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## Social Network Analysis on Program Convergence to Alleviate Poverty

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### Abstract

This study shows that the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs is strongly shaped by the structure of governance networks. The findings indicate that a highly centralized network, while improving administrative coordination, produces governance asymmetry, limits horizontal collaboration, and constrains the participation of peripheral actors. Low network density further weakens program convergence, making it largely procedural rather than outcome-oriented. Theoretically, this study contributes by integrating Social Network Analysis (SNA) with collaborative governance, demonstrating that network inequality and governance asymmetry are key factors influencing policy effectiveness. This challenges the assumption that coordination alone is sufficient, highlighting instead the importance of network structure in shaping inclusivity and resource distribution. From a policy perspective, short-term priorities should focus on improving data integration, strengthening cross-agency coordination through SOPs, and developing integrated referral systems. Long-term strategies should aim to reduce over-centralization, strengthen horizontal collaboration, and enhance community participation as active actors in governance processes. This study is limited by its single-case design and qualitative interpretation of network data. Future research should apply mixed-method approaches and comparative analysis across regions to further examine how network structures influence policy outcomes.

**Keywords:** Social network analysis, poverty alleviation, collaborative governance, network centralization, governance asymmetry

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas program pengentasan kemiskinan sangat dipengaruhi oleh struktur jaringan tata kelola. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa jaringan yang sangat tersentralisasi, meskipun meningkatkan koordinasi administratif, justru menghasilkan asimetri tata kelola, membatasi kolaborasi horizontal, dan menghambat partisipasi aktor perifer. Rendahnya kepadatan jaringan semakin melemahkan konvergensi program, sehingga implementasinya cenderung bersifat prosedural daripada berorientasi pada hasil. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berkontribusi dengan mengintegrasikan Analisis Jaringan Sosial (SNA) dan tata kelola kolaboratif, yang menunjukkan bahwa ketimpangan jaringan dan asimetri tata kelola merupakan faktor kunci yang memengaruhi efektivitas kebijakan. Temuan ini menantang asumsi bahwa koordinasi semata sudah cukup, serta menegaskan pentingnya struktur jaringan dalam menentukan inklusivitas dan distribusi sumber daya. Dari perspektif kebijakan, prioritas jangka pendek difokuskan pada peningkatan integrasi data, penguatan koordinasi lintas instansi melalui SOP, serta pengembangan sistem

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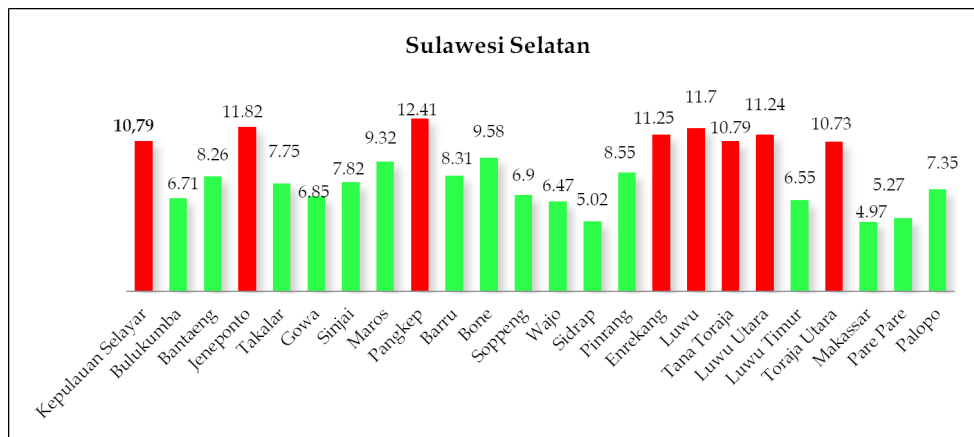


*rujukan terintegrasi. Sementara itu, strategi jangka panjang diarahkan pada pengurangan sentralisasi yang berlebihan, penguatan kolaborasi horizontal, dan peningkatan partisipasi masyarakat sebagai aktor aktif dalam proses tata kelola. Penelitian ini memiliki keterbatasan pada penggunaan desain studi kasus tunggal dan pendekatan kualitatif dalam interpretasi data jaringan. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran serta analisis komparatif antar wilayah untuk mengkaji lebih lanjut pengaruh struktur jaringan terhadap hasil kebijakan.*

**Kata Kunci:** Analisis jaringan sosial, pengentasan kemiskinan, tata kelola kolaboratif, sentralisasi jaringan, asimetri tata kelola

## INTRODUCTION

The problem of poverty remains a central issue in public administration and development studies globally, as it directly affects human welfare, economic productivity, and social stability (Zhong et al., 2024); (Tang et al., 2023). Globally, approximately 8.5 percent of the population nearly 700 million people still live in poverty, particularly in developing regions across Asia and Africa. In Indonesia, national statistics indicate that 25.22 million people were living below the poverty line in 2024 (BPS Republik Indonesia, 2024). At the subnational level, Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency in South Sulawesi represents a critical case, with poverty rates exceeding 10 percent and persistent structural challenges in poverty reduction (BPS South Sulawesi, 2024)..



**Figure 1. National Index (BPS South Sulawesi)**  
**Source: BPS South Sulawesi, 2024**

Despite extensive policy interventions, including national programs such as PKH, BPNT, BLT, and sectoral development initiatives, poverty indicators in Pangkep exhibit fluctuating and even worsening trends. The poverty depth index (P1) increased from 1.81 in 2019 to

2.15 in 2023, while the poverty severity index (P2) rose from 0.31 to 0.50 in the same period (BPS Pangkep, 2025). These patterns suggest that existing policy interventions have not effectively addressed structural inequalities, particularly in terms of access to resources and participation in development programs.

Government responses have emphasized program convergence through national and regional policy frameworks, including the National Medium-Term Development Plan (2025–2029) and local planning instruments such as RPJMD and RKPD. These frameworks aim to integrate multi-sectoral efforts to reduce poverty and inequality (Pangkep Research and Development Agency, 2021; Pangkep Regency Government, 2023). However, the persistence of fragmented implementation, weak inter-agency coordination, and limited community inclusion indicates that convergence remains largely administrative rather than relational or network-based.

Existing studies on poverty alleviation and collaborative governance have highlighted the importance of multi-actor coordination and policy integration. Social Network Analysis (SNA) has been widely used to map relationships between actors and identify structural positions within governance networks (Jeong et al., 2024; Luqman et al., 2017; (Neves et al., 2024). However, prior research tends to focus on descriptive mapping of networks or general collaboration patterns, with limited attention to how network structures produce governance inequalities, particularly at the local level. There is a lack of empirical studies that explicitly examine how centralization, actor dominance, and peripheral exclusion shape policy effectiveness and access to resources within poverty alleviation networks. This gap is especially evident in developing country contexts, where governance capacity and data integration remain uneven (Benedetti & Crescenzi, 2023a; Cartone et al., 2024).

In this context, the key problem is not merely the existence of collaborative networks, but the unequal structure of those networks, which may reproduce governance asymmetry and limit the participation of target groups, particularly poor communities. The dominance of central actors and the marginalization of peripheral actors raise critical questions about whether program convergence truly leads to inclusive and effective policy outcomes, as unequal network structures often shape access to resources and decision-making processes (Jeong et al., 2024; Luqman et al., 2017; (Neves et al., 2024) .

To address this issue, this study employs Social Network Analysis (SNA) as an analytical framework to examine the structure of intersectoral collaboration in poverty alleviation programs (Mustari et al., 2024; (Wungo et al., 2024). SNA enables the identification of key actors, the measurement of network centrality, and the analysis of resource flows and communication patterns within governance systems (Benedetti & Crescenzi, 2023; Cartone et al., 2024).

This study contributes to the literature in three significant ways. First, it advances SNA applications in public policy by moving beyond descriptive network mapping toward an analysis

of network inequality and governance asymmetry. Second, it provides empirical evidence from a local governance context, demonstrating how centralized network structures can constrain program convergence and limit equitable access to resources. Third, it offers a governance-oriented perspective by linking network structure to policy effectiveness, thereby enriching the theoretical intersection between collaborative governance and network theory (Abdillah et al., 2022).

Accordingly, this research focuses on three main aspects: (1) the structure of collaborative networks in poverty alleviation, (2) the dynamics of program convergence within the network, and (3) the implications of network structure for accessibility, participation, and policy effectiveness in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Poverty reduction has long been recognized as a multidimensional governance challenge that requires integrated institutional responses across sectors (Tang et al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2024). Existing studies consistently highlight that poverty is not merely an economic issue but also a structural governance problem shaped by inequality in access to resources, services, and decision-making processes (Benedetti & Crescenzi, 2023a). However, despite extensive policy interventions, many poverty alleviation programs remain fragmented, reflecting sectoral silos and weak coordination across institutions.

Recent scholarship emphasizes that traditional top-down approaches often fail to address structural inequalities due to limited participation and weak inter-organizational collaboration (Cintiara et al., 2025). While these studies underline the importance of integration, they often overlook how governance structures themselves shape the distribution of power and access within policy networks. This indicates a theoretical limitation in explaining how institutional arrangements influence policy effectiveness beyond formal coordination mechanisms.

The concept of program convergence has emerged as a strategic response to fragmentation in poverty alleviation policies. Convergence refers to the alignment of actors, resources, and objectives across sectors to achieve shared policy outcomes (Neves, Burlandy, & Medeiros, 2024). In practice, convergence is closely linked to collaborative governance, which emphasizes joint decision-making, shared responsibility, and cross-sector coordination (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012).

However, empirical studies show mixed results. While convergence can improve policy coherence, its effectiveness is highly dependent on institutional capacity, trust among actors, and the inclusivity of governance processes (Luqman et al., 2017). In many developing contexts, convergence remains procedural rather than substantive, as coordination is often dominated by central government actors with limited engagement of local communities.

This suggests that convergence alone does not guarantee effective collaboration, particularly when underlying governance structures are unequal or exclusionary. Social Network Analysis (SNA) has been widely used to examine the structure of relationships within governance systems. SNA provides tools to analyze how actors are connected, how resources flow, and how influence is distributed within networks (Jeong et al., 2024). Key metrics in SNA include:

1. Centrality: the extent to which an actor occupies a dominant or influential position within the network
2. Density: the level of interconnectedness among actors
3. Network centralization: the degree to which the network is dominated by a few central actors
4. Inclusivity: the extent to which peripheral actors are integrated into decision-making processes

These indicators are critical for understanding whether governance networks are collaborative or hierarchical in practice. Studies by Mustari et al., (2024) and Wungo et al., (2024) demonstrate that actor positioning significantly influences policy coordination and implementation outcomes.

However, most SNA applications in public policy remain descriptive, focusing on mapping relationships rather than explaining how network structures produce governance outcomes such as inequality, exclusion, or policy failure.

Recent developments in network governance theory suggest that the effectiveness of collaboration is shaped not only by the presence of networks but also by their structural configuration (Ruijter et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). Highly centralized networks tend to concentrate power in a few actors, potentially leading to governance asymmetry, where decision-making and resource control are unevenly distributed.

Empirical evidence indicates that such asymmetry can limit the participation of peripheral actors, including marginalized communities, thereby reducing the inclusivity and effectiveness of policy interventions (Rahman et al., 2024). Similarly, fragmented data systems and low institutional capacity further reinforce network inequality by restricting information flows and coordination (Zhao et al., 2025).

Despite these insights, there is still limited integration between SNA and collaborative governance theory in explaining how network structures influence policy convergence and inclusivity at the local level.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative case study approach combined with Social Network Analysis (SNA) to examine the structure of intersectoral collaboration in poverty alleviation programs in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency. This approach is appropriate for capturing complex governance interactions while enabling structural analysis of relationships among actors.

### **Sampling and Informants**

Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement and relevance in poverty alleviation programs. The study involved 15 key informants representing multiple stakeholders, including:

- (1) local government agencies (Bappelitbangda, Social Affairs Office, Village Government),
- (2) program implementers, and
- (3) community representatives.

Selection criteria included: (a) direct involvement in program implementation or coordination, (b) knowledge of inter-agency collaboration, and (c) experience with poverty-related policies.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through three main techniques:

- (1) In-depth interviews using semi-structured interview guides focusing on collaboration patterns, coordination mechanisms, and resource flows among actors.
- (2) Document analysis, including policy documents (RPJMD, RKPD), program reports, and official records.
- (3) Observation, to capture interaction patterns and institutional practices in program implementation.
- (4) To ensure data validity, triangulation was conducted by cross-checking information across these sources.

### **Network Data Construction and SNA Operationalization**

Network data were constructed by identifying relationships among actors based on three types of interactions:

- (1) coordination,

- (2) information exchange, and
- (3) resource sharing.

These relationships were coded into an adjacency matrix, where the presence or absence of ties between actors was recorded. The network was then analyzed using Social Network Analysis to examine structural properties. The analysis focuses on the following SNA indicators:

- ü Degree centrality: to identify dominant actors with the highest number of connections
- ü Betweenness centrality: to assess actors that function as intermediaries or brokers
- ü Network density: to measure the level of interconnectedness among actors
- ü Network centralization: to evaluate the concentration of power within the network
- ü Network analysis was conducted using software such as UCINET/Gephi to visualize and calculate network metrics.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted in two stages. First, SNA was used to quantify and visualize the structure of the collaboration network. Second, qualitative analysis was performed using thematic coding (open, axial, and selective coding) to interpret governance dynamics, particularly in terms of coordination, participation, and inclusivity.

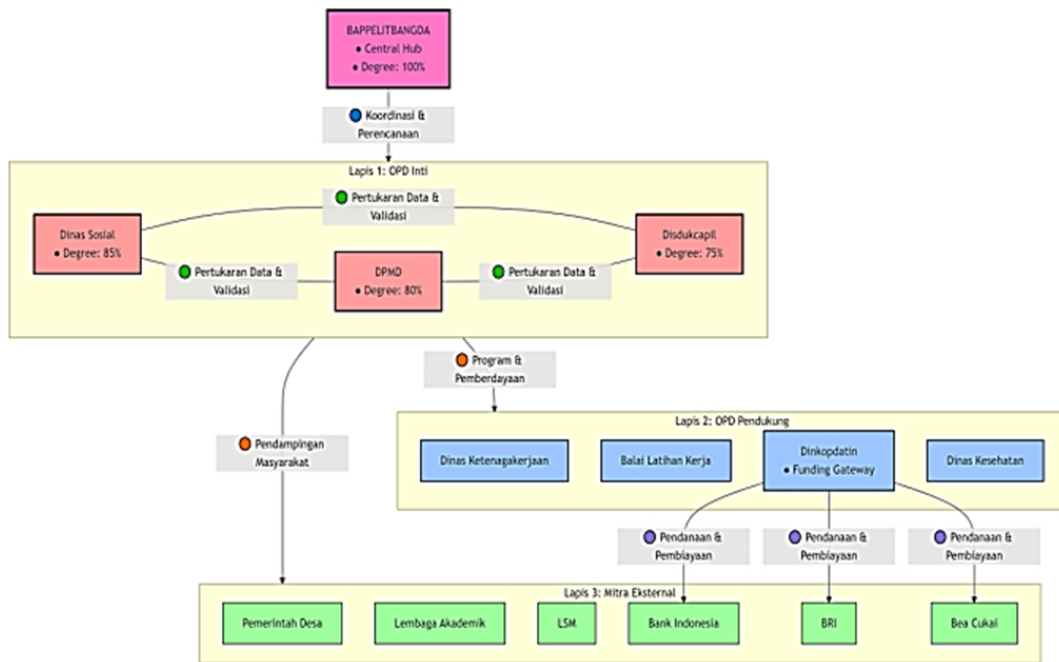
The integration of SNA and qualitative analysis allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how network structures influence governance processes and policy outcomes.

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, the use of purposive sampling may limit generalizability beyond the case study context. Second, network data are based on reported relationships, which may be subject to respondent bias. Third, the cross-sectional design captures network structure at a single point in time and does not fully reflect dynamic changes over time..

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Network Structure and Centralization of Actors**

The findings reveal that the poverty alleviation network in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency is characterized by a highly centralized structure, with Bappelitbangda acting as the dominant actor in coordinating programs and managing resource flows, as illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Structure of Poverty Alleviation Governance Network in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency**  
 Source: Researcher Processing

This is indicated by its highest degree centrality, reflecting its extensive connections with other actors in the network. In SNA, high centrality signifies control over information exchange and coordination processes, positioning central actors as key decision-makers (Jeong et al., 2024).

While centralization can improve administrative efficiency and streamline coordination, excessive reliance on a single dominant actor may lead to power concentration and reduced network resilience. This finding aligns with Benedetti & Crescenzi, (2023), who argue that highly centralized networks tend to be efficient but vulnerable due to dependency on key nodes. In contrast to the ideal model of collaborative governance, which emphasizes distributed participation and shared decision-making (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012), the observed structure reflects a hierarchical governance pattern, indicating the presence of governance asymmetry.

**Actor Roles and Collaboration Patterns**

To further explain how centralization is operationalized within the governance network, Table 1 presents the distribution of strategic roles and collaboration patterns among actors involved in poverty alleviation.

Table 1. Actors, Strategic Roles, and Collaboration Patterns in Poverty Alleviation Governance

No	Actor/Agency	Strategic Role	Routine Collaboration Pattern
1	<b>Bappelitbangda/TKPKD</b>	Cross-sector coordinator through TKPKD, controller of poverty alleviation policy planning and reporting	Facilitate cross-agency coordination meetings, formulation of integrated planning, monitoring and evaluation of joint programs
2	<b>Social Services</b>	Main implementer of social assistance programs and data collection of poor families	Integrated data updates, validation of social assistance targets, reporting on the realization of assistance programs
3	<b>Community and Village Empowerment Service (DPMD)</b>	Supporting data collection on poor families in villages through database updates (SIX-NG)	Coordination of village database updates, assistance to village governments in reporting poor family data
4	<b>Population and Civil Registration Service (Disdukcapil)</b>	Ensure the validity of population data by name and address so that the program targets correctly	Synchronization of population data with Dinsos & DPMD, verification and matching of program recipient identities
5	<b>Department of Manpower &amp; Vocational Training Center (BLK)</b>	Organizing job skills training and economic empowerment	Implementation of training, data collection of training participants, monitoring of training alumni
6	<b>Department of Cooperatives, SMEs, Trade, and Industry (DINKOPDATIN)</b>	Facilitation of business equipment, capital, and marketing channels	Data collection on poor MSMEs, provision of business facilities, marketing partnerships, opening access to funding with financial institutions
7	<b>public health Office</b>	Addressing the issues of stunting, malnutrition, and the health of poor families	Updating data on families at risk of stunting, nutrition education, health interventions for poor communities
8	<b>Village Government</b>	Supporting program implementation at the grassroots level	Reporting on the condition of poor families, KPM assistance, facilitation of village deliberations regarding interventions
9	<b>Academic Institutions</b>	Conducting KKN/PKM/KKP and research to strengthen community capacity	Implementation of KKN/PKM in villages, policy research, recommendations for empowerment programs

10	Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	<b>Community empowerment assistance, social advocacy, community literacy</b>	<b>Literacy training, policy advocacy at the local level, beneficiary assistance</b>
11	<b>Banking Institutions (Bank Indonesia, BRI)</b>	Providing access to financing, financial inclusion, and funding for empowerment programs	Distribution of people's business credit (KUR), financial literacy, financing partnerships for poor MSMEs
12	<b>Customs</b>	Facilitation of fiscal policies and control of goods/services related to the economic activities of poor communities	Coordination of control of the flow of goods for micro businesses, facilitation of fiscal incentives for poor businesses

Source: Researcher Processing

As shown in Table 1, Bappelitbangda not only occupies a structurally central position but also performs a dominant coordinating role in planning, monitoring, and evaluating cross-sectoral programs. Core agencies such as the Social Affairs Office, the Community and Village Empowerment Office (DPMD), and the Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil) are primarily responsible for data management and program implementation, reinforcing the concentration of administrative authority (Mustari et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2025).

In contrast, supporting actors including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and financial institutions play complementary roles, particularly in capacity building and economic empowerment. However, their involvement remains largely supportive rather than integrative, indicating limited participation in decision-making processes. This distribution confirms that the network is not only structurally centralized but also functionally hierarchical, thereby reinforcing governance asymmetry (Emerson et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2022).

### Coordination Mechanism and Network Governance

To further understand how governance operates beyond structural positioning, Figure 3 illustrates the coordination mechanisms and interaction patterns among key actors within the poverty alleviation network.

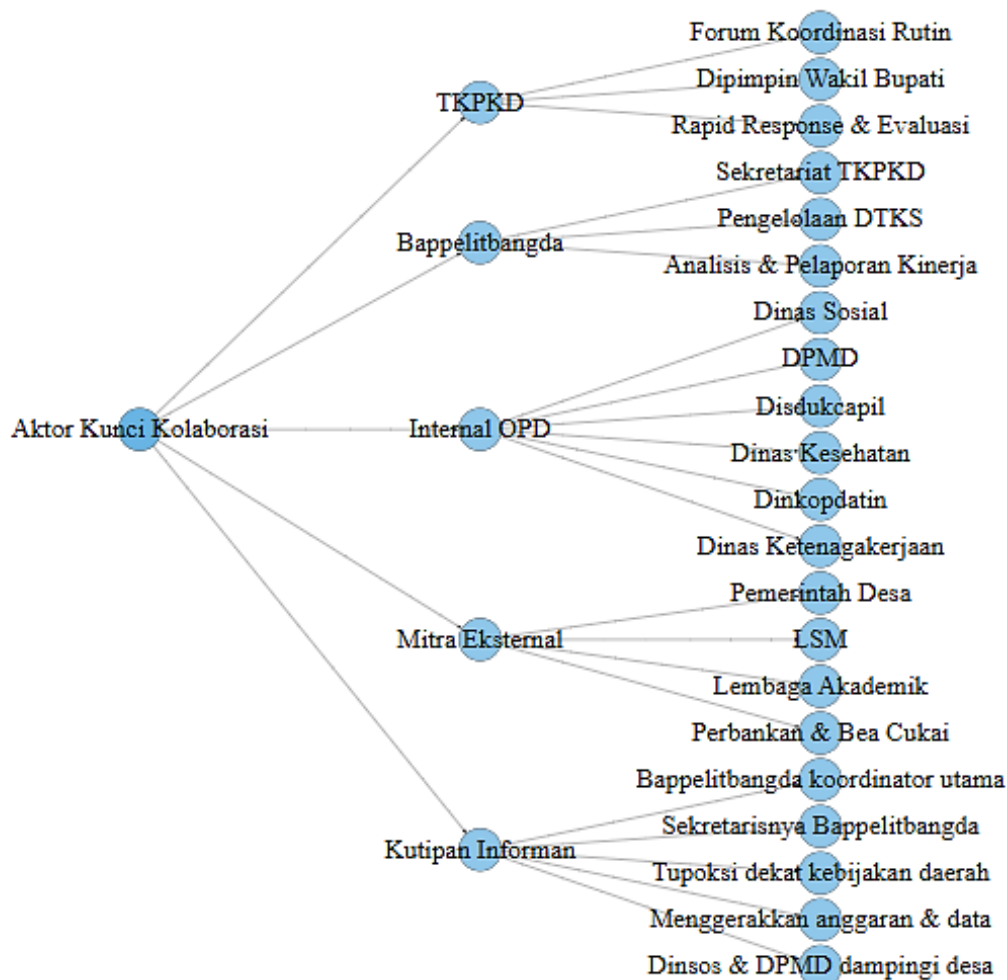


Figure 3. Coordination Mechanism and Actor Linkages in Poverty Alleviation Governance  
 Source: Researcher Processing

As shown in Figure 3, coordination is structured around the Regional Poverty Reduction Coordination Team (TKPKD), which functions as a central platform for routine coordination, rapid response, and program evaluation. Bappelitbangda plays a strategic role in managing data (DTKS), performance analysis, and reporting, reinforcing its dominance both structurally and functionally.

The network is organized into several clusters, including internal government agencies (OPD), external partners, and community-level actors. While internal coordination appears relatively structured, linkages with external actors remain fragmented and limited in intensity. This indicates that governance operates predominantly in a top-down manner, rather than through collaborative and horizontally integrated mechanisms (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012).

## Network Density and Fragmented Collaboration

The analysis further shows that the network exhibits low density, indicating weak horizontal connections among actors. Most interactions are concentrated toward central institutions, while collaboration between agencies and non-state actors remains limited.

Low network density suggests that information and resource flows are not evenly distributed, which reduces coordination effectiveness and slows policy implementation. (Zhao et al., 2025) emphasize that fragmented networks with low density often result in inefficiencies and limited policy responsiveness.

This finding contrasts with Neves, Burlandy, & de Medeiros, (2024), who argue that effective program convergence requires strong interconnections among actors. The discrepancy indicates that structural limitations within the network hinder the realization of convergence outcomes, despite the existence of formal policy alignment.

## Resource Flows and Implementation Constraints

To complement the structural analysis, Table 2 summarizes key findings related to funding schemes, data pathways, and implementation constraints.

**Table 2. Aspects and Core Findings of the Research**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Core Findings</b>
Fund Scheme	Funds come from the APBN (PKH social assistance, BPNT), APBD (limited), Village Funds (directly to villages), and CSR (Semen Tonasa, etc.).
Data Path	DTKS data by name by address to the Bappelitbangda Coordinator Distribution to the Social Services, Civil Registration, Health Services and six enji operators in the village to help with data proposals.
Regional Budget Limitations	Fiscal space is limited, some local empowerment programs have minimal support, and some subsidies burden the regional budget.
Technical Barriers	Data validity is not yet synchronized, operator human resources are limited, island areas are difficult to reach, and digital literacy is low.

As shown in Table 2, poverty alleviation programs rely on multiple funding sources, including national budgets (APBN), regional budgets (APBD), village funds, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, this fragmentation indicates weak financial integration, which may reduce program effectiveness.

The data pathway reveals centralized information flow through Bappelitbangda, reinforcing dependency on a single coordinating actor. Additionally, regional fiscal limitations and technical barriers such as data inconsistency, limited human resources, geographical challenges, and low digital literacy further constrain implementation effectiveness. These findings confirm that structural centralization is accompanied by operational limitations, which together hinder effective policy convergence (Chen et al., 2021).

### **Peripheral Actors and Inclusivity Constraints**

A significant finding is the peripheral positioning of communities and grassroots actors within the network, characterized by low centrality and limited engagement in decision-making processes.

From a collaborative governance perspective, this condition reflects weak inclusivity, as affected communities are not actively involved in policy processes (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Zhang et al., (2022) argue that exclusion of peripheral actors reduces governance legitimacy and policy effectiveness.

This study demonstrates that network structure directly influences access to resources and participation. Governance asymmetry, in this context, leads to unequal distribution of benefits, reinforcing structural inequality in poverty alleviation outcomes.

### **Governance Implications: Network Structure and Policy Effectiveness**

Building on these findings, Table 3 presents key accessibility barriers and corresponding strategic solutions to improve governance performance.

**Table 3. Accessibility Barriers and Strategic Solutions in Poverty Alleviation Governance**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Accessibility Barriers</b>	<b>Strategic Solutions</b>
Information and Literacy	Lack of public understanding of aid procedures, program terms, and complaint channels	Policy literacy training and the establishment of inclusive information centers in villages
Data Validity	Differences between DTKS and village data; low citizen participation in verification	Participatory updating based on village deliberation and active collaboration between data operators and village officials
Inter-OPD Referrals	Inter-OPD programs do not refer to each other (for example between training and business capital)	Integration of inter-sectoral referral systems through cross-OPD program convergence dashboards
Neglected Vulnerable Groups	Female heads of households, people with disabilities, and the elderly are often not accommodated affirmatively.	Mainstreaming gender and vulnerable groups in the TKPKD forum and village planning
Intermediary Dependence	Citizens' access is highly dependent on officials or informal figures.	Strengthening direct channels for citizen participation, such as independent proposals through digital village applications
Weak Cross Sector Coordination	Weak communication between OPDs and the absence of integrated SOPs	Preparation of collaborative cross-sector SOPs and facilitation of quarterly meetings between OPDs and community partners

As shown in Table 3, governance challenges are not only structural but also operational, particularly in terms of information access, data validity, and inter-agency coordination. Weak policy literacy and limited citizen participation reflect the peripheral position of communities identified in the SNA findings.

Data inconsistencies and lack of inter-OPD integration further reinforce fragmentation, confirming that convergence remains procedural rather than substantive (Bukhari et al., 2025). The proposed solutions emphasize participatory governance, data integration, and cross-sector coordination, directly addressing network inequality and governance asymmetry.

This study contributes to the literature by advancing Social Network Analysis beyond descriptive mapping toward analytical interpretation of network inequality and governance asymmetry (Benedetti & Crescenzi, 2023b; Emerson et al., 2012).

A key novel finding is that strong centralization does not necessarily produce effective or inclusive policy outcomes. Instead, excessive reliance on central actors can limit participation, weaken horizontal collaboration, and reduce equitable access to resources. This challenges the assumption that coordination alone is sufficient for successful policy convergence.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs is strongly shaped by the structure of governance networks. The findings indicate that a highly centralized network, while improving administrative coordination, produces governance asymmetry, limits horizontal collaboration, and constrains the participation of peripheral actors. Low network density further weakens program convergence, making it largely procedural rather than outcome-oriented.

Theoretically, this study contributes by integrating Social Network Analysis (SNA) with collaborative governance, demonstrating that network inequality and governance asymmetry are key factors influencing policy effectiveness. This challenges the assumption that coordination alone is sufficient, highlighting instead the importance of network structure in shaping inclusivity and resource distribution.

From a policy perspective, short-term priorities should focus on improving data integration, strengthening cross-agency coordination through SOPs, and developing integrated referral systems. Long-term strategies should aim to reduce over-centralization, strengthen horizontal collaboration, and enhance community participation as active actors in governance processes.

This study is limited by its single-case design and qualitative interpretation of network data. Future research should apply mixed-method approaches and comparative analysis across regions to further examine how network structures influence policy outcomes.

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