

Institutional layering in climate policy: Insights from REDD+ governance in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Climate change adaptation in low- and middle-income countries has magnified the urgency of transforming forest governance. Despite the increased international pressure, progress is hampered by inefficiencies in forest-related state institutions that struggle with coordination, mediating political interests, and strategic policy formulation. Focusing on Indonesia's Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) program, this article offers a novel perspective on the institutionalization of the climate agenda within the forestry sector and its implications for forest governance transformation. We posit that Indonesia's forest institutions have internalized the climate agenda via layering, a process where climate objectives are embedded within existing structures. While this assimilation approach potentially restricts transformative capacity, we argue that it demonstrates greater resilience for long-term climate agenda, especially in non-climate consensus nations like Indonesia. Our study accentuates the necessity to incorporate domestic political contexts in examining the institutionalization process of climate objectives. The dynamic relationship between politics and institutions provides a crucial lens to understand limitations and pathways to transformative forest governance. This analysis hopes to shed light on more efficient and transformative climate governance in the forestry sector.

1. Introduction

The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, underscored the increasingly pivotal role of national institutions in the global climate dialogue. Participating states have committed to reducing their national emissions as part of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), accelerating the global climate agenda's progression. Consequently, climate discourse has evolved from scrutinizing interactions between nations to dissecting political dynamics within them, thus marking a shift towards a more bottom-up approach to policy (Falkner, 2016). This shift necessitates a closer inspection of how nations internally coordinate their transition away from business-as-usual practices (BAU), thereby aligning with global climate norms. Hence, the concept of state capacity, i.e., its ability to address governance challenges and mobilize domestic resources, assumes greater significance in achieving the objectives set forth in the Paris Agreement (Hein et al., 2018).

However, this transition is not without its challenges. During the early phase of climate institutionalization, many countries struggle to

develop the capacity to mobilize domestic resources for climate action (Hochstetler, 2021; Yoseph-Paulus and Hindmarsh, 2016). This struggle is often tied to the configuration of domestic institutions. Dominant developmental paradigms, such as poverty alleviation, energy security, and unemployment, often overshadow climate objectives within domestic institutional debates (Halsnæs and Verhagen, 2007).

This paper examines the configuration of domestic institutions, particularly in the context of low- and middle-income countries undertaking climate action. We spotlight the competing processes of climate institutionalization and their evolution over time, which is instrumental in comprehending the political dynamics that shape the transformational potential of climate institutions. To exemplify this, we scrutinize the chronological institutionalization of the global climate initiative, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). By exploring the interplay between political machinations and the institutionalization process in Indonesia, a nation still striving for comprehensive climate consensus, we highlight the ensuing political tensions when integrating the climate agenda within the

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forestry and land-use sector. Given that forests contribute to nearly a third of the annual CO₂ emissions from terrestrial ecosystems (Lawrence et al., 2022), our research offers novel insights into institutional inefficiencies concerning climate governance challenges.

Indonesia has experimented with two competing approaches to institutionalizing the climate agenda via REDD+: the creation of a dedicated REDD+ taskforce/management agency (2010–2014) and institutional layering (2015–present), where climate objectives are incorporated within existing institutions. The latter is apparent in the integration of REDD+ initiatives within the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The climate debate's polarizing nature hinders consensus formation around a mitigation-centric narrative, subsequently posing significant obstacles to the creation and sustainability of a dedicated institution in Indonesia. Despite international processes creating domestic political space for climate objectives, bureaucratic resistance to straying from entrenched traditions and practices persists. The assimilation of climate institutions within the existing bureaucracy has arguably extended the REDD+ agenda's longevity, albeit at the expense of its transformative potential.

Our study suggests that Indonesia's REDD+ governance has experienced two modes of change. The first, termed as REDD+ Governance 1.0, was orchestrated through a dedicated institution during the Yudhoyono presidency. The second mode, REDD+ Governance 2.0, emerged under President Joko Widodo's administration, with the REDD+ mandate being reinstated within the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), indicating a mode of institutional change referred to as institutional layering.

To substantiate this argument, this article is structured as follows. Section 2 presents a literature review on forest governance and institutional transformation. Section 3 explains the framework and approach used in this study. Section 4 discusses the study's methodology. Section 5 highlights the political economy context of forest governance in Indonesia. Section 6 examines the establishment of a purpose-built REDD+ institution and the challenges it faced. Section 7 looks at institutional layering of REDD+ governance via the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

2. Literature review

Recent scholarly discourse has placed significant emphasis on the transformation of Indonesia's forest governance as a response to climate change (Brockhaus and Angelsen, 2012; Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). This transformation signifies a marked shift from established business-as-usual practices, such as deforestation and forest degradation, towards climate mitigation strategies. Catalysts for this shift span various factors, including evolving discourse, attitude modifications, power relation alterations, strategic policy decisions, and protest actions (Brockhaus and Angelsen, 2012).

A diverse array of forest initiatives and policies, from non-state market-driven governance systems like forest and palm oil certification (Giessen et al., 2016; Wibowo et al., 2019), to state-led governance mechanisms such as the Forest Moratorium (Sloan, 2014), One Map Initiative (Astuti and McGregor, 2015; Mulyani and Jepson, 2017), Community Forest Management (Wulandari and Inoue, 2018), and global strategies like the REDD+ initiative (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017; Boer, 2020) have been leveraged to effect substantial transformation in Indonesia's forest governance. The REDD+ initiative, in particular, has been a principal subject of forest policy studies, given its potential to offer abundant opportunities and challenges for reforming forest and land-use governance (Indonesian REDD+ Task Force, 2012).

While some research conveys optimism regarding the transformative capacity of REDD+ (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017; Maryani et al., 2012; Widiaryanto, 2020), others contend that existing policies and initiatives fall short in reforming Indonesia's forest governance (Moeliono et al., 2020; Myers et al., 2018). These inefficiencies are frequently attributed to conflicting policies and regulations (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017),

poor inter-sectoral coordination, and insufficient local capacity building (Yoseph-Paulus and Hindmarsh, 2016). Brockhaus and Angelsen (2012) highlight the weak institutional infrastructure underpinning Indonesia's land allocation and policy process, which is inherently aligned with a development paradigm centered on large-scale economic development.

The tension between the state and private sector is often spotlighted as a central contributor to institutional inefficiencies (Giessen et al., 2016; Mulyani and Jepson, 2013a; Sahide et al., 2016). Mulyani and Jepson (2013a) demonstrate the differential perception of REDD+ among state and private actors. The private sector largely attributes prevalent corruption within the forestry sector to the ambiguity in regulations related to revenue sharing and "carbon ownership." Conversely, government officials tend to view REDD+ as an instrument leveraged by affluent nations to constrain the economic development of developing countries.

Further, Giessen et al. (2016) and Wibowo et al. (2019) reveal state resistance against the emergence of transnational private regulatory governance via international certification standards, primarily due to the state's limited capacity to monitor the forestry sector. The state's regulatory push to establish international, state-driven certification mechanisms also reflects an attempt to regain authority over the forestry sector. The resulting conflicting objectives can potentially confuse customer preferences for certified products, consequently undermining the long-term efficiency of forest certification. Sahide et al. (2016) present similar observations regarding the Indonesian central government's attempts to regain control over forest land following two decades of decentralization. Inter-governmental power struggles further complicate community forestry schemes.

Two key insights can be gleaned from this discussion. Firstly, the concept of "governance without government" is not entirely applicable, particularly in the context of forestry issues. Concerns over sovereignty inherently necessitate the government's active involvement, which directly impacts the successes and failures of forest governance (Giessen et al., 2016). Secondly, the competing interests of various forest stakeholders can lead to significant contention, becoming a primary obstacle to meaningful forest reform (Wibowo et al., 2019).

In light of the limitations of climate policies and initiatives, the state's capacity—via its national climate institution—to coordinate, build consensus, and develop strategic frameworks becomes paramount. Institutional structures often prove instrumental in mediating political interests and guiding the development and implementation of climate policies. MacNeil (2021) contends that the nature of climate policies mirrors the institutions that formulate them—weak institutions often yield weak policy outcomes. Despite the critical role of domestic climate institutions in transforming forest governance, current governance literature tends to disproportionately focus on the study of climate targets and policies, giving inadequate attention to the interplay between political dynamics and institutionalization processes.

Addressing this gap, this article aims to explore the process of REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia, focusing on how national forest institutions internally reorganize in response to climate initiatives.

3. Theoretical framework

The existing literature often underestimates the critical role that domestic institutions play in transforming forest governance. Our study addresses this oversight, adopting a historical institutionalist (HI) approach as postulated by Dubash (2021) to further understand the evolution of REDD+ institutions in Indonesia and the role of politics in shaping this process.

Historical institutionalism employs process-tracing to elucidate how historical events and decisions mold institutional development over time. HI characteristically views institutions as entities that once established, become incredibly resistant to change due to positive feedback loops, encouraging actors to maintain the status quo

(Heinmiller, 2009). This process gives rise to institutional inertia, thereby limiting institutional change and leading to recurring ('path') and favored ('dependent') institutions (Pierson, 2000). Typically, HI perceives institutional changes as a result of exogenous shocks, or 'critical junctures,' which trigger institutional realignment (Schmidt, 2010).

However, this perspective somewhat overlooks the role of endogenous factors in institutional change. Changes are not solely precipitated by external shocks; instead, they can also occur incrementally from within the institution (Madama, 2013). In the case of REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia, evidence of internal struggles and changes impacting the institutional outcome and the implementation of REDD+ have been observed (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017).

The role of endogenous factors in incremental change has garnered attention in recent institutionalist studies (Schmidt, 2010). Our study delineates these factors into two forms of change. First, institutional displacement, where an institution is purposefully constructed to tackle a specific issue (Dubash, 2021), and second, institutional layering, whereby new objectives are introduced into pre-existing institutions, initially established for different purposes (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010).

Discerning these change modes necessitates understanding the intricate interaction between institutional emergence and the domestic politics that envelops it (Dubash, 2021). We view institutions as the products of deliberate political maneuvers and contention among actors pursuing their respective interests. This political conflict serves as the driving force behind institutional development and change (Mackay et al., 2011).

Two variables impact domestic acceptance. First, in the realm of ideas, we can scrutinize whether the dominant narrative pertaining to a particular issue is centered more towards an embedded narrative or a mitigation-centric narrative. With the dominance of embedded narrative, issues or objectives tend to be submerged into other objectives deemed to be more politically viable. Meanwhile, with the presence of a mitigation-centric narrative, an issue or objective is framed around a policy focus on targets and emissions, which enables more straightforward and strategic mitigating action. Secondly, in the area of interest, the degree of polarization pertaining to the issue is also important to institutional outcomes. Polarization is the extent to which the implementation of a particular issue leads to domestic political contestation. High polarization suggests the absence or lack of political consensus regarding a particular issue or objective, likely rendering its operationalization more susceptible to political contestation. Conversely, low polarization indicates the presence of political consensus, which tends to suppress the development of political contestation.

The interplay of these ideas and interests defines the institutional arrangement tailored to its institutionalization process. When an issue garners domestic political acceptance, it is more likely to result in a

purpose-built institution. Conversely, a layered institution is more likely to emerge in the absence of sufficient domestic political acceptance. For REDD+ institutionalization, the degree of domestic acceptance of climate mitigation determines the institutional outcomes.

Following the exploration of how the landscape of ideas and interests shapes institutional outcomes, we turn to the process in which domestic politics mold these outcomes. According to Dubash (2021), three variables mediate this relationship: domestic political institutions, bureaucratic routines, and a country's interactions with international processes. The symbiotic relationship between these variables and the configuration of ideas and interests ultimately shapes the type of institutional arrangement for a specific issue or objective (see Fig. 1).

Domestic political institutions not only matter in policy-making but also influence the resultant institution assigned to govern such policy (Dubash, 2021). Analyzing the interests of political actors within these institutions helps elucidate the role of these institutions. The strategies politicians use to distribute resources among constituents greatly influence institutional outcomes.

However, the situation may differ in Indonesia. The adoption of a proportional representation (PR) electoral system in Indonesia has encouraged a multi-party government system and closer ties between the national parliament and voters. Despite these potentially advantageous conditions, the prevalence of money politics and the lack of domestic saliency of REDD+ inhibits active involvement of the national parliament in strengthening Indonesia's REDD+ institutions.

Secondly, bureaucratic routines, traditions, and practices both complicate and ease the institutionalization process for climate institutions. Two conditions shape the emergence of a robust institution. First is the ability of a state to be sufficiently autonomous to impose a cost on interests, or the so-called 'bureaucratic rationality' (Dubash, 2021). This aspect stresses the need for a state's bureaucracy to be staffed with rule-following bureaucrats who prioritize their duty over predatory interests and personal gain (Chibber, 2002). It also requires that the bureaucracy is able to resist external pressures and maintain a commitment to self-preservation, rejecting any attempt to undermine or dilute its power from outside forces. Second is the presence of disciplinary coordination across state agencies. The presence of 'Weberian' rule-following bureaucrats alone is insufficient for a robust institution, knowing that bureaucratic politics are often dominated by interagency rivalry and conflict. These bureaucratic tensions can manifest as resistance to change, reluctance to cooperate with other agencies, and a drive to protect the interests and authority of individual agencies, all of which can hinder the establishment of a strong and effective climate institution. These two conditions should support the emergence of a robust climate institution.

In the context of REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia, the (in-)ability of government ministries, especially the Ministry of Environment

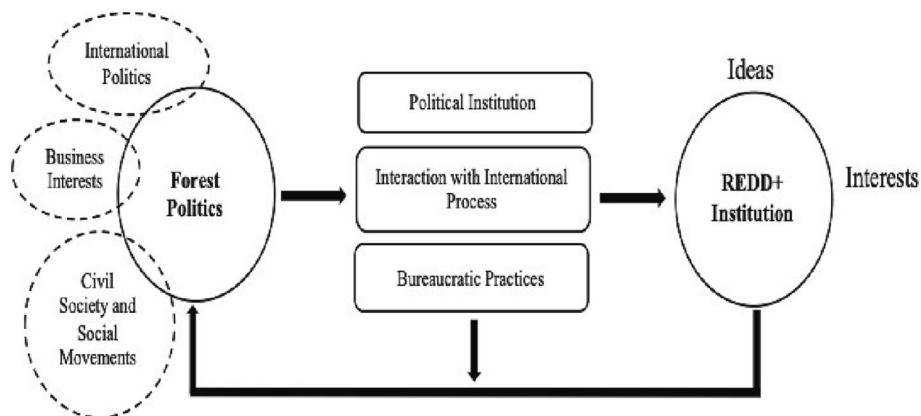


Fig. 1. The process of REDD+ institution's emergence. Source: Authors' adaption from Dubash (2021)

and Forestry (MOEF), to be autonomous from predatory interests, especially those of forestry industries, affect the REDD+ institutional arrangement (Meehan and Tacconi, 2017). These conditions might also be complicated by a long tradition of state-led development in Indonesia and the legacy of the Suharto regime that tends to perpetuate the commercialization of forests and corrupt practices within it as we discuss in more detail below. Another important aspect is the state's capacity to coordinate its ministries, for instance, through inter-ministerial coordinating institutions. Given the cross-cutting nature of the REDD+ initiative, sectoral politics has been a critical issue that underpins Indonesia's forest governance reform. Accordingly, REDD+ and its resultant institution are shaped by the state of Indonesia's bureaucratic politics and traditions.

Thirdly, international drivers play an essential role in the opening up of domestic politics on certain issues, by shaping the domestic configuration of interests as well as the dominant narratives surrounding the issue or objective at hand. In this case, international interaction can trigger domestic institutional development through the diffusion of new ideas, mechanisms, and standards. This influence is plausible knowing that states often aim to deflect international pressure and win legitimacy by meeting international obligations. However, national political constraints determine the degree to which international pressures can be accommodated at the domestic level. From this standpoint, a low domestic political acceptance of an issue or objective may constitute national constraints that impede the mobilization of international pressures. Therefore, seeking consistency and harmony between international arrangements and domestic acceptability becomes an important step for state actors to address and avoid any mismatch between the two levels (Dubash, 2021). Hence, in the context of REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia, the institutional arrangement to govern such an initiative would be subject to the two-level game resolution, namely the international pressures and support for Indonesia to conduct forest governance reform, and the question of societal (especially of forest stakeholders) support for an agenda of transformation.

While this approach provides valuable insights into the path-dependent nature of institutional development, it could be critiqued for its deterministic nature and the heavy emphasis on historical legacies in shaping institutional outcomes. Despite our attempt to integrate the importance of domestic political dynamics and international drivers, this focus on path-dependence might overshadow the role of agency and ongoing negotiations among actors in driving institutional change. Additionally, the framework does not sufficiently examine the diverse perspectives and interests of various stakeholders beyond political actors and bureaucrats. As such, it might not capture the full spectrum of factors influencing the institutionalization of REDD+ in Indonesia. We have attempted to address these factors in our discussion section.

4. Research method

This article utilizes a process-tracing method to examine the history of REDD+ institutional development in Indonesia, focusing on the importance of domestic political institutions, bureaucratic traditions, and interactions with the international process. REDD+ is selected as a case study mainly because it has become a prominent object of study among many scholars on the topic of forest governance transformation. Other than its policy significance, REDD+ is a cross-cutting issue in which the implementation brings complex political and governance challenges that demand an effective and engaged state. Thus, it provides an important case for studying institutional formation at the national level within high-politic circumstances.

This research primarily uses secondary data, collected from reports, official documents, journals, and other credible online sources in both English and Indonesian. The data analysis mainly utilizes qualitative and descriptive methods to explore the questions that require a subjective interpretation on less tangible matters. From a methodological standpoint, the analysis follows the prescription of historical institutionalism

to conduct a process-tracing approach to better understand the way in which institutional legacies influence contemporary developments. In doing so, the scope of analysis is framed from the 1960s to the year 2018, given the extensive change in both ideational and material forces pertaining to the climate issue in the forestry and land-use sector that influence REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia. Although we recognize the recent developments showing a more positive trend, this paper concentrates on the competing processes of REDD+ institutionalization and the institutional inefficiencies that emerge from conflicting institutional forms. For this reason, we have established 2018 as our analytical cut-off point.

5. The political economy context of Indonesia's state policy towards forests

To fully comprehend the institutionalization of climate change within Indonesia's forestry sector, it is necessary to examine the state's forest policies since the New Order era (1967–1998). During this period, Indonesia's forestry practices echoed its colonial legacy, majorly exploiting forest resources for commercial benefit under the guise of a "development" paradigm. Commercial logging amplified from the 1970s through to the 1990s under the authoritarian New Order, leading to a drastic reduction in the country's forest coverage from 74% to 56% (Tacconi and Muttaqin, 2019). The perception of forests as economic tools for development, along with legislative support, further encouraged forest commercialization and exploitation by domestic and international entities (Indrarto et al., 2012a, 2012b).

Extensive deforestation in Indonesia can be attributed to the monopolistic nature of Suharto's regime and its close ties with business conglomerates. This centralized political structure gave the state full control over "state forest" resources, and the 1967 Forestry Law designated the Ministry of Forestry as the sole entity responsible for issuing new forest concessions (Widiaryanto, 2020). Influenced by powerful business actors with ties to high-ranking political officials, this centralized bureaucracy led to widespread corruption. Businesses frequently participated in illicit practices to secure government permits for forest extraction beyond assigned quotas (Widiaryanto, 2020). Thus, the control over forest governance lay predominantly in the hands of a few political elites and business conglomerates, with minimal regard for the environmental and social impacts of forest exploitation.

The political and bureaucratic traditions established during Suharto's 32-year authoritarian rule have significantly influenced the emergence of REDD+ institutions. Although the Suharto legacy persists, perpetuating a forest governance status quo that impedes REDD+'s success, some positive progress has been made. This includes Indonesia's ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through Law No. 6/1994, reflecting its climate commitment to reduce emissions (Indrarto et al., 2012a, 2012b). The UNFCCC, which requires member states to meet annually at the Conference of Parties (COP) to implement the framework, serves as the foundation for REDD+ in Indonesia.

Following the collapse of Suharto's regime in 1998, Indonesia underwent a significant political reform, transitioning to democracy. Power shifts among domestic political actors shaped forest governance arrangements, especially REDD+. In 2001, Indonesia adopted a decentralized system, devolving forest authority from the central government to provincial and district governments through regional autonomy policies (Luttrell et al., 2014). However, coordination challenges for forest governance emerged due to decentralization, as the central government retained the authority to award concessions.

Significant power shifts were also observed between the legislative and executive branches. The President's power, previously absolute, was diminished by the second amendment to the national constitution, requiring policy approval in the form of parliamentary legislation. The multi-party system in parliament was strengthened, making presidential success dependent on coalition support. This power shift made REDD+

more vulnerable to political dynamics.

Furthermore, the post-reformasi era saw the emergence of environmental justice narratives due to extractivist development policies and unequal distribution of benefits, particularly concerning indigenous land rights. Public dissatisfaction led to significant forest-related resistance and conflicts, influencing the formation of REDD+ institutions in Indonesia (Indrarto et al., 2012a, 2012b). The shift in developmental paradigm between the Suharto era and the democratization era has had a significant impact on the institutional change in Indonesia's forestry sector. The transition from an extractivist approach to a more sustainable and equitable development model has led to changes in forest governance arrangements, the emergence of new institutions and policies, and an increased focus on addressing environmental and social concerns. However, the legacy of the Suharto era and the challenges associated with decentralization and political reform continue to influence the implementation of REDD+ and other climate change initiatives in Indonesia. The following section will two competing modes of REDD+ institutionalization pursued in Indonesia.

6. REDD+ governance 1.0: development of a purpose-built REDD+ institution in Indonesia

REDD+ surfaced as a key global initiative, acknowledging the significant role of the forestry and land-use sector in mitigating climate change. Post-2000, research indicated that land-use change, such as deforestation and forest degradation, accounted for 12–29% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Consequently, this period marked a surge in global awareness and pressure to prioritize effective forest management practices as central to global climate mitigation, particularly in the Global South (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2019). This phenomenon was most evident since the 2005 COP-11, with the inception of the Reduction Emission from Deforestation (RED) initiative, serving as the precursor to REDD+. Following the Montreal Decision, Indonesia established the Indonesia Forest Climate Alliance (IFCA), a crucial entity for assessing Indonesia's readiness and participation in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (Moeliono et al., 2014). The studies conducted by IFCA later formed the groundwork for the institutionalization of the REDD+ framework in Indonesia, as seen since the Bali Action Plan (Maryani et al., 2012).

The 2007 UNFCCC COP 13, hosted in Bali, signified Indonesia's more ambitious efforts towards climate governance, particularly in the land-use sector. In the lead-up to this event, the Indonesian government introduced a policy document termed the National Action Plan Addressing Climate Change. This document was designed to serve as a guideline for all sectors in formulating climate-related policies (Indrarto et al., 2012a). The following year witnessed the establishment of the National Council on Climate Change (Dewan Nasional Perubahan Iklim, or DNPI), an inter-ministerial body assigned with an exclusive climate change mandate, operating directly under the president's leadership via Presidential Regulation no. 46/2008 (Di Gregorio et al., 2017).

These developments in the climate institutional architecture epitomized the entrance of the climate change debate into Indonesia. However, it is important to note that climate mitigation in Indonesia remains to be centered on the forestry and land-use sector (Ordenez et al., 2021). The Indonesian state seems to be more interested in projecting its international leadership on mitigation in this particular sector, which contributes 63% of Indonesia's carbon emissions (Di Gregorio et al., 2017). This is evident in Indonesia's institutionalization of REDD+, one of the world's first global climate initiatives. The following section will discuss Indonesia's REDD+ governance since 2007.

Since 2007's COP 13, RED further evolved into REDD+ as stated within the Bali Action Plan, which contained policy approaches and positive incentives to implement the initiative in low- and middle-income countries. COP 13 placed REDD+ firmly onto the international climate agenda and increased the role of low- and middle-income countries in forest conservation while continuing their development

(DJJPI, 2022a; Indrarto et al., 2012a). As the host country for this international event, Indonesia launched a broad REDD+ Roadmap, prepared by the IFCA, as one of its first REDD+-specific policy documents (Indrarto et al., 2012a).

A defining characteristic of the post-COP 13 era was the influx of international support and funding for Indonesia, coupled with the emergence of domestic REDD+ institutional architecture. From 2008, various multilateral initiatives such as the United Nations REDD Programme, the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership (FCPF), and the Forest Investment Program (FIP) were established to support REDD+ implementation, primarily via funding. Countries like Norway, Australia, and the United Kingdom also provided bilateral support for REDD+. Throughout this process, Indonesia showed a keen interest in securing international backing.

During the 2009 G20 summit in Pittsburgh, USA, Indonesia further signaled its commitment to climate change mitigation. The then President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, pledged a 26% reduction in the nation's emissions from the Business-As-Usual baseline by 2020, a figure he projected could be increased to 41% with international support (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). This period also saw the establishment of various climate-focused bodies at the ministerial level, including a working group and an expert panel on climate change within the Ministry of Forestry (Maryani et al., 2012).

As the climate change agenda matured, discourse regarding REDD+ continued to evolve. The initial draft of the REDD+ National Strategy, which outlined a comprehensive forest-related analysis and examined potential implementation pathways, was published in September 2010 (Maryani et al., 2012). This document was coordinated by the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) and supported by the Ministry of Forestry, contributing to the fortification of Indonesia's REDD+ institutional development.

BAPPENAS, the central government agency responsible for devising national development plans and policies, played an indispensable role in integrating REDD+ goals into Indonesia's development framework. By incorporating REDD+ programs into broader sustainability initiatives, BAPPENAS aligned the country's climate change and deforestation mitigation efforts with its socio-economic development objectives. BAPPENAS also facilitated coordination among various stakeholders involved in implementing REDD+, ensuring effective cross-sectoral collaboration and communication (Indrarto et al., 2012b).

Since 2009, the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), a strategic policy document developed by BAPPENAS, locks REDD+ objectives into Indonesia's development priorities and targets for a five-year period (Indrarto et al., 2012b). The inclusion of REDD+ goals and strategies within the RPJMN ensures their integration into the country's overarching development plans, securing political commitment and allocating necessary resources for the implementation of REDD+ initiatives (Ekawati et al., 2019). Consequently, BAPPENAS creates a more coherent and integrated approach to incorporating REDD+ into Indonesia's broader development strategy.

Following a letter of intent with Norway in 2010, President Yudhoyono established the REDD+ Task Force (Satgas REDD+) via Presidential Decree 19/2010. The Task Force, entrusted with the development of the National REDD+ Strategy, operated under the President's Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight (UKP4) and reported directly to the President. This Task Force, which consisted of ten working groups, coordinated government departments and civil society groups, serving as a tool for UKP4 to supervise ministries' performance in climate change mitigation for REDD+ (Di Gregorio et al., 2017). Upon expiration of the Task Force's mandate, it was upgraded to the REDD+ Management Agency (BP REDD+) in 2013 through Presidential Decree no. 62/2013 to continue its work.

The inception of the Task Force was closely tied to the 2010 Letter of Intent (LoI) signed between Indonesia and Norway to synchronize REDD+ implementation efforts. Hence, the establishment of the REDD+ Task Force is intrinsically linked with donor involvement in shaping the

institutionalization of the climate change agenda within Indonesia's forestry sector (Fig. 2). Donor funding played a key role in providing financial resources, guiding policy priorities, building capacities, and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders (Rahman et al., 2021). By actively involving non-state actors in national decision-making processes, the REDD+ Task Force in Indonesia also stimulated policy innovation in related areas (Moeliono et al., 2020).

In addition to the institutional development of the climate architecture, several policies were also enacted to support Indonesia's REDD+ implementation during this phase (see Fig. 1). These include the forest moratorium policy on granting new licenses and improvement of natural primary forest and peatland governance through Presidential Instruction 10/2011, as well as the One Map Policy concerning participatory map standardization to support the moratorium process (Indrarto et al., 2012a; Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). In 2012, the REDD+ National Strategy was officially launched, followed by provincial strategies and action plans to further institutionalize REDD+ at the sub-national level (Indonesian REDD+ Task Force, 2012). The government also released the National Action Plan on Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction through Presidential Decree no. 61/2011 as a follow up to the president's Pittsburgh G20 statement (DJPPPI, 2022b). The National Action Plan is comprised of climate mitigation activities in five sectors: agriculture, forestry and peatlands, energy and transportation, industry, and waste management. However, it is important to note that the plan focuses predominantly on forests and peatlands, with REDD+ mentioned as one of the strategies to achieve climate mitigation targets within the sector (Dwisatrio et al., 2021). Nevertheless, in the context of the Indonesian political economy, the existence of a purpose-built REDD+ institution ultimately proved unstable.

7. REDD+ governance 2.0: institutional layering by embedding REDD+ within the Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Following the 2014 presidential election, Indonesia witnessed a reconfiguration of its climate governance under President Joko Widodo, aimed at streamlining administrative structures and reducing bureaucratic redundancy. Key climate bodies - the National Council on Climate Change and the REDD+ Agency - were dissolved, with the climate mandate being integrated within the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) as directed by Presidential Regulation no. 16/2015. The REDD+ mandate was subsequently assigned to a sub-directorate within the newly formed Directorate General for Climate Change Control (DJPPPI), which also served as the national focal point for UNFCCC. This department was established within the MoEF following an extensive ministerial restructuring that combined the Ministry of Environment with the Ministry of Forestry (Dwisatrio et al., 2021).

This institutional shift under President Widodo initiated new trajectories in REDD+ governance, transitioning from an autonomous model to one embedded within the formal bureaucratic structure. Despite these significant institutional shifts, Indonesia's participation in global climate initiatives has continued unabated. This is evidenced by the ratification of the Paris Agreement through Law no. 16/2016, the announcement of the country's NDC, and the establishment of the Peat Restoration Agency in 2016 to expedite the restoration of fire-ravaged peatlands (Presidential Spokesperson, 2016). Moreover, the extension of the forestry moratorium policy in 2017 and 2018 (Thuy, 2019) reinforces the ongoing commitment of the Indonesian government to climate change mitigation. However, this steadfast commitment has not translated into consistent strategies for orchestrating REDD+ domestically. While both Yudhoyono and Widodo demonstrated comparable levels of commitment to climate issues and REDD+, variations in REDD+ institutional arrangements indicate underlying political complexities.

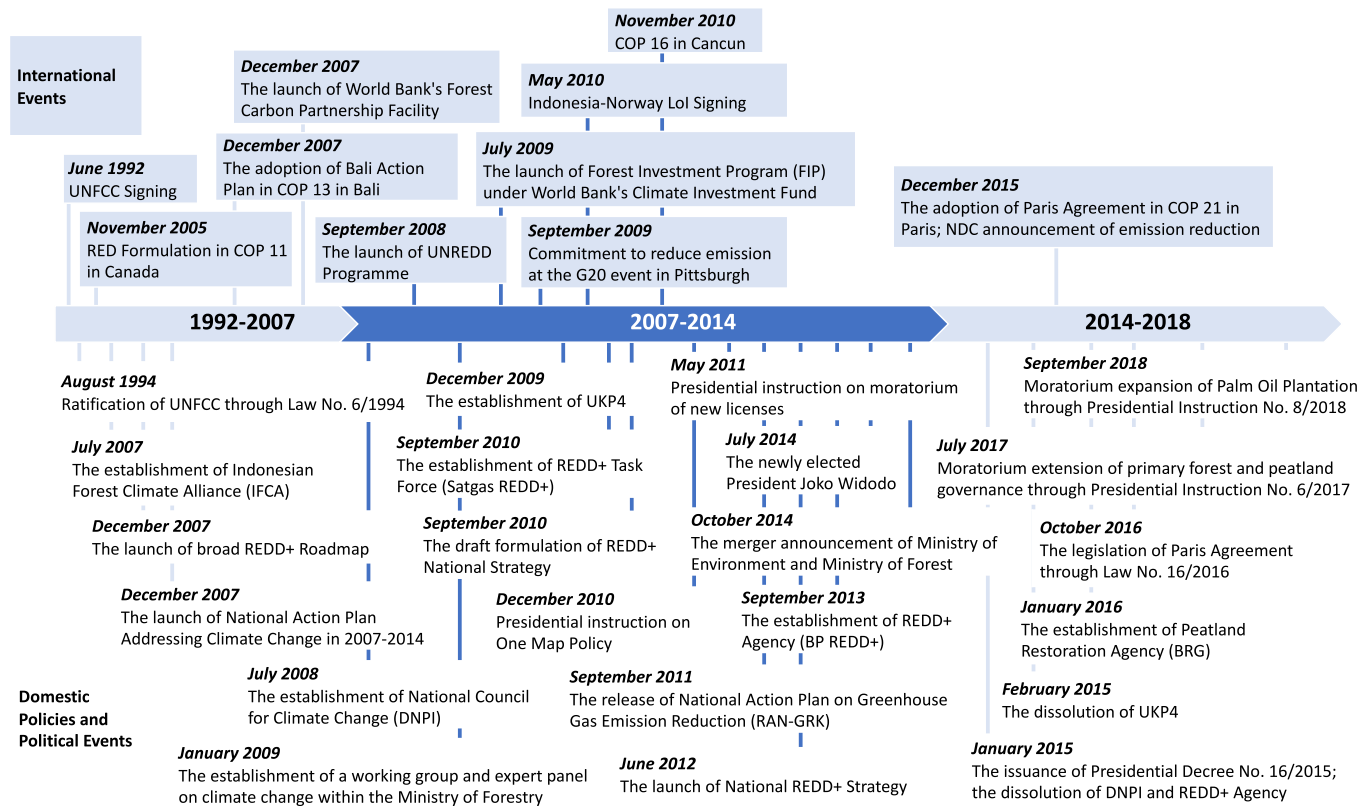


Fig. 2. Key historical events in REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia. (Source: Compiled by authors from multiple sources)

Certain REDD+ advocates have voiced concerns over the dissolution of the REDD+ Task Force, arguing that it breaches the Letter of Intent between Indonesia and Norway, which stipulated the creation of an independent agency. Coordinating bodies are considered essential to resolve fragmented institutional settings, including in the case of Indonesia (Dwisatrio et al., 2021).

Therefore, in order to understand the institutional evolution of REDD+, it is crucial to scrutinize the narrative surrounding climate change mitigation, particularly in the forestry and land-use sector. Long-standing developmental priorities in Indonesia, dating back to the New Order era, have somewhat stymied efforts to address climate change. The sector, which has been subject to extensive commercialization, is viewed as more beneficial for plantation development than forest conservation due to the socio-economic and political advantages such as employment, improved infrastructure, and tax revenues. Indeed, even the Ministry of Forestry's secretary-general has questioned who will offset the socio-economic impact associated with implementing climate-related initiatives, especially in the forestry sector (Eilenberg, 2015). Calls for international support persist, exemplified by the Minister of Finance's disappointment over the failure of developed countries to fulfill their pledge to aid Indonesia's climate funding (Masitoh, 2021).

Climate change narratives have significantly influenced the framing of REDD+ during both Yudhoyono and Widodo's administrations. In these discussions, issues related to land conversion and rights have taken precedence over climate mitigation. The global "No Rights No REDD+" campaign, for instance, has sparked concern among civil society actors and indigenous communities over REDD+ being potentially viewed as a forest conversion program that reinforces existing practices and undermines indigenous control over forests (Fay and Denduangrudee, 2018).

As noted by Cronin and Santoso (2010), issues surrounding forest conversion and climate mitigation activities by REDD+ have been overshadowed by land-use rights issues, particularly among civil society. This is evident in the resistance expressed by the Indonesian National Indigenous Peoples' Organization (AMAN) to the 1999 Forest Law, which sustained state authority to grant forestry permits to companies for mining and palm oil production, thereby infringing on indigenous land rights. The focus on indigenous land rights reflects the dominant narrative shaping the implementation of REDD+ in Indonesia.

The concentration on the socio-economic aspect, rather than environmental and ecological dimensions, suggests that the climate change narrative remains entrenched within sectoral politics, rather than being strategically recontextualized around emissions reduction. The lack of domestic relevance to frame REDD+ within the context of climate mitigation has led to the program being primarily discussed in terms of safeguarding or co-benefits to address concerns over socio-economic impacts (Mulyani and Jepson, 2013b). This reframing has been instrumental for the Indonesian government in reconciling international pressures to combat climate change and domestic socio-economic concerns.

The evolution of REDD+ institutions in Indonesia can be further understood through the lens of the nation's interactions with international climate initiatives. A case in point is the US\$1 billion agreement with Norway under Yudhoyono's administration, which mandated the creation of an independent REDD+ institution and incentivized the adoption of significant policy initiatives like the moratorium on new forestry concessions (Di Gregorio et al., 2017; Enrici and Hubacek, 2018). International funding and developmental aid have expanded the political space for Indonesia to accommodate REDD+ 1.0 by attaching conditionalities and mitigating socio-economic risks associated with its implementation (Brockhaus and Di Gregorio, 2014).

However, the initial institutional arrangement of REDD+ (REDD+ 1.0) was ephemeral. As Dubash (2021) argues, the interplay of ideas and interests wields considerable influence on the formation of institutions. In the case of REDD+ 1.0, it not only grappled with legitimacy issues among the Indonesian populace but also stirred political polarization

and contestation, thereby fostering an inhospitable environment for an independent agency to thrive. While presidential backing played a pivotal role in shaping REDD+ 1.0, it proved inadequate to effectuate a transformative shift in Indonesia's forest governance for the long haul. Nofyanza et al. (2020) highlight that REDD+ implementation in Indonesia remains ensnared in "projectification," which concentrates on technical aspects without grappling with the underlying socio-economic and political factors contributing to deforestation. For REDD+ to secure enduring relevance, it is imperative to assimilate it into the formal institutional fabric, encompassing laws and regulations.

An effective REDD+ institution demands expansive political backing from domestic stakeholders, including not only the president but also parliament, private sector, bureaucrats, civil society, and the wider public (Nofyanza et al., 2020). However, in Indonesia, such domestic support is lacking, leading to an unfavorable political atmosphere. The parliament, for instance, has exhibited reluctance to buttress the president's push for REDD+ reform. The political landscape evolved after reformasi, strengthening the parliament's legislative and budgetary roles while significantly curbing the president's legislative powers (Luttrell et al., 2014). The transition towards a multi-party political system and the emergence of coalition politics have further diminished the president's clout, rendering his success increasingly contingent on the coalition party's support within the parliament (Hamudy and Rifki, 2019; Luttrell et al., 2014). In this evolving power dynamic, the parliament could bolster REDD+ institutional development, especially by providing a legal mandate.

However, securing parliamentary support for REDD+ is challenging, considering the intricate connections between politicians and business actors, many of whom are resistant to forest conservation (Luttrell et al., 2014). Historically, the nexus between business and government has facilitated rent-seeking in Indonesia, a tradition that persists. Political campaigns are predominantly financed by revenues from natural resources, including forestry products, endowing business actors with significant informal sway over political dynamics and natural resource governance (Dwisatrio et al., 2021). These patron-client relationships erode the 'democratic contract' of good governance, as parliamentary dynamics are increasingly influenced by business elites rather than reflecting the wider public's interests. The limited domestic relevance of REDD+ offers little incentive for parliamentarians to support it, as evident in the fact that most REDD+-related policies are promulgated by the president rather than the parliament. For instance, the REDD+ Task Force was established through a presidential decree, sidestepping the need for parliamentary approval. While this helped the task force gain domestic momentum, it also exposed it to legal uncertainties and susceptibility to domestic political shifts (Luttrell et al., 2014), culminating in its disbandment following a change in government.

Similarly, Indonesia's bureaucracy tends to see REDD+ institutionalization as a threat to its authority. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), a dominant force in forest governance, legally controls as much as 70% of Indonesia's landmass (Moeliono et al., 2014). Owing to its massive revenue stream from forest resources, MoEF scored the lowest on the integrity survey among Indonesian government ministries, plagued by numerous corruption cases and strong ties with business lobbyists (Brockhaus and Di Gregorio, 2014; Enrici and Hubacek, 2016). Given its high stakes in forest control, MoEF is resistant to relinquish any exclusive authority to other agencies or institutions (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017).

In this context, REDD+ as a performance-based fund opened a new battlefield for inter-agency power rivalry over formal mandates and budgets (Wibowo and Giessen, 2015). From MoEF's perspective, the rise of REDD+ institutions to operationalize the REDD+ mandate was perceived as a threat undermining its power and sovereignty. This friction manifested in the protracted process of issuing Presidential Decree no. 10/2011 concerning the suspension of forest licenses and the publication of an indicative moratorium map under the Indonesia-Norway partnership agreement (Mulyani and Jepson, 2013b). This

contention is likely the result of rent-seeking practices and/or strong lobbying from forestry and tree crop plantation industries, fearing a loss of access to forest lands (Butler, 2011; Maryani et al., 2012). This illustrates how Suharto's legacy continues to shape the configuration of interests among bureaucrats and influence the governance of REDD+.

One key factor underpinning the re-bureaucratization of REDD+ under President Joko Widodo's reign is the prevailing self-serving sectoral attitudes that threaten the longevity of an agency disconnected from the bureaucratic structure. As argued by Mulyani and Jepson (2013a, 2013b), the creation of independent ad-hoc agencies has become part of the political culture in Indonesia, serving as a quick fix to bypass failing ministries and address emerging issues. However, as demonstrated by the dissolution of the REDD+ Task Force (REDD+ 1.0), such specially constituted institutions often lack sustainability and are vulnerable to political shifts.

8. Discussion

The discourse around the institutional development of REDD+ in Indonesia prompts the inquiry: what strategic implications do these institutionalization processes hold for the transformative potential of REDD+ in addressing governance challenges? The re-entrenchment of REDD+ within the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) – deemed as REDD+ 2.0 – appears to be more enduring in the long run, given Indonesia's political context. Yet, we postulate that this mode of institutionalization (REDD+ 2.0) holds strategic consequences for REDD+'s capacity to drive a transformative shift in forest governance. The incremental changes induced by this institutional layering largely leave the "business as usual" (BAU) practices unaltered within the existing bureaucracy (Moeliono et al., 2020; Nofyanza et al., 2020). It is crucial to underscore that the successful implementation of REDD+ is a cross-sectoral endeavor demanding extensive coordination, particularly in the wake of decentralization. This necessitates both horizontal coordination among state bureaucrats and vertical coordination with sub-national governments for REDD+ to be effectively institutionalized (Luttrel et al., 2014).

In this vein, there are several factors that distinguish institutional layering from a purpose-built institution, particularly regarding institutional capacity to grapple with governance challenges. A purpose-built institution, exemplified by the REDD+ Task Force and the DNPI, functions independently of the conventional government structure and operates under the president's central leadership. Such institutional arrangements are favored by international organizations and donors (e.g., Norway, Germany, and the UK), as they facilitate reduced bureaucracy, increased international involvement in REDD+, and subsequently, a more transformative impact (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017).

The independent position of the Task Force and the DNPI enabled enhanced coordination and political interest mediation. This is evidenced by how these agencies, backed by the UKP4, highlighted the issues in Indonesia's map-making practices, which frequently resulted in conflicts over forest concessions and land tenure. Given the considerable vested interests among bureaucrats (especially within the Ministry of Forestry) and local authorities to profit from ambiguities in forest spatial information, these agencies advocated for increased transparency and integration of forest spatial data via the One Map Initiative (OMI).

The independence of an institution from the formal bureaucracy bolsters its capacity to identify and challenge entrenched issues within the existing system. Such an agency can function as a watchdog over the existing bureaucracy, fostering increased accountability. This demonstrates the potential effectiveness of a purpose-built institution in coordinating efforts, mediating interests, and setting strategic goals – a dynamic which could be altered if the mandate were layered. One limitation of the Task Force was its narrowly defined mandate and time limit. The national Parliament could potentially provide a legislative mandate for REDD+ implementation, thus enhancing the Task Force's authority and legitimacy among stakeholders, particularly sectoral

departments.

Conversely, embedding REDD+ within the MoEF, specifically under the Directorate General of Climate Change (DJPPPI), indicates a national trend of increased bureaucratic control and power over REDD+. While the MoEF's greater resources and authority could arguably consolidate national ownership and foster effective coordination, the lack of a law-empowered coordinating institution raises questions about the DJPPPI's ability to collaborate with other stakeholders, particularly other ministries (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). Gallemore et al. (2015) highlight weak information-sharing networks between national and sub-national entities due to transaction costs, impeding the development of participatory multi-level governance.

Embedding REDD+ within the bureaucratic framework potentially risks a reversion towards BAU in forest management practices, given the prevailing corruption and rent-seeking within MoEF. This issue is exacerbated by weak forest law enforcement in Indonesia, which perpetuates predatory interests and undermines the MoEF's capacity to mediate political interests and strategic approach (Tacconi and Muttaqin, 2019). The delayed process of moratorium mapping illustrates how business interests can influence REDD+'s policy through informal channels. In non-climate consensus countries like Indonesia, politics tend to steer institutional directions rather than being guided by them.

9. Conclusion

This article scrutinized the evolution and institutionalization of the REDD+ initiative in Indonesia, with particular emphasis on its ramifications for the transformation of forest governance. We elucidated two distinct modes of REDD+ institutionalization within the Indonesian context: the inception of a bespoke institution embodied by the REDD+ Task Force and Agency, and the institutional layering that transpired with the re-bureaucratization of REDD+ within the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF). The ephemeral existence of the REDD+ Task Force is inextricably linked to Indonesia's overarching political milieu, which presents volatile circumstances for the longevity of an autonomous body operating outside the established bureaucratic system.

Climate change narratives in Indonesia lack strategic support and remain confined within the ambit of sectoral politics due to the state's developmental imperatives and the broader public's relative disinterest. These dynamics, intertwined with heightened polarization surrounding REDD+, provoke intra-agential conflict over the REDD+ mandate. Such conflict, in conjunction with entrenched rent-seeking practices and enduring government-business alliances traceable to the Suharto era, impinge on the political latitude for REDD+.

Our analysis of Indonesia's journey with REDD+ institutionalization yields two crucial insights. Firstly, the transient existence of the REDD+ Task Force underscores how in a non-climate consensus nation, political dynamics tend to sculpt institutional evolution rather than the reverse. Secondly, the re-bureaucratization of REDD+ underlines how a paucity of domestic political backing, especially from bureaucratic entities, inclines the trajectory towards incremental, rather than transformative, institutional alteration.

Nonetheless, despite its apparent resilience, the integration of climate institutions into the existing bureaucracy may inadvertently circumscribe their transformative potential. This situation increases the prevalence of sectoral interests and entrenches climate institutions within the purview of national bureaucratic traditions. While institutional layering has proven resilient in the long run, it also restricts rapid and comprehensive transformation within the existing bureaucratic infrastructure. However, the competing processes that have shaped the institutionalization of REDD+ in Indonesia are far from static and may hint at a more transformational change in the future.

While our study significantly contributes to the literature on forest governance transformation by highlighting the importance of domestic climate institutions and the process of their institutionalization, it

harbors one central limitation: its exclusive focus on the national level. The lack of examination of the interplay between national and sub-national political dynamics presents a clear gap in our study, leaving the potentially rich field of multi-level government interactions during the institutionalization process unexplored. This omission limits our understanding of how sub-national dynamics and interactions might affect the emergent institutional structures at the national level. Consequently, we advocate for further studies focusing on these interactions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the institutionalization process.

Tackling climate change demands more than mere institutional arrangements or confined bureaucratic efforts. It calls for the relentless and collective endeavor of government bureaucracy, citizens, and the intricate weave of national and sub-national dynamics. Given the urgency and scale of the challenge, climate governance must ultimately transcend the boundaries of individual ministries, agencies, and governance levels, evolving into a cohesive, nationwide effort.

Author statement

Silvio Hermawan

Conducting data gathering, writing up the analysis and drafting the manuscript.

Moch Faisal Karim

Providing guidance in the conceptualisation of the framework, literature review, and argument. Formulating research design and strategy. Conducting analysis, interpretation of the data, as well as re-writing the paper.

Lena Rethel

Providing guidance on the gap in the literature, polishing the paper, and providing critical analysis on the findings.

Declaration of Competing Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this research.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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