from legally verified suppliers	Partial	Easing administrative & financial burdens on SMEs and artisans
25/2016	April 15, 2016	Mandatory legality licensing for all exports, including for furniture and handicrafts	Full mandatory	Observing trends of trade of legal products
84/2016	December 27, 2016	Mandatory legality licensing for all exports, legality verification of small industries subsidized	Full mandatory	Observing trends of trade of legal products; easing financial burdens on SMEs
15/2020	February 18, 2020	No references towards MoEF Regulation on legality, all exports only require technical inspection	Non mandatory	Simplifying export procedures & fostering investments on timber-based industries
45/2020	May 11, 2020	Revocation of P. 15/2020, mandatory legality licensing for all exports, including for furniture and handicrafts	Full mandatory	Responding protests from civil society groups

following intensive pressure from civil society groups and some factions of private sector. As of December 2020, legality licensing for all exports is still reinforced.

### 3. Differing levels of confidence on legality: effects on Indonesian exports

The Indonesian forest/timber sector is highly fragmented and diverse, from vertically integrated operations (such as pulp and paper industry, woodworking/plywood) to the labor-intensive SMEs and home industries of furniture (Maryudi and Myers, 2018). As previously mentioned, the debates on mandatory legality licensing in Indonesia are centered on the issue of accessibility of the legality systems by different types of forest operations and the implications for their operations, markets and trades.

On the one hand, the main legality advocates usually use the aggregate term (the national level) to point out the positive impacts of legality on the exports. The Indonesian exports of timber products have markedly increased in terms of value and quantity over the period between 2014 and 2018 (SILK, 2020). The major rise was recorded by pulp and paper products, with slight increases also recorded for woodworking, furniture, and handicrafts. A recent report from the [International Tropical Timber Organization \(2020\)](#) mentions that Indonesia has started to benefit from legality licensing.

On the other hand, critics point out challenges facing small-scale forestry sector and artisanal operations, particularly in terms of the extra costs and efforts involved in legality verification and mandatory licensing. HIMKI is at the forefront of this, particularly in the face of unclear -if non-existent- incentives offsetting the associated costs that would have instead persuaded them to engage in legality (Erbaugh et al., 2017). Several studies (Obidzinski et al., 2014; Setyowati and McDermott, 2017; Acheampong and Maryudi, 2020; Maryudi et al., 2020) have also reported that many small businesses have faltered during legality implementation. In some cases, they were ironically forced to conduct illegal practices to sustain their business, in contrast to the consummate ease with which larger manufacturers engaged in legality (Maryudi and Myers, 2018).

Drawing clear links between legality implementation and sale/export levels is challenging because it involves many other factors, including market situations, competition, consumer preferences, designs of products, and influencing trade of timber products. What has become clearer is that there are diverse conditions that are experienced in different ways by different types and scales of industries. Overall, legality licensing is more accessible for larger manufacturers and operators than for SMEs as only a small fraction of SMEs in Indonesia is legally verified (Maryudi and Myers, 2018). This was identified as a pressing governance challenge that the legality policy initially sought to address.

However, removing legality licensing altogether for export requirements does not necessarily mean that SME exports will be boosted, nor does it solve the challenges facing small operators in engaging in global markets. In EU markets, for example, without FLEGT Licenses, Indonesian products will have to follow due diligence procedures, which can be complex and costly. An analysis from the Global Timber Forum (2015) reveals the costs of due diligence, which could outstrip those of legality verification (Maryudi, 2020). Due diligence may also open the possibility for voluntary chain of custody certification, which many Indonesian timber manufacturers already participate in. For example, as of December 2019, nearly 300 companies (mostly woodworking/panel and furniture) have been CoC-certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC, 2020). However, voluntary certification does not necessarily solve the overall issues of accessibility by different types of forest operations, thereby proving the issues will remain present from those experienced during mandatory legality licensing.

One may also consider other markets other than the EU, which have not explicitly required SVLK-styled legality license for Indonesian products to enter. Those markets have not explicitly required SVLK-styled legality license for Indonesian products to enter. In fact, Asian countries, notably China, Japan, and Republic of Korea (India, Malaysia, and Taiwan to a lesser extent) remain the main export destinations for Indonesian timber products (SILK, 2020). However, Indonesia is

contractually tied by its VPA with the EU and cannot unilaterally choose to make legality optional for non-EU markets. It may seek to do so, but this step needs to be done through bilateral consultations, negotiations, and eventual revisions of the VPA and relevant annexes. Furthermore, legality licensing may later offer competitive advantages for Indonesian products, especially when the recent trends on legality policies in main export destinations are strongly enforced.

### 4. Mandatory legality licensing: looking ahead

There are intensive ongoing discussions and consultations taking place between MoEF, MoT, and related stakeholders on the future of legality licensing for exports, which seek to consider how legality licensing can best serve and balance the goals of forest governance and timber industries. A complete termination of legality licensing, as was stipulated in the eventually annulled Regulation 15/2020, might not be the best viable solution given its potential adverse political consequences. It might be viewed as a violation of EU-Indonesia's VPA. Although the bilateral agreement was made on a voluntary basis, it is legally binding after ratification. Following the issuance of Regulation 15/2020, an EU delegation sent a *Note Verbale*, requesting an emergency meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee. It highlighted the function that the Indonesia-EU VPA will be "unilaterally and unacceptably affected". The delegate further indicated that grounds exist for the invocation on the suspension of the VPA, in line with Article 21 of the VPA.

Indonesia indeed has the option to exit the agreement at any stage but doing so would be a diplomatic blunder and may politically harm its standing in international relations and other cooperation initiatives. Instead, the Government of Indonesia may need to establish communication and dialogues with the EU and explore the potential of opening new negotiations on the potential amendments on the VPA, including the potential relaxation of legality licensing as a safeguard measure to address concerns about the ability of SMEs to engage in legality.

There is a valid argument that relaxation of the export policy might be problematic itself as a robust legality system needs the verification of timber movements along its supply chains (Meridian et al., 2018). Partly, this is because the Indonesian legality policy only applies to production forests (in the case of state forests) and does not cover protection and conservation forests on which logging is prohibited. Logging is prohibited in both forest types. When legality policy is implemented in the upstream (forests) only, timber from unclear sources (illegal timber), including timber from protected and conservation forests and imported timber cannot be verified. Hence, as some legality advocates argue, it creates loopholes in the legality system and poses further questions about country commitments in tackling illegal logging (Suradiredja, 2020).

Nonetheless, there are several types of forest operations that could be excluded from legality licensing (e.g. private smallholder forests and planted trees), especially the species (e.g. teak) that are increasingly considered under a "low risk" category. Although not legally verified, this does mean that they are illegal (see Nurrochmat et al., 2016). Over the past 15 years, numerous furniture manufacturers in Indonesia have heavily relied on timber sourced from private smallholder planted forests (see Maryudi et al., 2015). In fact, legality verification for private smallholder timber production has been relaxed in legality regulations and replaced with a legality declaration instead. Hence, similar deregulation for downstream processing industries, particularly SMEs, manufacturing timber originated from smallholder timber producers is a potential option to address concerns about their ability to engage in legality.

### 5. Conclusions and policy recommendations

In this paper, we discuss the ongoing controversies regarding mandatory legality licensing for exports of all types of timber products

to all export destinations. The Indonesian timber legality system was introduced to address illegal logging, improve forest governance, to help improve the reputation of timber products and ensure continued access to key foreign markets. While there is a strong argument that Indonesian exports increased, there is also increasing evidence of varying effects across different types and scales of forest industries engaging in legality licensing. More specifically, the challenges and difficulties facing small manufacturers, in contrast with larger operators, highlights the way that legality licensing is increasingly burdening SMEs.

Nonetheless, we do not advocate the termination of legality licensing for exports. First, doing so could be viewed as a violation of an international agreement, and termination would thereafter result in a series of cascading impacts. Such a decision would be a diplomatic blunder and risks Indonesia's political standing if the country decides to exit the VPA. In addition, implementation trends are heading towards more stringent legality regulations, not only in the EU, but also in other key target export destinations of Indonesia's timber products, and foregoing legality licensing will only weaken Indonesia's broader export potential. We instead promote revisions on the legality systems and policies, addressing the key issues and challenges, such as how to navigate the potential adverse impacts on legality policy experienced by specific industries, especially for SMEs. We promote the legality policy being deregulated in ways that entail more simplified processes and reduce cost burdens for engaging in verification processes. The process should be improved to be more accessible for SMEs, and this should be done through streamlined mechanisms and procedures for low-risk timber species (timber from private lands and plantations) and simplifying requirements for certain industries whose timber supplies originate from low-risk sources.

In deregulating the legality policy, the Government of Indonesia first needs to establish communication and dialogue with the EU to explore the potential of opening new negotiations on the potential amendments on the VPA. The success of such a dialogue requires a mutual understanding between both parties on the various key aspects of timber trade governance in ways that help to gain mutual benefits. More specifically, the dialogues need to be focused on the definition and scope of legality as well as coverage of mandatory legality licensing to reflect the existing situation.

Domestically, synergies and communication approaches need to be established. The series of regulatory changes regarding mandatory legality licensing for exports also indicates differing priorities and policy goals between different ministries. To address these differences, the legality policy should be orchestrated under high-level regulatory frameworks, e.g. presidential decrees/regulations. This measure will take time, so we recommend the MoEF to swiftly proceed with the formulation of complementary measures to ensure the credibility and sustainability of the Indonesian legality system if the MoT eventually decides not to require legality licenses for exports of timber products. Credible law enforcement measures must also be strengthened to ensure legality.

At a broader context, to improve access to foreign markets, future policy discussions should not be relegated to whether legality licensing is required. The government and timber industries should therefore also need to begin pondering other factors, such as ways to improve marketing strategies and product designs, which are also fundamental issues shaping the markets.

#### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial

interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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# Challenges facing independent monitoring networks in the Indonesian timber legality assurance system

Zainuri Hasyim<sup>a</sup>, Dwi Laraswati<sup>b</sup>, Ris H. Purwanto<sup>b</sup>, Andita A. Pratama<sup>b</sup>, Ahmad Maryudi<sup>b,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Jaringan Pemantau Independen Kehutanan (JPIK), Bogor, Indonesia*

<sup>b</sup> *Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

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## ABSTRACT

The Indonesian timber legality verification system was launched ten years ago with the objective of eradicating illegal logging and improving domestic forest governance. At the heart of the legality system, independent monitoring (IM) was designed as an innovation to ensure its credibility and legitimacy. This paper analyzes the challenges facing IM networks in the Indonesian timber legality assurance system and examines what lessons can be learned to further develop ideas and strategies that strengthen the effectiveness of their activities. The current experience in Indonesia suggests that IM still faces some major structural challenges to fulfill high expectations. Above all, the existence and roles of IM bodies within the legality system are not yet fully understood and are often questioned by other stakeholders. There has been some degree of skepticism about their impartiality. IM is also constrained by the limited personnel available to manage it. This situation is not aided by the complex administrative requirements to become involved in IM activities. Access to data and information is another challenge that may hinder the role IM can play in fostering good forest governance. Furthermore, IM relies heavily on donor funding to finance their project-based activities. IM bodies need to explore models and schemes for more sustainable funding for their activities.

## 1. Introduction

This year marks ten years since the Government of Indonesia (GoI) launched *Sistem Verifikasi Legalitas Kayu/ SVLK* (timber legality verification system), which aims to eradicate illegal logging and improve domestic forest governance (Obidzinski et al., 2014). By the end of the 1990s, illegal logging was regarded as one of the most chronic forest problems in Indonesia (Luttrell et al., 2011; Maryudi and Myers, 2018). It pervasively occurred there due to poor governance, ambiguous and overlapping policies, and weak law enforcement, among other reasons (Luttrell et al., 2011; Tacconi et al., 2019). This domestic legality policy development also fits with global trade-governance regimes such as the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Initiative of the European Union (EU). In fact, the GoI participated in the FLEGT-Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) and has become the first country in the world to issue a FLEGT license, which provides the country's timber products with green-lane access to European markets (Maryudi et al., 2017).

At the heart of the legality system, independent monitoring (IM) was designed as an innovation to ensure its credibility and legitimacy (Maryudi, 2016). In fact, IM is formally enshrined in SVLK legislations.

Registered IM bodies are expected to actively participate in monitoring the compliance with regulations by companies/industries, verification bodies, the national accreditation, and licensing authorities (van Midwoud and van Bodegom, 2006v). They may also channel the involvement of wider civil societies in monitoring activities. This paper asks whether the IM designs are adequate to ensure the credibility and legitimacy of the Indonesian legality assurance system and to contribute to improving the quality of forest governance in Indonesia. It analyzes challenges facing the existing IM-designed networks and examines the lessons that can be learned to further develop ideas and strategies to strengthen its effectiveness in promoting good forest governance.

This commentary is mostly based on personal reflections, principally by the first author, who has been involved with IM networks since their formative phases. Between 2014 and 2016, he was also the national dynamist (coordinator) of the Indonesian Network of Independent Monitoring (*Jaringan Pemantau Independen Kehutanan/ JPIK*). Several parts of this paper may also reflect the position of the three other monitoring bodies/coalitions (see Section 2), with whom the first author has intimately interacted through various workshops and national policy forums and discussions on the Indonesian legality

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [ahmad\\_maryudi@ugm.ac.id](mailto:ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id) (A. Maryudi).

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system. His vast experience in IM is complemented by the other authors' experiences; they have been involved in SVLK in some capacity since its formative phases.

## 2. SVLK and IM: an overview

SVLK was initiated in the early 2000s amidst growing domestic and international concerns about the adverse impacts of illegal logging and its associated trades. In 2002, the GoI started multi-stakeholder processes for preparing a national legality system as a part of its bilateral agreement with the government of the United Kingdom and later the preparation of a VPA with the EU (Maryudi, 2016). The legality system was finally instituted in 2009 through the Ministerial Regulation P.38/Menhut-II/2009. The government maintains full authority over the system and mandates external parties for enforcement (Cashore and Stone, 2012). Verification is executed by a verification/certification body (VB/CB) accredited by the National Accreditation Committee (Komite Akreditasi Nasional/ KAN). IM bodies are formally instituted in SVLK to oversee the system through monitoring practices by forest concessions/industries, accreditation, and verification processes.

To date, there are currently four IM bodies in Indonesia: *Jaringan Pemantau Independen Kehutanan* (JPIK), *Aliansi Pemantau Independen Kehutanan Sumatera* (APIKS), *Eyes on the Forest* (EoF), and *Koalisi Anti Mafia Hutan* (KAMH). JPIK was established during a workshop on SVLK implementation in 2010 by 29 non-governmental organizations and their networks. JPIK's establishment was facilitated by *Perkumpulan Telapak*, who was actively involved in both forest-related investigations and SVLK policy processes. Complementing the national committee structure based in Bogor, JPIK has 24 provincial-level focal points. It currently has 88 organization members and 528 individuals. APIKS was also established in 2010 as a response by civil societies in Sumatra to the implementation of legality verification in Indonesia. Its memberships cover both organizations and individuals, including academics. Coordinated by SSS Pundi, it has nodes in each Sumatran province. During its declaration, the first node was established for Riau Province, consisting the following organizations: *Yayasan Kaliptra*, *Yayasan Elang*, *Yayasan Hakiki*, and *Kabut Riau*. Each provincial node has a degree of autonomy, including allowed collaboration with non-member organizations.

KAMH consists of the Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW), *Perkumpulan untuk Pembaruan Hukum Berbasis Masyarakat dan Ekologis* (HuMa), *Epistema Institute*, *Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria* (KPA), *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia* (WALHI), *Jaringan Kerja Pemetaan Partisipatif* (JKPP), *Sylvagama* (Auriga), *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* (AMAN), *Jaringan Advokasi Tambang* (JATAM), *Sawit Watch*, the *Indonesia Center for Environment Law* (ICEL), *Forum Komunikasi Kehutanan Masyarakat* (FKKM), and *PUSAKA*. KAMH's establishment was particularly driven by the termination of police investigation into 13 companies that committed illegal logging in Riau. In 2014, KAMH swiftly released an independent study report on SVLK certification after the EU parliament ratified the VPA between the EU and Indonesia. Established in 2014, *Eyes in the Forest* (EoF) is an NGO coalition from West Kalimantan (Titian and WWF-West Kalimantan), and Riau (WWF Riau, WALHI Riau, and Jikalahari). Its work focuses on forest conservation issues and indigenous rights and communities, but later became engaged in monitoring activities of timber legality.

## 3. Who can be involved in IM and how?

Good forest governance often emphasizes a more inclusive model that promotes multi-stakeholder processes, such as engaging wider elements of the public (Forsyth, 2010; Maryudi et al., 2018). This deliberative mode aims to ensure that relevant stakeholders have opportunities to be heard and to influence policymaking processes. The FLEGT Action Plan, which served as one of the main drivers for the Indonesian legality policy, also highlights the importance of

strengthening participation of relevant stakeholders (European Commission, 2003). To evaluate the dynamics of participation in IM activities in Indonesia, we analyse the types of stakeholders and the level and intensity of participation.

The newest SVLK regulation, i.e., Ministerial Decree P.30/MenLHK/Setjen/PHPL.3/3/2016, indicates that IM is an inclusive process in the way that all Indonesian citizens can be part of IM. It includes both individuals, such as local communities at the proximities of forest concessions, and legally-registered non-government organizations concerned with forest issues in Indonesia. However, there are administrative and technical requirements that limit the participation of wider civil societies. The ministerial decree clearly forbids international observers to get involved in monitoring. In addition, as inferred by Article 25 of the ministerial regulation, IM can only be conducted by members of registered IM bodies, contradicting the "all Indonesian citizens" provision. This requirement makes it difficult as IM bodies have limited formally-registered individuals and organizations for monitoring activities.

Arguments have been made in several policy discussions that the administrative requirements are not intended to limit participation of wider societies. Several stakeholders suggested that instead, they should specify the translation in a way that explains that IM requires technical competence and specific procedures. Several VB bodies have raised concerns about the level of understanding on SVLK, mastery of monitoring methods, and coordination among IM bodies and their members. In fact, in a national focus group discussion on SVLK, several VB bodies proposed an accreditation of technical competence of IM bodies and their members and monitoring methods. The formal regulation on IM procedures was said to be important for ensuring the responsibility of the IM members in conducting their monitoring. However, IM bodies feared that formal accreditation of IM bodies and registration of their members would put their independence at risk.

The requirement of presenting the organizational ID of a monitoring body as specified in Article 25 P.30/MenLHK/Setjen/PHPL.3/3/2016 has also become a high concern. IM bodies are generally convinced that undercover monitoring activities are more effective for finding evidence of law violation/contravention. They argue that formal monitoring may be meaningless as violators can conceal potential evidence. Formal registration of IM members has also been a high concern regarding their safety and security in executing monitoring activities (Meridian et al., 2018). For instance, JPIK members in Sorong (West Papua) were intimidated and threatened to death after the PT investigation. Rotua has become a spotlight in the mass media (Meridian et al., 2014). Although P.30/MenLHK/Setjen/PHPL.3/3/2016 (Article 26) specifies the protection of IM members from physical and psychological threats, IM bodies are concerned about its effectiveness as it needs strong commitments to its enforcement. In fact, the security issues of IM members have also been included in the final report of EU-Indonesia's Joint SVLK Review in 2013.

## 4. Interaction among IM bodies and with other stakeholders

One key element that determines the quality of a governance system is the quality of interaction and coordination of stakeholder or policy actors (Secco et al., 2014; Maryudi and Sahide, 2017). Good interaction guarantees and facilitates continuous and genuine dialogs that build trust, understanding, and acceptance among relevant stakeholders (Bickerstaff et al., 2002; Innes and Booher, 2003).

An IM body can work independently and/or collaborate with other networks/coalitions. IM coalitions believe that monitoring is the work of networking; therefore, there should be effective communication and coordination among IM bodies. Collaborative monitoring offers several advantages, such as cost-sharing and mutual learning. There have been joint workshops, discussions, and trainings that provide a platform for IM bodies to share necessary information related to monitoring activities, such as basic data on companies being monitored as well as

monitoring results. In addition, in 2015, all four IM coalitions conducted a joint monitoring activity in several provinces in Sumatera, Kalimantan, and Java and Papua islands. Nonetheless, such collaboration is not yet institutionalized. In most cases, each IM coalition works independently of one another. Even within a monitoring body, coordination among members remains a challenge.

More importantly is how IM bodies interact with other stakeholders within the legality system. That is, forest concessions and industries, verification bodies, and the national accreditation body can crucially determine their contribution to improving forest governance in the country. There are several practical and structural challenges that hinder IM roles. IM often draws negative views; for instance, there has been some degree of distrust among VB bodies toward IM activities despite claiming the importance of IM for system legitimacy, principally with the certificates issued (see the Joint Press Release of Independent Monitoring Bodies, August 31<sup>st</sup> 2016)<sup>1</sup>. Several VB bodies felt their audits were being excessively scrutinized. The resistance to IM bodies is due to the negative perception on the part of NGOs who are perceived as always in confrontation with the government and the private sector. Several companies argue that NGOs should not be involved in auditing processes. IM bodies believe that these negative perceptions hinder their activities. They face difficulties in accessing timber companies, for example. IM bodies understand that they need to improve their communication with other stakeholders. They need to convince VB bodies that they are not an auditing competitor. Instead, IM bodies can complement their work, providing input on certain issues that might have been missed during the legality verification.

## 5. Access to public data and information

Transparency is often used as an instrumental tool for assessing the quality of forest governance. It is a moral imperative closely associated with legitimate and democratic governance (Gupta, 2008). Transparency is often discussed in relation to access to information (Lyster, 2011). With regard to IM designs, Article 24 of the Decree of Ministry of Environment and Forestry P.30/MenLHK/Setjen/PHPL.3/3/2016 stipulates that independent monitoring bodies are entitled to obtain data and information from SVLK stakeholders, including VBs, forest concessions/industries, KAN, and bureaucracy offices, and access to specific sites for their monitoring activities. The work of IM bodies is further empowered by Law No. 14/2008 on Disclosure of Public Information and the Ministerial Decree No. 7/Menhut-II/2011. Regarding legality verification, access to data and information is further regulated in the Regulation of the General Director No. 14/2016 and Annex IX of the EU-Indonesia's VPA, both of which specify data types and disclosure levels.

For preliminary studies of monitoring forest concessions and timber industries, IM bodies usually need the concession map, annual working plans, and timber stock take plans (*Rencana Pemenuhan Bahan Baku Industri/RPBBI*). Although these documents are categorized as openly available, IM bodies lament that they cannot be easily accessed. RPBBI, which is important for tracking timber origins and uses, is not regularly updated by MoEF and Provincial Forest Services. This difficulty is partly associated with the poor and even non-existent office of information and document management (*Pejabat Pengelola Informasi dan Dokumen/PPID*) at local-level governments. Similarly, audit processes (the plans, public consultation) and reports and summaries are not always published as required by the national legality system. IM bodies believe that several auditing bodies often hide behind their clients' confidentiality.

Long legal cases have taken place only to obtain clarity about the disclosure status of certain information. For instance, it took 17 months

for FWI and JPIK to obtain clarity of information on Hak Guna Usaha (HGU) of the Ministry of Agrarian and Spatial Planning/National Land Administration Bureau (see [Forest Watch Indonesia/ FWI, 2016](#)). In addition, no one responded to the five-month legal lodging by Auriga, a member of KAMH, to obtain annual plans of a forest concession in Papua. Even when the legal lodging is successful, the necessary data and information are not provided swiftly. In some cases, IM bodies have been given irrelevant data, different from what they requested. There are long bureaucratic procedures within MoEF that constrain monitoring activities. The ministry appears to half-heartedly implement the rules of disclosure of public information. Regarding the polemics of public data and information, a source from MoEF suggested that transparency is SVLK's truest spirit, but that not all information can be disclosed to the public. IM coalitions pledge that at a minimum all registered networks should be given full access to information as regulated.

## 6. Financing sustainable monitoring

Financing IM has become one of the crucial issues in SVLK implementation. In most cases, IM bodies obtain grants from donors to finance their project-based activities that are centered on organizational capacity building at the national level. It is estimated that only three percent of the total SVLK certifications have been monitored. This raised concerns about the sustainability of IM activities, particularly field monitoring. IM requires an adequate number of qualified personnel to be positioned in proximity to the monitoring targets. This challenge has been discussed intensively in timber legality policy processes. Many stakeholders consider that self-financing mechanisms are the best possible option. Nonetheless, funding from governmental budgets emerged in several policy discussions, bearing in mind that IM is a formal part of the national legality system.

In fact, the latest SVLK regulation stipulates that IM bodies may obtain government budgets and/or other sources that are regulated by the government, such as from fractions of legality verification costs, but concerns about impartially monitoring activities strongly resulted. The latest development has seen the establishment of a Trust Fund that pledges to sustain IM activities. The Trust Fund was initiated by the Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP3) as mandated by the VPA Action Plan. It is expected to generate more funds from other donor agencies through fundraising activities. The start-up fund from MFP3 is to be allocated for the preparation of the trust fund body, administration, protocols, and small-scale monitoring.

Expanding monitoring scopes is also important to IM bodies. Monitoring is currently focused on forest activities, industries and their linked trades, but it has yet to cover exported products using V-Legal documents/FLEGT-licenses. In addition, monitoring activities can be expanded to other certification schemes, such as voluntary initiatives. Furthermore, there are forest-related land uses that involve cutting timber, such as forest clearance for oil palm plantations and mining, which could require monitoring activities. In fact, there have been intensive discussions to replicate SVLK-styled IM in Indonesia Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO). This could enhance the role of IM and the sustainability of its activities.

## 7. Conclusions and lessons learned

SVLK was developed as a system to ensure the legality of Indonesia's timber products. It considers civil society groups and communities integral and empowers them to take active roles in its implementation. IM was designed as an innovative mechanism to ensure credibility and accountability of the system. IM designs in Indonesia have been praised as one of the main strengths of SVLK (see [European Parliament, 2014](#)). More importantly, IM is seen as instrumental for the assessment of the quality of forest governance. Good forest governance is often built around the following principles: coordination, accountability,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jpik.or.id/pernyataan-pers-bersama-organisasi-pemantau-independen-kehutanan/amp/> (accessed 18 May 2019)

inclusion, and transparency (Kanowski et al., 2011).

IM is formally instituted within SVLK structures. It is a promising design that empowers civil societies with formal mandates to oversee the governance system's credibility and to provide feedback for its improvement. Despite this huge potential, the current experience suggests that IM in Indonesia continues to face major structural challenges to fulfill high expectations. Above all, the existence and roles of IM bodies within the legality system are not yet fully understood and are often questioned by other stakeholders. There has been some degree of skepticism about their impartiality. Communication and coordination among IM bodies, and between them and other stakeholders (principally VB bodies and forest concessions/timber-based industries) needs to be addressed to ensure that the IM roles are acknowledged. Monitoring activities also lack qualified personnel considering the scope of legality verification required. This situation is not aided by the complex administrative requirements to become involved in IM activities. The requirements and procedures should be simplified and made easier to improve the inclusiveness of IM, allowing broader civil societies and not only members of IM bodies to get involved in monitoring activities.

Access to data and information is another challenge that may hinder the role of IM in fostering improved forest governance. Double standards are often used to define "openness" and "confidentiality." Standards should be well-clarified to minimize the continued reluctance to share data and information needed to support monitoring activities. At the same time, IM bodies should also improve the quality of their monitoring by developing reliable and accountable methodologies to provide assurance and clarity to the other stakeholders. Given the heavy reliance on donor funding for monitoring activities, IM bodies and other SVLK stakeholders (principally the government) are expected to ensure the availability of various models of funding schemes for IM activities. The overall potential of this funding scheme (donors, state budget, certification, and trust fund) is expected to provide guarantees for sustained quality monitoring.

IM is designed as a separate body in addition to the independent auditor, and it is officially empowered to report irregularities in the legality verification. This should be celebrated as a breakthrough given the historical exclusion of civil societies in public policymaking. However, this cannot be a standalone strategy. Instead, this should become part of the country's broader forest governance reform. Problems related to participation, transparency, and ambiguity of the legal system are a rubric that extends beyond legality verification. It is also highly relevant to other contemporary forest issues and challenges such as reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD+). The experience gained through the processes of design and implementation of IM-FLEGT can be a valuable asset in the development of IM-REDD+.

IM has been a featured provision in several countries, particularly those in the FLEGT initiative. Seven countries have signed a VPA, and nine more countries are interested. The Indonesian experience can provide lessons for other IM organizations to succeed in ensuring the credibility of legality verification and improving the effectiveness and reliability of respective countries' VPAs. Indeed, we are not advocating a copy-paste strategy since those countries may have different institutional arrangements and political settings. Unlike in Indonesia, IM in some countries is expected to serve as informal watchdogs (Overdevest and Zeitlin, 2018). However, those countries share similar governance challenges, including incoherent forest-related regulations and widespread and deeply-rooted transparencies, lack of public participation, and corruption. The fundamental lesson may include, for example, the strong signal of the government's political will to institutionalize IM.

#### Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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## Method Article

# Problem-method fit in forest policy analysis: Empirical pre-orientation for selecting tested or innovative social-qualitative methods



Dwi Laraswati<sup>a</sup>, Sari Rahayu<sup>a</sup>, Andita A. Pratama<sup>a</sup>,  
Emma Soraya<sup>a</sup>, Muhammad A.K. Sahide<sup>b</sup>, Ahmad Maryudi<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup> Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia

## A B S T R A C T

An array of research methods has been employed for social-qualitative inquiries. However, the selection of specific research methods has rarely been given adequate attention. We mapped out the variety of research methods used in social-qualitative inquiries used in the study of forest policy. Our “problem-method fit” map is based on the usage quantity of a method employed in specific forest policy research themes and contextual analyses. Our map provides a suitable basis for rapid appraisal before deciding appropriate research methods for future studies. While the map provides only an indication of the appropriate methods, it may be supplemented and adapted case-by-case according to the specific needs of the research theme.

- We mapped the commonly used research methods in forest policy analysis
- The map is “problem-method fit” for specific policy themes and contextual analyses
- It can be used as for rapid appraisal when choosing appropriate research methods

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## A R T I C L E I N F O

*Method name:* A rapid selection of research methods for forest policy analysis

*Keywords:* Rapid appraisal, Qualitative research, Forest governance, Social research, Method selection, Innovative method

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\* Corresponding author.

*E-mail addresses:* [dwi.laraswati@mail.ugm.ac.id](mailto:dwi.laraswati@mail.ugm.ac.id) (D. Laraswati), [sarirahayu104@mail.ugm.ac.id](mailto:sarirahayu104@mail.ugm.ac.id) (S. Rahayu), [andita.aulia.p@ugm.ac.id](mailto:andita.aulia.p@ugm.ac.id) (A.A. Pratama), [esoraya@ugm.ac.id](mailto:esoraya@ugm.ac.id) (E. Soraya), [muhhammad.alif@unhas.ac.id](mailto:muhhammad.alif@unhas.ac.id) (M.A.K. Sahide), [ahmad\\_maryudi@ugm.ac.id](mailto:ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id) (A. Maryudi).

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### Specification Table

<b>Subject Area:</b>	Social Sciences
<b>More specific subject area:</b>	<i>Forest policy and governance</i>
<b>Method name:</b>	<i>A rapid selection of research methods for forest policy analysis</i>
<b>Name and reference of original method:</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Resource availability:</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>

### Method details

Good preparation is one of the key steps in the methodology of any research. Yet, this has not been given sufficient explicit attention [1]. The preparatory stage includes developing study designs and selecting research methods that fit with the focal topic [2,3]. There has been increasing effort to make methodological innovations in social-qualitative inquiries over the past few years. As a result, the repertoire of research methods has become increasingly diverse [3,4]. Researchers now face challenges in selecting methods that are specifically relevant for their studies. Different philosophical paradigms lead to different research methods and designs [1–3,5]. In this short note, we mapped the social-qualitative methods commonly used in forest policy studies. There is a vibrant social-qualitative research in the field of forest policy [6,7]. Our map is based on the popularity of specific methods used in research themes; as well as the typical analyses used in the field. On the one hand, it identifies tested/ standardized methods commonly used by previous scholars. On the other hand, it can point to methods that are seldom employed to date but potentially useful to find new insights. Either way, this map will help forest policy researchers to better organize and scope their studies.

### Social research methods used in forest policy analysis

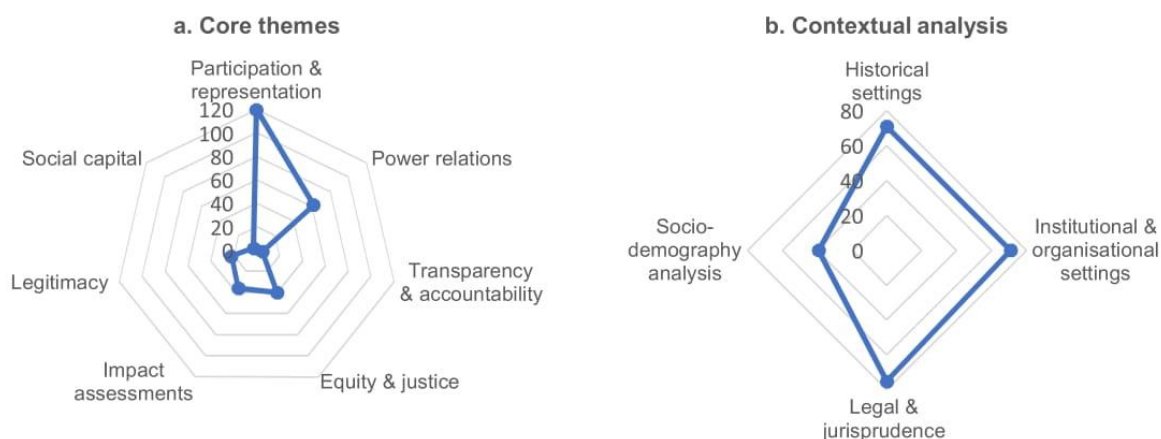
#### *Research problem-method fit*

Research is a systematic inquiry to discover new knowledge through describing, explaining, and predicting a certain phenomenon using suitable methods. Hence, it is not the mere gathering of data or information, and then analyzing and interpreting them. Instead, research should be guided by some certain philosophical assumptions, and follows specific procedures to collect relevant data and information [5,8]. The choice of data collection methods depends on the paradigm of the research, and the nature of the problems and questions [2,5,9].

During the data collection phase, researchers make effort to obtain quality data for testing their hypothesis and eventually making conclusions. Certain research methods are relevant when they can be used to gather data that can meaningfully explain the specific problems and provide answers to them. Relevance is often specified as the degree to which a certain method is applicable to the inquiry [10,11]. In this short note, we do not assess the existing research methods based on those attributes. *Instead*, we focus on the extent to which particular methods have been used in specific inquiries. In fact, researchers cannot ignore previous scientific studies on their topics and their employed methods [12]. They may learn from and replicate what has been used by previous researchers.

#### *Mapping research themes and typical analysis in forest policy*

Before organizing the methods in forest policy research, we need to identify typical analyses or inquiries already conducted in the field. Diverse research programs have been emerging in the field of forest policy over the past few years, employing a vast number of social science disciplines such as political science, anthropology, human geography, sociology, environmental history, and legal studies [6]. This has resulted in the use of different study methods. As an illustration, we examine the case of decentralized community forestry policy. This topic has become a prominent topic of forest policy, and has been explored through an array of perspectives using a variety of methods [7].



**Fig. 1.** Distribution of core themes and contextual analysis in social-qualitative studies of community forestry policy.

We analyzed the peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in the Scopus database. We found a total of 1070 scientific articles related to the topic of decentralized community forestry policy, published between 1991 and 2018, 142 of which used purely qualitative approaches<sup>1</sup>. We thoroughly read all articles, instead of simply skimming the abstracts, for two primary reasons. 1) The abstracts of several articles, particularly those published prior the 2000s, rarely gave mention to the study methods used. 2) We aimed to investigate how data and information were presented and discussed. From the qualitative-based scientific articles, we identified two types of analysis; i.e., core forest policy themes and contextual analysis (see Table 1). The former refers to the main subjects or themes being analyzed, while the latter is defined as the additional analysis required to further support the main arguments.

We found 2–3 themes and 3–4 contextual analyses in each article. Participation and representation, and power relations dominate the social-qualitative inquiries in the field of community forestry policy (Fig. 1a). Equity and justice, and impact assessments have also become popular themes in the field to date. In contrast, the themes of legitimacy as well as transparency and accountability remain understudied. They are fundamental issues of good forest governance [13] and can thus be a good value for future research. Similarly, social capital is rarely studied, suggesting a novel and original research area for social-qualitative scientists in the field of community forestry policy. We also found four typical contextual analyses, i.e. historical settings, institutional and organizational setting, legal jurisprudence, and socio-demographic analysis. In contrast to the case of policy and governance themes, the four contextual analyses are equally popular, depending on the focal topics (Fig. 1b).

#### *The “problem-method fit” map*

We delved into the commonly used study methods and accepted by the wider research communities in the field, and mapped them accordingly to the two aforementioned types of analysis. As previously mentioned, the map presented here is based on a review of the extant studies with the goal of identifying usage trends in the study methods. The “problem-method fit” is based on the quantity of usage; i.e., the extent to which a specific method has been employed in a particular forest policy theme. It is important to note that some articles employ multiple methods. In addition, in some papers we found it quite difficult to distinguish whether a method was specifically used for core themes, or contextual analyses, or both. In such case, we consider the methods were used for both. Further, as we seek to find trends on the popular (highly-used) methods, we leave the significantly

<sup>1</sup> The following keywords were used in the search: (“community forestry” OR “social forestry” OR “Community forest tenure” OR “small scale forestry” OR “smallholder forestry” OR “community based forestry” OR “community based forest management” OR “customary forest” OR “village forest” OR “rural forest”) AND\* Policy

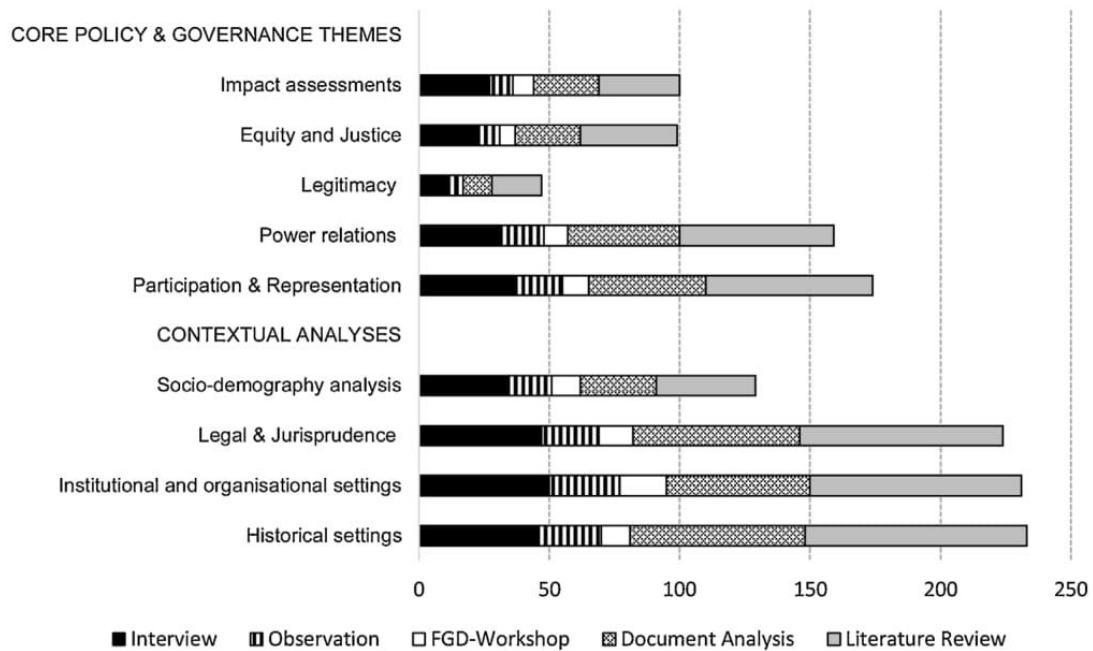


Fig. 2. Uses of methods in social-qualitative studies of community forestry policy.

under-studied (occurrence less than 5) policy themes (social capital, transparency & accountability) out of the analysis to avoid biases.

Fig. 2 shows that interview, document analysis and review of literature are among the overriding methods as they were frequently used in both the core policy themes and contextual analyses. In contrast, focused group discussions and workshops were relatively underused in the research field. Fig. 2 also suggests that specific methods seem to be particularly conducive to certain types of inquiries. Document (secondary data) analysis and review of literature are more common for the contextual analyses, while observations seems a good fit for core policy themes.

Thus, understanding the nature of the specific themes being analyzed is the key to researchers of forest policy in order to make judgments on the types of data and the collection methods required. Our findings can be useful in revealing specific study methods applicable to specific themes and analyses. It can be very useful for future qualitative research in forest policy. It provides an applicable basis for a rapid appraisal (pre-orientation) before decision making on tested research methods and strategies.

### Responsible role of researchers in method selection and adaptation

Instead of being an easy-fix for any research problem, our findings provide guidance and indicates trends of popular methods only. The decision on the method needs to be critically checked and possibly supplemented with additional methods by the researcher. Researchers may follow the trends found in this paper and use the most frequently used (i.e. popular) methods. It is fairly suitable for different and highly new empirical cases. Nonetheless, quality research is often measured by its novelty and originality, in terms of new methods, data, or new understanding about specific social phenomenon. In fact, similar research is done too often, providing limited novel and original ideas.

There is a possibility of new methodological innovations as the nature of research in forest policy continues evolving [14]. Trying a new set of methods that is rarely used to date can be crucial for researchers to find new insights. We thus encourage researchers to critically and realistically consider method innovation or adaptation. For instance, as we found FGD and workshop are limitedly used to date, but they are appropriate to gain data from purposely selected individuals [15]. They can be more used in the future, for instance for the theme of power relations, and potentially justice issues, since

power analysis is more fruitful when dealing with few powerful actors in specific policy networks [2]. Document analysis and literature review, which we found are more used in contextual analysis, can potentially be used for core policy themes. Their values have been analyzed [7], and there is an emerging forest policy research employing the methods [see 16,17,18].

## Conclusion

Given the potential challenges facing researchers in forest policy due to the diverse research methods available, we mapped out these methods as a basis that is specifically tailored for forest policy analysis. This map was developed based on the popular use of specific approaches in specific forest policy research themes, generated from the rich body of literature in the field. Our map can be used as a rapid appraisal guide for researchers to develop specific strategies for their studies more efficiently. However, researchers need to critically assess its suitability for their studies. They are also encouraged to explore possibilities to use the less standardized methods as new innovations in the research.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

All authors have participated in the conception and design and writing of the article, and have no affiliation with any organization with a direct or indirect financial interest in the subject matter discussed in the manuscript.

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## Research trend: Hidden diamonds – The values and risks of online repository documents for forest policy and governance analysis



Sari Rahayu<sup>a</sup>, Dwi Laraswati<sup>a</sup>, Andita A. Pratama<sup>a</sup>, Dwiko B. Permadi<sup>a</sup>, Muhammad A.K. Sahide<sup>b</sup>, Ahmad Maryudi<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup> Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Sound forest policy and governance analysis requires rich empirical evidence, collected through the use of a (possibly) combination of various scientific methods. Scientific communities are currently offered with abundance of digital data, information and scientific materials, made fully or partially available through the explosive development of various types of online repositories. Nonetheless, the rich treasures are not optimally used in forest policy and governance analysis yet. We analysed how researchers can make use of online repositories, analysing their values and risks. Using the case of community forestry policy and elaborating the Indonesian contexts, we have observed several types of online institutional and non-profit repositories, archiving valuable documents/ materials for qualitative inquiries. Valuable materials found from the observed online repositories include policy documents (laws, regulations, decrees), local journal articles, biophysical and socio-demographic data, groups' constitutions, community forestry rights and agreements, local maps, as well as graphics and photos. We understand the concerns about the scientific quality of the repository materials. Before utilising them, researchers are encouraged to have clear visions and objectives on the types of materials relevant to their studies.

### 1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, forest policy has become a vibrant research sub-discipline in political sciences, even regarded as one of the most advanced areas of the multiple social science disciplines (Maryudi et al., 2018). It focuses on analysing and explaining contemporary complex issues and challenges with regard to the nexus between human and forests (Fisher et al., 2017). Forest policy analysis has also spurred a number of advances, in terms of theoretical frameworks (e.g. Arts and Buizer, 2009; Krott et al., 2014) and methodological innovations (e.g. Schusser et al., 2012; Siegner et al., 2018).

Increasingly, forest policy research has relied on qualitative approach of document content analysis (Siegner et al., 2018). Analysis of documents has been used as either the essential approach (for instance see Sahide et al., 2018) or a complement of the arguably more common methods of in-depth interviews and participant observations (e.g. Fatem et al., 2018; Susanti and Maryudi, 2016). With a few exceptions of recent work (e.g. Sahide and Giessen, 2015), the current scientific

literature is yet to optimally use materials from repositories as sources of empirical evidence. A repository refers to a (physical and online) storage system of artefacts/ materials (documents, data, information), used usually for reporting, analysis and sharing (Bernstein and Dayal, 1994).

To illustrate the limited use of repository materials in scientific work, we analysed Scopus-indexed literature on the topic of community forestry policy. We use the topic as an example since it has become a prominent topic of forest policy and governance over the past four decades, allowing us to collect as many as possible scientific literature. More importantly, there are substantial data gaps, such as population dynamics, market forces, and biophysical factors, in the current community forestry literature (Hajjar et al., 2016). In Scopus, we found in total of 1070 articles,<sup>1</sup> only a quarter of which used repository materials as empirical evidence.

One of the possible explanations of the limited use of repository materials in previous studies may include the difficulties in accessing them. Trigg et al. (1999) point out that important documents were

\* Corresponding author at: Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

E-mail address: [ahmad\\_maryudi@ugm.ac.id](mailto:ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id) (A. Maryudi).

<sup>1</sup> Using the following keywords: ("community forestry" OR "social forestry" OR "Community forest tenure" OR "small scale forestry" OR "smallholder forestry" OR "community based forestry" OR "community based forest management" OR "customary forest" OR "village forest" OR "rural forest") AND\* Policy,

stored in file cabinets (in physical forms) or scattered throughout offices so that retrievals for later use is seldom. This is evident in the few studies utilising repository documents. For instance, when describing the legal frameworks of forest-land administration in Indonesia, [Sahide and Giessen \(2015\)](#) had to collect the related legal/ policy documents from the physical archives of various organizations. This compromised the effectivity of their research, i.e. spending more time in collecting data.

The recent trend on the digitalisation (see the next section) has seen abundance of digital data, information and scientific materials made fully or partially available through the explosive development of various types of online repositories. Research communities studying forest policy and governance should pay increased attention to this development. It opens windows of opportunities of the more extensive uses of online repositories, and the materials stored within, in forest policy and/or social science research in general. This article aims to explore the potentials of online repositories, and the materials stored within, for strengthening forest policy research. More specifically, it analyses their values and risks. We contextualize the analysis with community forestry policy in Indonesia.

## 2. The values of online repositories

The past decade has seen the transformation of repositories; information achieving and sharing have been changing into the digital direction. The main idea is to provide anyone (with internet connection) in the world with access to the materials ([Repanovici, 2012](#)). A first digital repository emerged in 2000 when the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Hewlett Packard Company collaborated to develop DSpace<sup>2</sup> ([Smith et al., 2003](#)). There has since been an explosion of interests in developing online repositories ([Pickton and McKnight, 2007](#)). For instance, by November 2018, there have been 3804 global repositories ([DOAR, 2018](#)). The contents range from published articles and book chapters, datasets, theses/ dissertations, conference papers and grey literature and ephemera ([Marsh, 2015](#)).

Universities and research institutions increasingly show interests in establishing institutional repositories, among others driven by the interests of an increased institutional prestige from exposing research carried out by staff and students ([Cullen and Chawner, 2010](#)) and an improved “impacts” of the research ([Bonilla-Calero, 2014](#)). They often oblige the staff and students to self-archive their working papers, theses and dissertations, research and statistical reports, technical documentation, and even teaching materials, usually using Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) platform. These repositories provide support for learning for scientists to avoid the recreation of what has already been produced in a specific research theme ([Lehman, 2007](#)). They can also be utilised as a platform for generating new innovation and ideas.

Using the same keywords (translated) as our search in Scopus, we found hundreds of undergraduate and graduate theses in the field of community forestry policy in the repository of authors' universities, which have started self-archiving just a couple years ago. They are mostly case studies containing rich description on chiefly what is occurring or has occurred. In this regard, the documents can greatly assist future researchers to select the cases for their studies. By using the documents, researchers will also be greatly helped in understanding the contexts, instead of starting their research from scratches.

In addition, the documents rich of empirical materials, statistics and graphics, such as biophysical (including the forest conditions) and socio-demographic data, groups' constitutions, community forestry

rights and agreements, local maps, as well as photos. As previously mentioned, the current scientific literature on community forestry is still lacking of such data ([Hajjar et al., 2016](#)). It is not easy to gather such data in Indonesia, or possibly in many developing countries, where data management is usually poor even in official forest offices. Even when the data are available, accessing the data might need to follow complex bureaucratic processes for obtaining research permits. Using online repositories allows researchers to collect important empirical materials easier, and to conduct their studies in more efficient ways. It will reduce both time and costs ([He and Han, 2017](#)).

In addition, forest policy and governance analysis has increasingly relied on content analysis of policy documents issued by governments such as laws, government/presidential regulations and decrees, ministerial regulation, district and provincial decrees, and government/court decisions (see [Harahap et al., 2017](#); [Maryudi and Myers, 2018](#); [Wibowo and Giessen, 2018](#)). Obtaining such documents from governmental offices is often challenging as they are not always readily-available. Bureaucratic structures, in Indonesia for instance, keep changing that often results in poor management of policy documents and legal products.

In Indonesian case, we found an important open-access repository platform for legal products, i.e. HUKUMONLINE, 2019 (<https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata>). This website is apparently developed to provide a single stop for all policy documents produced in the country, and is connected with a number of search engines such as Google, making it easier for researchers to find a particular policy document. More importantly, the documents are sorted accordingly to document types (laws, government regulations, ministerial decrees, etc.) and topics (e.g. customary and agrarian issues, decentralisation and local autonomy, agriculture-forestry and fisheries, environment etc.), for the ease of researchers in retrieving the relevant legal documents for their studies. Although the bulk of the documents are in the original language (Bahasa Indonesia), the repository has started to include the official English translation, facilitating international researchers as well.

Content analysis of scientific literature is more common is forest policy and governance analysis (e.g. [Myers et al., 2017](#)). It primarily relies on articles from reputable journals and books or book chapters from reputable publishers. Articles from local and national journals are rarely captured in scientific work, with exception of those involving researchers with good knowledge on local languages. Local journals remain a reliable source of data as they have also undergone peer review processes ([Jacobs et al., 2000](#)). For this, we observe a quite powerful open-access repository, i.e. NELITI, 2019 (<https://www.neliti.com/id/>), which currently archives articles from 1675 (mostly) Indonesian journals. This repository links the materials stored with the original sources. The one-gate access of thousands of journals, equipped with a search engine facility, offer a great advantage to researchers as they do not need to check every single journal in finding relevant articles. In addition, there are no copyright issues when using this repository as the local journals are mostly open-access. Furthermore, this repository has also digitized old journal articles that were available only in printed version by the publishers that will help researchers, particularly when their work requires some historical backgrounds (for an example, [Sahide et al., 2018](#) using this approach). Old journal articles might offer research communities with additional empirics to make more powerful review and arguments in their work.

We argue, in this section, the potentials of online repositories as sources of empirical research evidence, including analyses of the types of repositories, data and information valuable for forest policy and governance studies. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that that not all datasets and materials provided by online repositories might not be useful. To address this, we discuss the risks of using online repository documents and strategies can be used by research communities to mitigate the risks in the following section.

<sup>2</sup> is a digital open source system acting as a repository for intellectual outputs (research and educational materials) produced by an organization or institution ([Tansley et al., 2003](#)), built to give greater visibility and accessibility of the materials ([Smith et al., 2003](#))

### 3. Risks of using online repository documents and mitigating strategies

There are concerns about the quality of repository materials, as frequently raised (see Palavitsinis et al., 2014; He and Han, 2017; Pham-Kanter et al., 2014). As experienced by some of this paper's authors, many reviewers have often questioned the credibility of, and suggested the removals of the so-called grey literature. With tremendous amount of digital data, researchers may find it difficult to evaluate whether repository materials are valuable and satisfactory for scientific uses. For example, project proposals and interim reports, which are often archived for obtaining funding, may have little value as they contain limited empirical materials. Even when empirical evidence is there, researchers face challenges in making judgements about scientific values of the data (Uhlir, 2010).

The ability of the users to filter the resources relevant for their research is crucial in this regard (Sicilia et al., 2016; Prieto, 2009). In some cases, repositories also contain ambiguities as coding is made in general terms (Serrano-Vicente et al., 2018). Researchers need to be meticulous, and to make clear objectives in their studies to decide what types of data relevant to their studies. In addition, the users need to familiarise with the repositories, despite the fact that they have coded accordingly to specific categorisation (Alonso Gaona García et al., 2014).

Completeness of the data is also a common theme of concerns (Faniel et al., 2016). We also found it problematic in search engines despite the increasingly amount of materials being deposited as data are often unavailable due to the deletion of changes of web-addresses (also see Bonilla-Calero, 2014). In some cases, repositories -chiefly universities' repositories, provide only resumes or abstracts or important metadata. They make the full version available offline and is only for their own staff and students so that non-members need to work to get the complete data. The chief reason explaining this policy is to avoid plagiarism practices by their students and staff.

Although repositories only provide resumes, they remain a great help, as researchers are still well-guided in the data collection, in a way that they do not need to consider all documents when deciding to further probe the full version. In addition, the resumes often contain the author's contacts (i.e. email addresses), which is useful in case future users interested to obtain the complete documents. Collaboration with local researchers can be another key to mitigate the accessibility issues. In fact, data sharing and wider collaboration is one of the main themes of developing repositories. Local partners are also crucial when international researchers want to utilize the local-context materials, including those available in local languages.

### 4. Conclusion

Over the past few decades, social scientists have witnessed a number of advancement in qualitative research methods (see Bryman, 2015). Recently, we have seen trends in the development of various forms of online repositories, archiving tremendous of data, information and other forms of scientific materials. We argue in this piece that the rich treasures have high potentials in supporting qualitative research, including for forest policy and governance analysis. Online repositories may help researchers to conduct their studies more efficiently, in terms of time and costs, and the materials stored may improve the quality of the empirical evidence of scientific work. Using the case of community forestry policy and the Indonesian contexts, we have observed several types of valuable online repositories, and various forms of documents can be utilised for supporting forest policy and governance research. We further argue that research communities can no longer afford to overlook them. While not all repository materials can be used as meaningful empirical resources, it is the researchers themselves to filter them. Before utilising the resources, they need to have visions and objectives on the types of materials relevant to their studies.

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