



Transformation of Population-Data Coordination Networks after Kemendukbangga's Formation in Bengkulu

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A B S T R A C T

This study analyses how the coordination network for population-data integration at the BKKBN Provincial Office of Bengkulu was transformed after the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) became the Ministry of Population and Family Development (Kemendukbangga) in late 2024, and what that transformation implies for coordination effectiveness. A qualitative descriptive single-case design was employed at the Provincial Office. Data came from semi-structured interviews with three internal key informants, the Secretary of the Provincial Office and the heads of two functional Working Teams, supported by observation and documentation, and were analysed through historical institutionalism along three dimensions: path-dependency dynamics, gradual institutional change, and implications for coordination effectiveness. Four findings emerge. First, the network's position rests on inherited by-name-by-address micro-data and informal trust rather than on structural authority. Second, change proceeds through layering and conversion rather than displacement and is read internally as continuity. Third, a dual formal-informal architecture is undermined by interlocking technical, organisational, personal, and incentive barriers. Fourth, a recognition gap with external partners signals an emerging drift. The transformation is therefore best characterised as institutional continuity punctuated by gradual change and shadowed by sustainability risk. Resilience depends on formalising informal channels, reforming cader incentives, and preserving institutional memory.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia treats data integration as a fundamental precondition for accurate development intervention. Presidential Regulation 39 of 2019 on One Data Indonesia requires every government institution to produce data that meet common standards, can be shared and reused, and are coordinated through a data steward (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2019), while Law 52 of 2009 places population and family data at the base of development planning (Republik Indonesia, 2009). International scholarship reinforces the point that the principal obstacles to government data sharing are institutional rather than technological (Janssen et al., 2012).

This normative framework was disturbed by an institutional shock at the end of 2024. Through Presidential Regulations 180 and 181 of 2024, within the cabinet-arrangement framework of Presidential Regulation 139 of 2024, the National Population and Family Planning Board, previously a non-ministerial government body, was transformed into the Ministry of Population and Family Development (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2024b; Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2024c; Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2024a). The transformation places the custodian of national family micro-data in a theoretically precarious position: the data-integration mandate demands stability among the nodes of the coordination network, whereas the institutional restructuring alters the status, nomenclature, and internal structure of the central node itself.

The urgency of this study is therefore twofold. The by-name-by-address family data managed by the office underpin the targeting of national priority programmes, most visibly the acceleration of stunting reduction, whose achievement still lags

the medium-term target, so a failure of data coordination translates into mistargeted intervention. The provincial office is also the subnational node most directly exposed to the transformation, since it links central policy to implementation across ten regencies and cities, and the transition is still under way, which allows the network to be observed while it changes rather than reconstructed after the fact.

Within population and family affairs, the office manages by-name-by-address family micro-data compiled through family enumeration and held in the Family Information System (SIGA). Such data use is bounded by the personal-data-protection regime, which demands lawful, limited, and accountable processing (Lee & Jun, 2021; Republik Indonesia, 2022). Population-data integration is therefore the concrete arena in which the interagency coordination network operates, and thus an apt empirical window on the transformation.

A bibliometric scan of 64 Scopus-indexed journal documents for 2021 to 2026, mapped in VOSviewer through keyword co-occurrence (65 keywords in five clusters; Figure 1), indicates that the meeting point between institutional-change scholarship and government-data-integration scholarship remains sparsely cultivated (Donthu et al., 2021; van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Existing work concentrates on the technical and privacy dimensions of data sharing (Lee & Jun, 2021), on the relational dimension between agencies (Zhou et al., 2022), on interoperability maturity (Wahyuni et al., 2024), and on the neglect of data standardisation and management relative to technological innovation (Schmeling et al., 2025). Historical institutionalism has been shown to explain policy coordination and public-sector change (Cinar et al., 2025; Pan et al., 2023;

Rahman et al., 2023), yet its application still stops largely at the supranational and national levels and has not reached interagency coordination among implementing organisations at the subnational level. None of these seven studies treats a formal institutional transformation, such as the elevation of a non-ministerial body into a ministry, as a variable that reshapes the coordination network for data. The network is dense, but its co-occurrence links are mostly weak, which indicates that the intersection of organisational coordination and government data governance is still at a pioneering stage. This is the research gap, and the novelty of the present study lies in addressing it.

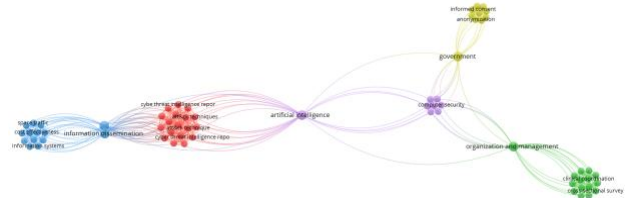


Figure 1. Keyword Co-occurrence Map of Scopus Documents, 2021–2026 (65 Items, 5 Clusters, 495 Links)

Source: Authors' processing of Scopus data (2021–2026) using VOSviewer.

The theoretical umbrella of this study is new institutionalism, the family of theories that treats institutions, meaning the rules, procedures, norms, and conventions that are embedded in practice, as the principal explanatory variable for actor behaviour and policy outcomes. Three strands are commonly distinguished: rational-choice, sociological, and historical institutionalism, the last of which emphasises time, sequence, and the distribution of power in explaining why institutions persist and how they change (Hall & Taylor, 1996). This study adopts historical institutionalism because its object is a process of institutional change unfolding in time. Two conceptual tools anchor the analysis. First, path dependency holds that past institutional choices generate positive feedback, or increasing returns, in the form of accumulated competencies, networks, and rising switching costs, so that actors tend to remain on an existing trajectory even when alternatives might be more efficient (Pierson, 2000). Path-dependent processes typically originate in choices made at critical junctures that close off alternative options (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Mahoney, 2000). Second, the typology of gradual institutional change distinguishes four mechanisms, namely displacement, the replacement of old rules by new ones; layering, the addition of new rules on top of old ones; drift, the shifting effect of formally unchanged rules as the environment changes; and conversion, the redirection of old rules toward new purposes (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010).

For the effectiveness dimension, the study draws on network-governance scholarship as sensitising concepts. Modern governance is understood as an interorganisational network in which an actor's position is determined by control over exchangeable resources (Rhodes, 1997), the effectiveness of a network depends on the fit of its governance mode (Provan & Kenis, 2008), and the collaborative-governance tradition foregrounds facilitative leadership, institutional design, and trust-building (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012).

This study addresses that gap. Its objective is to analyse the transformation of the population-data coordination network at the BKKBN Provincial Office of Bengkulu following the establishment of Kemendukbangga. Three research questions guide the analysis. (1) How do path-dependency dynamics shape

the network after the establishment of Kemendukbangga? (2) Through which mechanisms of gradual institutional change does the network change in the data-integration arena? (3) What are the implications of the transformation for coordination effectiveness among agencies? Empirically, the study records a live institutional transition in real time at a provincial office. Theoretically, it extends the gradual-change typology of Mahoney and Thelen (2010) to an interagency data-coordination arena, bridging two literatures that have developed separately. Practically, its process-sensitive design yields recommendations that can be applied while the transition is still under way. To situate the transformation, Table 1 summarises the principal institutional differences before and after the change.

Table 1. Institutional Comparison of BKKBN and Kemendukbangga

Aspect	BKKBN (before)	Kemendukbangga (after)
Legal basis	Law 52/2009; Presidential Regulation 62/2010	Presidential Regulations 180/2024 and 181/2024
Institutional status	Non-ministerial government body reporting to the President	Ministry within the cabinet; BKKBN performs attached functions during transition
Leadership	Headed by the Chair of BKKBN	Headed by the Minister, who also performs the Chair function during transition
Mandate scope	Population control and family planning (Bangga Kencana)	Broader, cross-sectoral population and family-development policy
Policy authority	Limited to technical implementing policy	Authority to formulate national policy, strengthening bargaining position
Regional structure	Provincial office as a vertical unit	Provincial office retains functions while adjusting nomenclature and structure

Source: Compiled from Law 52/2009, Presidential Regulation 62/2010, and Presidential Regulations 180/2024 and 181/2024.

METHOD

Research Design

A qualitative approach of the descriptive type was used, because the problem is a social-institutional process whose meaning is constructed by actors and can be grasped only through in-depth exploration of their experience, perception, and practice in their natural setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The descriptive type was chosen because the aim is to portray how the coordination network for population-data integration works and changes after the establishment of Kemendukbangga rather than to test relationships among variables. The strategy is a single-case study of one organisation undergoing an actual institutional transformation (Yin, 2018), which permits process tracing that is contextual and time-sensitive, consistent with the historical character of the theory employed.

Research Site

The study was conducted at the Provincial Office of BKKBN in Bengkulu, now operating as the Provincial Office of Kemendukbangga/BKKBN, whose coordination area covers ten

regencies and cities. The site was selected because it is the subnational coordination node most directly affected by the transformation, and because its capacity disparities among regencies offer a rich analytical variation of path dependency that has been little studied in the population-governance literature. Field access had been established through preliminary interviews conducted between April and May 2026.

Data Collection

Two types of data were collected. Primary data came from semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. The interviews were guided by an instrument derived from the three research aspects (Table 2) and were conducted until information reached saturation. Observation covered accessible coordination activities, such as coordination meetings, partnership audiences, and data-management practice, and captured real practice that is not always articulated in interviews. Secondary data came from documentation, comprising relevant regulations, memoranda and cooperation agreements, organisational and working-team decrees, the Bengkulu One Data portal, and coordination records, which served to verify and complement the primary data.

Informant Selection

Informants were selected purposively using the key-informant technique, choosing those whose position and experience give them the richest knowledge of the research focus (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Three internal informants were interviewed: the Secretary of the Provincial Office (W-BKKBN; 30 April 2026) as manager of institutional relations, the Head of the Family Development Working Team (W-TK3; 29 April 2026) as manager of program-partnership mechanisms, and the Head of the Data and Information Working Team (W-TKD; 13 May 2026) as manager of the technical data ecosystem. On preliminary interview they provided mutually referring and mutually complementary information. Data sufficiency was pursued through depth and repetition of interviews to the point of saturation rather than through an expansion of the number of informants, and it was reinforced by triangulation against observation and institutional documents. The operationalisation of the three aspects into sub-aspects and indicators is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Operationalisation of the Three Analytical Aspects

Aspect	Sub-aspects	Indicators
Path-dependency dynamics	Interaction habits; interpersonal trust; informal protocols	Pattern and frequency of coordination; role and maintenance of personal trust; informal channels and their perceived risks
Mechanism of institutional change	Displacement; layering; conversion; drift	Old mechanisms removed or retained; new structures added onto old; old tools redirected; formally unchanged rules whose effect shifts, including external recognition
Implications for coordination effectiveness	Formal and informal mechanisms; barriers; sustainability	Audiensi-to-MoU workflow and its effectiveness; technical, organisational, and personal barriers; cader incentives and institutional-memory maintenance

Source: Derived from Mahoney and Thelen (2010).

Data Analysis

Analysis followed the six-step qualitative procedure that proceeds in a spiral and simultaneously with data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018): preparing and organising the data through transcription and the ordering of field notes and documents; reading the whole to gain a general sense of meaning and credibility; coding by attaching labels to data segments, with each statement assigned an aspect code and sequence number (48 coded segments in total); building themes and descriptions from the codes according to the three aspects; presenting themes and descriptions in interconnected narrative, tables, and diagrams; and interpreting the meaning of the findings in dialogue with historical institutionalism and prior research. Conclusions were drawn by comparing the themes with the research questions and the theoretical propositions. Trustworthiness was maintained through source triangulation among the three key informants and institutional documents, technique triangulation among interview, observation, and documentation, cross-referral checking among informants, and member checking of the summarised findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

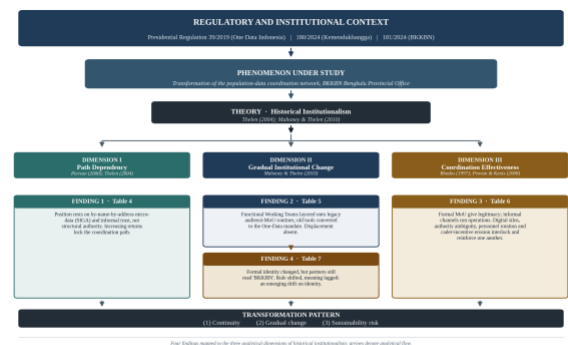


Figure 2. Synthesis of Findings: Transformation of the Population-Data Coordination Network through a Historical-Institutionalist Lens

Source: Authors' construction (2026), based on coded interview data and Mahoney and Thelen (2010).

Figure 2 presents a synthesis of the four principal findings across the three analytical dimensions. Every statement drawn from the three key informants was labelled with a dimension code (D1 = actor and network mapping; D2 = coordination mechanisms and barriers; D3 = impact of the ministerial transformation), an informant code (W-BKKBN, W-TK3, W-TKD), and a sequence number. Excerpts were originally recorded in Indonesian and translated by the authors; the codes preserve traceability to the appended transcripts.

Finding 1: Resource-Based Positioning Locked In by Legacy Data Assets and Informal Trust

The first finding is that the coordination network occupies its position and sustains its operation through inherited data assets and interpersonal trust rather than through structural authority, producing increasing returns that lock actors onto the pre-existing coordination path. First, institutional standing is

articulated by informants as a function of data ownership rather than formal power. The Secretary of the Provincial Office located the office's bargaining value squarely in its legacy data asset:

"Our data is by name by address; that is what we 'sell'. We convey that this is our data, this is its source, and its mechanism is clear."

(Secretary of the Provincial Office, 30 April 2026; D1/W-BKKBN/08, D3/W-BKKBN/15)

The Data Head likewise grounded the office's network power in a micro-data monopoly reaching the village and sub-district level through SIGA (D1/W-TKD/04, 06-07). Operational coordination runs mainly through inherited informal ties, which the Secretary described as the more intensive channel and which the Data Head said make other agencies willing to prioritise data requests (D2/W-BKKBN/10-11; D2/W-TKD/16). Sustained investment in audiensi routines, memoranda of understanding, SIGA, and a field cader network raises switching costs and makes the path self-reinforcing (Pierson, 2000), yet a path anchored in personal relations remains vulnerable to the loss of the individuals who carry it.

This supports the proposition that the principal barriers to government data sharing are institutional rather than technological (Janssen et al., 2012) and the view that an actor's position is determined by control over exchangeable resources (Rhodes, 1997).

Finding 2: Layering and Conversion as the Dominant Mechanisms of Change; Displacement Absent

The second finding is that the transformation into Kemendukbangga operates through layering and conversion rather than displacement, and that internal actors interpret the change as continuity. The Head of the Family Development Working Team rejected the 'new actor' description outright:

"Kemendukbangga is not a new actor. It is an old player. We are still BKKBN; only now the status has risen to a ministry. The people are the same; only the nomenclature changed from a non-ministerial government body to a ministry. So this is more about rebranding and a status upgrade."

(Head, Family Development Working Team, 29 April 2026; D3/W-TK3/08)

Yet the same informant reported that the echelon posts of Head of Division and Head of Sub-directorate were abolished, leaving only two structural officials at the provincial level, while day-to-day work shifted to nine functional Working Teams (D3/W-TK3/09). New functional structures were thus added on top of the inherited routines, which is the signature of layering (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). Old mechanisms were redirected rather than dismantled: the audiensi-to-agreement routine and SIGA persist but now serve the One-Data agenda (D2/W-TK3/03-04; D1/W-BKKBN/05), and memoranda continue to be signed at ministerial level as a macro legal umbrella (D2/W-TKD/11), which is conversion. No informant reported the wholesale replacement of a coordination mechanism, so displacement is absent (Table 3).

Table 3. Mapping of the Mahoney-Thelen Gradual-Change Mechanisms to Empirical Evidence (Finding 2)

Mechanism	Empirical manifestation	Verdict	Evidence code
Displacement	Wholesale removal and substitution of a coordination mechanism	Absent	Only echelon posts abolished; mandate and personnel retained
Layering	Nine functional Working Teams added onto legacy audiensi-MoU routines	Dominant	D3/W-TK3/09; D2/W-TK3/03-04
Conversion	Audiensi routine and SIGA redirected to the One-Data mandate; MoU as macro umbrella	Dominant	D2/W-TK3/03-04; D1/W-BKKBN/05; D2/W-TKD/11
Drift	Formal identity changed while external recognition lags (see Finding 4)	Emerging	D3/W-BKKBN/14

Source: Authors' analysis based on Mahoney and Thelen (2010) and interview transcripts (2026).

This supports whole-of-government scholarship showing that formal restructuring does not automatically reshape cross-agency working patterns (Christensen & Lægveid, 2007), and digital-government research showing that organisational change lags the regulation that mandates it (Mergel et al., 2019). It extends the gradual-change typology, previously applied to national and supranational policy coordination (Pan et al., 2023), to a subnational data-coordination arena.

Finding 3: A Dual Formal-Informal Architecture Undermined by Interlocking Barriers

The third finding is that coordination effectiveness rests on a dual architecture in which formal instruments supply legitimacy while informal channels carry operations, and that four interlocking barriers undermine it. Ministerial-level memoranda give officials and cadets legal protection (D2/W-TKD/11-12), yet operations run informally: problems are handled without waiting for an official letter when the server is down (D2/W-TKD/15). The Data Head identified low participation of regional agencies in the one-data portal, digital silos, unclear jurisdiction over data validation, and knowledge loss when officials rotate (D2/W-TKD/19-22). The Family Development Head illustrated the technical and personal dimensions:

"The main technical barrier is incompatible systems and differing data formats. For example, data on couples of reproductive age at BKKBN often differ from those held by the Health Office. We have often built partnerships with regional officials, but suddenly the official is replaced, and we must repeat the explanation from zero."

(Head, Family Development Working Team, 29 April 2026; D2/W-TK3/06-07)

A further, upstream barrier compounds these: field cadets who update family data each year receive no proportional compensation, so loyalty to data accuracy declines (D1/W-TKD/09-10). The barriers lock one another in place (Table 4): silos require personal relations to breach, rotation severs those relations, jurisdictional ambiguity prevents a stable data authority, and eroding cader incentives attack the micro-data

asset anchoring Finding 1. The Secretary, by contrast, located the obstacle in sectoral ego (D2/W-BKKBN/12), a divergence that marks a triangulation limit.

Table 4. Interlocking Coordination Barriers across Four Layers (Finding 3)

Barrier layer	Empirical manifestation	Evidence code	Interlocking effect
Technical	Digital silos; incompatible systems and data formats; low OPD portal participation	D2/W-TKD/19-20; D2/W-TK3/06	Requires personal ties to bridge, transferring load onto the informal channel.
Organisational	Unclear jurisdiction over data collection and validation; disputes over valid data	D2/W-TKD/21	Prevents a stable data authority from consolidating.
Personal	Frequent officer rotation; knowledge of data and MoU lost; restart from zero	D2/W-TKD/22; D2/W-TK3/07	Severs the trust relations that the technical barrier depends on.
Sustainability	Disproportionate cader compensation eroding loyalty to data accuracy	D1/W-TKD/09-10	Feedback loop degrading the core asset underpinning network position.

Source: Processed from interview transcripts (2026).

This supports the network-governance claim that effectiveness depends on the fit of the governance mode (Provan & Kenis, 2008) and the emphasis on trust-building in collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012), and corroborates evidence that data standardisation and management are neglected relative to technology (Schmeling et al., 2025) and that interoperability maturity is uneven (Wahyuni et al., 2024).

Finding 4: The Recognition Gap as an Emerging Drift on the Identity Dimension

The fourth finding is that the gap between the completed formal change of identity and the lagging recognition of that identity by external partners constitutes an emerging drift. The Secretary reported that the transformation had not disrupted the coordination pattern but had produced a recognition lag:

"The coordination pattern is not problematic, but in terms of nomenclature people still know us as BKKBN; they do not yet know the ministry's name. So it takes extra effort to explain the transformation."

(Secretary of the Provincial Office, 30 April 2026; D3/W-BKKBN/14)

This stands in tension with the internal reading of continuity in Finding 2: the reputational trust accumulated under the BKKBN name does not transfer automatically to the new ministerial identity. The rotation barrier of Finding 3 compounds the gap, since each replacement of a partner official forces the office to re-explain its programmes and its new identity from zero (D2/W-TK3/07). The causal logic is that of drift (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010): the formal rule, the office's status and nomenclature, has changed, but the environment's interpretation of that rule has not. Left unaddressed, the gap threatens the legitimacy that anchors the resource-based position of Finding 1.

This applies the concept of drift (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010) to an identity-and-recognition dimension that gradual-change scholarship has rarely examined empirically, and aligns with findings on the organisational lag that trails formal transformation (Mergel et al., 2019) and on reform outcomes depending on how change is received (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007).

Integrative Discussion

Taken together, the findings answer the three research questions. Path dependency is resource-based and lubricated by informal trust (Finding 1); change proceeds through layering and conversion (Findings 2 and 4); and effectiveness is eroded by interlocking barriers and the recognition gap (Findings 3 and 4). The decisive point is the feedback loop: the informal, personnel-bound relations that make the path efficient are the same relations that rotation severs, while disproportionate cader incentives erode the micro-data asset on which the network position depends. The network is therefore resilient and fragile for the same reason, its reliance on inherited, informally maintained resources.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of the population-data coordination network at the BKKBN Bengkulu Provincial Office following the establishment of Kemendukbangga is best characterised as institutional continuity punctuated by gradual change rather than by displacement. The network sustains its coordination through a path-dependent, resource-based configuration in which by-name-by-address micro-data and informally maintained interpersonal trust, not structural authority, anchor its position; the change proceeds through layering of functional Working Teams onto legacy routines and conversion of inherited instruments toward the One-Data mandate; and the transformation carries a sustainability risk expressed in interlocking technical, organisational, personal, and cader-incentive barriers and in an emerging drift visible as a recognition gap with external partners. The main implication is that the network's resilience rests on inherited, informally maintained resources that require institutional protection.

Theoretically, the study contributes by extending the gradual-change typology of historical institutionalism (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010) to a subnational interagency data-coordination arena, bridging the previously separate literatures on institutional change and on government data integration (Schmeling et al., 2025), and by identifying drift on an identity-recognition dimension rather than in instrument content. Practically, the findings point to four priorities for Kemendukbangga and regional government: the selective formalisation of informal channels so that their operational speed is retained without sacrificing information security (Provan & Kenis, 2008); the creation of rotation-resilient mechanisms for preserving institutional memory of data and agreements; the reform of cader incentives as an investment in data validity rather than a discretionary cost; and active communication of the new institutional identity to close the recognition gap before it hardens into durable drift.

The study has clear limitations. It is a single-case, qualitative-descriptive design (Yin, 2018) resting on preliminary fieldwork conducted between April and May 2026 with three internal key informants, and it therefore reflects an internal vantage; the

voices of external partner agencies and of field cadres were not yet captured, and the divergence between managerial and operational readings of the technical barrier (Finding 3) signals a triangulation limit that fuller fieldwork must resolve. The findings are analytically, not statistically, generalisable and should be read as an account of one implementing office during a live transition.

Future research should therefore extend the design in four directions: comparative multi-case study across provinces with differing capacity to test the boundary conditions of the path-dependency and drift dynamics; inclusion of external partner agencies and field cadres to triangulate the internal account and adjudicate the barrier-perception divergence; longitudinal tracking of whether the incipient drift consolidates or is arrested; and mixed-methods measurement of interoperability maturity (Wahyuni et al., 2024) alongside the institutional analysis, with due attention to the personal-data-protection regime governing population data (Lee & Jun, 2021). Such work would test whether the continuity-with-gradual-change pattern documented here is characteristic of institutional transitions in developing-country population administration more broadly.

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