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# Institutional Dualism in Social Forestry: Village Authority Implementation in Pesanggrahan

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## Abstract

Indonesia's Social Forestry program provides conditional access to community-based management of state forests under state oversight and regulatory conditions. One of its key schemes, Hutan Desa designates village governments as formal managers through Village Forest Management Institutions (LPHD). This study examines implementation in Pesanggrahan Village, Batu City, where LPHD Mayangsari coexists with the long-established Forest Village Community Institution (LMDH). Prior Hutan Desa studies (Rakatama & Pandit, 2020; Sahide et al., 2020) have predominantly examined rural-district contexts. This research addresses this gap by examining implementation in an urban-administrative municipality structurally lacking a dedicated municipal forestry office—an underexplored administrative context for social forestry policy. A descriptive qualitative approach with a single intrinsic case study design was employed. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants, field observations at the Tumpak Seruk Forest, and systematic document analysis. The analytical process operationalized content, discourse, and narrative analysis to decode actor strategies, rhetorical framing, and historical power configurations. Findings reveal that LPHD's formal legal recognition did not secure operational control in practice. LMDH retained stronger farmer loyalty due to decades-long patronage and clearer benefit-sharing. The Village Head responded by orchestrating joint activities—such as the November 2025 tree planting event that allowed both institutions to remain operationally visible rather than pursuing direct institutional confrontation. These findings suggest that implementation of village authority in social forestry is shaped not only by legal design, but also by institutional history, resource constraints, and the discretionary strategies of local actors.

## KEYWORDS

institutional dualism; policy implementation; social forestry; village authority.

## Introduction

The governance of forests in Indonesia has historically been shaped by a strong state-centered framework in which access, licensing, and control over forest areas were largely determined through centralized institutional arrangements. In Indonesia specifically, this centralized framework has been documented through analyses of forest decentralization processes (Christopher et al., 2006) and has limited community participation and created structural inequities in forest resource access (Art & Visseren-Hamdkers, 2012). As part of efforts to address these governance problems, the Indonesian government expanded the Social Forestry (Perhutanan Sosial) program, which provides community groups and village-based institutions with regulated access to manage parts of state forest areas under specific legal conditions and administrative oversight through Government Regulation No. 23 of 2021. This program seeks to democratize forest governance by transitioning 12.7 million hectares of state forest land toward community-based management, simultaneously pursuing ecological sustainability and socio economic equity (Fachri et al., 2024).

Within this framework, the Village Forest (Hutan Desa) scheme is distinctive because this scheme formally designates the Village Government as the primary managing entity, operationalized through the mandatory establishment of a Village Forest Management Institution (LPHD). This design deliberately connects sectoral forestry governance with the principle of village autonomy established by Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, which empowers local governments to regulate local affairs and manage natural resources on the basis of recognition and subsidiarity (Muhammad Addi Fauzani, 2024; Surono, 2018).

Translating formal village authority into effective governance remains difficult, especially in locations where administrative structure and sectoral authority do not align neatly. Batu City represents such a setting. Despite holding urban municipal status, 19 of Batu City's 24 lower administrative units function as autonomous villages (BPS Kota Batu, 2018, 2023). Furthermore, more than 55% of its territory comprises state forest zones (BPS Kota Batu, 2018). These forest areas face mounting ecological pressure from tourism-driven land conversion and hydrometeorological disasters (Fibrianto & Yuniar, 2022; Ramadhan et al., 2022). This configuration is relevant for village authority implementation because it creates overlapping jurisdictional claims.

Existing studies on social forestry in Indonesia have shown that implementation outcomes vary across schemes, regions, and institutional settings. Furthermore, at the design level, Village Forest management positions village organizations as formal managers, but in practice, there are often limitations in participation, technical support, and decision-making space that impact program outcomes (Rakatama & Pandit, 2020; Royer et al., 2018). Much of this literature has emphasized participation, technical support, post-permit assistance, and the uneven capacity of local management bodies. Consequently, the success of institutional managers at the grassroots level, like LPHD, cannot be assumed solely from their legal status, but rather depends on how access to information, legitimacy, and resources is managed and contested during the implementation phase. Yet this body of literature has not examined implementation settings in which village-based social forestry operates within an urban-administrative municipality without a dedicated municipal forestry office (Erbaugh, 2019; Sahide et al., 2020; Widiyanto et al., 2025). Batu City's administrative structure provides such a context, compelling local actors to coordinate directly with provincial-level forestry bodies rather than through intermediate municipal apparatus. This study contributes by showing how village authority is negotiated under conditions of institutional dualism, where a newly established LPHD must coexist with a legacy institution, LMDH, that already possesses stronger historical legitimacy and operational ties. Accordingly, the contribution of this study lies not only in its unusual administrative context, but also in its explanation of how formal authority is mediated through institutional history, resource constraints, and frontline discretion.

To analyze this implementation problem, the study combines Grindle's political perspective on policy implementation with Lipsky's concept of street-level bureaucracy. Grindle's framework is used to examine how implementation is shaped by policy content, affected interests, resources, and the broader context of power relations (Grindle, 2017). Lipsky's perspective is employed more specifically to interpret how frontline village actors respond to institutional ambiguity and limited

implementation capacity (Lipsky, 1980). Through this combination, the study addresses three objectives: first, to examine how village authority is implemented in the Hutan Desa scheme in Pesanggrahan Village; second, to identify the strategies used by local actors in managing institutional dualism; and third, to assess the implications of these strategies for local forest governance.

## Methods

### Research Type

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a single-case study design. A qualitative design was selected because the implementation of village authority in social forestry involves institutional conflict, actor interpretation, and discretionary practice that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative indicators alone. (Creswell, 1994). Pesanggrahan Village was selected purposively based on three criteria: first, it is formally involved in the Hutan Desa scheme; second, it exhibits institutional dualism—the observable coexistence of LPHD and LMDH within a single administrative village; and third, it is located in a municipal setting without a dedicated municipal forestry office. These characteristics create a distinct analytical context for examining how village authority operates under conditions of institutional overlap and structural resource constraints, beyond what prior rural-focused studies have addressed. The case boundary was defined as the implementation of village authority in the Hutan Desa scheme in Pesanggrahan, with particular attention to relations among the Village Government, LPHD, LMDH, Perhutani, and the regional forestry branch office (CDK Malang) during the fieldwork period of November 2025 to February 2026.

### Population and Sample/Informants

Informants were selected through purposive sampling to capture perspectives from actors directly involved in, affected by, or overseeing the implementation process. A total of 7 informants were interviewed: (1) one Village Government representative; (2) the Chairperson of LPHD Mayangsari; (3) the Chairperson of LMDH Pesanggrahan; (4) two farmers with experience in both LPHD and LMDH activities; (5) one representative from the Regional Forestry Branch Office (CDK) Malang; and (6) one representative from Perhutani KPH Malang. All invited actors accepted participation. Divergent accounts among informants were analyzed as evidence of competing interests and institutional positioning rather than as inconsistencies to be removed.

### Research Location

The study was conducted in Pesanggrahan Village, Batu City, East Java, Indonesia. The site was selected not only because it includes ecologically important areas such as the Tumpak Seruk Forest and the Sumber Kasinan spring catchment, but also because these areas are embedded in overlapping institutional claims. This combination of ecological importance and institutional coexistence makes Pesanggrahan a relevant site for examining how village authority is implemented when legal recognition, historical control, and practical resource use do not fully align.

### Instrumentation or Tools

The main instrument of this study was a semi-structured interview guide. The guide was organized around four

dimensions adapted from Grindle's implementation framework, namely policy content, interests affected, context of implementation, and resources committed. To support interpretation of frontline practice, additional prompts were developed from Lipsky's concept of street-level bureaucracy, including discretion, coping strategies, compliance, and informal problem-solving. Observation was guided by a structured checklist covering institutional presence in the field, visible land-use practices, patterns of interaction among actors, and evidence of joint or overlapping activities in the forest area. Documentary review focused on legal and administrative records relevant to the institutional timeline and implementation arrangements. Specifically analyzed documents included Village Regulation No. 10 of 2020 establishing LPHD Mayangsari, Village Budget (APBDes) records for 2021-2025, and inter-institutional cooperation agreements between LPHD, LMDH, and forestry oversight bodies. Documentary evidence was used to verify the institutional timeline and cross-check interview accounts of decision-making authority and resource allocation.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected over four months period from November 2025 to February 2026 through interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45–90 minutes were conducted with all participating informants. Field observations were undertaken in the Tumpak Seruk Forest area, the Sumber Kasinan spring catchment, and the relevant institutional offices or secretariats. Documentary evidence included the Village Regulation establishing LPHD No. 10 of 2020, relevant APBDes records for 2021-2025, and other administrative records used to confirm the chronology, roles, and claims described in interviews. When interview accounts differed, documentary evidence and cross-interview comparison were used to assess which aspects could be verified and which reflected contested interpretations (Arfa'i et al., 2023).

#### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through Miles and Huberman's interactive model, cycling iteratively between data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). The primary unit of analysis was the implementation practice of village authority as reflected in actor narratives, institutional documents, and observed field interaction. First, interview transcripts, field notes, and documents were read repeatedly and coded openly to identify recurring themes (authority, conflict, coordination, resources, institutional legitimacy). Second, codes were grouped into analytical categories operationalizing Grindle's framework: policy content, affected interests, implementation context, and resources committed. Third, discourse analysis examined selected interview passages to decode how actors framed legitimacy, cooperation, and conflict to revealing rhetorical strategies and power positioning. Fourth, narrative analysis arranged documentary and interview evidence into institutional timelines showing the evolution of LPHD-LMDH coexistence. Finally, triangulation across interviews, observation, and documents ensured that findings from each analytical layer (content analysis → discourse analysis → narrative reconstruction) converged toward the study's final claims about institutional dualism and street-level coping.

#### Ethical Approval (Optional)

Formal institutional ethical clearance was not required for this study under Indonesian academic research

guidelines. Nevertheless, ethical principles were applied throughout. All participants were informed of the study's purpose and the voluntary nature of their participation before interviews were conducted. Informants were free to decline particular questions or withdraw at any point. Where sensitive institutional relationships were discussed, identifying information was minimized in reporting, and research materials were stored by the researcher for academic use only. Participants' data confidentiality was maintained throughout analysis and reporting.

## Result and Discussion

Implementation of the Village Forest scheme in Pesanggrahan is not a straightforward administrative process but a deeply negotiated political undertaking. Findings are organized around the four principal dimensions of Grindle's implementation framework. (See [Table 1](#)).

#### Content of Policy: Structural Bottlenecks

The decision-making architecture of the Village Forest scheme produces immediate structural friction. While the Village Law confers broad local autonomy grounded in the subsidiarity principle, formal authority over forestry affairs remains concentrated at provincial and national levels (Surono, 2018). Interviews with Village Government officials revealed specific bottlenecks: the Village Head could not authorize LPHD activities in contested forest areas without consultation with CDK Malang and Perhutani, despite LPHD's formal legal status. Documentary analysis of LPHD meeting minutes from 2024-2025 shows repeated references to 'pending coordination' with provincial forestry authority, demonstrating practical delays that formal legal recognition did not resolve. One LPHD meeting minute (September 2025) noted: "Activity timeline postponed pending approval from provincial office"—evidence that decision-making was layered across multiple authorities beyond the village.

The broader finding is that LPHD's legal standing did not automatically settle questions of territorial operation in areas already associated with LMDH activity. This overlap created practical bottlenecks in decision-making, because village actors could not independently enforce their formal position without considering the responses of institutions that had longer historical presence in the field. In this sense, the policy content provided formal authority, but its implementation remained filtered through a multi-layered institutional environment (Fisher et al., 2018; Sahide et al., 2016).

#### Interests Affected and Grassroots Responsiveness

Grassroots responses to the Hutan Desa scheme were not uniform. Interviews with farmer suggest at least three patterns. First, LMDH-Oriented farmers (majority) remained primarily oriented toward LMDH due to decades-long patronage familiarity and economic reliability. As one farmer stated: "LMDH provides certain harvest payments"—a direct reference to LMDH's established benefit-sharing mechanism. (Ramadhan et al., 2022). Second, LPHD-Accepting (conditional) farmers accepted LPHD mainly for its formal legal status and connection to village authority, yet expressed skepticism about economic viability. One LPHD participant noted: "We trust the government, but when will there be results?". Third, Pragmatic dual-members, that maintained relations with both institutions, strategically adjusting engagement according to immediate opportunity, perceived risk, and social obligations. This variation indicates that grassroots responsiveness was shaped not

Table 1. Key Findings from Results

Dimension	Key Finding	Implication
Content of Policy	Structural bottlenecks due to centralized forestry authority conflicting with village autonomy.	Legal autonomy insufficient without harmonization.
Interests Affected	Competing stakeholder interests: Village prioritizes ecology, farmers prioritize economics; loyalty to legacy LMDH.	Grassroots responsiveness anchored to economic reliability.
Context of Implementation	Institutional dualism LPHD vs LMDH; Village Head uses pragmatic mediation.	Coexistence through joint events, not enforcement.
Resources Committed	Severe resource scarcity; LPHD symbolic, no operational capacity.	Fiscal interventions may be necessary for sustainability (requires testing in other social forestry contexts)

Source: Primary Data

Table 2. Findings relate to Context of Implementation

Stakeholder	Role	Power Source	Strategy
Village Head	Street-level bureaucrat; mediator	Political discretion	Pragmatic mediation
LPHD Mayangsari	Formal village manager (legal authority)	Ministerial decree	Symbolic compliance
LMDH Pesanggrahan	Legacy community institution (operational power)	Historical patronage & profit-sharing	Territorial defense
Perhutani KPH Malang	State regulator	Corporate backing	Compliance monitoring

Source: Primary Data

only by ecological concerns or formal legality, but also by livelihood dependence, institutional trust, and long-standing patterns of patronage (Araral, 2014; Fibrianto & Yuniar, 2022).

Context of Implementation: Power, Interests, and Strategies

The implementation context in Pesanggrahan was defined by unequal institutional power. LPHD possessed formal legal recognition under the Hutan Desa scheme, but LMDH retained stronger historical ties with Perhutani and broader practical recognition among farmers (Ostrom, 2015). Field observation during the November 27, 2025 joint tree-planting rehabilitation event in Tumpak Seruk Forest documented this mediation strategy directly. The Village Head explicitly framed the activity (1,000 seedlings planted) as 'collaborative forest restoration' rather than demarcating territorial claims between LPHD and LMDH. Post-event interviews with LMDH leadership revealed satisfaction that LPHD was 'not trying to take over our historical role'—a perception the Village Head had explicitly managed through inclusive framing. Documentary evidence from LPHD meeting minutes (September 2025) shows the Village Head proposed three joint events for 2025-2026, each strategically involving both institutions. This pattern—across multiple episodes of observable orchestration—demonstrates deliberate boundary-blurring strategy, distinguishable from ad-hoc accommodation. This pattern supports the interpretation that village-level implementation relied on mediated coexistence rather than formal clarification of authority. (See Table 2). (Nur Azizah et al., 2024).

Resources Committed and the Illusion of Autonomy

This pragmatic mediation strategy is ultimately born of necessity under conditions of severe resource scarcity. While the Village Government extends political backing to

LPHD Mayangsari, financial capacity through the APBDes is heavily constrained by mandatory expenditure categories and competing urban infrastructure demands (Kleinhans & Kearns, 2013). APBDes allocation to LPHD Mayangsari from 2021-2025 ranged from 15-25 million Rupiah annually, per document review of budget records—insufficient even for operational meetings, let alone productive activities. A pivotal failure occurred in 2023: LPHD proposed establishing KUPS (Social Forestry Business Groups) with the aim of developing forest product value chains. The initiative collapsed within six months due to lack of working capital; no processing facilities, production units, or ecotourism infrastructure materialized. Interviews with LPHD leadership attributed the failure explicitly to absent funding: "We have no funds for working capital". Without capital for processing facilities or ecotourism infrastructure, the LPHD functions primarily as a symbolic legal instrument—representing the village's formal territorial claim—rather than an operationally effective and economically productive institution (Clever, 2017). This gap between formal recognition and practical capability directly explains why farmers continued to rely more heavily on LMDH, which already possessed clearer operational routines and economic relevance.

Interpretation of Key Findings

The case of Pesanggrahan indicates that formal village authority, although institutionally important, was not sufficient by itself to secure effective implementation of the Hutan Desa scheme.

Empirically, the study shows that LPHD's legal status was constrained by three factors: (1) overlapping institutional claims (jurisdictional competition with LMDH); (2) stronger historical legitimacy of LMDH (farmers' decades-long patronage and trust); and (3) limited local implementation resources (APBDes budget constraints, failed KUPS initiative).

Theoretically, Grindle's (2017) framework is analytically

useful in showing how policy implementation is shaped by affected interests (competing village/farmer/forestry priorities), power relations (LMDH's operational dominance), and resource commitments (budget scarcity), rather than by formal policy design alone. Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucracy perspective is valuable for interpreting the Village Head's pragmatic mediation—his preference for accommodation and joint activities in a setting where direct enforcement would have provoked institutional conflict.

These theoretical lenses do not exhaust all possible explanations. Historical land control dynamics, informal patronage networks, and local political economy may also have influenced the persistence of institutional dualism—mechanisms that go beyond the present study's evidentiary scope (Brodin, 2012; Rossi et al., 2025). This study thus contributes interpretation, not complete causal explanation.

#### Comparison with Previous Studies

The case reveals an administrative boundary condition that structural absence of municipal forestry agency rather than merely poor coordination that appears underexplored in prior Hutan Desa literature focused on rural-district settings. Whether this condition generalizes to other urban-administrative forestry jurisdictions requires comparative research. The Pesanggrahan findings confirm that legal recognition alone is insufficient for operational success—consistent with (Sahide et al., 2020), who concluded that formal LPHD establishment does not guarantee success without capacity building and capital injection. This study provides case-specific evidence of this pattern: LPHD Mayangsari possessed legal authority but lacked operational resources (failed KUPS initiative, 15-25 million Rupiah budget), driving farmers toward LMDH. The study extends prior rural-district literature by identifying how institutional dualism in a municipal setting structurally lacking a forestry office (not merely poorly coordinated) creates a distinct boundary condition. Village actors must coordinate directly with provincial-level forestry bodies, intensifying implementation friction. This administrative anomaly—absent from prior Hutan Desa studies—is analytically important. Prior studies suggest that LPHD benefits from formal linkage to village government. The Pesanggrahan case qualifies this claim: such organizational advantages may weaken under three specific conditions: (1) legacy institution already occupies space; (2) farmers maintain economic trust in legacy institution; (3) village-level implementation lacks sufficient resources. Under these conditions, formal advantage becomes symbolic rather than operational.

The unique finding that emerges from Batu City's municipal status—structural absence of a forestry agency rather than merely poor coordination—extends beyond what prior studies in rural district settings have identified (Andreotti et al., 2024; Tummers & Bekkers, 2014). The study's application of the Grindle-Lipsky synthesis also reinforces findings from forestry conflict analysis (Wicaksono & Wicaksono, 2021) and Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) studies (Muttaqin et al., 2025): where institutional legacies are powerful and resource inadequate, frontline actors resort to discretionary coping rather than formal enforcement (Ardiansyah et al., 2024; Fathiyah, 2024), exactly the mediation pattern observed in Pesanggrahan.

#### Limitations

This study has several significant limitations that readers should consider. First, as a single-case qualitative

study, findings are analytically useful for theory refinement and contextual understanding, but cannot support generalizations to all social forestry settings across Indonesia. The case of Pesanggrahan—urban-administrative, resource-scarce, with strong legacy institution—may not represent typical Hutan Desa implementation. Second, the study relied substantially on institutional and semi-elite informants (Village Head, LPHD Chairperson, CDK official). This sampling strategy likely biased findings toward leadership perspectives and institutional narratives. Quieter voices—marginalized farmers, youth, women without formal roles—may possess different perceptions of institutional dualism and resource access that were not fully captured. Third, interpretations of actor strategy and motivation are based on interviews, observation, and documents. Some causal mechanisms—why the Village Head chose mediation specifically, whether this was calculated political strategy or survival necessity—remain inferential rather than directly demonstrable from the available evidence. Fourth, the study did not quantify household-level economic effects of institutional dualism. Therefore, it cannot measure the relative material costs (lost access to KUPS benefits) or benefits (diversified risk through dual membership) of LPHD-LMDH coexistence—a gap that limits policy relevance.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should build on these limitations in strategically targeted ways: (1) Comparative cases to address single-case limit: Multi-site studies across Hutan Desa settings with institutional dualism (comparing high-resource vs. resource-scarce municipalities, urban vs. rural contexts) would test whether pragmatic mediation is a generalizable coping strategy or Pesanggrahan-specific. (2) Household-level economic analysis to address quantification gap: Mixed-methods designs combining economic surveys (household income impacts of KUPS failure vs. LMDH benefits) with qualitative livelihood narratives would clarify whether institutional dualism costs or benefits farmers materially. (3) Deeper grassroots voice to address informant bias: Participatory research methods (farmer focus groups, youth panels, women-focused discussions) and longitudinal household tracking would capture perspectives absent in elite-bias limited study—particularly those of marginalized actors. (4) Legal-administrative research to address policy gaps: Studies examining mechanisms for LPHD-LMDH coexistence (rather than conflict-focused approaches) would move beyond assumption that formal legal recognition alone resolves overlap. What inter-institutional agreements, regulatory clarifications, or resource-sharing protocols actually work in practice?

## Conclusion

This study examined how village authority was implemented in the Hutan Desa scheme in Pesanggrahan Village, Batu City, under conditions of institutional dualism. Formal legal recognition of village authority (LPHD) did not automatically translate into effective operational control in practice. Implementation remained shaped by three factors: (1) overlapping institutional claims between LPHD and LMDH; (2) stronger historical legitimacy of LMDH among farmers; and (3) limited operational resources for LPHD (budget constraints, failed initiatives). In response, village-level implementation relied on pragmatic mediation and negotiated coexistence rather than formal

enforcement. The case demonstrates that Grindle's and Lipsky's frameworks are analytically useful for explaining policy implementation under institutional ambiguity and resource constraint—a finding consistent with other studies of frontline bureaucratic practice in Indonesia.

For researchers, the findings suggest that institutional history, local resource capacity, and frontline discretion deserve closer analytic attention in social forestry literature. For practitioners and policymakers, the case suggests the importance of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms and implementation support above the village level—though the study's limitation to a single urban-administrative setting means these implications should be tested in other contexts before scaling.

Ultimately, this study contributes contextual understanding and theory refinement, not predictive generalization or prescriptive policy solutions.

## Author contributions

Alfian Difa Nagara conceptualized the research framework, conducted qualitative field data collection including interviews and observations, performed the multi-layered analysis based on the Grindle–Lipsky theoretical synthesis, and drafted the manuscript. Maya Puspita Dewi contributed to theoretical framing, critical review of the analytical framework, and manuscript revision.

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## Conflict of interest

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