

THE BROKEN BRIDGE OF COLLABORATION: UNPACKING POVERTY POLITICS IN EASTERN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of Collaborative Governance in poverty alleviation programs in Bolaang Mongondow Timur Regency, North Sulawesi. Grounded in a constructivist paradigm, the research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, document analysis, and focus group discussions involving stakeholders from five key sectors: government, business, academia, civil society, and media. The findings reveal that although a formal structure (TKPKD) has been established to facilitate coordination, its effectiveness has been compromised following the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 163/2024, which dissolved the existing institutional framework without providing operational guidelines for its replacement (BPPK). The study identifies a paradox of collaboration, where formal documents and coordination mechanisms exist, but genuine multi-actor interaction remains limited. The involvement of non-government actors is largely instrumental and symbolic, with civil society and media often excluded from meaningful deliberation. The research concludes that Collaborative Governance in the region is still characterized by top-down administrative logic rather than inclusive, transformative practice. A key recommendation is the institutionalization of regular, deliberative, and open multi-actor forums supported by accurate and transparent data systems. This study contributes theoretically by offering a localized adaptation of the Pentahelix model, enriched by institutional improvisation and contextual wisdom.

Keywords: collaborative governance; multi-actor participation; pentahelix; poverty alleviation; public policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Although North Sulawesi Province successfully reduced its overall poverty rate to below eight percent in 2024, persistent disparities remain evident in peripheral and border regions. One such area is Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) Regency, where

5.87 percent of the population continues to live beneath the national poverty line. This figure positions BolTim among the most impoverished regions in the eastern part of the province and underscores that provincial-level achievements have yet to fully trickle down to the local level. This discrepancy highlights that poverty is not merely a matter of statistical targets, but fundamentally a question of institutional capability to respond to complex problems in adaptive and participatory ways.

As poverty is increasingly recognised as a multidimensional phenomenon, development governance has undergone a paradigmatic shift. Contemporary public policy literature emphasises the importance of collaborative governance as both a normative and operational framework for addressing development challenges that involve multiple stakeholders. Introduced by Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance promotes joint decision-making between state and non-state actors within deliberative forums. In Indonesia, this concept has been translated into various collaborative arrangements, notably the Pentahelix model, which engages five key sectors: government, private enterprise, academia, civil society, and the media. The Pentahelix is expected to generate a socially innovative ecosystem and strengthen collective capacity for locally rooted development solutions.

However, local realities often reveal tensions between normative frameworks and fragile institutional implementation. This is particularly evident in the case of BolTim following the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024, which formally abolished the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Teams (TKPKD) and established a new body, the Poverty Reduction Acceleration Agency (BPPK). The absence of operational guidelines, budgetary allocations, and a clear institutional framework for BPPK has produced an institutional vacuum at the local level. As a result, the coordinating structures that had long enabled cross-sectoral engagement in poverty programmes were rendered legally and operationally obsolete. Local governments entered a phase of stagnation in coordination, while non-governmental actors—such as NGOs, local businesses, and the media—faced uncertainty over their roles in the development agenda.

This situation reveals that top-down institutional reform, when implemented without adequate local instruments, may inadvertently erode the collaborative capacities that have been painstakingly developed. The challenge is compounded by the highly procedural and hierarchical nature of Indonesia's bureaucracy, which tends to constrain local initiatives within the boundaries of national regulation. In this context, regulatory disruption not only halts programme delivery but also undermines inter-sectoral trust—the very social capital upon which collaboration depends. To date, academic studies have yet to fully address the implications of such policy discontinuities for collaborative governance in poverty reduction, particularly at the regency level. For instance, the study by Muslim et al. (2021) maps collaborative practices only up to 2021, thereby omitting the institutional

disruptions caused by Presidential Regulation No. 163/2024.

In light of this vacuum, there is a need to adopt an analytical approach that does not merely document institutional failure but also explores the adaptive dynamics that emerge beyond formal structures. One such approach is institutional bricolage, which examines how local actors improvise institutional arrangements through adaptive use of existing norms, forums, and resources. Through this lens, collaboration is seen not as a fixed entity but as a socially constructed process – constantly negotiated, reinterpreted, and reassembled in response to local challenges. By integrating institutional bricolage theory into the Pentahelix framework, this study seeks to construct a more contextually grounded and practically relevant conceptual model for analysing collaboration in development settings.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to analyse how the regulatory changes brought about by Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024 have influenced the dynamics of collaborative governance in BolTim's poverty alleviation programmes. Moreover, it seeks to identify the improvisational (bricolage) strategies employed by local actors to sustain cross-sectoral collaboration in the midst of institutional uncertainty.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single-case study design. Grounded in the constructivist paradigm, the research recognises that the social reality surrounding Collaborative Governance in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes in Bolaang Mongondow Timur Regency is socially constructed through dynamic interactions among key actors. The primary objective of this approach is to explore, in depth, the meanings, perceptions, and relational dynamics involving five core elements of the Pentahelix model: government, private sector, civil society, media, and academia.

The central variable in this research is the effectiveness of Collaborative Governance implementation, with particular attention to three key indicators: (1) patterns of cross-sectoral actor participation; (2) the operational functionality of collaborative institutions following regulatory changes; and (3) forms of institutional improvisation (institutional bricolage) that emerge under conditions of structural vacuum. The operational definition of Collaborative Governance refers to the active and deliberative engagement of stakeholders in inclusive, data-informed decision-making, programme implementation, and joint evaluation processes.

Research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, targeting informants across a range of strategic categories: local government officials

(including the Regent, Head of Bappeda, the Social Affairs Office, and other relevant technical departments), village heads, private sector representatives involved in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), NGO activists, local journalists, academics, and programme beneficiaries. A total of 29 individuals were interviewed in-depth. Furthermore, two Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions, each involving 14 participants from across the five helixes, were conducted to juxtapose perspectives and delve into the discursive patterns between actors. Data were collected through four primary techniques: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews, guided by protocols tailored to the characteristics of each informant group;

(2) participant observation of coordination processes, technical meetings, and policy forums at both district and village levels; (3) focus group discussions to explore multi-actor interaction and assess the resilience of collaboration amid institutional transition; and (4) document analysis, including review of TKPKD archives from 2019 to 2023, preliminary BPPK drafts, budget reports, as well as local media coverage and community publications. The data corpus comprised narrative accounts, field notes, visual documentation, and transcripts from interviews and discussions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study unveils the dynamics of multi-actor collaboration in poverty alleviation policy in Bolaang Mongondow Timur Regency (BolTim), following a sudden shift in national regulation. Employing an in-depth qualitative approach, the research identifies five key themes that illuminate the complexities of implementing collaborative governance within a disadvantaged region marked by intense institutional pressure. The entire analysis is presented without direct quotations from informants, with findings instead articulated through an interpretive narrative grounded in a robust theoretical framework.

3.1 Institutional Void and Transitional Disarray

Following the enactment of Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024, which formally dissolved the Regional Poverty Reduction Coordination Teams (Tim Koordinasi Penanggulangan Kemiskinan Daerah, TKPKD), the district of Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) experienced a profound institutional vacuum. For over seven months, not a single formal coordination forum was convened, despite the fact that Rp 2.4 billion had already been allocated in the regional budget for poverty alleviation programmes. This situation reflects more than mere administrative stagnation; it embodies a deeper collective disorientation across actor networks that had long relied on the presence of formal institutions to mediate and sustain collaboration.

This phenomenon aligns with what Gultom and Hosein (2024) refer to as regulatory transitions under institutional uncertainty – a condition in which newly introduced regulations are not accompanied by adequate operational frameworks, resulting in functional ambiguity and role confusion within subnational governance arrangements. In the case of BolTim, the abrupt regulatory shift, devoid of any transitional protocol, led to the suspension of cross-sectoral decision-making. Not only were local government actors left disoriented, but so too were non-state stakeholders – NGOs, academics, and journalists – who no longer knew where or to whom they should direct proposals, data, or critical feedback.

More broadly, Rothman, Yates, and van Hees (2023) argue that such convulsive change exerts immediate and destabilising effects on governance networks. When a key organisational “node” – such as a coordination body – is abruptly removed, the entire collaborative ecosystem is thrown into jeopardy. Actor interactions, they suggest, are inherently dependent on formal institutions which serve as connectors, legitimators, and sources of strategic direction. In BolTim, this institutional rupture not only eliminated intersectoral meetings, but also obliterated any consensus as to who now holds authority to perform coordinating functions in the wake of the TKPKD’s dissolution.

The consequences of this institutional void may also be interpreted through the framework proposed by Popli, Raithatha, and Fuad (2021), who observe that sudden regulatory shifts often result in dramatic declines in institutional performance. When structural arrangements are dismantled without clear successors, organisations tend to experience institutional freeze – a state in which resources remain available, yet cannot be mobilised due to legal and procedural uncertainty. In the context of BolTim, such paralysis has contributed to programme stagnation, operational frustration among technical staff, and a perceptible erosion of trust from external actors regarding the government’s commitment to collaborative poverty reduction.

Beyond bureaucratic inertia, the situation in BolTim encapsulates a condition of liminality in public governance – an interstitial phase between a defunct institutional order and an emergent one still under construction. As Glas and Martel (2024) suggest, such liminal states are frequently marked by role crises and the disintegration of institutional value systems. Both public servants and civil society partners found themselves in ambiguous positions – no longer anchored to familiar normative references, and yet not equipped with new procedural pathways. In such scenarios, boundary work – the negotiation and delineation of institutional roles – becomes blurred, and accountability mechanisms weaken systemically.

Nevertheless, the institutional vacuum did not go entirely unanswered. Instead, it triggered informal responses that may be characterised as acts of institutional bricolage. Local actors began to adapt the MusrenbangDes (village-

level development forums) into ad-hoc platforms for discussing poverty-related issues, and engaged local media and activists via informal channels such as WhatsApp groups. This reflects the findings of Frick-Trzebitzky, Pahl-Wostl, and Hinkel (2023), who argue that in the Global South, adaptive governance often emerges through bricolage—i.e., the creative recombination of available institutional elements to compensate for absent or dysfunctional formal mechanisms.

Further, Suresh, D'Souza, and Nyaga (2024) assert that in such structurally ambiguous environments, local actors frequently construct improvised coordination systems that, while lacking formal legality, still perform essential governance functions—such as data collection, cross-sectoral communication, and collective decision-making. The implications of this are far-reaching: collaboration does not necessarily depend on the existence of formal structures, but rather on the social capacity of local institutions to adapt, reconfigure, and function under conditions of policy uncertainty.

Thus, the findings suggest that collaborative poverty governance in BolTim did not collapse entirely, but entered a critical transitional phase characterised by the absence of official structures and the emergence of informal initiatives as adaptive responses. However, the sustainability of these improvised arrangements remains precarious in the absence of central government support and a legal framework that clarifies the mandate of the newly proposed institutional configurations. Accordingly, the success of collaborative governance amid institutional transitions hinges heavily on regulatory clarity and the government's willingness to open participatory spaces for local actors in shaping the architecture of the new governance framework.

3.2 Symbolic Participation and the Illusion of Inclusivity

On paper, BolTim's collaborative governance framework nominally recognised the five helixes—government, private sector, academia, civil society, and media—as equal partners. However, an examination of meeting minutes, attendance matrices, and field observations reveals a striking pattern: most non-governmental actors merely signed the register, posed for photographs, and promptly exited the forum without contributing to substantive policy deliberations. This phenomenon resonates with what Hickey and du Toit (2013) term adverse incorporation—a procedural inclusion that paradoxically reinforces substantive exclusion, wherein perspectives and bargaining power of non-bureaucratic actors are never genuinely accommodated.

Popli, Raithatha, and Fuad (2021) have shown that abrupt regulatory shifts—such as India's economic liberalisation—frequently induce performance decline within institutions where the old normative structures are dismantled before new ones are functionally operational. A similar dynamic appears to unfold in BolTim.

Following the dissolution of the TKPKD, local authorities sought to preserve a semblance of collaborative governance by continuing to invite representatives from all helixes. Yet, in the absence of an operational replacement framework (i.e., BPPK), the deliberative space contracted into a one-way ceremonial reporting session. This highlights how symbolic inclusion often serves as a cosmetic bridge, masking legitimacy crises born from institutional discontinuity (Gultom & Hosein, 2024).

The paralysis of substantive discussion is further compounded by the dynamics of liminality—a transitional zone in which roles and identities are ambiguously defined. Glas and Martel (2024) describe how boundary-work in liminal settings tends to be defensive: public officials become hesitant to entertain negotiation for fear of missteps, while private and media actors adopt a low-profile stance to avoid reputational risk. Rather than fostering co-creation, the forum degenerates into a ritualised compliance arena—ensuring that the participatory checklist is ticked, while silencing critical engagement.

Ironically, it is within this liminal vacuum that participatory bricolage emerges outside formal structures. A number of NGOs and academics initiated thematic online discussions on rural poverty via WhatsApp channels, later distilling their policy suggestions into independently drafted briefs. Frick-Trzebitzky, Pahl-Wostl, and Hinkel (2023) underscore that institutional bricolage often constitutes an adaptive response to formal voids—a means through which communities “patch” deficits in inclusivity by leveraging more agile informal mechanisms. Suresh, D’Souza, and Nyaga (2024) further assert that unstructured practices, when afforded minimal political recognition, may yield genuine innovations in coordination.

However, in BolTim, these bricolage efforts remain disconnected from the mainstream policy process. Without an interface that bridges formal and informal spheres, alternative ideas risk marginalisation—even as official forums continue to bear the label of “inclusion”. Rothman, Yates, and van Hees (2023) caution that governance networks become increasingly brittle when convulsive change is not accompanied by mechanisms to absorb critical feedback; such networks are prone to fracture when weak nodes are relegated to merely ornamental roles.

Thus, symbolic participation in BolTim is not merely a procedural anomaly but a structural consequence of regulatory discontinuity. To transcend this illusion of inclusivity, several institutional innovations are required: (1) the establishment of designated deliberative slots in every meeting—dedicated time in which non-governmental actors present independent analysis and recommendations; (2) the enforcement of a response matrix obligation, whereby every input receives a formal written reply from the secretariat; and (3) formal recognition of online bricolage forums as auxiliary decision-making channels. Absent such mechanisms, collaboration risks remaining ensnared in the logic of tokenism: inclusion is

documented, but substantive voices remain systematically silenced.

3.3 Data Fragmentation and Policy Blind Spots

One of the most salient challenges in implementing collaborative governance for poverty alleviation in Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) lies in the lack of cross-sectoral data integration. The Social Affairs Office, the Health Office, and the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda)—as the primary administrative bodies overseeing poverty programmes—each operate independent information systems. These systems are based on non-synchronised databases, utilise disparate recording methodologies, and lack any shared real-time data exchange platform. Consequently, cross-sectoral planning is rarely grounded in shared, verifiable evidence; instead, it often relies on assumptions, unilateral perceptions, or pressure from local political elites. This reflects what Zhang et al. (2020) describe as data-deficient collaboration, in which strategic direction collapses due to an absence or incompatibility of information among actors who are otherwise meant to be complementary.

This condition is exacerbated by the absence of both technical and institutional interoperability. Technologically, there is no integrated digital infrastructure. Institutionally, no agreed-upon data-sharing protocols exist. Each agency tends to silo its datasets within administrative boundaries, rendering them inaccessible to other stakeholders—including those from non-governmental sectors who are formally expected to participate in planning and oversight. The result is not only the misidentification of target beneficiaries but also a severe weakening of public accountability mechanisms. The inability to transparently correlate programme inputs with outcomes and impacts undermines evaluative governance. These conditions resonate with the analysis of Gultom and Hosein (2024), who characterise such scenarios as regulatory transitions without data readiness. In BolTim's case, the abolition of TKPKD and its abrupt replacement with the BPPK—absent any operational guidelines—was not accompanied by a corresponding renewal or alignment of data systems. Consequently, local actors have been deprived of a reliable information-based navigation map, and deliberative forums have been reduced to ceremonial gatherings stripped of analytical potency. Rothman, Yates, and van Hees (2023) further highlight that convulsive institutional change, when not accompanied by preparatory system development, often leads to the fragility of governance networks, including their inability to process cross-sectoral data efficiently.

In practice, this vacuum produces what may be termed policy blind spots—zones of social need that go unrecognised due to outdated, unverified, or untransformed data that fails to inform evidence-based policymaking. Popli et al. (2021) argue that the institutional performance breakdowns following sudden regulatory shifts are frequently catalysed by a failure to synchronise data systems,

which ideally should function as the backbone of coordination. This also helps explain why multi-actor planning meetings in BolTim consistently struggle to produce effective inter-sectoral strategies; there is no shared policy dashboard capable of providing a holistic and up-to-date representation of local realities.

In a related exploration, Glas and Martel (2024) delineate the stages of liminality in transitional bureaucracies, where ambiguity over roles and authority is compounded by information uncertainty, leading to collective dysfunction. This precisely reflects the situation in BolTim following the enactment of Perpres 163/2024, where the absence of BPPK operational guidelines has not only created structural confusion but also precipitated an epistemic breakdown—raising unresolved questions over who holds what data, who is responsible for data synchronisation, and who may legitimately access such information for public interest purposes.

Referring to the work of Suresh, D'Souza, and Nyaga (2024), this scenario may be understood as a condition wherein local actors are forced to govern without structure, resorting to temporary informational bricolage. This includes reliance on manual records, Excel spreadsheets, or informal communication applications such as WhatsApp for inter-agency data transmission. While such improvisation may demonstrate adaptive resilience, it risks entrenching governance inequalities in the long term, as it depends heavily on individual capacity and informal social networks rather than on institutionalised, auditable systems.

Thus, the establishment of an interoperable governance dashboard emerges as an urgent recommendation. Such a system must facilitate real-time data exchange across agencies, anchored by mutually agreed security and validation protocols. Moreover, it must create room for non-state actors to independently monitor and analyse governance processes. Beyond reinforcing multi-helix collaboration, such a system is a necessary precondition for a shift towards adaptive governance, in which policy responses are not only timely but also precise, directional, and accountable (Frick-Trzebitzky et al., 2023).

3.4 Institutional Bricolage and Improvised Pentahelix

In response to the institutional void following the dissolution of the District Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD) through Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024, development actors in Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) did not remain passive. In the absence of operational guidance from the central government on establishing the new Poverty Alleviation Acceleration Agency (BPPK), various stakeholders—including village authorities, community leaders, local academics, and journalists—began to devise localised solutions to overcome the paralysis in governance. Chief among these was the strategic repurposing of the Village Development Planning Forum (Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan

Desa, or MusrenbangDes). Originally intended as a village-level planning mechanism, MusrenbangDes was informally re-engineered into a cross-sector coordination space, placing poverty alleviation as a core agenda item.

This phenomenon aligns closely with the concept of institutional bricolage, as articulated by Frick-Trzebitzky, Pahl-Wostl, and Hinkel (2023), which refers to the adaptive reconfiguration of institutional arrangements based on available resources and structures, rather than awaiting top-down reform. In BolTim's case, bricolage took the form of informal invitations to media actors via WhatsApp, the formulation of action plans based on pre-existing programme data, and the engagement of university lecturers in community discussions convened without district-level facilitation. Such practices illustrate that a 'frozen' institutional architecture from above can be 'repopulated' from below, through collaborative routines grounded in social ties and collective awareness.

Although improvised and inherently vulnerable to fragmentation, this form of bricolage reveals the adaptive capacity of local communities to govern amidst structural disarray. Suresh, D'Souza, and Nyaga (2024) observe that, under regulatory transitions, many communities in the Global South demonstrate an ability to "govern without structure" by functionally reassembling institutional roles outside the confines of formal frameworks. This was evident in BolTim, where village officials, local scholars, and media representatives effectively assumed roles intended for BPPK, illustrating that the idealised pentahelix configuration could be enacted through flexible institutional improvisation.

These dynamics further necessitate a re-reading of the pentahelix model itself. Under normative conditions, the five helices—government, business, academia, civil society, and media—are expected to interact in a synchronised and structured fashion. Yet, in the face of regulatory uncertainty, this configuration became modular and responsive. Field findings revealed a triadic core composed of village government, local entrepreneurs, and academic actors, while civil society and the media played the role of informal monitors and discursive catalysts. This constellation mirrors what Glas and Martel (2024) describe as role negotiation in liminal settings, where actors must renegotiate their positions and functions within a legally undefined space.

The strength of bricolage, therefore, lies in its capacity to navigate uncertainty with agility. In the absence of formal standard operating procedures for the BPPK, faith-based groups, women's collectives, and youth organisations provided alternative entry points for information flow and responsive action targeting impoverished households. The practical implication is that these improvised collaborative forms, though imperfect, should not be underestimated. In fact, their very imperfection showcases the resilience of local governance systems operating under conditions of institutional ambiguity and resource scarcity.

Nonetheless, this approach carries inherent risks. The reliance on informal relationships and the lack of codified accountability mechanisms may permit silent exclusion or the entrenchment of local elites. Rothman, Yates, and van Hees (2023) caution that convulsive institutional change without clarified authority often produces fragile governance networks that are overly dependent on the personal engagement of key actors. Over time, such arrangements are highly susceptible to political turnover, leadership transitions, or the withdrawal of critical resources.

Thus, the experience of BolTim offers more than a creative local workaround; it foregrounds the value of bricolage as a survival strategy within the broader theory of collaborative governance. When grand institutional designs are disrupted, localised, modular, and flexible efforts must be recognised as legitimate forms of meaningful, contextualised governance. Accordingly, the transitional phase need not be equated with paralysis; rather, it can serve as fertile ground for institutional experimentation that may, in time, crystallise into a more responsive and formally recognised structure.

3.5 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The legal discontinuity following Presidential Regulation No. 163/2024 reveals a significant gap within the theory of Collaborative Governance (CG) that remains underexplored: namely, that collaborative networks are not solely vulnerable due to asymmetrical resource distribution, but more fundamentally through the absence of legal transition planning. The institutional void left by the dissolution of the TKPKD placed Boltim's collaborative framework in a state of liminal collaborative governance – a transitional phase wherein roles, authority, and shared norms unravel before a new structure has formed. In this vacuum, the five classic CG elements – face-to-face dialogue, trust building, procedural commitment, shared understanding, and intermediate outcomes – effectively lost their operative “platform” or institutional base.

This study affirms that institutional bricolage is far more than sporadic improvisation; it functions as a mode of survival governance – preserving essential information flows and decision-making continuity when formal nodes collapse. Thus, the variables of legal continuity and bricolage capacity should be considered foundational starting conditions in CG frameworks, alongside the more established factors such as relational history and incentive distribution.

Concurrently, this research highlights that the disintegration of formal structures compels the Pentahelix to evolve into a more modular configuration. In Boltim, a core triad – comprising village governments, local enterprises, and academic actors – emerged to perform substantive coordination roles. Civil society organisations and local media, meanwhile, assumed the functions of transparency watchdogs and discourse amplifiers. This emergent formation was only feasible due to what can be termed data bricolage – the fusion of manual spreadsheets,

WhatsApp groups, and village-level development forums (MusrenbangDes) to compensate for the fragmented nature of cross-agency information systems.

In the absence of an integrated data-sharing dashboard, collaborative efforts were driven instead by interpersonal trust and informal social networks, which were used to validate beneficiary targeting, monitor outputs, and negotiate rapid interventions. These findings suggest that in regulatory environments marked by volatility, it is not structural neatness but elastic flexibility—the capacity of networks to oscillate between formal and informal architectures—that serves as the true indicator of collaborative resilience. The cleanliness of an organigram, while desirable, is ultimately secondary.

Practically, the implications of this study coalesce around three strategic axes. First, the national government must mandate that any institutional reform be accompanied by a formal transition protocol—comprising a timeline, ad-hoc coordination unit, and mapped flows of authority—to prevent subnational actors from being trapped in institutional paralysis. Second, district-level governments should issue a decree (SK) establishing a transitional cross-agency task force—composed of private sector, academic, NGO, and media actors—to function as a bridging node until BPPK structures are fully operational. This team should simultaneously serve as a clearing house for poverty data, built upon open API infrastructure to ensure that evidence remains accessible and shared.

Third, to dismantle the recurring cycle of symbolic participation, every collaborative forum must reserve at least 20 percent of deliberative space exclusively for non-government actors, supplemented by a written response matrix ensuring that each input receives formal feedback within two working weeks. Together, the combined implementation of a transition protocol, bridging node, and shared evidence dashboard offers a practical roadmap to restoring trust, enhancing network adaptability, and institutionalising the forms of social improvisation that have emerged during crisis phases into more accountable and adaptive governance practices.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals a profound disruption to the formal collaborative framework for poverty governance in Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) following the enactment of Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024. The policy dissolved the Regional Coordination Team for Poverty Alleviation (TKPKD) without providing immediately operable technical guidance for its successor, the Poverty Alleviation Acceleration Agency (BPPK). This regulatory vacuum resulted in the suspension of multi-actor coordination forums for several months and rendered poverty programmes and budgets inoperable. This situation demonstrates that

collaboration cannot function in isolation from regulatory certainty. From the perspective of governance theory, this case underscores the crucial role of regulatory continuity as the foundation of sustained cross-sector collaboration, where the mere presence of formal structures without procedural clarity risks confusion and coordination failure at the local level.

At the same time, the study reveals that inclusivity in collaboration is not merely a matter of who is invited, but whether the voices and capacities of non-governmental actors—particularly those from the private sector, media, and civil society—are substantively accommodated within planning and decision-making processes. In BolTim, participation by these sectors has been largely symbolic: present in attendance lists and official documentation, yet absent in deliberative spaces. This disparity highlights how administratively inclusive collaborations may in fact conceal substantive exclusion. In other words, procedural participation without meaningful engagement contributes to the erosion of checks and balances in collaborative processes.

Furthermore, the research identifies that the absence of a shared inter-agency database significantly weakens the effectiveness of collaboration. When data from the Social Affairs Office, Health Office, and Development Planning Board (Bappeda) remain fragmented and unintegrated, coordination forums lack a common analytical foundation for policy prioritisation. Without evidence-based planning, strategic decisions become vulnerable to short-term political bias and fail to respond to the real needs of communities. This data fragmentation undermines not only planning but also the system of evaluation and public accountability. The findings reinforce a growing body of international literature that identifies data interoperability as a cornerstone of successful multi-sectoral collaboration, particularly in complex issues like poverty that demand integrated, multi-level responses.

Despite the institutional void, local actors in BolTim did not remain passive. They engaged in institutional bricolage—a form of organisational improvisation—by repurposing village planning forums as makeshift coordination spaces and reactivating communication across the pentahelix through informal channels such as WhatsApp groups. This strategy illustrates that in liminal situations, where formal institutions falter, social flexibility and local wisdom can sustain cooperation. Such improvisational models represent a form of adaptive governance, which does not rely solely on bureaucratic structure but is instead anchored in social networks, personal credibility, and intersectoral trust. While imperfect, these practices offer evidence that hybrid forms of collaboration can endure, so long as there is a shared commitment to problem-solving.

Based on these findings, several key recommendations emerge. First, any institutional reform, especially those affecting cross-sectoral coordination

structures, must be accompanied by clear transitional protocols that are immediately actionable by local governments. These should include temporary coordination mechanisms, delegated authority, and integration pathways between outgoing and incoming institutions. Second, both central and local governments must prioritise the development of an integrated data system that ensures inter-agency interoperability and transparent access across all five helixes. Strengthening this data architecture is essential for planning, evaluation, and accountability in poverty alleviation programmes. Third, the inclusion of non-governmental actors must be guaranteed not only through administrative invitations but by legally mandating their deliberative roles. Media and civil society organisations should be granted equitable space to present evaluations and evidence-based recommendations grounded in field realities.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on Collaborative Governance by demonstrating that it is not only resource asymmetries or dominant actors that threaten collaboration, but also regulatory disruptions and institutional vacuums that can severely undermine networks built over many years. This finding introduces a new dimension to academic discourse: that institutional resilience and the adaptive capacity of local actors are critical factors in sustaining collaborative governance. By integrating theories of regulatory transition, institutional bricolage, and the Pentahelix model, the study offers a context-sensitive conceptual framework for development governance in Indonesia. Collaboration, in this light, is not merely an administrative project—it is a social arena marked by negotiation, improvisation, and adaptive learning..

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