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Multiparty Collaboration and State Capacity in Border Governance: The Case of Indonesia's National Border Management Agency

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary international governance, border management increasingly reflects a state's institutional capacity to manage sovereignty, development, and security through governance rather than coercion. This⁹ study examines how multiparty collaboration strengthens the institutional capacity of Indonesia's National Border Management Agency (Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan/BNPP) in managing land border areas in West and North Kalimantan. Border governance in these regions is characterized by fragmented authority, decentralized administrative arrangements, and limited integration of non-state actors.

Existing studies on border governance largely emphasize security enforcement, decentralization, or cross-border cooperation, leaving limited empirical explanation of how collaborative governance mechanisms operate as instruments of state capacity in developing²² country contexts. Employing a qualitative explanatory approach, this study draws on in-depth interviews, field observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis conducted between August and November 2024.

The findings demonstrate that BNPP's coordinative capacity is strengthened through four interrelated collaboration mechanisms: coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification. These mechanisms enable BNPP to align diverse actors across sectors and governance levels despite its limited formal authority. Information and communication technology (ICT) functions as a critical institutional enabler by facilitating communication, reducing fragmentation, and supporting cross-level coordination in geographically remote³¹ border regions.

This study contributes to collaborative governance and border studies literature by illustrating how a national border management agency operates as an interface institution linking domestic administrative capacity with international and cross-border dynamics. The findings highlight that effective border governance in developing states depends not on hierarchical control alone, but on structured multiparty collaboration supported by digital governance. Policy implications emphasize strengthening BNPP's coordinating mandate, institutionalizing non-state actor participation, and expanding ICT capacity at the local level.

Keywords: border governance; state capacity; collaborative governance; multiparty collaboration; sovereignty management; ICT

1. INTRODUCTION

Border governance constitutes one of the most complex policy domains in contemporary international governance, particularly for developing countries characterized by vast territories, institutional fragmentation, and uneven regional development. In international relations scholarship, borders are no longer understood merely as fixed territorial demarcations or security perimeters; rather, they function as dynamic governance spaces where domestic administrative capacity, international norms, cross-border interactions, and state sovereignty intersect (Brunet-Jailly, 2011; Newman, 2016). As such, the effectiveness of border governance increasingly reflects a state's broader institutional capacity and its ability to manage sovereignty through governance rather than coercion.

In this context, border areas are expected to perform a dual function. On the one hand, they serve as frontlines of national sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. On the other hand, they operate as front porches of the state, representing public service delivery, economic development, and social integration. However, empirical conditions in many developing countries reveal persistent governance challenges that undermine this dual function, including fragmented authority, sectoral policy silos, weak coordination across governance levels, and limited engagement of non-state actors.

In Indonesia, border regions remain disproportionately affected by structural underdevelopment, limited infrastructure, low access to public services, and vulnerability to transnational challenges such as illegal trade, smuggling, human trafficking, and environmental exploitation. These challenges are particularly evident in land border regions such as West Kalimantan and North Kalimantan, which share extensive boundaries with Malaysia. Despite their strategic geopolitical importance, these regions continue to face governance constraints rooted in fragmented institutional arrangements, decentralized administrative authority, and weak coordination between central and subnational governments. This situation highlights the limitations of conventional border management approaches that prioritize security enforcement while marginalizing governance and development dimensions.

The establishment of the National Border Management Agency (Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan/BNPP) represents the Indonesian government's institutional response to these multidimensional challenges. Mandated by Law No. 43 of 2008, BNPP is responsible for

coordinating border management and development policies across ministries, agencies, and subnational governments. Unlike line ministries with direct operational authority, BNPP functions primarily as a coordinative institution. Its effectiveness therefore depends less on hierarchical control and more on its capacity to align diverse actors, interests, and resources within a fragmented governance environment.

From a border governance perspective, BNPP operates as an interface institution that mediates domestic administrative structures with international and cross-border dynamics (Brunet-Jailly, 2005; Newman, 2016). This positioning places BNPP at the center of a complex governance network involving central government institutions, regional authorities, sectoral agencies, private actors, and local communities. However, the coordinative nature of BNPP also generates inherent constraints, including limited formal authority, overlapping mandates, and dependence on other institutions' resources and compliance.

Existing studies on border governance have largely approached the issue from three dominant perspectives. First, security-oriented approaches emphasize border control, territorial defense, and sovereignty protection. Second, decentralization and regional autonomy perspectives focus on the distribution of authority between central and local governments, often highlighting coordination challenges in multi-level governance systems. Third, international relations and cross-border cooperation studies examine borders as sites of inter-state interaction and diplomacy. While these perspectives provide valuable insights, they offer limited empirical explanation of how collaborative governance mechanisms strengthen the institutional capacity of national border management agencies, particularly in developing country contexts.

In parallel, ²⁵ the growing literature on collaborative governance emphasizes the importance of multiparty collaboration in addressing complex policy problems characterized by interdependence and institutional fragmentation (Ansell & Torfing, 2014; Gray & Purdy, 2018). Collaborative governance frameworks highlight coordination, trust-building, shared problem definition, and joint action among heterogeneous actors. Yet, empirical applications of these frameworks to border governance remain limited, especially in understanding how collaboration functions as a capacity-building mechanism for coordinative agencies with limited formal authority.

Recent advances in digital governance further suggest that information and communication technology (ICT) plays a critical role in facilitating collaboration within fragmented governance systems. ICT enables real-time communication, data sharing, monitoring, and coordination across organizational and geographical boundaries (Howlett et al., 2020). In border regions characterized by remoteness and institutional dispersion, ICT has the potential to function as an institutional enabler of governance capacity. Nevertheless, empirical research examining ICT-enabled collaboration in border governance remains scarce.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how multiparty collaboration strengthens the institutional capacity of BNPP in managing border areas in West and North Kalimantan. Rather than treating collaboration as a normative ideal, this research conceptualizes collaboration as a set of concrete governance mechanisms through which a coordinative agency exercises state capacity and manages sovereignty in border regions. Specifically, the study analyzes four interrelated mechanisms—coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification—supported by ICT as an institutional enabler.

Accordingly, this study is guided by three research questions: (1) How does multiparty collaboration operate in strengthening BNPP's institutional capacity in managing border areas? (2) What roles do state, private, and community actors play within this collaborative governance arrangement? and (3) How does ICT facilitate coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification among stakeholders involved in border management? By addressing these questions, this research contributes to collaborative governance and border studies literature while offering policy-relevant insights into how developing states manage border regions as complex governance spaces.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Collaborative Governance and Multiparty Collaboration

Collaborative governance has emerged as a prominent framework in public administration to address complex public problems characterized by uncertainty, interdependence, and institutional fragmentation. Ansell and Torfing (2014) define collaborative governance as governance arrangements in which public agencies engage constructively with non-state actors in collective decision-making processes that are formal, deliberative, and consensus-oriented. This approach

departs from traditional hierarchical governance by emphasizing interaction, shared responsibility, and joint problem-solving among heterogeneous actors.

Multiparty collaboration represents a broader conceptualization of collaborative governance by highlighting the involvement of multiple actors across sectors and levels of governance. Gray and Purdy (2018) argue that multiparty collaboration is particularly relevant for addressing “wicked problems” that cannot be resolved by single organizations due to their complexity and cross-sectoral nature. Rather than focusing solely on participation, contemporary collaboration literature emphasizes governance mechanisms that enable coordination, trust-building, alignment of interests, and effective collective action (Lawrence et al., 2023).

In the public sector context, multiparty collaboration typically involves government agencies, private sector actors, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and local communities. Each actor brings distinct resources, authority, interests, and capacities, which can both enrich collaboration and generate conflict. As such, the effectiveness of collaboration depends not only on actor inclusion but also on the institutional arrangements that manage interdependence and mitigate power asymmetries (Bryson & Crosby, 2006).

Despite its growing prominence, collaborative governance is not without challenges. Scholars note that collaboration can be hindered by sectoral ego, weak leadership, unclear accountability, and institutional rigidity (O’Leary & Bingham, 2009). These challenges are particularly acute in contexts where lead organizations lack formal authority over participating actors, as is often the case in coordinative agencies. This highlights the importance of understanding collaboration as an institutional capacity-building process rather than merely a participatory arrangement.

2.2. Institutional Capacity in Public Sector Organizations

Institutional capacity refers to the ability of public organizations to perform their mandated functions effectively by mobilizing resources, coordinating actors, and adapting to dynamic governance environments. Grindle and Hilderbrand (1995) conceptualize capacity as a multidimensional construct encompassing institutional arrangements, human resources, organizational processes, networks, and the broader policy environment. Similarly, Wu, Ramesh, and Howlett (2018) emphasize that policy capacity extends beyond technical expertise to include analytical, operational, and political capabilities.

In collaborative governance settings, institutional capacity is increasingly shaped by relational and network-based capabilities. Lead organizations must function as boundary spanners that connect actors across institutional, sectoral, and territorial boundaries (Howlett et al., 2020). This role requires skills in coordination, negotiation, facilitation, and information management rather than

command-and-control authority. Consequently, institutional capacity in such contexts depends on the ability to orchestrate collaboration rather than to impose decisions.

For coordinative agencies like BNPP, capacity constraints are often structural. Limited formal authority, dependence on other institutions' resources, and overlapping mandates can undermine effectiveness. However, scholars argue that these constraints can be mitigated through governance mechanisms that enhance coordination, integration, and alignment among actors (Kekez et al., 2018). Understanding how such mechanisms operate empirically is therefore critical for advancing institutional capacity theory in fragmented governance systems.

2.3. Border Governance as a Multidimensional Policy Arena

Border governance literature has evolved significantly from traditional geopolitical perspectives that conceptualize borders as fixed lines of sovereignty. Contemporary border studies emphasize borders as dynamic governance spaces characterized by flows of people, goods, capital, and information (Brunet-Jailly, 2011; Newman, 2016). In this view, border areas are not merely peripheral zones but central arenas where national, regional, and local governance intersect.

Brunet-Jailly (2005, 2011) proposes a multidimensional framework for border governance that integrates market forces, cross-governmental policies, political participation of border communities, and local cultural contexts. This framework underscores the need for governance arrangements that balance security concerns with socio-economic development and community well-being. In practice, however, many developing countries continue to prioritize security-oriented approaches that marginalize development and participatory dimensions.

In Indonesia, border governance is further complicated by decentralization and regional autonomy. While decentralization aims to empower local governments and improve service delivery, it has also generated coordination challenges due to fragmented authority and varying institutional capacities across regions. Studies indicate that decentralization alone has not resolved disparities in border development and, in some cases, has exacerbated policy incoherence (Hadiwijoyo, 2009). These dynamics highlight the necessity of collaborative governance mechanisms that can integrate central authority with regional autonomy and local participation. Border management agencies operating in such contexts must navigate complex institutional landscapes, making multiparty collaboration a functional necessity rather than a normative choice.

2.4. ICT as an Enabler of Collaborative Governance

The growing literature on digital governance emphasizes the transformative potential of ³² information and communication technology (ICT) in public administration. ICT enables governments to enhance transparency, efficiency, and coordination by facilitating real-time communication, data integration, and monitoring across organizational boundaries (Howlett et al.,

2020). In collaborative governance contexts, ICT can reduce transaction costs, improve information symmetry, and support collective decision-making.

In geographically remote and institutionally fragmented settings such as border areas, ICT assumes heightened importance. Digital platforms—including integrated reporting systems, surveillance technologies, and inter-agency communication networks—enable coordination across distances and administrative levels. ICT thus ²⁹ functions not merely as a technical tool but as an institutional enabler that reshapes governance processes and interaction patterns.

However, scholars caution that ICT alone cannot resolve governance challenges. Its effectiveness depends on institutional readiness, human resource capacity, and supportive regulatory frameworks (Wu et al., 2015). In the absence of these conditions, digital initiatives risk reinforcing existing inequalities and fragmentation. Empirical studies that examine ICT within specific governance contexts are therefore essential for understanding its enabling and constraining effects.

Despite its relevance, empirical research on ICT-enabled collaboration in border governance remains limited. Most studies focus on e-government or digital service delivery rather than on how ICT supports institutional coordination and collaborative capacity. This gap is particularly evident in developing country contexts, where digital infrastructure and institutional capacity vary significantly across regions.

2.5. Analytical Framework: Collaboration Mechanisms

Building on collaborative governance, institutional capacity, border governance, and digital governance literature, this study employs an analytical framework based on four collaboration mechanisms: coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification. Coordination refers to aligning actors and activities through communication and information exchange. Integration involves harmonizing policies, programs, and institutional roles. Synchronization ensures that actions and timelines are mutually reinforcing across actors, while simplification aims to reduce procedural complexity and bureaucratic barriers.

These mechanisms operationalize multiparty collaboration as a capacity-building process rather than a static arrangement. They provide a structured lens for analyzing how BNPP navigates institutional fragmentation and leverages ICT to strengthen its coordinating role. By applying this framework to empirical data from West and North Kalimantan, the study seeks to advance theoretical understanding of collaborative governance while offering practical insights for border management institutions.

2.6 Border Governance, State Capacity, and Sovereignty Management

Border governance is increasingly conceptualized as an expression of state capacity rather than merely a function of territorial control. State capacity in border regions reflects a government's

ability to coordinate institutions, regulate cross-border flows, deliver public services, and maintain legitimacy in peripheral territories (Fukuyama, 2013; Wu et al., 2018). Weak border governance often signals broader institutional fragmentation and limited governing reach, particularly in developing and decentralized states.

Contemporary border studies emphasize that borders operate as governance spaces where domestic administration, international interaction, and local socio-economic dynamics intersect (Brunet-Jailly, 2011; Newman, 2016). In this context, effective border management increasingly relies on governance mechanisms that integrate multiple actors across sectors and levels of government rather than on centralized command-and-control approaches.

National border management agencies therefore play a strategic role in sovereignty management by functioning as coordinative and boundary-spanning institutions. Their effectiveness depends on relational capacity, institutional alignment, and the ability to mobilize non-state actors within collaborative governance arrangements. Understanding how such agencies strengthen institutional capacity through structured multiparty collaboration is essential for advancing both border governance and international governance scholarship.

¹³ 3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a qualitative explanatory research design to examine how multiparty collaboration strengthens the institutional capacity ³ of the National Border Management Agency (BNPP) in managing border areas. ⁴ A qualitative approach is appropriate given the study's objective to explore governance processes, interaction mechanisms, and institutional dynamics that ⁴¹ cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement. ²³ Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena within their natural contexts and is particularly suitable for analyzing collaborative governance arrangements involving multiple actors, interests, and institutional settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The explanatory orientation of this study emphasizes not only describing collaborative practices but also explaining how and why specific collaboration mechanisms contribute to institutional capacity strengthening. This design aligns with the study's analytical framework, which conceptualizes multiparty collaboration through four interrelated mechanisms: coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification.

3.2. Research Sites

The research was conducted in West Kalimantan and North Kalimantan, Indonesia. These provinces were purposively selected due to their strategic geopolitical position as land border

regions adjacent to Malaysia and their relevance to national border governance policy. Both provinces host Integrated ⁹ Border Crossing Posts (Pos Lintas Batas Negara/PLBN) and are actively involved in BNPP-coordinated border management and development programs. The selected sites represent typical characteristics of Indonesian land border areas, including geographical remoteness, infrastructural limitations, and multi-level governance arrangements involving central, provincial, and district authorities.

3.3. Informants and Units of Analysis

The units of analysis in this study consist of organizations and actors involved in multiparty collaboration in border governance. ⁴ Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their institutional roles, responsibilities, and direct involvement in border management and development activities. This sampling strategy ensured that data were obtained from actors with relevant knowledge and experience of collaborative governance processes.

Key informants included: (1) officials from the National Border Management Agency (BNPP); (2) officials from Provincial and District Border Management Agencies (BPPD); (3) heads and staff of Integrated Border Crossing Posts (PLBN); (4) representatives of sectoral agencies operating at border posts, such as customs, immigration, health quarantine, and agricultural quarantine; (5) local government officials and community leaders in border sub-districts; (6) academics and university representatives involved in research and community service programs in border areas; and (7) ¹⁰ representatives of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other local economic actors. This diversity of informants enabled a comprehensive examination of multiparty collaboration across sectors and governance levels.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected between August and November 2024 using multiple qualitative data collection techniques to enhance depth and credibility. First, ²⁰ in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants. Interview guides were designed to explore perceptions, experiences, and institutional practices related to multiparty collaboration, coordination challenges, and the role of ICT in border governance. ⁷ Semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility to probe emerging themes while maintaining consistency across interviews.

Second, direct field observations were undertaken at selected border locations, particularly at PLBN facilities and surrounding border communities. Observations focused on interaction patterns among institutions, coordination practices, use of ICT tools, and day-to-day governance activities related to border management. Field notes were systematically recorded to capture contextual insights that complemented interview data.

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Third, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with local stakeholders, including community representatives, local officials, and economic actors. FGDs were used to validate preliminary findings, capture collective perspectives, and identify shared challenges and expectations related to border governance. Finally, secondary data were collected through document analysis of laws, regulations, policy documents, institutional reports, and relevant academic literature to contextualize and triangulate primary data.

36 3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative analysis process. All interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts and field notes were then subjected to systematic coding to identify recurring concepts and themes. 2
Open coding was initially applied to capture key ideas emerging from the data, followed by axial coding to group related codes into broader analytical categories.

The analytical categories were aligned with the study's four collaboration mechanisms: coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification. Pattern matching and thematic analysis were employed to link empirical findings with the analytical framework and research questions. Manual data processing was applied throughout the analysis to allow close engagement with the data and iterative refinement of interpretations.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

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To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed several validation strategies. Source triangulation was applied by comparing data from interviews, observations, FGDs, and documents. Informant triangulation was achieved by engaging actors from different institutional backgrounds and governance levels. Member checking was conducted through follow-up communications with selected informants to confirm interpretations and clarify ambiguities. In addition, expert triangulation involving academics with expertise in governance and border studies was used to enhance analytical rigor.

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Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. Informants were informed about the purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by removing identifying information from transcripts and reports.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Multiparty Collaboration in Border Governance: Empirical Overview

The empirical findings demonstrate that border governance in West and North Kalimantan involves a complex constellation of actors operating across multiple governance levels and sectors. These actors include central government institutions coordinated by BNPP, provincial and district border

management agencies (BPPD), sectoral agencies operating at Integrated Border Crossing Posts (PLBN), local governments, community actors, academics, and limited private sector participants. While formal institutional arrangements for collaboration exist, ³⁴ their effectiveness varies significantly depending on coordination capacity, institutional alignment, and enabling resources. BNPP occupies a central position within this governance network as a coordinating institution mandated to align border management and development policies. However, its limited formal authority constrains its ability to directly command other institutions. As a result, BNPP's institutional capacity relies heavily on collaborative governance mechanisms that facilitate alignment, cooperation, and collective action among diverse stakeholders. The findings reveal that this capacity is operationalized through four interrelated mechanisms: coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification.

4.2. Coordination as a Foundational Mechanism

Coordination emerges as the most fundamental mechanism underpinning multiparty collaboration in border governance. BNPP facilitates coordination through both formal and informal channels, including inter-agency meetings, reporting systems, and hierarchical communication pathways linking central, provincial, and district institutions. These arrangements aim to reduce fragmentation and ensure that border-related information flows effectively across governance levels.

³⁷ The use of information and communication technology (ICT) significantly enhances coordination capacity. Digital reporting systems, WhatsApp coordination groups, and real-time monitoring tools such as CCTV and digital dashboards enable rapid information exchange regarding border crossings, security incidents, logistical challenges, and development needs. These tools are particularly valuable given the geographical remoteness and infrastructural limitations of border areas.

Nevertheless, coordination remains uneven. Differences in ICT infrastructure quality, digital literacy, and organizational capacity across regions constrain consistent implementation. Local-level actors often face limitations related to internet connectivity and human resource skills, which reduce the effectiveness of digital coordination mechanisms. Despite these challenges, ICT-supported coordination represents a critical advancement compared to previous reliance on fragmented and delayed communication channels.

4.3. Integration of Programs and Institutional Roles

Integration refers to the alignment and harmonization of policies, programs, and institutional roles among stakeholders involved in border governance. The findings indicate that integration is more advanced among government actors than between government and non-state actors. Vertical

integration between BNPP and regional BPPD is facilitated through shared planning frameworks, policy documents, and coordinated development programs.

However, integration across sectors and with non-state actors remains limited. Private sector involvement is largely confined to investment activities without systematic incorporation into governance processes. Similarly, community and civil society actors primarily engage in monitoring, local conflict resolution, and informal consultations rather than structured policy participation. This limited integration reflects the absence of institutionalized mechanisms for non-state actor engagement within BNPP's governance framework.

The findings suggest that integration is constrained not only by institutional design but also by differing priorities and incentive structures among actors. While government institutions prioritize administrative compliance and policy coherence, private and community actors emphasize economic opportunity and social welfare. Without formal integration mechanisms, these divergent priorities limit the potential benefits of multiparty collaboration.

4.4. Synchronization of Actions and Policy Cycles

Synchronization involves aligning the timing, sequencing, and implementation of programs and activities across institutions to ensure coherence and mutual reinforcement. The study finds that synchronization is partially achieved through centralized planning cycles and ICT-enabled reporting systems that allow BNPP to monitor ongoing activities across regions.

Despite these efforts, synchronization challenges persist due to differences in institutional mandates, budget cycles, and operational priorities. Sectoral agencies often operate according to their own timelines and performance indicators, which may not align with BNPP-coordinated plans. These discrepancies can result in delayed implementation, overlapping initiatives, or gaps in service delivery.

ICT tools help mitigate synchronization challenges by increasing transparency and enabling faster feedback loops. Real-time reporting allows BNPP to identify misalignments and initiate corrective coordination. However, ICT alone cannot fully overcome structural constraints arising from fragmented authority and regulatory rigidity. Effective synchronization therefore requires both technological support and institutional commitment to shared planning and accountability.

4.5. Simplification of Collaborative Procedures

Simplification focuses on reducing procedural complexity and bureaucratic barriers that hinder effective collaboration. The findings indicate that BNPP has initiated efforts to simplify coordination and reporting processes through digitalization. Standardized reporting formats, streamlined communication channels, and centralized information systems have reduced administrative burdens and improved efficiency.

Nonetheless, simplification remains constrained by overlapping legal mandates and rigid regulatory frameworks governing border management. Multiple laws, regulations, and ministerial decrees create procedural complexity that limits BNPP's ability to streamline collaborative processes fully. As a result, simplification efforts often operate within narrow administrative boundaries rather than addressing systemic fragmentation.

The findings underscore that simplification is not merely a technical exercise but an institutional challenge that requires regulatory harmonization and political support. Without such reforms, procedural complexity will continue to undermine collaborative capacity despite technological advancements.

4.6. ICT as an Institutional Enabler of Collaborative Capacity

Across all four mechanisms, ICT functions as a critical institutional enabler rather than a standalone solution. ICT enhances BNPP's boundary-spanning capacity by facilitating communication, information sharing, and monitoring across organizational and geographical boundaries. By reducing transaction costs and improving information symmetry, ICT strengthens BNPP's ability to coordinate actors despite limited formal authority.

However, the enabling role of ICT is contingent on institutional readiness, human resource capacity, and supportive governance arrangements. Where these conditions are absent, digital tools risk reinforcing existing inequalities and fragmentation. The findings therefore support arguments in digital governance literature that technology must be embedded within broader institutional reforms to achieve transformative impact.

4.7. Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to collaborative governance literature by demonstrating how a coordinative public agency can strengthen institutional capacity through structured collaboration mechanisms supported by ICT. The findings extend institutional capacity theory by highlighting relational and network-based capacities as critical dimensions in fragmented governance systems.

Practically, the results suggest that strengthening BNPP's role requires a strategic focus on institutionalizing collaboration mechanisms rather than expanding hierarchical authority. Policies should prioritize enhancing coordination infrastructure, formalizing non-state actor participation, harmonizing regulatory frameworks, and investing in ICT capacity at the local level. These measures can collectively improve the effectiveness and sustainability of border governance.

Beyond public administration scholarship, the findings contribute to border studies and international governance literature by illustrating how state sovereignty is exercised through governance rather than coercion. BNPP's collaborative role demonstrates how developing states

manage border regions as institutional interfaces where legitimacy, coordination, and service provision become key instruments of sovereignty management. This supports contemporary border theory that views borders as dynamic governance spaces linking domestic administrative capacity with international and cross-border dynamics (Brunet-Jailly, 2011; Newman, 2016).

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that strengthening the institutional capacity ³ of the National Border Management Agency (BNPP) in managing border areas depends less on the expansion of formal hierarchical authority and more on the effectiveness of multiparty collaborative governance mechanisms. ³⁹ In the context of border management in West and North Kalimantan, BNPP operates within a highly fragmented governance environment characterized by overlapping mandates, sectoral autonomy, and multi-level institutional arrangements. Under such conditions, BNPP's capacity is shaped primarily by its ability to coordinate, align, and mobilize diverse actors rather than to directly command them.

The findings reveal that multiparty collaboration strengthens BNPP's institutional capacity through four interrelated mechanisms: coordination, integration, synchronization, and simplification. Coordination enables information exchange and alignment among actors; integration harmonizes policies, programs, and institutional roles; synchronization ensures coherence in timing and implementation; and simplification reduces procedural complexity that often undermines collaboration. Together, these mechanisms function as a governance architecture that allows BNPP to perform its boundary-spanning role effectively despite limited formal authority.

⁴⁰ At a broader level, this study highlights the relevance of collaborative governance for understanding state capacity in border regions. By framing border management as a governance challenge rather than solely a security issue, the findings offer comparative insights into how states in the Global South manage sovereignty through institutional coordination, stakeholder integration, and digital governance mechanisms.

A central contribution of this study is the identification ²⁸ of information and communication technology (ICT) as a critical institutional enabler of collaborative capacity. ICT enhances communication, reduces fragmentation, and supports both vertical and horizontal coordination across geographically dispersed border areas. However, the study also confirms that ICT alone is insufficient to resolve governance challenges. Its effectiveness depends on institutional readiness, human resource capacity, and supportive regulatory frameworks. Without these conditions, digital tools risk reinforcing existing inequalities and coordination failures.

Policy Implications

The findings yield several policy implications for strengthening border governance in Indonesia. First, border governance policies should explicitly recognize BNPP as a collaborative coordinator rather than merely an administrative institution. Strengthening BNPP's mandate to convene, integrate, and synchronize sectoral and regional programs is more critical than expanding its hierarchical authority.

Second, the institutionalization of non-state actor participation should be prioritized. Formal mechanisms for engaging ⁶ private sector actors, civil society organizations, and border communities—such as structured consultation forums and partnership frameworks—can enhance inclusivity, legitimacy, and sustainability in border development initiatives.

Third, continued investment in ICT infrastructure and digital governance systems is essential, particularly at the local level. Such investments should be accompanied by capacity-building programs to ensure effective utilization and to reduce disparities in digital readiness across regions.

Limitations of the Study

²⁶ This study has several limitations. The empirical analysis focuses on two land border provinces, ²⁴ which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other border contexts in Indonesia, such as maritime border regions. In addition, the qualitative research design prioritizes depth of analysis over breadth and does not quantitatively measure collaboration outcomes or development impacts.

Directions for Future Research

Future research could adopt comparative or mixed-method approaches to examine collaborative border governance across different regions or countries. Quantitative assessments of collaborative performance and long-term socio-economic and security outcomes would complement the qualitative insights offered in this study. ² Further research may also explore the role of leadership, political dynamics, and regulatory reform in sustaining ICT-enabled collaborative governance in border areas.

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