

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 case study approach. 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: formal documents and coordination mechanisms exist, yet genuine multi-actor interaction remains limited. The involvement of non-government actors is mainly instrumental and symbolic, with civil society and media often excluded from meaningful deliberation. The research concludes that Collaborative Governance in the region remains characterized by a top-down administrative logic rather than an 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*

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INTRODUCTION

Although North Sulawesi Province successfully lowered its overall poverty rate to below eight percent in 2024, persistent disparities still exist in remote and border regions. One such area is Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) Regency, where 5.87 percent of residents continue to live below the national poverty line. This figure places BolTim among the poorest areas in the eastern part of the province and highlights that success at the provincial level has not entirely reached the local communities (Stolze, 2021). This gap emphasizes that poverty is not just a matter of hitting statistical targets, but also reflects the

capacity of institutions to address complex issues through adaptive and participatory approaches.

As poverty is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional issue, development governance has experienced a fundamental shift. Current public policy literature highlights the significance of collaborative governance as both a guiding principle and a practical approach for tackling development challenges involving multiple stakeholders. Introduced by Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance encourages joint decision-making among government and non-governmental actors within deliberative forums. In Indonesia, this idea has been adapted into various collaborative arrangements, especially the Pentahelix model, which involves five key sectors: government, private sector, academia, civil society, and the media. The Pentahelix aims to foster a socially innovative ecosystem and enhance collective capacity for locally grounded development solutions.

However, local realities often expose tensions between normative frameworks and the fragile institutional mechanisms that implement them. This is especially clear in BolTim after the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024, which officially abolished the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Teams (TKPKD) and created a new entity, the Poverty Reduction Acceleration Agency (BPPK). The lack of operational guidelines, budget allocations, and a clear institutional structure for BPPK has led to a local institutional gap. Consequently, the coordinating bodies that had long facilitated cross-sector engagement in poverty programs became legally and operationally outdated. Local governments faced a period of stagnation in coordination, while non-governmental actors such as NGOs, local businesses, and the media were uncertain about their roles in the development agenda (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

This situation shows that top-down institutional reform, when carried out without appropriate local tools, can unintentionally weaken the collaborative efforts carefully built over time. The problem is worsened by Indonesia's highly procedural and hierarchical bureaucracy, which tends to limit local initiatives within the scope of national rules. In this context, regulatory disruption not only stops program implementation but also damages inter-sectoral trust—the social capital essential for collaboration. So far, academic research has not fully explored the effects of such policy interruptions on collaborative governance in poverty reduction, especially at the regency level. For example, the study by Muslim et al. (2021) maps out collaborative practices only until 2021, missing the institutional disruptions caused by Presidential Regulation No. 163/2024.

Given this gap, there is a need to adopt an analytical approach that not only documents institutional failure but also explores the adaptive dynamics that develop beyond formal structures. One such approach is institutional bricolage, which examines how local actors improvise institutional arrangements by modifying existing norms, forums, and resources. Using this perspective, collaboration is viewed not as a fixed entity but as a socially constructed process that is constantly negotiated, reinterpreted, and reassembled in response to local challenges. By integrating institutional bricolage theory into the Pentahelix framework, this study aims to create a more grounded and practically relevant conceptual model for analyzing collaboration in development settings.

The present study aims to analyze how the regulatory changes introduced by Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024 have influenced the dynamics of collaborative governance in BolTim's poverty alleviation programs. Additionally, it seeks to identify the improvisational (bricolage) strategies employed by local actors to sustain cross-sector collaboration amid institutional uncertainty.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative, single-case design. Rooted in the constructivist paradigm, the research recognizes that the social reality around Collaborative Governance in implementing poverty alleviation programs in Bolaang Mongondow Timur Regency is socially constructed through dynamic interactions among key actors. The main goal of this approach is to deeply explore the meanings, perceptions, and relational dynamics among five core elements of the Pentahelix model: government, private sector, civil society, media, and academia.

The main focus of this research is the effectiveness of implementing Collaborative Governance, with special emphasis on three main indicators: (1) patterns of participation by cross-sectoral actors; (2) how well collaborative institutions operate after regulatory changes; and (3) types of institutional improvisation (institutional bricolage) that develop when there is a lack of structure. The operational definition of Collaborative Governance involves the active and thoughtful involvement of stakeholders in inclusive, data-driven decision-making, program implementation, and joint evaluation activities (Willis et al., 2021).

Research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, targeting informants across various 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 program beneficiaries. A total of 29 individuals were interviewed in-depth. Additionally, two Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions, each involving 14 participants from across the five helixes, were conducted to compare perspectives and examine discursive patterns among actors. Data were collected through four main techniques: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews, guided by protocols tailored to each informant group's characteristics; (2) participant observation of coordination processes, technical meetings, and policy forums at district and village levels; (3) focus group discussions to explore multi-actor interactions and assess the resilience of collaboration during institutional transitions; and (4) document analysis, including review of TKPKD archives from 2019 to 2023, preliminary BPPK drafts, budget reports, local media coverage, and community publications. The data included narrative accounts, field notes, visual documentation, and transcripts from interviews and discussions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study explores the dynamics of multi-actor collaboration in poverty alleviation policy in Bolaang Mongondow Timur Regency (BolTim), following a sudden change in

national regulation. Using an in-depth qualitative approach, the research identifies five key themes that shed light on the complexities of implementing collaborative governance in a disadvantaged area under significant institutional pressure. The entire analysis is presented without direct quotes from informants, with the findings conveyed through an interpretive narrative grounded in a strong theoretical framework.

FINDING RESULT

Research findings show that the pentahelix structure of poverty alleviation collaboration in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency has not achieved equal roles among its components. The five main elements—government, private sector, civil society organizations, academics, and media—are officially involved in various social policy agendas, but their relationships and contributions are not equally balanced. The government remains the central point for coordination, while the other elements act mainly as supporters, following regulations and initiatives from the regional leadership. This situation reflects a shift from bureaucratic governance to a developing collaborative model. The Regent highlighted that poverty issues require a collective approach but admitted that "poverty cannot be solved with a single program, let alone the work of a single agency. It must be through a collaborative approach" (Sachrul Mamonto, personal communication, 2025). Therefore, the pentahelix structure in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency is an ongoing social and administrative system, evolving from a hierarchy into an adaptive network based on social relations and the learning capacity of involved actors.

The local government has a leading role as the agenda-setter and coordinator. The Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) acts as the technocratic center, making sure cross-sector planning is coordinated, while the Social Services Agency and other regional government agencies (OPD) carry out sector-specific programs. Fiscal constraints compel the government to seek support from other parties, but the control remains firmly with the bureaucracy. The Head of Bappeda explained that his agency's role is to "harmonize all regional apparatus" and clarified that development involves not just creating plans but also "translating plans into concrete actions" (Jemes Kinontoa, personal communication, 2025). Still, government dominance is clear in decision-making. The Regent pointed out that formal meetings are not always effective, highlighting the need for informal channels to respond quickly, saying "formal forums are often not optimal... informal networks are actually more mobile" (Sachrul Mamonto, personal communication, 2025). This dominance is not authoritarian but paternalistic—a collaborative approach influenced by local culture, where communities and other sectors see the government as the patron of social legitimacy.

The private sector in Boltim is mainly represented by mining companies and regional financial institutions. Their engagement focuses on CSR, MSME support, financial literacy, basic infrastructure aid, and skills training. While visible contributions exist, their approach combines philanthropy and productive economic development. A mining company director dismisses the ceremonial narrative, stressing that CSR is not just about "handing out packages," but about building capacity and access to community businesses (Arif Perdanakusuma, personal communication, 2025). However, he also notes that coordination

depends on close social ties rather than solely institutional mechanisms. Regional banks are enhancing support through financial literacy programs, student savings, and micro-capital access. The branch manager of Bank SolutGo highlighted that "banks are partners in economic life," emphasizing the bank's role in fostering a savings culture and supporting small businesses (Aswin Papatungan, personal communication, 2025). Still, access to credit remains limited for some small business owners due to administrative eligibility issues. The private sector in Boltim has significant potential, but contributions are still uncoordinated within a long-term policy framework.

Civil society organizations contribute a social justice perspective, but their structural capacity remains limited. They serve as community mobilizers, advocates for essential services, and facilitators of activities based on mutual cooperation. However, their bargaining power in formal decision-making platforms is often unbalanced. Community leaders noted that collaboration is ongoing, but "there are many meetings, there are programs, but the results are not yet felt... collaboration with the private sector, academics, and the media has not really been felt in the village" (Samsudin Dama, personal communication, 2025). Another leader emphasized that residents' aspirations are more frequently expressed through social mechanisms than formal forums, citing informal discussions on porches as effective venues for building understanding (Awaludin Umbola, personal communication, 2025). This indicates that while community social capacity is strong, participatory institutional structures have yet to fully incorporate citizens' critical voices into the policy process. The role of academics within the pentahelix framework is often episodic, mostly used for technical studies rather than as long-term, reflective partners. One local academic described this trend: "We were asked for an analysis, but after it was submitted, there was no follow-up" (Yusril Damapolii, personal communication, 2025). Nevertheless, the emotional and social relationship between academics and the government remains relatively positive. Academics see Boltim as a "learning region in progress," recognizing the government's openness to critique and reflection (Yusril Damapolii, personal communication, 2025). There is a chance to enhance academics' role as guardians of quality, evidence-based policies, but a more systemic collaborative mechanism is necessary to ensure this role extends beyond mere consultation.

Local media serves a dual role as both a watchdog and a partner in spreading policy information. However, the media's relationship with the government and private sector is delicate because of its reliance on financial support. Although this study did not include direct quotes from journalists, other stakeholders frequently mentioned the media's role as a conduit for information and as a cautious public watchdog. The local government itself views the media as a communication link with the community, and the Regent often mentioned involving the media in social discussions and the development of public narratives (Sachrul Mamonto, personal communication, 2025). Therefore, the media makes a significant contribution, but full editorial independence has not yet been firmly established within the institutional ecosystem.

Compared to the theoretical pentahelix framework, a clear deviation in structure and function is visible. In the ideal model, the government acts as a regulator and facilitator,

the private sector as an economic driver, academia as a knowledge producer, civil society as a protector of social interests, and the media as a defender of transparency. However, the reality in Boltim shows that the government remains the main force, with other sectors adjusting to the rhythm and agenda set by local authorities. Social trust serves as the primary glue, not formal institutional arrangements. The cultural aspect enhances social cohesion, as evidenced by a traditional leader's statement that "when the bureaucratic system faltered, custom became the anchor" (Abdul Kader, personal communication, 2025). Family values and social solidarity eased the institutional vacuum after the dissolution of the TKPKD before a new system was put in place.

Despite power imbalances, the pentahelix ecosystem in Boltim shows positive dynamics. Youth are a source of ideas, driving creativity, and leading the digitalization of the village economy. One youth figure stated that youth are "idea engines" who need space to make mistakes, learn, and be trusted (Rusmin Mamonto, personal communication, 2025). Strong youth involvement is a strategic asset for the long-term transformation of local governance. The potential for a talent-based economy at the village level is emerging through coffee businesses, digital printing, creative content, and local MSMEs.

In practice, the pentahelix structure in Boltim resembles a hybrid network rather than an ideal symmetry. The system works not because formal instruments are fully effective, but because social relations, moral legitimacy, and cultural values support the process. The government opens up space for deliberation through informal channels, the private sector adapts to public expectations, civil society acts as a moral guide, academics act as conceptual advisors, and the media serves as a channel for collective narratives. The advantages of this approach are adaptive flexibility and social resilience. However, the risks lie in reliance on figures, personal relationships, and the lack of standardized, institutionally sustainable collaboration mechanisms.

The implementation of the pentahelix model in collaborative poverty alleviation in Boltim is still in a transitional phase. Collaborative capacity is beginning to develop, accompanied by actors' awareness that poverty is a multidimensional issue that requires a participatory and reflective approach. However, institutional strengthening, the establishment of joint mechanisms, and increased capacity of non-governmental actors are needed to create more equitable collaborative relationships. Going forward, the consolidation of a more balanced pentahelix structure can be achieved if the government facilitates regular, substantive policy forums, the private sector shifts its CSR approach toward sustainable empowerment, academia is involved in the whole policy cycle, the media is given space to become independent, and civil society's advocacy capacity is strengthened. A strong social foundation is in place, and the challenge ahead is to transform this social capital into a systematic, sustainability-oriented, and social justice-based collaborative design.

DISCUSSION

Institutional Void and Transitional Disarray

After the enactment of Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024, which officially dissolved the Regional Poverty Reduction Coordination Teams (Tim Koordinasi Penanggulangan Kemiskinan Daerah, TKPKD), the district of Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) faced a significant institutional vacuum. For more than 7 months, no formal coordination forum had been held, even though Rp 2.4 billion had already been allocated in the regional budget for poverty alleviation programs. This situation reflects more than just administrative stagnation; it highlights a deeper collective disorientation among actor networks that had long depended on formal institutions to facilitate and maintain collaboration (Söderlund & Borg, 2018).

This phenomenon aligns with Gultom and Hosein's (2024) concept of regulatory transitions under institutional uncertainty—a situation in which newly implemented regulations lack adequate operational frameworks, leading to functional ambiguity and role confusion within subnational governance structures. In the case of BolTim, the sudden regulatory change, without any transitional protocol, caused the suspension of cross-sector decision-making. Not only were local government actors confused, but non-state stakeholders—NGOs, academics, and journalists—also became uncertain about 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 has immediate and destabilizing effects on governance networks. When a key organizational “node”—such as a coordination body—is suddenly removed, the entire collaborative ecosystem is thrown into jeopardy. Actor interactions, they suggest, are inherently reliant on formal institutions that act as connectors, legitimizers, and sources of strategic guidance. In BolTim, this institutional rupture not only eliminated intersectoral meetings but also erased any consensus about who now has the authority to perform coordinating functions following the TKPKD's dissolution.

The consequences of this institutional void can also be understood through the framework proposed by Popli, Raithatha, and Fuad (2021), who note that sudden regulatory changes often lead to sharp declines in institutional performance. When structural arrangements are dismantled without clear successors, organizations tend to experience an institutional freeze. In this state, resources remain available but cannot be mobilized due to legal and procedural uncertainties. In the context of BolTim, such paralysis has led to program stagnation, frustration among technical staff, and a noticeable erosion of trust from external actors regarding the government's commitment to collaborative poverty reduction (Gilardi, 2006).

Beyond bureaucratic inertia, the situation in BolTim captures a state of liminality in public governance—an in-between phase connecting a broken institutional order to a still-developing one. As Glas and Martel (2024) suggest, such liminal states often involve role crises and the breakdown of institutional value systems. Both public servants and civil society partners found themselves in uncertain positions—no longer tied to familiar norms, but not yet with new procedural paths. In these cases, boundary work—the negotiation and

definition of institutional roles—becomes unclear, and accountability mechanisms across the system weaken.

However, the institutional vacuum was not completely unaddressed. Instead, it prompted informal responses that can be described as acts of institutional bricolage. Local actors began transforming MusrenbangDes (village-level development forums) into makeshift platforms for discussing poverty-related issues. They involved local media and activists through informal channels such as WhatsApp groups. This aligns with the findings of Frick-Trzebitzky, Pahl-Wostl, and Hinkel (2023), who state that in the Global South, adaptive governance often develops through bricolage—the creative recombination of available institutional elements to fill gaps left by absent or ineffective formal mechanisms.

Furthermore, Suresh, D'Souza, and Nyaga (2024) argue that in such structurally ambiguous environments, local actors often create improvised coordination systems that, although lacking formal legality, still perform vital governance functions—such as data collection, cross-sector communication, and collective decision-making. The implications are significant: collaboration does not necessarily rely on formal structures but rather on the social capacity of local institutions to adapt, reconfigure, and operate in conditions of policy uncertainty.

Therefore, the findings indicate that collaborative poverty governance in BolTim did not completely collapse but entered a critical transition phase marked by the absence of formal structures and the rise of informal initiatives as adaptive responses. However, the longevity of these improvised arrangements remains uncertain without support from the central government and a legal framework that defines the roles of the new institutional setups. Thus, the success of collaborative governance during institutional changes depends on clear regulations and the government's willingness to create participatory spaces for local actors to influence the development of the new governance system.

Symbolic Participation and the Illusion of Inclusivity

On paper, BolTim's collaborative governance framework nominally recognized the five helices—government, private sector, academia, civil society, and media—as equal partners. However, an examination of meeting minutes, attendance records, and field observations reveals a striking pattern: most non-governmental actors simply signed the register, took photos, and quickly left the forum without engaging in meaningful policy discussions (Xu et al., 2022). This pattern aligns with what Hickey and du Toit (2013) call 'adverse incorporation'—a form of procedural inclusion that paradoxically enforces substantive exclusion, where the views and bargaining power of non-bureaucratic actors are never truly addressed.

Popli, Raithatha, and Fuad (2021) have shown that sudden regulatory changes—such as India's economic liberalization—often lead to a decline in performance within institutions where old normative structures are dismantled before new ones are fully in place. A similar pattern appears in BolTim. After the dissolution of the TKPKD, local authorities sought to maintain a sense of collaborative governance by continuing to invite representatives from all levels. However, without an operational replacement framework (i.e., BPPK), the deliberative

space shrank into a one-way ceremonial reporting session. This shows how symbolic inclusion often serves as a superficial fix, masking legitimacy issues stemming from institutional disconnection (Gultom & Hosein, 2024).

The paralysis of substantive discussion is further worsened by the dynamics of liminality—a transitional zone where 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 negotiations for fear of mistakes, while private and media actors adopt a low-profile stance to avoid reputational risk. Instead of encouraging co-creation, the forum turns into a ritualized compliance arena—focusing on ticking the participatory checklist while silencing critical engagement.

Ironically, it is within this liminal space that participatory bricolage arises outside formal structures. Several NGOs and academics began thematic online discussions on rural poverty via WhatsApp channels, later turning their policy suggestions into independently written briefs. Frick-Trzebitzky, Pahl-Wostl, and Hinkel (2023) emphasize that institutional bricolage frequently serves as an adaptive response to gaps in formal systems—a way for communities to "patch" inclusivity deficits by utilizing more flexible informal mechanisms. Suresh, D'Souza, and Nyaga (2024) also argue that unstructured practices, when given little political recognition, can lead to true innovations in coordination.

However, in BolTim, these bricolage efforts remain disconnected from the mainstream policy process. Without an interface that connects formal and informal spheres, alternative ideas risk marginalization—even as official forums still carry the label of "inclusion." Rothman, Yates, and van Hees (2023) warn that governance networks become more fragile when sudden change is not supported by mechanisms to absorb critical feedback; such networks are likely to break apart when weak nodes are treated as purely decorative.

Therefore, symbolic participation in BolTim is not just a procedural anomaly but a structural result of regulatory discontinuity. To move beyond this illusion of inclusion, several institutional innovations are necessary: (1) creating designated deliberative slots in every meeting—specific times when non-governmental actors can present independent analysis and recommendations; (2) implementing a response matrix requirement, ensuring every input receives a formal written reply from the secretariat; and (3) formally recognizing online bricolage forums as supplementary decision-making channels. Without such mechanisms, collaboration risks remaining trapped in tokenism: inclusion is noted, but meaningful voices are systematically ignored.

Data Fragmentation and Policy Blind Spots

One of the most significant challenges in implementing collaborative governance for poverty alleviation in Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) is the lack of cross-sectoral data integration. The Social Affairs Office, the Health Office, and the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda)—the main administrative bodies overseeing poverty programs—each run independent information systems. These systems are based on non-synchronized databases, use different recording methods, and lack a shared real-time data exchange

platform (Manara & Pani, 2023). As a result, cross-sectoral planning rarely relies on shared, verifiable evidence; instead, it often depends on assumptions, unilateral perceptions, or pressure from local political elites. This situation reflects what Zhang et al. (2020) call data-deficient collaboration, where strategic efforts fail due to missing or incompatible information among actors who are supposed to work together.

This condition worsens due to the lack of both technical and institutional interoperability. Technically, there is no unified digital infrastructure. Institutionally, no agreed-upon data-sharing protocols are in place. Each agency tends to keep its datasets within administrative boundaries, making them inaccessible to other stakeholders—including those from non-governmental sectors who are supposed to participate in planning and oversight. As a result, they not only misidentify target beneficiaries but also weaken public accountability mechanisms significantly. The inability to transparently link program inputs with outcomes and impacts undermines effective evaluative governance.

These conditions echo the analysis of Gultom and Hosein (2024), who describe such situations as regulatory transitions lacking data readiness. In BolTim's case, the abolition of TKPKD and its sudden replacement with the BPPK—without any operational guidelines—was not supported by a corresponding update or alignment of data systems. As a result, local actors lack a dependable information-based navigation tool, and deliberative forums have become mere ceremonial events devoid of analytical effectiveness. Rothman, Yates, and van Hees (2023) also emphasize that sudden institutional change, if not preceded by system development, often weakens governance networks, including their capacity to handle cross-sectoral data efficiently.

In practice, this vacuum creates what can be called policy blind spots—areas of social need that go unrecognized due to outdated, unverified, or untransformed data that fails to inform evidence-based policymaking. Popli et al. (2021) argue that institutional performance failures following sudden regulatory changes are often triggered by a failure to synchronize data systems, which should ideally serve as the backbone of coordination. This also helps explain why multi-actor planning meetings in BolTim consistently struggle to develop effective intersectoral strategies. No shared policy dashboard can offer a complete, up-to-date view of local realities.

In a related study, Glas and Martel (2024) describe the stages of liminality in transitional bureaucracies, where ambiguity about roles and authority is worsened by information uncertainty, leading to collective dysfunction. This accurately reflects the situation in BolTim after the enactment of Perpres 163/2024, where the lack of BPPK operational guidelines has not only caused structural confusion but also triggered an epistemic breakdown—raising unresolved questions about who controls what data, who is responsible for data synchronization, and who can legitimately access such information for public interest purposes.

Building on the work of Suresh, D'Souza, and Nyaga (2024), this scenario can be seen as a situation where local actors are forced to govern without a formal structure, relying on temporary informational bricolage. This includes dependence on manual records, Excel spreadsheets, or informal communication tools like WhatsApp for inter-agency data sharing.

While such improvisation may show adaptive resilience, it also risks reinforcing governance inequalities over time, as it relies heavily on individual skills and informal social networks rather than on institutionalized, auditable systems.

Therefore, establishing an interoperable governance dashboard is an urgent recommendation. Such a system must enable real-time data exchange among agencies, based on mutually agreed security and validation protocols. Additionally, it should allow non-state actors to independently monitor and analyze governance processes. Besides strengthening multi-helix collaboration, such a system is a crucial prerequisite for a shift toward adaptive governance, where policy responses are not only timely but also accurate, purposeful, and accountable (Frick-Trzebitzky et al., 2023).

Institutional Bricolage and Improvised Pentahelix

In response to the gap left by the dissolution of the District Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD) under Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024, development actors in Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) did not stay inactive. Without operational guidance from the central government on setting up the new Poverty Alleviation Acceleration Agency (BPPK), various stakeholders—including village authorities, community leaders, local academics, and journalists—began creating local solutions to address governance paralysis. The most notable was the strategic reorganization of the Village Development Planning Forum (Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa, or MusrenbangDes). Initially designed as a village-level planning mechanism, MusrenbangDes was unofficially transformed into a cross-sector coordination space, making poverty alleviation a key focus (May, 2003).

This phenomenon closely relates to the concept of institutional bricolage, as described by Frick-Trzebitzky, Pahl-Wostl, and Hinkel (2023). It refers to the adaptive reconfiguration of institutional arrangements based on available resources and structures rather than waiting for top-down reform. In BolTim's case, bricolage involved informal invitations to media actors via WhatsApp, the development of action plans based on existing program data, and the engagement of university lecturers in community discussions convened without district-level facilitation. These practices show that a 'frozen' institutional structure from above can be 'repopulated' from below through collaborative routines rooted in social ties and collective awareness.

Although improvised and inherently vulnerable to fragmentation, this form of bricolage demonstrates the adaptive capacity of local communities to govern amid structural disarray. Suresh, D'Souza, and Nyaga (2024) note that, during regulatory transitions, many communities in the Global South can "govern without structure" by functionally reassembling institutional roles outside formal frameworks. This was evident in BolTim, where village officials, local scholars, and media representatives effectively took on roles meant for BPPK, showing that the idealized pentahelix setup could be carried out through flexible institutional improvisation.

These dynamics further require a re-evaluation of the pentahelix model itself. Under typical conditions, the five helices—government, business, academia, civil society,

and media—are expected to interact in a coordinated and structured manner. However, faced with regulatory uncertainty, this setup became more flexible and adaptable. Field findings showed a core group of three—village government, local entrepreneurs, and academic actors—while civil society and the media acted as informal monitors and discussion facilitators. This setup reflects what Glas and Martel (2024) describe as role negotiation in liminal settings, where actors must renegotiate their roles and functions within a legally undefined space.

The strength of bricolage, therefore, lies in its ability to navigate uncertainty with agility. In the absence of formal standard operating procedures for the BPPK, faith-based groups, women’s collectives, and youth organizations offered alternative ways to share information and respond to impoverished households. The practical takeaway is that these makeshift collaborative forms, although not perfect, should not be overlooked. In fact, their very imperfections highlight the resilience of local governance systems working under conditions of institutional ambiguity and resource scarcity (Zhu et al., 2024).

However, this approach involves certain risks. Relying on informal relationships and lacking formal accountability mechanisms can lead to silent exclusion or the strengthening of local elites. Rothman, Yates, and van Hees (2023) warn that rapid institutional change without clear authority often results in fragile governance networks that depend heavily on the personal involvement of key individuals. Over time, such systems are vulnerable to political shifts, leadership changes, or the loss of essential resources.

Thus, the experience of BolTim illustrates more than a creative local workaround; it highlights the importance of bricolage as a survival strategy within the larger framework of collaborative governance. When large institutional plans are disrupted, localized, modular, and adaptable efforts must be recognized as legitimate forms of meaningful, context-specific governance. Therefore, the transitional phase need not be seen as paralysis; instead, it can serve as a fertile ground for institutional experimentation that might, over time, develop into a more responsive and officially recognized structure.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The legal discontinuity caused by Presidential Regulation No. 163/2024 exposes a significant gap in the theory of Collaborative Governance (CG) that is often overlooked: specifically, that collaborative networks are vulnerable not only to uneven distribution of resources but also, more fundamentally, to the lack of effective legal transition planning. The institutional void left by the dissolution of the TKPKD left Boltim’s collaborative framework in a state of liminal governance—a transitional phase in which roles, authority, and shared norms break down before a new system is established. In this absence, the five core CG elements—face-to-face dialogue, trust building, procedural commitment, shared understanding, and intermediate outcomes—lost their operational platform or institutional foundation.

This study confirms that institutional bricolage is much more than occasional improvisation; it operates as a form of survival governance—maintaining essential information flows and decision-making continuity when formal structures break down.

Therefore, the variables of legal continuity and bricolage capacity should be considered core initial conditions in CG frameworks, alongside more established factors such as relational history and incentive distribution (Hariyoko et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, this research shows that the breakdown of formal structures pushes the Pentahelix to become more modular. In Boltim, a core triad—made up of village governments, local businesses, and academic actors—took on important coordination roles. Civil society organizations and local media, meanwhile, acted as watchdogs for transparency and amplifiers of discussion. This new setup was only possible because of what can be called data bricolage—the combination of manual spreadsheets, WhatsApp groups, and village-level development forums (MusrenbangDes) to fill the gaps caused by scattered cross-agency information systems.

In the absence of a unified data-sharing dashboard, collaborative efforts relied on interpersonal trust and informal social networks to validate beneficiary targeting, monitor outputs, and negotiate swift interventions. These findings indicate that in volatile regulatory environments, it is not structural order but flexible adaptability—the ability of networks to shift between formal and informal structures—that best indicates collaborative resilience. The organization’s neatness, while beneficial, is ultimately less important.

Practically, the implications of this study revolve around three main strategic areas. First, the national government must require that any institutional reform include a formal transition protocol—containing a timeline, an ad hoc coordination team, and mapped flows of authority—to prevent subnational actors from becoming stuck in institutional paralysis. Second, district-level governments should issue a decree (SK) creating a transitional cross-agency task force—made up of private-sector, academic, NGO, and media representatives—to act as a bridge until BPPK structures are fully in place. This team should also function as a clearinghouse for poverty data, built on an open API infrastructure to ensure that evidence remains accessible and shareable.

Third, to break the ongoing cycle of symbolic participation, every collaborative forum should allocate at least 20 percent of deliberative space exclusively for non-governmental actors, supported by a written response matrix that guarantees each input receives formal feedback within two working weeks. Together, the combined implementation of a transition protocol, a bridging node, and a shared evidence dashboard provides a practical roadmap for rebuilding trust, improving network flexibility, and institutionalizing the forms of social improvisation developed during crisis periods into more accountable and adaptable governance practices.

CONCLUSION

This study uncovers a significant disruption in the formal collaborative framework for poverty governance in Bolaang Mongondow Timur (BolTim) following the implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 163 of 2024. The policy abolished the Regional Coordination Team for Poverty Alleviation (TKPKD) without providing immediate technical guidance for its replacement, the Poverty Alleviation Acceleration Agency (BPPK). This regulatory gap led to the suspension of multi-actor coordination forums for several

months and made poverty programs and budgets inoperative. This situation shows that collaboration cannot exist without regulatory certainty. From a governance theory perspective, this case highlights the essential role of regulatory continuity as the foundation for ongoing cross-sector collaboration; the absence of formal structures with clear procedures risks confusion and coordination failures at the local level.

Simultaneously, the study shows that inclusivity in collaboration is not just about who is invited, but whether the voices and abilities of non-governmental actors—especially those from the private sector, media, and civil society—are genuinely included in planning and decision-making processes. In BolTim, participation from these sectors has been mostly symbolic: included in attendance lists and official records, yet absent from meaningful discussions. This gap underscores how, in practice, administratively inclusive collaborations can mask real exclusion. In other words, procedural participation without true engagement weakens checks and balances in collaborative efforts.

Furthermore, the research finds that the lack of a shared inter-agency database significantly weakens collaboration effectiveness. When data from the Social Affairs Office, the Health Office, and the Development Planning Board (Bappeda) remains fragmented and unintegrated, coordination forums lack a common analytical foundation for policy prioritization. Without evidence-based planning, strategic decisions become vulnerable to short-term political biases and fail to address communities' real needs. This data fragmentation not only hampers planning but also undermines the evaluation system and public accountability. The findings reinforce an expanding body of international literature that highlights data interoperability as a key element for successful multi-sector collaboration, especially in complex issues such as poverty, which require integrated, multi-level responses.

Despite the institutional void, local actors in BolTim did not stay passive. They engaged in institutional bricolage—a form of organizational improvisation—by transforming village planning forums into makeshift coordination spaces and reactivating communication through informal channels like WhatsApp groups. This strategy shows that in liminal situations, when formal institutions weaken, social flexibility and local knowledge can sustain cooperation. These improvisational approaches represent a type of adaptive governance that relies less on bureaucratic structures and more on social networks, personal credibility, and intersectoral trust. Though imperfect, these practices demonstrate that hybrid collaboration models can persist as long as there is a shared commitment to solving problems.

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 prioritize the development of an integrated data system that ensures inter-agency interoperability and transparent access across all five helices. Strengthening this data architecture is essential for planning, evaluation, and

accountability in poverty alleviation programs. 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 organizations 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 resource asymmetries and dominant actors are not the only threats to collaboration; regulatory disruptions and institutional vacuums can also 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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