

Camouflaging Economic Development Agendas With Forest Conservation Narratives: A Strategy of Lower Governments for Gaining Authority in the Recentralising Indonesia

by Muhammad Alif K Sahide

Submission date: 02-Apr-2021 04:12PM (UTC+0200)

Submission ID: 1548999012

File name: omic_development_agendas_with_forest_conservation_narratives.pdf (815.18K)

Word count: 11777

Character count: 68516



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Land Use Policy

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/landusepol



Camouflaging economic development agendas with forest conservation narratives: A strategy of lower governments for gaining authority in the re-centralising Indonesia



Sepus M. Fatem^{a,b}, San A. Awang^a, Satyawan Pudyatmoko^a, Muhammad A.K. Sahide^c,
Andita A. Pratama^a, Ahmad Maryudi^{a,*}

^a Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^b Faculty of Forestry, Papua University, Manokwari, Indonesia

^c Faculty of Forestry, University of Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Forest conservation
Decentralisation
Recentralisation
Interest
Power
Coalition
Papua
Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The government of Indonesia has recently recentralised the authority over forest resources. This paper analyses the bureaucratic politics and power struggles between central and local governments concerning the re-centralisation policy. This paper analyses the local initiative by Tambrauw District of West Papua in integrating management of conservation areas into district governance through so-called “conservation district” policy. We asked what are the specific real interests of the local government in implementing the environmentally-minded policy? How does the accumulation of power by the local government help it pursue its interests? We found that by using the environmentally-minded policy narrative, the district masks its true interests of economic gains from the forests. We further identified the power sources and strategies employed by the district government of Tambrauw in achieving its interests. The district successfully used the issue of local wisdom, customary rights and communities. Nuancing the narrative importance of specific socio-cultural realities, customary rights, and tenurial systems of indigenous people has paid off; the district successfully built coalitions with an array of actors, i.e. NGOs, higher bureaucracies, and indigenous groups. The coalitions provide opportunities for actors to realise their goals.

1. Introduction

1.1. Competing bureaucracies in forest decentralisation policy

Decentralisation has become an essential feature of forest governance reforms across the globe since 1980s (Agrawal et al., 2008). It is implemented in more than 60 developing countries (Andersson et al., 2006). Decentralisation policy is promoted to facilitate improved transparency of governance by increasing representation of local actors in decision-making and reduce the planning and transactions costs (Larson and Soto, 2008; Colfer et al., 2008). Decentralisation is broadly defined as a process by which the central government redistribute its authority to lower level administrations within the scopes of political-administrative and territorial regional hierarchies (Larson and Ribot, 2004; Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001; Sahide et al., 2016a). It is often called as local governance (Wollenberg et al., 2009; Mery et al., 2010). Decentralisation involves the redistribution of power, human and

financial resources, and administrative capacity to different territorial units of governance and various local groups (Capistrano and Colfer, 2005; Sikor et al., 2013; Sahide et al., 2016a).

As a political process, decentralisation involves negotiations among actors holding power and authorities over natural and other relevant resources (Capistrano and Colfer, 2005; Maryudi, 2016a,b; Barr et al., 2006). Central governments of several countries attempt to block the path of decentralisation despite the official rhetoric (Ribot et al., 2006; Sunam et al., 2013). They create policies and administrative and technical procedures impeding decentralisation in order to maintain their power (Baral et al., 2017; Maryudi, 2012; Maryudi and Krott, 2012; Sahide et al., 2016a). The most common arguments used to halt the progress of decentralisation include the insufficient capacity of the lower authority (Ribot et al., 2006; Larson, 2002), given several incidences of increases in deforestation under decentralised governance arrangements (Wright et al., 2016; Barr et al., 2006). Thus, complete or partial re-centralisation has ostensibly become a political agenda in

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id (A. Maryudi).

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2018.07.018>

Received 5 August 2017; Received in revised form 11 July 2018; Accepted 11 July 2018
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many countries in recent years (Robins and Kanowski, 2011; Basnyat et al., 2018; Sahide et al., 2016a).

Such a case also occurs in Indonesia. In 1999, the country implemented a political reform of regional autonomy, through the issuance of the twin Regional Governance Law No. 22 and the Fiscal Balancing between Central and Regional Governments Law No. 25. The twin decentralisation Laws conferred on the authorities of district governments obligatory and optional tasks; forestry issues were among the optional tasks (Maryudi, 2015). They allowed districts with rich-land based resources to pursue extractive policies to generate local incomes (Prabowo et al., 2017; McCarthy, 2012). It also empowered the districts, which in some instances have felt less-obligation to adhere and obey higher regulations and bureaucracies (McCarthy, 2004; Moeliono et al., 2014). The local government officials were frequently engaged in the abuse of power for pragmatic purposes (McCarthy, 2012). For these reasons, the central government implemented re-centralisation policy by issuing the Local Government Law No. 23/2014, which removes the autonomy of the district bureaucracy for natural resource and forest management.

Over the past few decades, how forest is governed has been characterised by the increasingly complex coordination, and interdependence among different actors at different political spheres (Maryudi et al., 2018; Giessen and Sahide, 2017; Sahide et al., 2018). Thus, power interplays between actors offer an interesting area for research (Maryudi and Sahide, 2017; Siswoko, 2009). This paper analyses the bureaucratic politics and power struggles between central and local governments concerning the re-centralisation policy of forests in Indonesia. Krott (2005) argues that the lower levels of bureaucracy do not need orders from above to uniformly adopt their measures according to special administration. There is the increasingly rich body of literature on bureaucratic politics and power, focusing on actors, interests and power, in forest and natural resource policy. Giessen and colleagues (Giessen et al., 2014; Rahman and Giessen, 2017b; Giessen et al., 2016; Bums et al., 2017; Giessen and Krott, 2009; Sahide et al., 2016a,b) have chiefly worked in this research area over the past few years. Their work has focused on either global-domestic nexus or bureaucratic politics within the central state, and barely addressed power struggles between and/or among different bureaucracies at the different levels of domestic sphere. Our research focuses on that understudied area, i.e. the sub-national bureaucratic politics, and hence nicely complements their work.

This paper will specifically analyse the local initiative by Tambrauw District of West Papua in integrating management of conservation areas into district governance through so-called “conservation district” policy (Asem et al., 2013; Fatem and Asem, 2015). While the State move toward re-centralising forest and environmental policy, we hypothesise that the environmental-orientation is used as a means of retaining forest governance power locally. We specifically ask:

1.1.1. What are the specific real interests of the local government in implementing the environmentally-minded policy?

Environment conservation, as Escobar (1998) notes, does not necessarily reflect conservation activities, but also exhibits a means of achieving political purposes. Many studies (Setiawan et al., 2016; Susanti and Maryudi, 2016) reveal the character of local governments of using forests for economic development. Considering Tambrauw is a newly-established district, we hypothesised that the Conservation District, which is formally narrated as promoting forest conservation, masks the real interests of using the forest resource to promote local economic development.

1.1.2. How does the accumulation of power by the local government help it pursue its interests?

While authority over forest and conservation being at higher levels of government, it is important to analyse how the more local levels of bureaucracy pursue their economic interests and translate it into

policymaking. In Indonesia, land use allocation and administration are characterised with the overlapping or even conflicting laws and regulations (Brockhaus et al., 2012; Maryudi, 2015; Setiawan et al., 2016), we hypothesise that the local government of Tambrauw selects the laws and regulations appropriate to its interests. In light of strong power of the central government, we further see coalition building as a means of the lower bureaucracy to achieve its interests.

1.2. The case study contexts

Following the aforementioned 1999 decentralisation policy, Indonesia has undergone a rapid proliferation of new regional administrations that was aimed at improving equity in development and enabling greater prosperity amongst local populations (Burgess et al., 2012). Tambrauw was established as a new district in 2008 as stipulated by Law No. 56. It covers 11,529.18 square kilometres and is geographically situated at the north of *Kepala Burung* (Bird’s Head) area of the West Papua Province.

The term of “Conservation District” was first said in 2011 by the newly-elected Mayor (Paino, 2017). He was said to be committed to promote development in the newly-established district accordingly to sustainable uses of forest resources, utilization, the protection of life support systems, and the preservation of biodiversity and its ecosystem given the vast forest covers in the Tambrauw (Fatem and Asem, 2015). According to the Forestry Minister Decree No. 710/Menhut-II/2014, nearly 80% of its land area is designated as forest zone (Fig. 1). Approximately half of the forest zone is categorized as conservation forest, which prohibits human activities, with the addition of 26% as protection forest (BPKH-XXVII, 2014). According to the Forest Law No. 41/1999, conservation forest is directly administered and managed by the central government (Ministry of Environment and Forestry/ MoEF), while the authority over non-conservation forest, according to the Regional Government Law No. 23/2014, is given to the provincial government, which is a representation of the central government at the local level.

The local initiative of conservation district is encouraged by Law No. 21/2001 and the Government Regulation No. 1/2008, which both grant special autonomy to the Provinces of Papua and West Papua.¹ The status acknowledges the peculiarity of Papua compared to other provinces in Indonesia, given the existence of numerous customary laws and communities (Aspinall and Fealy, 2003; Pakasi, 2012). It allows the district governments in Papua and West Papua to plan and implement programs of human and natural resources development for the welfare of the indigenous Papuan by taking into account the local contexts of the provinces (Kanowski et al., 2009). With regard to forests, the special status is supported by the recent ruling by the Constitution Court, that customary forests are excluded from state forest zones (Myers et al., 2017). Although the policy formally reflects the aspiration of the customary communities, it informally bears political nuances. For the central government, the establishment of new autonomous regions is a rational choice to stifle the political aspirations of the Papuan people for self-determination or independence (Patay and Sasmitawidjaja, 2005).

2. Theoretical frames: bureaucracy politics and power

Rather than a single entity, governments made up of many bureaus, ministries, department and agencies, referred to as “bureaucracy” (Peters, 2014; Krott, 2005; Giessen et al., 2014; Allison, 1971). A bureaucracy can be defined as “a public institution that makes decisions concerning specific problems on the basis of general legal standards, resolving those problems by implementing special measures” (Krott, 2005,

¹ The special autonomy status applies to the lower administration within the Provinces, i.e. all districts and municipalities

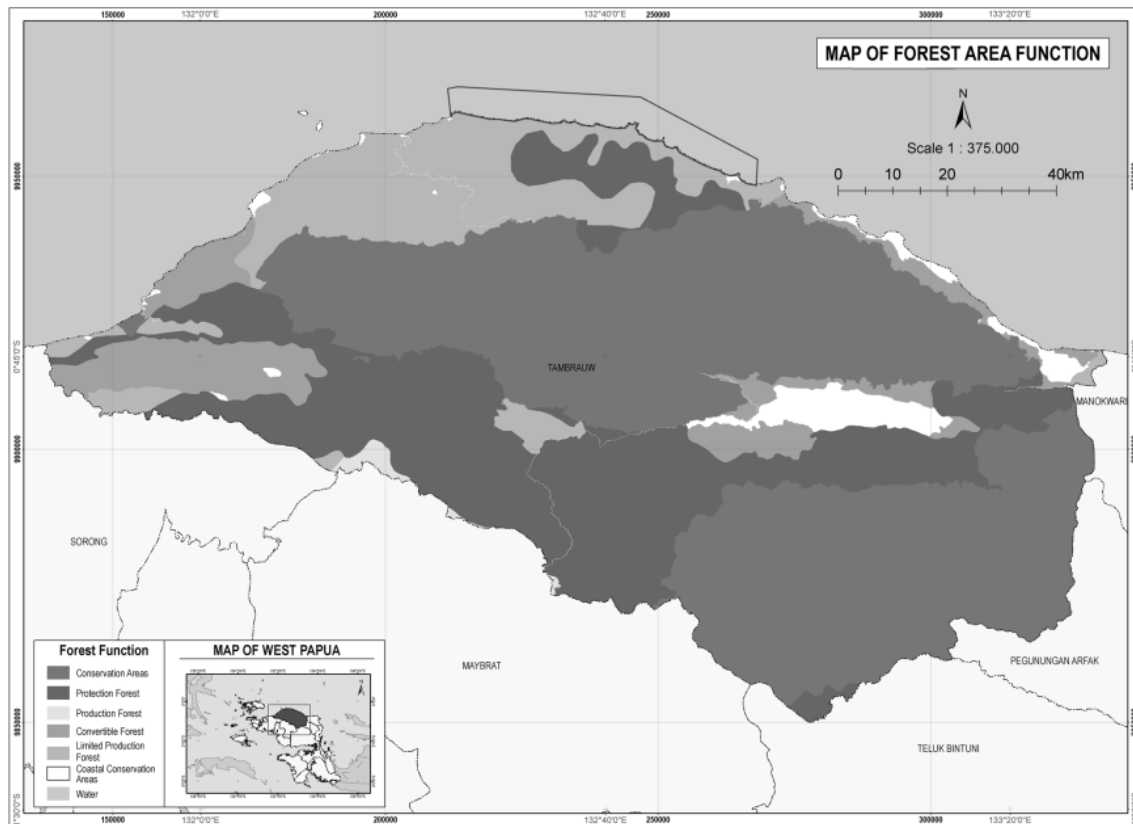


Fig. 1. Map of Forest Zones based on Functions in Tambrauw District.

p.126). It is characterised by a specialised hierarchy of authority, jurisdiction, fixed competencies, standardized principles, rules and regulations (Krott, 2005). Bauer et al. (2012) add that bureaucracy is different from other organisations in terms of institutional regulation; it is built on a normative framework. In principle, bureaucracy relates to the acquisition of power at various levels, e.g. national, provincial and district levels (Hooghe and Marks, 2002), reaffirmation of power and authority, budget allocation and personnel reinforcement to achieve certain targets (Niskanen, 1971; Krott, 1990; Peters, 2014). Bureaucrats may act as members of a political institution for legitimacy, public mandate, financial resource, and skilled personnel, or administrative body for authority to formulate policy, form alliance, and hold permanent position (Krott, 2005).

Formally, bureaucracy is tasked with problem-driven actions to provide public services as mandated (Krott, 2005; Sahide et al., 2016b; Maryudi, 2016a,b). This type of interest is the normatively pronounced and publicly announced decisions and intended consequences (Krott, 2005; Easton, 1965). Nonetheless, bureaucratic agents may have inherent self-interests (Niskanen, 1971), referred to as informal interests (Krott, 2005; Rahman and Giessen, 2017a). This type of interest is generally hidden and reflected by course of action, and entails the real interests (Easton, 1965). Kleinschmit et al. (2016) argue informal interests are not necessarily illegal. They usually serve the interest of organisation in maintaining and increasing its influence, such as maximizing power, broadening authority, maximizing the use of budget and recruiting more staff (Niskanen, 1971; Bowornwathana and Poocharoen, 2010; Peters, 2014; Krott, 2005; Rahman and Giessen, 2017b). Both formal and informal goals are expected to be achieved at the same time (Peters, 2014; Niskanen, 1971). However, if this does not happen, then the organizational interests become the main priority

(Krott, 2005; Sahide et al., 2016a).

Bureaucracies exercise political influence in policy formulation and implementation (Krott, 1990; Rahman and Giessen, 2017b). Each bureau tries to protect its own interests and maintain or extend its operating autonomy and discretion in decision-making (Bowornwathana and Poocharoen, 2010; Peters, 2014). It competes with other bureaus for resources, staff, and responsibility for policy domain (Niskanen, 1971; Burns et al., 2017). Bearing that in mind, policy decisions are generally the product of political resultants or bargaining and negotiations bureaucracies (Rahman and Giessen, 2017b; Giessen et al., 2016; Peters, 2014; Giessen et al., 2014). In this regard, power is a decisive factor in shaping the outcomes of policy processes (Prabowo et al., 2016; Maryudi and Sahide, 2017); strong bureaucracies hold high potential to shape the policy outcomes (Schusser et al., 2016, 2015; Aurenhammer, 2013).

Krott et al. (2014) develop a theoretical framework of actor-centered power (ACP), which consists the following sources: coercion, (dis-)incentives, and dominant information. Bureaucracies' power based on coercion may include their legal public mandates (including decision rights and sanction mechanisms), legitimacy, administrative ideologies, and technical resources that enable them to maintain a policy process (Burns et al., 2017; Krott, 2005; Prabowo et al., 2017; Maryudi et al., 2016; Negi and Giessen, 2018). Creating disadvantages and giving advantages (disincentives-incentives) can also alter the behaviour of other actors (Krott et al., 2014); bureaucracies generally use transfer of budgets or finances, and provide staff resources (Krott, 2005). Dominant information is defined as unverifiable information that is eventually blindly trusted by the other actors (Krott et al., 2014), in general bureaucracies may use expertise and interest-guided use of beliefs and values (Burns et al., 2017; Maryudi et al., 2016; Krott,

2005).

In achieving the interests, bureaucracies may also build coalition with each other, congruently to their core policy beliefs (Sabatier, 1988) and/ or specific interests (Giessen and Krott, 2009). For instance, international donors often seek coalition with domestic actors in order to have access to domestic policy change (Sahide *et al.*, 2016b; Bernstein *et al.*, 2010; Rahman *et al.*, 2018). By transferring funds, international donors are able to pressurise their domestic alliances to adopt their policy blueprints (Burns *et al.*, 2017; Rahman *et al.*, 2016). At the domestic level, coalition between/among sectors whenever their interests resonate (Giessen and Krott, 2009). Bureaucracies may further make coalition with private/non-state actors, such as indigenous groups (Prabowo *et al.*, 2017), domestic and international non-governmental organisations/NGOs and business groups (Maryudi, 2015; Yunita *et al.*, 2018). Building a coalition allows them to coordinate and leverage their power to achieve shared goals (Sabatier, 1988), and bring the right political alignment to exploit and trigger windows of opportunity in policy making processes (Huang *et al.*, 2015).

3. Methods

We employed theory-driven qualitative strategy (Bryman, 2015), with empirical-analytical approach (Krott, 2005), which is anchored in positivism emphasising empirical data and scientific methods (Kleinschmit *et al.*, 2016). In collecting the empirical data and information, we used multiple methods to triangulate our results (Denzin, 1970), as follow:

3.1. Interview

This method is the most widely employed method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2015). We conducted personal/face-to-face interviews with different types actors/stakeholders. Barriball and While (1994, p.329) argue that personal interview is “suitable to the exploration of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives [and] provides the opportunity to evaluate the validity of the answers by observing non-verbal indicators, which is particularly useful when discussing sensitive issues”. We started the interviews with district government officials, from whom we obtained an initial list of actors involved in the policy processes of Tambrau Conservation District. We asked each of the subsequent interviewees about potential relevant actors/institutions which were not on our initial list. We deemed the list of interviewees as complete when no more new actors were mentioned. Between December 2012 and January 2018, we interviewed officials of different government bureaucracies (Ministry of Environment and Forestry/MoEF, Ministry of Home Affairs/MoHA, provincial and district governments), non-government organisations (The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute, Paradisea Foundation, Akawuon Foundation, WWF Papua-site Sausapor), academia from local and national universities, and tribal leaders of Abun, Miyah, Mpur and Ileres (see Appendix A).

We employed semi-structured interviews (Neuman and Kreuger, 2003) guided by a list of questions. Horton *et al.* (2004) argue that semi-structured interview allows flexibility both in designing and refining the interview guides. We started the interviews with questions on the respondents’ knowledge of Tambrau’s Conservation District and factors that may facilitate or debilitate it. These neutral-toned questions were used to avoid uncomfortable feeling of the respondents that eventually generates as many ideas and responses as possible. We followed the questions by asking other actors’ possible views and position about the Conservation District. This allowed us to identify potential coalition or opposition among the actors. We further probed what has been done by the respondents or their institutions, including whether they have formulated policies, and allocated budgets and staff for the Conservation District. From those questions, we expected to identify the actors’ interests, both formal and informal and how they pursued their specific interests.

3.2. Content analysis

Content analysis has come into wide use in qualitative research with high degree of validity and replicability (Krippendorff, 1989). It comprises “a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analysed” (Bryman, 2015, p.563). We analysed official policy documents issued by the government (e.g., laws, government/presidential regulations and decrees, ministerial regulation, district and provincial decrees) regarding land use/forest allocation, forest decentralisation and re-centralisation, rights of customary groups, and conservation in Indonesia. We also used stakeholders/actors’ opinions published in mass media, related issues of forest areas, and relevant speeches and magazines. Various statements relevant to our research questions have been extracted to explain the formal tasks and responsibilities related to forest conservation, forest policy, traditional wisdom, centralisation and re-centralisation (details of the documents analysed provided in Appendix B). We classified the information obtained into two major groups, i.e. actors’ interests and how actors pursue their interests. Within each group, we further provided notes whether they are manifest (the visible and obvious components) or latent (underlying meaning) (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). In the case of latent content, we further made interpretation, by triangulating the information with information gained from the aforementioned interviews, and participant observation (below).

3.3. Participant observation

It involves the participation of the researchers in the action and context of a social setting (Guest *et al.*, 2012; DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). It is associated with exploratory and explanatory research objectives, and differs from direct observation, which does not involve any interaction between the observer and those being studied (Guest *et al.*, 2012). Since 2012, the first author of this paper has been engaged intensively in the policy formulation. The first author, representing the district government, has attended numerous meetings, discussions and workshops on Tambrau’s Conservation District at both local and national levels (see Appendix C). He observed the policy dynamics, i.e. the actors and their particular interests and position. It was quite intriguing as the actors generally did not reveal their true interests and position, whether supporting or opposing the policy. The author made notes about the actors’ gestures, uses of language and tones. For example, when a particular actor, despite his/her explicit appreciation of the conservation district policy, was expressing doubts about its formalisation, we categorized his/her position as potentially opposing the policy. We triangulated our categorisation using the results of interviews and document analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Mainstreaming the local interests, building the arguments

In Indonesia, the management of conservation forests follows pure conservation regimes. As stipulated in the Forest Law No. 41/1999, conservation forests are under direct purview of the central government, c.q. Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF). Law No. 23/2014 further strengthens the centralized authority in forestry. It reads “forest matters [are] ceded to provincial and central government”. The law specifies that the authority for administration and management of conservation forests are reserved for the central government, while that of protection and production forests is for the provincial government, which according to the Indonesian legal systems is the representative of the central government. This poses huge challenges for Tambrau as a new district since most of its land area are covered by forests (Interviewee No.1). As said, one of the main drivers of the establishment of new districts in Indonesia is the acceleration of local economic development by utilising local potentials including the natural

resources.

Following the approval as a new autonomous region, as legalised by Law No. 56/2008, Tambrauw District swiftly established the complete the bureaucratic structures including: Forestry, Environment, Community Empowerment, and Marine & Fisheries Offices that all mirrors the principal development agenda focusing on natural resource-based economy. Those sectoral local bureaucracies were approved by the central government through the Government Regulation No. 41/2007. Conservation forest, which was previously mentioned making up the lion's share of the Forest Zone in Tambrauw, would provide little support for the economic development agenda. According to the function-based management regimes defined by the central forest authority the forest is exclusively designated for preserving biodiversity and the ecosystem. For this reason, the district government sees the importance of the "rationalisation" on the management regimes of the forest to allow certain uses. The District Mayor (Interviewee No. 1) bluntly suggested that "as a newly-established district, Tambrauw needs to maximize all available resources, including the forests, for economic development so that we can catch up with the more established regions...With the current conservation regulations, the development in the district will be severely constrained".

The district formally masks its economic interests with the political conservation commitments. Such is well-articulated by the District Mayor in several national and local events such as the REDD + National Meeting in Jakarta on May 7, 2013 (Empiric No.1 -*Tambrauw Bersinar* Bulletin, Edition 03, 2013) and West Papua Working Meeting on April 14, 2014 (Empiric No. 2 - *Tambrauw Bersinar* Bulletin, Edition 05, 2014). The Mayor also pointed out the development mission of the district, specifically number five, which reads "protecting the environment" (Empiric 3 - Papua Barat Post, 2016). He insisted that it was unwise for local governments to actively promote development in their territories yet failed to maintain the biophysical condition of conservation areas. In such a case, the district, as the Mayor argued, will promote a balanced forest management regime, between the needs for economic development and forest preservation (Empiric No.2-*Tambrauw Bersinar* Bulletin, Edition 05, 2014). Instead of strict prohibition, the district proposed an adaptive management that allows controlled utilisation in conservation areas. Its dubbed "Conservation District", as the Head of District Parliament (Interviewee No. 2) argued, will not compromise the protection and conservation goals.

4.2. Pursuing the local interests

4.2.1. Drawing legal and informational power

The local initiative of a Conservation District in Tambrauw met a mixed response by the MoEF. During a meeting between the District Government and the Ministry (Observation No. 1), the minister formally expressed its support. He acknowledged the strategic position of Tambrauw in the efforts of global conservation along the Bird's Head peninsula, and therefore the local initiative can be formalised swiftly. However, some high-ranked officials within the Ministry still questioned the definition of conservation district, its implementing strategies, and indicators used to assess the performance of a conservation district. The general notion developed within MoEF (as suggested by Interviewee No. 3) is that the conservation district policy does not have legal foundations since the Forest Law does not stipulate such initiatives.

Nonetheless, the District Mayor argued that the distinctive characteristics of Papua require "special treatments". He further insisted that becoming a conservation district was the right choice as it would enable Tambrauw to ensure sustainable development (Empiric No. 4 - Papua Barat Post, 2015). In several workshops (Observation No.2,3, 4), the arguments brought by the district in issuing the local policy initiative centred on the district's uniqueness regarding the social, legal, and political characteristics. The local government used the Law No. 21/2001 and the Government Regulation No. 1/2008 on the special

autonomy of Papua as a counter legal basis to oppose both the Forest Law No. 41/1999 and the Local Government Law No. 23/2014. The Mayor argued that the conservation district policy represents a clear manifestation of the Law No. 21/2011 (Interviewee 1). The Article 43 of the Law clearly stipulates that the State grants "recognition and protection of the customary communities in Papua", while the Article 64 further reads "sustainable development and natural conservation in Papua should take the rights of the customary communities into serious consideration." The special autonomy regulations are quite powerful in the context of Papua, as confirmed by several interviewees within the central and provincial bureaucracies (No. 4–7). With regard to forests, the local government is further empowered by the recent ruling by the Constitution Court, that customary forests are excluded from state forest zones. According to the Indicative Maps of Social Forestry (*Peta Indikatif Areal Perhutanan Sosial*), approximately 12 thousand hectares of state forest zones in Tambrauw have been designated as customary forests, while areas for social forestry schemes are currently being identified and mapped. The Mayor argued that customary forest rights and the other social forestry schemes are to be used as the pilot projects of the implementation of the conservation district policy. In addition, the local government uses the existence of local environmental wisdom practiced by indigenous groups. In fact, the issue of indigenous communities Papua and their rights are quite strong in the national policy processes, manifested in the issuance of the aforementioned special autonomy policy. The district mayor argued that the policy is strongly supported by the customary communities (Empiric No. 3 - Papua Barat Pos, 2016). He insisted that the indigenous people in Tambrauw have implemented forest conservation and sustainable uses and management of the forests. Indigenous communities of Tambrauw District, as they presented to MoEF (Observation No. 5), have been living in the conservation forest zones even before the designation, and practising sustainable forest uses and conservation, such as the rites of *Wiyon-wofle* and *Amah wofle*, which prohibit the access to certain forest areas. Officials from Tambrauw argued that the current conservation regime overlooks the existence of customary communities in the forests (Observation No 3–7). They argued that forest resources cannot be separated from the existing customary and cultural realities. The Mayor further argued that the conservation district policy accommodates the existing conservation practices by its people that in turn supports the conservation agenda of the central forest bureaucracy.

4.2.2. Establishing coalitions

The district government has sought to form coalitions with various actors that share common missions and interests (Fig. 2, Table 1). First, it established a number of collaborative work with environmental groups, such as The Samdhana Institute, WWF Tambrauw, Epistema Institute, and Yayasan Paradisea. Several high-ranked officials from the district (Interviewees 1, 2, 6, 7) noted the importance of building alliances with them as they provide strong political pressure to central government bureaucracies to re-formulate the conservation policies. They suggested that they are keen to utilise the environmental groups as lobbying groups to advocate the adaptive management of conservation forests in Tambrauw District. In a meeting between the non-governmental institutions and the district government on July 17th 2015 (Observation No. 6), the District Mayor presented its conservation commitment while promoting local development that resonates with the groups' visions and missions. The NGOs, on the other hand, observed that supporting the local policy initiative has provided windows of opportunities to get international funding and implement their conservation missions (Interviewees 8–10).

The coalition with the environmental groups was manifested in the establishment of so-called *Mitra Pembangunan* (Development Partnership) of the Tambrauw District, elaborating two principal issues, i.e. conservation district and the recognition and protection of customary rights. The environmental groups also supported the establishment of indicative maps for the adaptive management areas.

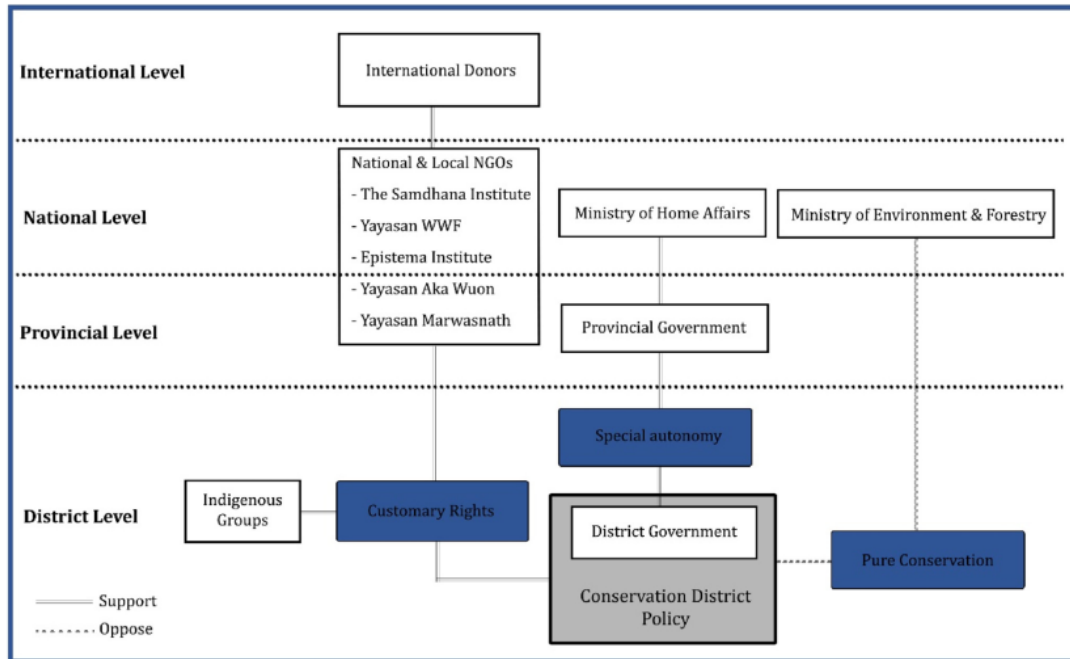


Fig. 2. Relationships of actors.

Table 1
Allies for conservation district policy and their roles.

Allies	Main Roles
Customary groups	Providing local legitimacy
Local and national NGOs	Providing political pressure Channelling to international funding agencies Facilitating policy formulation processes
Provincial government	Implementing a congruent policy program Disbursing special autonomy budgets
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Issuing umbrella regulations relating to special autonomy and customary communities Disbursing special autonomy budgets

Collaboration with environmental NGOs was also crucial as it provided the channels to international donors concerned about customary issues and the conservation of wildlife and natural resources. The leaders of

The Samdhana Institute, WWF Project Leader of Sausapor Tamberau, and Yayasan Paradisea (Interviewees No. 8–10) suggested that various international funds have been channelled through their organisation for supporting the local initiative of conservation district (Table 2).

The district government further sought coalition with higher bureaucracies, principally its vertical line of the provincial government of West Papua and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), to which the district is accountable to. The governor in fact followed Tamberau District, declaring West Papua as a Conservation Province on October 19th 2015. The governor (Interviewee No. 11) insisted that the policy initiative demonstrates the strong commitment of the local government West Papua in conserving the forests and environment. The commitment was manifested in the province’s development mission, which reads “to foster fair and sustainable managements of environment and natural resources”, and the Mid-term Development Program (MDP) of 2017–2022. He added that the Conservation Province of West Papua

Table 2
International Funding Supporting Conservation District Policy.

Channelling NGOs	International Funding Agencies	Programs & Activities
Samdhana Institute	Climate and Land uses Alliance Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)	Local workshop on the Model Designs for Conservation District Norwegian Initiative on Climate and Forests fund for conservation district policy Program BERSAMA – aiming to encourage recognition and protection of the customary communities Mapping of customary kinship groups as a preparation for a regional regulation plan of the customary communities
	Denmark’s development cooperation (DANIDA) Energies Foundation - IUCN REDD - DANIDA -NORAD Right and Resources Initiative	IUCN Pro Poor REDD Project for multi-stakeholder discussions on conservation district policy NICFI program supporting workshops & public consultation, legal drafting mapping of customary kinship groups Travel support for District Mayor presenting Conservation District Policy as a low emission strategy at the Governor Climate Forest meeting (Catalonia, Spain 15-18 June 2015) Travel support for Head of District Parliament presenting Conservation District Policy as a low emission strategy at the Conference Of Parties 21 (Paris 30 November 30-11 December 2015)
WWF Indonesia	WWF Netherlands & Walton Foundation	Financial support for the conservation activities Establishment of Regional Technical Management Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah/UPTD) for the conservation and protection of leatherback turtles
Yayasan Paradisea	Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN)	Empowerment of local farmers, customary forest development, participatory mapping, and policy advocacy

and the Conservation District of Tambrauw are the integral part of the local policy aiming to obtain greater impacts of the special autonomy.

This clearly highlights the support for the district with its economic development agenda. The governor added that the provincial bureaucracies will deal with coordinative tasks and functions and supported the districts to hold more authority in their respective administrative region. One clear example is how the so-called Special Autonomy Fund is distributed between the province and the districts. 90% of the Fund is allocated for the districts to encourage local development, including to support activities of natural resource management, and the establishment of conservation district. The Head of the Provincial Forestry Service (Interviewee No. 12) said that, instead of the Province, the district governments are in charge of the administration and management of forests in their respective administrative region, despite the fact that Law No. 23/ 2014 removes the district authority over forests. He added that the establishment of Tambrauw is already in line with the provincial policy.

The district government also see the MoHA as an important ally because the ministry is in charge of regional government policy, including the Papua's special autonomy status, which is used as the main entry point for the conservation district policy. The ministry deals with regulations concerning customary communities that are strongly embedded in the local conservation initiative. For the ministry, supporting the local conservation initiative means it gains more budgets and personnel from the central government. The MoHA specially assigns the Director of Special Autonomy to ensure the implementation of special autonomy, including in Papua (Interviewee 13). The ministry suggested that several assessments proved that Papua has shown the readiness to implement the regional autonomy policy. In 2014, the MoHA finally issued the ministerial regulation No. 52 concerning the Guidelines for the Recognition and Protection of Indigenous People.

Customary groups' leaders are strong actors in local politics, the district government hence saw the importance of making coalition with them to gain the legitimate support for its policy initiative. Leaders of several customary tribes (Interviewees 14–16) for instance suggested that there is a strong bond between their people and the forests. The people, as they suggested, have developed local wisdoms and traditions to sustainably use the forests that are inherited from generation to generation. They are strongly in favour of the local initiative of Conservation District as they believe to protect their interests. The support from customary groups were clearly manifested in several public hearings and workshops (Observations 4, 6, 8, 9) during which they were also concerned about the central government's conservation regime which they argued to threaten their customs and traditions.

4.2.3. Translating power into policy formalisation

The aspiration to designate Tambrauw as a conservation district has become one of the highest political agendas of the district government. It has manifested in the district's annual and strategic development plans in accordance with a number of legal frameworks.² The crucial further step is the policy formalisation, i.e. the issuance of the local regulation on Conservation District. According to the legal system in Indonesia, a local regulation can be issued by either the Mayor or the District Parliament. The Mayor (Interviewee 1) requested the District Parliament to initiate the drafting process of a local regulation, primarily to obtain a broader legitimacy. He suggested that designating Tambrauw as a Conservation District needs to take a good care of the customary communities' interests through recognition and protection

² Including Law No. 5/ 2004 on the Local Development Planning System; Government Regulation No. 8/ 2008 on the Steps, Formulation, Control and Evaluation of Regional Development; Government Regulation No. 40/ 2006 on the Procedures for the Preparation of National Development Plan; Regulation of The Ministry of Home Affairs No. 54/ 2010 on the Implementation of the Government Regulation No. 8, 2008.

programs. The Head of the Parliament (Interviewee 2) confirmed that the policy should not only be in accordance with positive laws, but also reflecting a bottom-up processes by taking customary and cultural perspectives into consideration (see also Empiric No. 5- Radar Sorong, 2015).

The policy formalisation has swiftly been placed as main agenda of the local parliament for enactment (see Table 3). It began in 2015, together with the drafting of a local regulation on customary rights and communities. It was started with presentations and discussions between the parliament with environmental groups and academics on the urgency of the local regulation (Observation No. 11). The scientific background study (*naskah akademik*) for the local regulation was also prepared. Table 3 clearly reveals the important roles of environmental groups in the policy formulation processes, including the drafting of, the conservation district policy. Not only facilitating the processes, they provided financial and other relevant logistical supports. The district government argues that the financial and technical supports were crucial as it had limited budgets (Interviewee No. 1). The initial process was concluded with a public hearing/consultation, which show common support for the local regulation (Observation No. 12).

Along with the parliamentary processes, the district government regularly provided update about the legal drafting process to the people at the village level. Officials from the district government suggested that village-level consultations aimed to better understand the tribal land territories and the clan systems of the customary communities, and to elaborate them in the eventual regulation (Observation No. 13). Aspirations of customary communities were channeled and integrated into indicative mappings of the customary important/sacred areas (Interviewee No. 14). Several tribal leaders, e.g. of Miyah, Abun, Mpur, and Ileress (Interviewees 3–6) suggested that the drafts of local regulations of both Conservation District and Customary Rights and Communities have articulated the interests of their peoples and requested an immediate enactment. They believed that those regulations will have ensured the traditional conservations of their land, forest, water, wildlife, and natural resources. In the working agenda of the local parliament, the regulation on the Conservation District was finally issued on 7 December 2017.

5. Discussion and conclusions

In the context of bureaucracy politics, decentralisation and re-centralisation can be understood of the conflicting interests of different bureaucracy entities at the different levels, where power and authorities are negotiated. This paper analysed the power struggles between central and local government bureaucracies using the local policy initiative of Conservation District by Tambrauw District of West Papua as the analytical case. We first attempted to identify the specific interests of the district, which according to the Law No. 23/2014 has no more authority over forests. Our case reveals that the declaration of Tambrauw as a conservation district demonstrates the resistance to the prohibitive conservation regimes that hinder the local aspirations on economic development. Using the environmentally-minded policy narratives, the district camouflages its true interests of economic gains from the forests. Escobar (1998) argues that conservation commitments and activities often exhibit a means of achieving economic purposes. In Indonesia, there are numerous examples of extractive economic activities in conservation areas veiled by conservation narratives (for instance see Sahide *et al.*, 2018). Our finding supports the theory of bureaucratic politics on the dual goals of a bureaucracy (Niskanen, 1971; Krott, 1990; Peters, 2014), and the extensive research findings on formal and informal interests of a bureaucracy (Rahman and Giessen, 2017b; Burns *et al.*, 2017; Giessen *et al.*, 2016).

We found that the local policy initiative is opposed by the central forest bureaucracy, i.e. MoEF, who is afraid of losing their authority over the forest resources. In this research, we identified the power sources and strategies employed by the district government to

Table 3
Policy Formulation and Formalisation Processes of Conservation District.

Source: Compiled from different sources

Time	Activity	Administrator	Venue	Partnership
February 13, 2013	MOU signed by The Samdhana Institute and the Tambrauw Head District	Tambrauw Head District and the Samdhana Director	Sausapor Tambrauw	The Samdhana Institute
June 19, 2013	Local Level Institution Workshop on Tambrauw as Conservation District	Local Government of Tambrauw District and The Samdhana Institute	Sorong	Faculty of Forestry, Unipa
September 15–16, 2014	The Establishment of Development Partnership in Tambrauw District	Local Government of Tambrauw District	Sausapor, Tambrauw District	WWF, The Samdhana Institute, Yayasan Paradisea, Universitas Papua, Yayasan Aka Wuon, Epistema Institute, and BP. REDD +
March 2, 2015	Socialization of Customary Land and Important Areas Map Planning in Tambrauw District	Local Government of Tambrauw District	Sausapor, Tambrauw District	The Samdhana Institute, WWF, Yayasan Paradisea and Akawuon, Participative Mapping Network and UNIPA
March 3, 2015	Internal Presentation on Ranperda Planning for Conservation District and Customary Community Signing of the MOU on Manuscript Writing of Customary Community, Conservation District, and Leatherback Turtle Conservation Ranperdas	Tambrauw House of Representatives	Office of the Tambrauw House of Representatives	University of Papua, The Samdhana Institute, and Epistema Institute
March 14–17, 2015	Workshop for Customary Community's Important Areas Mapping Facilitators in Tambrauw District	Local Government of Tambrauw District	Office of WWF Sausapor	Faculty of Forestry, UNIPA, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute, Yayasan WWF and Yayasan Akwuon, and Yayasan Paradisea
April 20–21, 2015	Limited Consultation and Discussion among related institutions, customary community and law experts, and the government concerning Customary Community Ranperda ^a	Tambrauw House of Representatives, Epistema Institute, and Samdhana Institute	Hotel Grand Tropic Jakarta	The Samdhana Institute, WWF, Yayasan Paradisea and Akawuon, UNIPA
June 8–August 8, 2015	Mapping of the Customary Community's Important Areas in Tambrauw District	Local Government of Tambrauw District	Sausapor and Manokwari	Faculty of Forestry, Unipa, WWF, Yayasan Aka Wuon and Yayasan Paradisea
February 11, 2016	Internal Consultation between on the Conservation District and Customary Community Ranperdas draft with the House of Representatives and Drafting team	Tambrauw House of Representatives	Office of the Tambrauw House of Representatives	Faculty of Forestry, Unipa, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute, Yayasan Paradisea and Yayasan Aka Wuon
March 30, 2016	District Level Public Consultation on Conservation District and Customary Community Ranperdas	Tambrauw House of Representatives	Head District Office	Faculty of Forestry, UNIPA, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute and Yayasan Akawuon
June 2017 ^a	Socialization on sub-district and kampung levels	Tambrauw House of Representatives	29 Districts in Tambrauw District	Faculty of Forestry, UNIPA, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute and Yayasan Akawuon
First Week of August, 2017 ^b	Final Consultation on Conservation District and <i>Mayarakat Hukum Adat</i> (Customary Law Community) Ranperdas on district level	Tambrauw House of Representatives	Hall of Tambrauw District Head	UNIPA, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute, and Yayasan Akwuon.
Second Week of August, 2017 ^b	Revision and finalization of inputs on Conservation District and MHA Ranperdas	Tambrauw House of Representatives	Sausapor	UNIPA, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute, and Yayasan Akwuon
Second Week of September, 2017 ^b	Consultation and Synchronization of the Ranperda on Provincial and Central Levels	Tambrauw House of Representatives	Law Bureau of West Papua Province and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Jakarta	UNIPA, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute, and Yayasan Akwuon
October 23–24, 2017 ^b	The Ranperda will be enacted as a Regional Regulation in the Tambrauw House of Representative's final meeting session, signed by the Tambrauw Head District. The Regional Regulation is District Gazette	Tambrauw House of Representatives and Tambrauw Head District	Sausapor	UNIPA, The Samdhana Institute, Epistema Institute, and Yayasan Akwuon

^a Implemented through BERSAMA (Berdayakan Sumberdaya Alam bersama Masyarakat Adat) Program supported by BP REDD +.

^b Result of observation, document analysis, and analysis of Tambrauw House of Representatives' legislative agenda 2017.

achieving its interests. Although it has no legal mandates over forests in accordance with the Conservation of the Living Natural Resources No. 5/1990, the Forest Law 41/1999, and Regional Government Law No. 23/2014- the district intensively utilised legal public mandates relating to the Special Autonomy Status of Papua. The conflicting regulations have opened windows of opportunities for the district to pursue its interests. There are also similar cases, where district governments use the best-fitted legal frameworks in the case of overlapping laws and regulations (see (Setiawan *et al.*, 2016; Maryudi, 2015). More crucially, the district successfully used the issue of local wisdoms, customary rights and communities as a source of power in the form of dominant information. Over the past few decades, those issues have gained tractions at both international and domestic levels (Myers *et al.*, 2017; Davenport *et al.*, 2010). Research also shows that conservation goals still fit within empowerment and livelihood of local communities (Pudyatmoko *et al.*, 2018; Nurrochmat *et al.*, 2017).

Nuancing the narrative importance of specific socio-cultural realities, customary rights, and tenurial systems of indigenous people has paid off; the district successfully built coalitions with an array of actors, i.e. NGOs, higher bureaucracies, and indigenous groups. Coalitions provide opportunities for actors to realise their goals (Sabatier, 1988); by making coalition, the district was able to leverage their power. Local and national NGOs provide links to international donors to finance the formulation and implementation of the necessary programs and

activities for the local policy initiative. Research shows that in recent years international donors have been forming coalitions with non-state actors, i.e. NGOs, through a combination of funding and technical assistance programs in order to create influence on domestic policy (Rahman *et al.*, 2018; Burns *et al.*, 2017). The district government of Tambrauw is fully aware of and taking advantages of this trend. It also seeks coalitions with higher bureaucracies, i.e. MoHA and provincial government which both aspire to ensure the special autonomy policy. These coalitions, especially those within the central state, are strategic as the district face opposition from the central forest bureaucracy. The local policy initiative further gained political support from indigenous groups since it is widely perceived to promoting the local practices.

Overall, our study contributes to a better understanding of domestic bureaucracies' interests, strategies and power. We revealed the political processes of the conflicting interests of different bureaucracies over forest resources and how they pursue their respective interests. Our study also pointed out the involvement of NGOs and their international allies although we did not probe in great details as this is beyond the scope of our study. Future studies may include the examination of the influences of global forest governance at the domestic policy making. More specifically relating to our study, they can be dedicated to the competing global interests on conservation and the livelihood of customary communities.

Appendix A

List of Interviews

Interview	Interviewee	Date
Interview 1	District Mayor of Tambrauw	18 August 2017
Interview 2	Head of Tambrauw Parliament	22 June 2017
Interview 3	Directorate General of Natural Conservation and Ecosystem, MoEF	11 December 2017
Interview 4	Head of Coastal management Area, Marine and Fishery of Papua Barat Office	18 December 2017
Interview 5	Head of reporting and data of Papua Barat Forest office	17 December 2017
Interview 7	Head of BBKSDAE Papua Barat	29 October 2017
Interview 8	Direktur Sinkronisasi Urusan Pemerintahan Daerah I. Ditjen Bina Pembangunan Daerah, Kemendagri	18 August 2016
Interview 9	Head of Bappeda Papua Barat	8 November 2017
Interview 10	Head of Environment Office of Papua Barat	13 December 2017
Interview 11	Governor of Papua Barat	6 November 2017
Interview 12	Head of Forest office of Papua Barat	27 November 2017
Interview 13	Director of Specialized Autonomy of Ministry Home Affairs	17 Januari 2018
Interview 14	Leader of Miyah Ethnic	12 December 2012
Interview 15	Leader of Abun Ethnic	12–13 April 2015
Interview 16	Leader of Mpur Ethnic	12–13 April 2015

Notes: sorted accordingly to the occurrence in the main text

Appendix B

Empirical Materials

- Bulletin Tambrauw Bersinar. 2013. Kabupaten Tambrauw Ditargetkan Menjadi Pilot Project Implementai REDD + di Indonesia. Edition 3 (in Indonesian)
- Bulletin Tambrauw Bersinar. 2014. Bupati Asem Pimpin Tim Tambrauw Bertemu Menteri Kehutanan Bahas Kabupaten Konservasi. Edition 5 (in Indonesian)
- Papua Barat Pos. 2016. Wawancara Khusus Refleksi 5 Tahun Kepemimpinan Pertama Gabriel Asem” Bapak Pembangunan “ Kabupaten Tambrauw. 7 October 2016
- Papua Barat Pos. 2015. Bupati Tambrauw Menerima Penghargaan dari Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan di Jakarta, 7 October 2015
- Radar Sorong. 2015. Legislatif Tambrauw Siap Mengawal Hak Masyarakat Adat Dalam Peraturan Daerah di Kabupaten Tambrauw. 2 April 2015
- Balai Pemantapan Kawasan Hutan Wilayah XXVII, 2014. Peta Kawasan Hutan Provinsi Papua Barat Sesuai SK.783/Menhut-II/ 2014 (in Indonesian)
- Bappeda Tambrauw, 2015. Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah Revisi Kabupaten Tambrauw (in Indonesian)

- 8 Bappeda Tambrauw. 2011. Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah Kabupaten Tambrauw. (in Indonesian)
- 9 Bulletin Tambrauw Bersinar. 2014. Rapat Kerja Bupati Se-Papua Barat; Wakili Para Bupati, Bupati Asem Dipercayakan Memberikan Sambutan Tunggal. Edition 5 (in Indonesian)
- 10 Conservation International, 1999. Laporan Akhir Lokakarya Penentuan Prioritas Konservasi Keanekaragaman Hayati di Irian Jaya. Washington DC. (in Indonesian)
- 11 Government Regulation No. 40, 2006 on the Formulation of Indonesian Development Planning
- 12 Government Regulation No. 8, 2008 on the Stages, Procedures for Preparation, Control, and Evaluation of the Implementation of Local Development Plans
- 13 Law No. 21/2001 on Special Autonomy of Papua Province
- 14 Law No. 23/2014 on Regional Government
- 15 Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Autonomy
- 16 Law No. 41/1999 on Forestry
- 17 Law No. 5/1990 on Conservation and Natural Resources and Its Ecosystem
- 18 Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 54, 2010 on the Implementation of Government Regulation No. 8, 2008 concerning the Stages, Procedures for Preparation, Control, and Evaluation of the Implementation of Local Development Plans
- 19 Laporan Kegiatan. Sinergitas Kebijakan Kelembagaan, Perencanaan Dan Penganggaran Tahun 2017. Direktorat Sinkronisasi Urusan Pemerintahan Daerah I Ditjen Bina Pembangunan Daerah. Jakarta, 7 Maret 2017

Appendix C

List of participatory observation

<i>Observation</i>	<i>Venue and Date</i>
<i>Observation 1.</i> Workshop on Feasibility/Baseline Study of Tambrauw as a Conservation District and Master Plan for Forestry Development in Tambrauw District	Sausapor- Tambrauw, December 12, 2012
<i>Observation 2.</i> Workshop on Local Institution Model for Conservation District Management	Sorong, June 19, 2013
<i>Observation 3.</i> Team of Tambrauw District Government conducted a Comparative Study in Malinau District, East Kalimantan	Malinau – East Kalimantan, July 21–26, 2013
<i>Observation 4.</i> Workshop on National Strategy for REDD + Operation in Papua	Jakarta, March 12–13, 2014
<i>Observation 5.</i> Presentation of Conservation District Establishment in REDD + Taskforce meeting in Jayapura.	Jayapura, May 8, 2014
<i>Observation 6.</i> Workshop on Work Plans and REDD + Programs for Tambrauw as a pilot district in West Papua	Manokwari, May 23–24, 2014
<i>Observation 7.</i> Internal meeting between the head of Tambrauw District and the Indonesian Minister of Forestry	Jakarta, September 13, 2014
<i>Observation 7.</i> Socialization of Conservation District in 12 “sub-districts” in Tambrauw District and Creating Database for Tambrauw as a Conservation District	12 “sub-districts” in Tambrauw District, July 7–27 and November 13, 2014
<i>Observation 8.</i> Workshop on Development Partnership in Tambrauw District	Sausapor-Tambrauw, September 15–16, 2014
<i>Observation 9.</i> Workshop on the Map Planning of Customary Community’s important areas in Tambrauw District	Sausapor-Tambrauw, March 2, 2015
<i>Observation 10.</i> Internal Presentation on the Formulation Plan for Conservation District and Customary Community Ranperdas with the Tambrauw House of Representatives	Sausapor Tambrauw, March 3, 2015
<i>Observation 11.</i> Facilitator Training for Mapping Customary Community’s Important Areas and Tribal Coverage in Tambrauw District	Sausapor- Tambrauw, April 12–15, 2015
<i>Observation 12.</i> National Partnership Dialogue among the Central Government, Local Government, and Civil Society to encourage recognition of customary zones and of customary land extension	Mataram- West Nusa Tenggara, April 17–18, 2015
<i>Observation 13.</i> Limited Discussion among several related local institutions, experts on customary law and customary laws, law experts, and the local government regarding the Customary Community Ranperda	Grand Tropic Hotel Jakarta, April 20–21, 2015
<i>Observation 14.</i> Participatory Mapping of Customary Community’s Important Areas in Tambrauw District	6 “sub-districts” in Tambrauw District, June 8 June–August, 2015
<i>Observation 15.</i> Internal Meeting between NGOs and the head of Tambrauw District	Saupapor Tambrauw, July 17, 2015
<i>Observation 16.</i> Seminar and Workshop on SRAK Formulation and RAD REDD + in Tambrauw District	Sausapor, October 12, 2015
<i>Observation 17.</i> Internal Consultation between the Tambrauw District and the Tambrauw House of Representatives on the Draft I Academic Manuscript regarding the Conservation District and Customary Community Ranperdas	Sausapor- Tambrauw, February 11, 2016
<i>Observation 18.</i> Public Consultation and Socialization of Draft I Academic Manuscript regarding the Conservation District and Customary Community Ranperdas among the Tambrauw District Government, customary communities, religious figures, and the head and members of the Tambrauw House of Representatives	Sausapor-Tambrauw, March 30, 2016

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