



## Rethinking Collaborative Governance in Marine Conservation: Evidence of State Dominance in Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters in West Kalimantan

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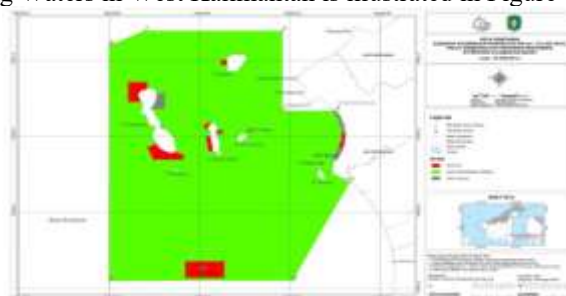
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### ABSTRACT

Randayan Island and its surrounding waters become a tourist destination and conservation area and raising concerns about the damage of the marine ecosystem, especially the local tourism and the local communities has a limited access to information and resources. The purpose of this study is to analyze collaborative governance by focusing on the distribution of power and stakeholder participation in marine conservation governance. A qualitative approach was used, using in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis with government agencies, Community Monitoring Groups (Pokmaswas), NGOs, and academics. The analysis used the Ansell and Gash framework, focusing on the collaborative process. The study found that local communities and NGOs has a limited participation in decision making. The results showed that the collaboration formed was state-dominant collaborative governance due to limited local resources and the implementation of top-down policies. This study highlights that the power relations and actor capacity must be added to the collaborative governance framework. Strengthening local capacity, increasing access to information, and expanding inclusive decision-making mechanisms are needed to improve the sustainability of marine conservation governance.

### INTRODUCTION

Marine governance is typically implemented at the national level, current climate threats demand cross-boundary governance arrangements. At the same time, integrating local-level interests remains essential for effective policy implementation, as hierarchical structures among stakeholders can influence interactions and decision-making processes. Conservation efforts in this area focus on protecting fishery resources, coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, sea turtles, and giant clams. The Marine and Coastal Conservation Area of Sungai Raya Kepulauan and its Surrounding Waters in West Kalimantan is illustrated in Figure 1 below.



(Source:KEPMEN-KP/2020 Tahun 2020)

Figure 1. Map of the Coastal and Small Islands Conservation Area of Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters in West Kalimantan Province

However, the limited number of human resources with expertise in conservation assigned to the Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters in West Kalimantan Conservation Area often leads to differing understandings

regarding the objectives of conservation management and its benefits for the environment and local communities. This challenge is further complicated by the fact that the area has been designated as a marine tourism destination in West Kalimantan. Another issue is the unavailability of data on current environmental conditions and marine conservation threats that can be accessed by local residents. Moreover, potential threats resulting from climate change have become a critical concern for the sustainability of marine conservation management. Conflicts of interest and a lack of transparency in administrative processes may further hinder the success of long-term collaboration (Lamers et al., 2017).

In the context of natural resource management, Bennett and Dearden (2014) conceptualize governance as a broad term that encompasses the institutions, structures, and processes that determine how and to what extent management functions effectively in addressing social or environmental challenges (Bianchi et al., 2021; Molenveld et al., 2021).

Within the scope of management, this concept includes various inputs such as management plans and actions such as zoning design, the establishment of non-extractive zones, and the granting of permits for customary and traditional resource use. Jones and Long (2021) and Freeman (2015), in the evaluation of 28 case studies on Marine Protected Areas that applied different governance approaches, concluded that each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses, and that significant benefits can be achieved when these approaches are functionally integrated.

However, most existing studies tend to assume that collaborative governance operates under relatively equal power relations among stakeholders, while empirical realities in developing regions often reveal otherwise. This study addresses this gap by examining the dynamics of collaborative governance in the Marine Protected Area of Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters in West Kalimantan, with particular attention to the distribution of power and the level of stakeholder participation in decision-making processes. Based on empirical findings, this research offers a conceptual contribution through the development of state-dominant collaborative governance, referring to a form of collaboration in which multiple stakeholders are formally involved, yet decision-making authority remains concentrated within government institutions. By critically engaging with the Collaborative Governance Model Ansell and Gash, this study highlights its limitations in capturing power asymmetry and uneven participation, and argues for the need to contextualize collaborative governance frameworks in hierarchical institutional settings. Consequently, this research contributes to advancing a more nuanced understanding of collaborative governance in marine conservation, particularly within the context of developing countries.

A study conducted by Pu, et al (2025), highlights that the loss of coastal ecosystem resilience caused by persistent marine pollution has encouraged local governments to formulate policies aimed at addressing marine pollution through collaborative governance between central and regional authorities. Kossmann, et al (2016) presents how the dynamics of collaboration in governance can lead either to successful collective action or to collaborative failure. Therefore, recommendations for implementing collaborative governance in marine conservation emphasize the importance of addressing the various social elements that shape collaborative governance, including deliberation, trust, and leadership. The study by Di Franco, et al (2020), highlights that such initiatives are most successful when they are adapted to specific institutional, local, and individual contexts, thereby ensuring that conservation governance is both inclusive and responsive to the needs and capacities of different actors involved (Bianchi et al., 2021; Molenveld et al., 2021).

Collaborative governance enables policymakers and public managers to improve the design and implementation of policies and programs, which in turn directly influences the achievement of desired outcomes. Wanna, as cited in O'Flynn and Wanna(2011), argues that through collaborative governance, governments are able to reconsider and refine strategies that best align with their intended results. Ansell and Gash (2008) highlight that the effectiveness of collaboration can be measured by the extent of actors' commitment and their ability to reach consensus. Donahue and Zeckhauser(2011) further explain that genuine collaboration is realized when decisions are made collectively through consensus rather than unilateral action. Similarly, Provan and Kenis (2008) contend that consensus-based problem solving is preferable because it minimizes the potential for conflict among participating actors.

The collaborative governance framework proposed by Ansell and Gash (2008) outlines six essential criteria that define the structure and dynamics of effective collaboration. First, the forum must be initiated by a public institution, establishing a formal foundation for the collaborative process. Second, participation should include non-state actors, reflecting the inclusiveness and diversity of perspectives within governance. Third, participants are expected to engage directly in decision-making rather than merely serving a consultative role to the public authority. Fourth, the forum should operate through a formally organized and collectively convened structure, ensuring regular interaction and accountability among stakeholders. Fifth, the decision-making process must aim to reach consensus, even though in practice such consensus may not always be achieved; this criterion highlights the normative goal of mutual agreement in collaborative governance. Finally, the collaboration should focus on public policy formulation or public management, emphasizing its orientation toward solving collective problems and achieving outcomes beneficial to the public interest. Together, these criteria illustrate that collaborative governance is not merely about coordination, but about shared power, trust-building, and joint responsibility among diverse actors in the governance process.

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Furthermore, the study by Atmodjo, Lamers and Mol (2020) on conservation governance in Raja Ampat illustrates that achieving balance between preservation and tourism development requires a collaborative process grounded in trust building and power sharing. The present research complements these findings by emphasizing the importance of local wisdom and customary licensing as sources of social legitimacy for marine conservation, an aspect often overlooked in global studies (Bellanger et al., 2020; Bennett et al., 2018). This study also contributes to the broader discourse on collaborative sustainability governance (Bianchi et al., 2021; Molenveld et al., 2021) by demonstrating how localized institutional design can serve as a bridge between formal regulatory frameworks such as regional and ministerial decrees and the value systems of coastal communities (Di Franco et al, 2020)

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive analysis method, in which the findings are presented in a narrative form. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of field conditions and helps the researcher identify underlying patterns. The selection of informants was conducted using the snowball sampling technique, in which the researcher initially identified key individuals who were considered capable of providing relevant data, such as representatives from the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs of Bengkayang Regency, community monitoring groups (Pokmaswas), local communities, and academics. Based on the information obtained from these initial informants, additional participants were identified to provide more comprehensive data. The data for this study were collected from multiple sources through a variety of data collection techniques (triangulation) and were continuously gathered until data saturation was achieved (Sugiyono, 2016).

The data collection process for this field research was conducted through several key methods, which are:

- a) In-depth interviews were carried out with several key informants identified for this study, including the Head of the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs of Bengkayang Regency and representatives from environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These interviews were designed to gain comprehensive insights into the dynamics of collaborative governance in marine conservation.
- b) Observation was employed as a method of directly examining situations, processes, conditions, activities, and behaviors relevant to the research focus. The observations included field visits to the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs of Bengkayang Regency to obtain firsthand information and contextual understanding of ongoing conservation initiatives.
- c) Documentation involved collecting various written materials, news archives, and articles related to the concept of collaborative governance, as well as supporting documentation such as photographs, posters, and other relevant media.

The data analysis process followed several stages:

- a) Data Reduction. At this stage, the researcher categorized and refined the information obtained from interviews, focusing only on essential data. The goal was to identify significant patterns and relationships that could support the formulation of research findings.
- b) Data Analysis. The researcher interpreted the narrative texts derived from interview transcripts to understand the underlying meanings and contexts.
- c) Conclusion Drawing (Verification). In this final stage, preliminary conclusions were tested and verified against evidence obtained from various sources, ensuring the validity and reliability of the research findings through continuous comparison and triangulation.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Collaborative Governance in the Sustainable Management of Marine Protected Areas in Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters**

The management policy of the Marine Protected Area in Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters aims to promote and ensure the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources for the welfare of local communities. This management framework encompasses various activities, including sustainable fisheries, ecotourism, and the utilization of other ecosystem services, while simultaneously functioning as a source of genetic resources for marine and fisheries research and innovation. Collaborative interactions between government institutions, local communities, and private sector actors have become increasingly essential in advancing sustainable economic development (Bellanger et al., 2020; Österblom et al., 2020). Collaborative governance emphasizes the sharing of information and resources as well as joint engagement in coordinated actions, thereby enabling outcomes that would not be achievable through isolated management approaches (Avoyan, 2022, 2025).

The implementation of collaborative governance in this context is analyzed through the conceptual framework developed by Ansell and Gash (2008), which outlines five interrelated stages: starting conditions, facilitative leadership, institutional design, collaborative process, and intermediate outcomes.

#### **Starting Condition**

The starting condition refers to the stage that identifies two main aspects, namely the imbalance of resources among stakeholders and the existence of incentives that motivate participation. The findings of this study show that

the limited number of human resources with expertise in marine conservation often leads to different interpretations regarding the management objectives of the Marine Protected Areas and its benefits for both the environment and the community. These challenges can be addressed through participatory zoning discussions that allow stakeholders to plan collectively and determine management structures. Zoning functions as a spatial planning mechanism that categorizes areas based on ecological and social priorities and guides decisions about which zones should be protected, utilized, or allocated for specific purposes such as tourism and research. Local communities in Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters have taken part in the design of zoning maps and the identification of non-extractive zones, although their participation has not yet extended to formal decision-making authority.

Non-extractive zones are areas established to protect ecosystems and biodiversity from destructive activities such as mining or unsustainable resource extraction. Within the context of Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters, these zones include critical habitats such as coral reefs, mangrove forests, seagrass beds, areas for giant clams (*Kima*, Species: *Tridacna* spp.), sea turtles, and fish breeding grounds that support the ecological balance and the livelihoods of coastal residents. The process of granting permits for traditional or customary resource use also forms part of this collaborative approach. Conservation efforts seek to incorporate traditional knowledge and environmentally friendly practices such as local fishing techniques that have been maintained through generations. By integrating such practices into formal conservation frameworks, community participation is strengthened and ecological stewardship is reinforced.

The findings of this study identified the specific roles and contributions of each stakeholder involved in the management of the Marine Protected Area (KKP). These roles are summarized and categorized in the following table:

**Table 1. The roles of stakeholders in the collaborative Governance**

Stakeholder	Main Function	Collaborative Functions
Provincial Government & Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs of Bengkayang	Formulating policies, regulations, and budget allocations for the management of the Marine Protected Area (KKP).	Facilitating multi-stakeholder meetings, providing official data, monitoring the implementation of zoning plans, and ensuring compliance with conservation regulations.
Local community monitoring groups (Pokmaswas)	Monitor fishing activities and other practices that affect marine ecosystems.	Serve as a communication bridge between the government, local communities, and other parties, ensuring compliance with Marine Protected Area (KKP) regulations.
NGOs	Conduct conservation education.	Provide advocacy and community assistance in KKP management.
Academics	Provide scientific data, ecosystem analysis, and zoning modeling.	Provide scientific data, ecosystem analysis, and zoning modeling.

Data Source: Primer data, 2025

Based on the table 1, it can be observed that the Provincial Government of West Kalimantan and the Bengkayang Regency Government play a crucial role in formulating policies, regulations, and budgeting for the management of Marine Protected Areas (KKP). Their collaborative functions include facilitating stakeholder meetings, providing official data, supervising the implementation of zoning plans, and ensuring compliance with conservation regulations. Meanwhile, the community monitoring groups (Pokmaswas) is responsible for monitoring fishing activities and other actions that may affect aquatic ecosystems, serving as a communication bridge between the government, local communities, and other stakeholders, as well as ensuring adherence to Marine Protected Areas regulations.

Furthermore, Local community monitoring groups (Pokmaswas) contributing collaboratively by reporting violations, engaging in zoning design, and helping to establish non-extractive zones. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) focus on advocacy and community assistance in conservation management. Academic institutions contribute by providing scientific data, ecosystem analysis, and zoning models, while also facilitating evidence-based discussions, proposing zoning methods, and supporting monitoring and evaluation of conservation programs. However, in this context, local communities do not hold decision-making authority.

In the broader framework of marine conservation area management, collaborative governance provides a foundation for managing conflicts of interest that may arise between environmental preservation and tourism development objectives. Through this approach, the involved actors are given the opportunity to collaborate and share authority in decision-making processes, enabling the creation of more inclusive and sustainable policies (Atmodjo et al., 2020).

### Facilitative Leadership

Based on the research findings, several key aspects of facilitative leadership are highly relevant in the context of marine conservation management in Sungai Raya Kepulauan, an area that involves multiple stakeholders with

diverse interests such as government institutions, local communities, and the Community-Based Surveillance Group. However, government dominance remains strong since this conservation policy follows a top-down approach in accordance with existing regulations. The local government acts as the initiator, regulator, and facilitator within the conservation process.

The Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs plays an active role in bringing various parties together in conservation forums, accommodating local community interests, socializing prohibitions against destructive activities in conservation zones, and mediating conflicts that arise. Although local authorities have not yet provided accurate, publicly accessible data, their leadership capacity has proven effective in influencing community behavior to prevent coral reef destruction and promote the preservation of turtles and giant clams. Nevertheless, the issue of waste inflow from external areas remains a significant challenge.

In this context, the role of facilitative leadership is highly relevant in managing collaboration among these diverse stakeholders. The stability of interactions among these actors is crucial to prevent tensions or conflicts that might hinder the implementation of conservation policies. Within the framework of sustainable governance, a collaborative approach is increasingly essential to address complex issues related to sustainable tourism and natural resource management (Sentanu et al., 2023).

### **Institutional Design**

According to Ansell and Gash (2008), institutional design refers to the set of formal and informal rules that guide the collaborative process among multiple actors. It defines how relationships are structured, how decisions are made, and how interactions occur within a governance framework. In multi-actor collaboration, such as in the management of regional marine protected areas, institutional design plays a vital role in shaping the effectiveness and sustainability of cooperative efforts. In this case, there is a hybrid actor in governance, namely the community supervisory group (pokmaswas) which functions as a bridging institution between the state and society. They are taking care of the conservation areas, but they are not paid by the government.

### **Collaborative Process**

In the context of the Marine Protected Area in Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters, which involves many stakeholders with diverse interests such as the government, local communities, Local community monitoring groups (Pokmaswas), Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), academics, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the collaborative process described by Ansell and Gash is highly relevant and important. The stages of this collaborative process can be implemented in the management of the Marine Protected Area:

#### **Face-to-face dialogue forum**

As the initial stage, face-to-face dialogue forums are crucial for initiating collaboration among the various actors involved. In this phase, the government, local communities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) come together in a forum to discuss issues such as zoning, the designation of non-extractive zones, and licensing for the use of natural resources. All parties actively listen to each other's perspectives, seek to understand the challenges faced by each actor, and share knowledge and information that may not be known to others.

In the context of conservation in Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters, particularly on Lemukutan Island, discussions were facilitated by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, allowing local communities to provide opinions and suggestions. However, there is still no formal forum established specifically for conservation purposes. For local communities whose livelihoods depend on marine natural resources, such as fishermen, these dialogue forums allow all parties to express their needs and explore ways in which policies can accommodate those needs without causing environmental harm. This collaboration is based on the principles of transparency, trust, and shared responsibility, which are built through direct dialogue that enables all stakeholders to deliberate and voice their aspirations.

Some concerns raised by the community include the lack of sustainable data on current environmental conditions and threats to marine conservation accessible to local residents, including potential risks caused by climate change. Another challenge is limited infrastructure, such as the absence of speed boats for patrols, and the lack of incentives for community-based surveillance groups (Pokmaswas) responsible for monitoring conservation areas.

#### **Consensus as the basis for decision-making**

After open dialogue takes place, the next stage involves reaching consensus. Consensus here does not mean that all parties must fully agree on every aspect of policy but rather that they can collectively endorse a set of fundamental principles to guide the management of the Marine Protected Area. This stage is essential for maintaining trust among the actors involved. Consensus can be observed in forum discussions where tensions often arise between conservation interests aimed at protecting marine ecosystems and the economic interests of local communities who rely on fisheries. Through the consensus process, all stakeholders are able to find a middle ground, such as designating sustainable fishing zones that do not harm ecosystems while still providing opportunities for local communities to benefit economically from marine resources.

### **Building trust and responsibility**

One of the main challenges in collaboration is maintaining trust among actors. In the context of Randayan Islands, all parties including the government, communities, NGOs, and tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis) work together to ensure transparency in every stage of decision-making and to guarantee that every actor has an equal opportunity to participate. Each party is expected to uphold its commitment to the agreements made. In this regard, the local government has committed to introducing fair licensing policies for local communities in utilizing marine resources. However, to date, no formal evaluation has been conducted regarding the level of trust in resource utilization within the Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters. Further research on this matter is therefore necessary.

### **Seeking joint solutions**

After going through forum discussions and reaching consensus, the solutions formulated include promoting economic activities such as ecotourism and sustainable fisheries to improve community welfare without damaging conservation areas for fish, giant clams (kima), sea turtles, and mangrove ecosystems. The ultimate goal of the collaborative process is to achieve effective and sustainable marine ecosystem management that protects marine biodiversity, supports community well-being, and ensures the optimal use of marine resources for the future.

### **Intermediate Outcomes**

Intermediate outcomes refer to the stage where the collaborative process can be considered successful if, over a certain period, joint activities have been carried out continuously and consistently. These outcomes indicate that the objectives established collectively are being achieved through approaches that are more effective than available alternatives. Although intermediate outcomes may already produce tangible results, the process that generates these outcomes is essential for building momentum that directs the collaboration toward long-term success. Importantly, these outcomes should not be viewed as the final result but rather as a vital phase in sustaining progress and trust among stakeholders.

Based on the discussion above, collaborative governance should not be understood merely as consultation, in which public institutions seek input from stakeholders but ultimately retain full control over decision-making. Instead, all stakeholders are given equal opportunities to influence the agenda and engage in negotiations to reach mutual agreements. Such direct involvement in the decision-making process enhances the sense of ownership and commitment toward the collaborative outcomes, fostering more inclusive and sustainable governance.

### **State-Dominant Collaborative Governance**

The collaborative governance model, which is primarily led by the state, defines a type of partnership where various stakeholders are officially engaged in the governing activities, while the bulk of decision-making power is largely retained by government entities. This model is informed by observed data from the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), where collaborative efforts occur but function within rigid institutional hierarchies. In this context, the government plays a pivotal role as the key player tasked with creating policies, enforcing regulations, and distributing resources. Its responsibilities go beyond mere facilitation to encompass control over decision-making, with the final say on crucial choices such as zoning layouts, issuing permits, and setting conservation goals remaining entrenched within official government frameworks. This dominance illustrates the state's better access to legal authority, funding, and institutional credibility when compared to other participants in the governance ecosystem.

Non-governmental actors contribute to governance processes through monitoring, advocacy, knowledge production, and economic activities such as ecotourism. However, their influence remains asymmetrical, as their roles are largely supportive and consultative rather than decisional. While their participation enhances policy implementation and legitimacy, it does not substantially alter the direction of decision-making processes. Despite being recognized in participatory forums and zoning discussions, their limited access to decision-making authority indicates a structural imbalance in governance participation. This condition reflects a form of "limited participation," wherein involvement exists but remains constrained in its substantive impact on policy outcomes.

A defining characteristic of this model is the presence of power asymmetry, which shapes interaction patterns among actors. Decision-making flows are predominantly top-down, originating from the government and extending to other stakeholders, while feedback from peripheral actors is filtered through institutional mechanisms that may not be fully translated into policy influence. Although dialogue forums and collaborative platforms are present, these mechanisms function more as consultative spaces than as arenas for deliberative decision-making.

However, this model does not imply that state dominance is inherently detrimental. In contexts characterized by limited local capacity, fragmented institutional arrangements, and resource constraints, the central role of the government may provide coordination, stability, and policy continuity. Nevertheless, the persistence of state dominance underscores the need for gradual transformation toward more inclusive governance arrangements, where power-sharing mechanisms are strengthened and local actors are empowered to participate more meaningfully in decision-making processes.

Therefore, the state-dominant collaborative governance model contributes to the refinement of the collaborative governance framework proposed by Ansell and Gash by introducing a contextual dimension that explicitly accounts for hierarchical power relations and uneven participation. This model positions governance as a dynamic spectrum in which collaboration and hierarchy coexist and evolve depending on institutional contexts and actor capacities. Such a perspective offers a more realistic and applicable framework for understanding governance practices in marine conservation, particularly within developing country contexts.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reaffirm the relevance of the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2008) as a conceptual framework capable of integrating multiple actors in the management of sustainable conservation areas. However, this study reveals that the implementation of these elements does not fully reflect the normative assumptions of equal participation and shared decision-making embedded within the model. Instead, empirical evidence suggests that collaboration in this context is more accurately characterized as state-dominated collaborative governance, in which the government maintains a central and controlling role in determining policy direction, while other stakeholders participate to a limited extent. Although participatory mechanisms such as zoning discussions and community engagement through community-based community groups (Pokmaswas) have been established, these forms of engagement remain largely consultative rather than deliberative. Decision-making authority continues to be concentrated within government institutions, indicating a power imbalance among actors.

These findings challenge the assumption that collaborative governance inherently leads to an equal distribution of power among stakeholders. In practice, structural conditions such as regulatory authority, access to resources, and institutional legitimacy position the government as the dominant actor. Consequently, non-state actors, including local communities, NGOs, and even academics, are positioned as supporting actors rather than equal partners in the governance process. This dynamic confirms that collaborative governance in developing country contexts often operates within hierarchical institutional arrangements, rather than fully horizontal networks.

Furthermore, the case of the Randayan Island and Its Surrounding Waters highlights that participation does not guarantee meaningful inclusion. Although local communities are involved in identifying conservation zones and monitoring environmental conditions, their lack of authority in strategic decision-making limits their influence on policy outcomes. This situation reflects a form of "limited participation," where involvement is formally present but limited in substance. This pattern strengthens the argument that collaborative governance frameworks need to incorporate more explicit consideration of power relations and levels of participation.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that state dominance is not entirely counterproductive. In contexts where local capacity, resources, and institutional readiness remain limited, a central role for government can provide stability, coordination, and sustainability in conservation efforts. The facilitative leadership demonstrated by government actors in this study played a crucial role in maintaining stable interactions, mediating conflicts, and ensuring policy implementation. This situation is not inherently negative. However, without a gradual shift toward more inclusive arrangements and power sharing, the sustainability of collaboration may be hampered in the long term.

Therefore, this study contributes to the development of collaborative governance theory by proposing the concept of state-dominated collaborative governance as a contextual model that better captures the realities of governance in hierarchical and asymmetrical resource environments. This study suggests that future governance models must transcend the distinction between collaboration and hierarchy. In doing so, it opens new avenues for understanding how collaboration can evolve from state-centered coordination to more balanced and deliberative forms of governance in marine conservation.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of collaborative governance in the Marine Protected Area of Randayan Islands has not fully achieved the ideal of equal participation and shared decision-making. While collaborative mechanisms such as participatory zoning and multi-stakeholder forums have been established, decision-making authority remains largely concentrated within government institutions. As a result, stakeholder involvement is predominantly consultative, with limited influence on strategic policy outcomes, reflecting a persistent condition of power asymmetry. Building on these findings, this study proposes the concept of state-dominant collaborative governance to explain the coexistence of collaborative arrangements and hierarchical control in practice. This model highlights that collaboration in marine conservation does not always operate within an egalitarian framework, but is shaped by institutional structures, resource distribution, and actor capacity.

By extending the collaborative governance model Ansell and Gash, this study contributes to a more context-sensitive understanding of governance in developing regions. From a policy perspective, improving the effectiveness of collaborative governance requires strengthening local capacity, expanding access to information, and institutionalizing more inclusive decision-making mechanisms. These efforts are essential to move from consultative participation toward more balanced and deliberative governance arrangements. Overall, this study underscores the importance of recognizing power dynamics in collaborative governance and offers a more realistic

framework for understanding and improving marine conservation governance in contexts characterized by strong state dominance.

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on a single qualitative case study in the Marine Protected Area of Sungai Raya Kepulauan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Second, although multiple data sources were used, the analysis relies on stakeholder perspectives that may not fully capture the views of all actors, particularly marginalized groups. Third, the study does not employ quantitative measures to assess participation, trust, or power distribution, so the analysis of power asymmetry is interpretative. Finally, the concept of state-dominant collaborative governance proposed in this study requires further empirical validation across different settings to strengthen its applicability as a broader theoretical framework.

## SUGGESTION

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## CONTRIBUTORSHIP

All authors contributed substantially to the conception, design, and completion of this manuscript:

1. Roma Tressa: Led the conceptual framework, coordinated the research design, conducted the primary data analysis, and prepared the initial draft of the manuscript.
2. Yulius Yohanes: Contributed to the literature review, theoretical development, and refinement of the collaborative governance framework.

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