



# Asymmetric Policy as an Instrument for Accelerating Development in the Border Region of West Kalimantan

Rusdiyanta Rusdiyanta<sup>1\*</sup>  & Ahmad Nabil Fauzi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Center for Public Policy Studies, University of Budi Luhur, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> [rusdiyanta@budiluhur.ac.id](mailto:rusdiyanta@budiluhur.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> [nabil.ahmadfauzi@budiluhur.a.id](mailto:nabil.ahmadfauzi@budiluhur.a.id)

**Abstract.** Several structural challenges in the border region between West Kalimantan and Sarawak include geographical isolation, lack of basic socio-economic infrastructure, disparities in public service delivery, and low economic growth. These conditions necessitate affirmative and innovative development policies specifically designed for border regions. This article aims to identify the types of asymmetric policies and analyze how these policies can serve as instruments to accelerate development in the border areas of West Kalimantan. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through literature review and in-depth interviews with the National Border Management Agency, the Regional Border Management Agency of West Kalimantan Province, local stakeholders, and community leaders. The findings indicate the presence of several types of asymmetric policies: political/regulatory, administrative, fiscal, and territorial. These policies take the form of political and regulatory support, fiscal schemes, limited special autonomy, spatial planning, and infrastructure acceleration programs in border areas. The implementation of such asymmetric policies has significant implications for improving governance efficiency, promoting economic growth, accelerating the development of basic infrastructure, and strengthening the strategic functions of border regions. However, the effectiveness of border area governance remains dependent on the institutional capacity of local governments, regulatory consistency, and intergovernmental coordination.

**Keywords:** asymmetric policy, border development, West Kalimantan, regional autonomy, development acceleration

## 1. Introduction

Border regions serve as a barometer of national resilience, encompassing strategic-military, economic, legal, and national identity functions (Brunet-Jailly, 2007; Guo, 2012; Blanchard in Wastl-Walter, 2016). In Indonesia, pursuant to Law No. 43 of 2008, border areas such as those in West Kalimantan face complex structural challenges, ranging from geographic isolation to disparities in infrastructure and public services compared to neighboring Sarawak. Despite their vital role, border areas in West Kalimantan remain hindered by geographic isolation and significant public service disparities compared to Sarawak. The failure of conventional symmetric development to address these structural issues has necessitated a shift toward asymmetric decentralization. By implementing specialized interventions—such as the designation of National Strategic Zones (NSZ) and targeted Special Allocation Funds (SAF), the construction of National Border Post (NBP), the strengthening of basic infrastructure, and the provision of affirmative fiscal support through thematic Special Allocation Funds (SAF) (NABM, 2023; Presiden Regulation No.18/2020, 2020). This asymmetric approach serves as a context-specific affirmative strategy to dismantle persistent underdevelopment in peripheral regions. This policy model emerges as an antithesis to the conventional symmetric approach, which has been criticized for its inability to effectively resolve spatial disparities and underdevelopment in peripheral areas. (Eaton et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of asymmetric policies remains a subject of debate. On one hand, such approaches are seen as promising strategies to accelerate development in 3T areas (Terdepan—Frontier, Terluar—Outermost, Tertinggal—Underdeveloped),

© The Author(s) 2026

N. Alyani Ishak et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Cross-Disciplinary Academic Research 2025 - Track 2 Advances in Business & Economics, Social Science, Communications & Media (ICAR-T2 2025)*, Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research 385,

[https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6239-715-6\\_9](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6239-715-6_9)

enhance national cohesion, build local capacity, and ensure sustainable development (Holzhacker et al., 2015; Manor, 1999; Tan, 2019). On the other hand, there are concerns that differentiated treatment may trigger regional jealousy, generate bureaucratic fragmentation, or even compromise national integration if not managed properly (Habibi & Zuhriyanti, 2019; Irfan Ridwan Maksum, 2020; Maksum, 2018).

Fundamentally, however, the adoption of asymmetric policies reflects a concrete and innovative response—an out-of-the-box strategy aligned with *Nawa Cita* (National Development Agenda), particularly Point 3: “*Developing Indonesia from the periphery.*” Empirical studies on the manifestation of *Nawa Cita* in border regions such as West Kalimantan indicate a policy shift toward integrative approaches that emphasize environmental stewardship, social welfare, and national security (Alunaza & Sudagung, 2020).

This study is theoretically significant as it expands the discourse on asymmetric decentralization within a unitary state framework. Practically, the findings are expected to contribute to evidence-based policymaking for more effective border development strategies. A well-targeted application of asymmetric approaches may offer a strategic solution to persistent underdevelopment, enhance regional capacity, improve the welfare of border communities, and strengthen the state’s geopolitical presence in frontier areas.

Accordingly, this research aims to identify the various forms of asymmetric policies implemented in the border region of West Kalimantan; and analyze the extent to which these policies contribute to accelerating development in the region.

This study employs a qualitative approach, with data collected through literature review and in-depth interviews involving the National Agency for Border Management (NABM), the Provincial Agency for Border Management (PABM) of West Kalimantan, local stakeholders, and community leaders. Ultimately, the study seeks to enrich academic discourse and offer policy recommendations that are contextualized, locally grounded, and responsive to the specific needs of Indonesia’s border regions.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Decentralization and Asymmetric Policy

Decentralization is a form of institutional transformation aimed at bringing public services and development closer to local communities. According to Cheema and Rondinelli (1983), decentralization can be classified into four main types: political, administrative, fiscal, and economic (Rondonelli et al., 1983; Veljanovski, 2010). In Indonesia, post-1998 decentralization has primarily emphasized administrative and fiscal dimensions through regional autonomy. However, in practice, decentralization has not been uniformly applied. Instead, it has evolved into asymmetric decentralization, where powers and responsibilities are distributed unequally based on the specific characteristics of each region (Eaton et al., 2011; Lele, 2019).

The core objective of asymmetric decentralization is to strengthen social and governmental cohesion in order to preserve political stability and national integrity (Veljanovski, 2010), including efforts to reduce separatist tendencies (Haryanto et al., 2018). Moreover, this approach also promotes fiscal efficiency, brings government services closer to remote populations, and aligns with constitutional values that recognize the diversity of regional characteristics within a unitary state.

Asymmetric policies aim to accommodate territorial disparities and regional diversity—geographical, social, economic, and historical. In the context of a unitary state like Indonesia, asymmetric decentralization is seen as a responsive mechanism to address special regional needs, such as those found in Aceh, Papua, and border areas (Tauda, 2018). Asymmetry can take various forms, including political regulation (such as special autonomy), differentiated fiscal allocations, or special territorial treatment in national development planning (Manor, 1999). Importantly, asymmetric

governance is not a contradiction to national unity; rather, it can reinforce unity when implemented in an accountable and participatory manner.

The theory of asymmetric decentralization provides the legal and political basis for this research to examine why border regions require special treatment. The focus of this research is to examine how this "positive discrimination" in authority and fiscal matters is implemented to maintain territorial integrity in West Kalimantan.

## **2.2. Policy Instruments**

Public policy instruments refer to a set of techniques used by government authorities to exercise power in order to mobilize support and influence (or prevent) social change (Vedung, 2017). These instruments are intended as concrete tools to promote (or avoid) certain transformations and are designed to stimulate innovation by directly influencing policy objectives and outcomes. As Borrás and Edquist explain, policy instruments can guide both the direction and speed of innovation (Borrás & Edquist, 2019). Policy tools may include regulatory measures, market-based mechanisms, and information-based instruments (Metz et al., 2018). The appropriate combination of these instruments enables governments to intervene effectively in complex policy environments, especially in structurally disadvantaged regions.

The asymmetric policy is not merely an abstract concept but a concrete tool for stimulating regional innovation. This policy instruments such as specialized regulations and targeted funding used by the government to fundamentally transform border dynamics.

## **2.3. Spatial Inequality, Unbalanced Development and Peripheral Affirmation Theory**

The development gap between the center and the periphery has long been a concern in regional development studies. Spatial inequality theory explains its causes as disparities in individual incomes, unequal distribution of access to infrastructure, capital, markets, and public policies across geographic space. Furthermore, the dynamics of globalization, economic liberalization, and limited mobility of population and capital between regions contribute to this imbalance (Kanbur et al., 2005). Peripheral regions tend to experience marginalization due to low connectivity, economies of scale, and government investment.

Hirschman's concept of unbalanced development suggests that effective economic development can be achieved through deliberate imbalances between sectors, as limited resources and institutional capacity prevent simultaneous equitable development, necessitating prioritization of strategic sectors (Cramer et al., 2020). Inequality is not seen as an obstacle, but rather as a catalyst for growth dynamics and institutional learning that fosters gradual, sustainable development. In the Indonesian context, border regions often experience this phenomenon due to their remoteness from the center of power and the national economy.

According to affirmative regional policy theory, development in disadvantaged or marginalized regions—particularly in 3T areas (Frontier, Outermost, Underdeveloped)—requires affirmative and context-sensitive policy interventions (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018). These may take the form of special fiscal transfers, prioritized infrastructure projects, or cross-sectoral development programs tailored to the specific needs of each area. In this regard, asymmetric policy can be understood as part of the state's broader affirmative strategy to close structural and geographical development gaps.

These theories explain the root causes of border underdevelopment as a peripheral phenomenon. This research positions asymmetric policy as a deliberate "affirmative action" strategy intended to correct spatial disparities and catalyze economic growth in long-neglected frontier regions.

#### 2.4. Multilevel Governance and Border Development

The development of border regions cannot be addressed by a single institution or level of government alone; rather, it requires a multilevel governance approach. As Hooghe and Marks (2003) explain, multilevel governance involves coordinated interaction among actors operating simultaneously at local, national, and even international levels (Benz, 2024; Hooghe & Marks, 2003). This model enhances the ability of governance bodies to manage the complexity of border-related challenges, strengthens accountability, and fosters public participation and democratic legitimacy (Harlow & Rawlings, 2007; Hurrelmann, 2021; Maggetti & Trein, 2019; Pierre, 2019).

In the context of border development, success largely depends on the synergy between central government, regional authorities, cross-sectoral institutions such as NABM, ministries/institutions, PABM and active engagement from local communities. Multilevel governance is especially relevant in the implementation of asymmetric policies, as it allows for policy adaptation at the local level without disregarding the national regulatory framework. Therefore, the effectiveness of asymmetric policies in border areas is highly contingent upon the institutional capacity of local governments, the consistency of central–local regulatory alignment, and the robustness of intersectoral coordination mechanisms (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Grindle, 2007; Rusdiyanta, 2017)

Building on the theoretical foundations discussed earlier, asymmetric policy represents a state's response to structural disparities and limitations in peripheral regions. When implemented through appropriate policy instruments, supported by effective governance and spatially integrated planning, this policy approach holds significant potential as a strategic tool for accelerating development.

This study adopts a perspective based on the theory of asymmetric decentralization (Eaton et al., 2011), spatial inequality and inter-regional development (Kanbur et al., 2005), affirmative policies (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018) and multi-level governance (Hooghe & Marks, 2003; Hurrelmann, 2021). This study uses a thematic analysis approach to assess the relationship between the form of asymmetric policies and the acceleration of development, especially in the function of NBP as the spatial epicenter of the country's affirmative strategy.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Approach and Design

This study employs a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the forms and implementation of asymmetric policy within the context of border development in West Kalimantan. A qualitative method was chosen to capture the social-political complexity and institutional dynamics that cannot be quantitatively measured. It also enables the researcher to explore the policy reality from the perspectives of the involved actors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research design is intrinsic case study-based, focusing on the specific case of asymmetric policy in West Kalimantan's border regions, particularly in three major locations: Entikong (Sanggau Regency), Aruk (Sambas Regency), and Badau (Kapuas Hulu Regency). These locations were selected based on their status as central NBP, geographical representation, and their designation as national development priorities under Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 on the 2020–2024 NTDM.

#### 3.2. Data Collection

Data collection was carried out through two main techniques:

**Library Research**, involving the examination of national and regional policy documents, including presidential regulations, National Term Development Plan (NTDM) reports, the NABM strategic documents, reports from the West Kalimantan PABM, and academic literature on asymmetric decentralization and border development. This was essential to understand the legal and formal frameworks underlying the policy.

**In-depth Interviews**, conducted in a semi-structured format with key informants from the NABM, the PABM of West Kalimantan, local community leaders and traditional authorities in Entikong, Aruk, and Badau, as well as several local academics and representatives from NGOs working on border development issues.

Key informants in this study were selected with the following main criteria: (1) having constitutional authority in border management, (2) being directly involved in the implementation of asymmetric policies (such as managing NBPs and Thematic SAF), and (3) having in-depth knowledge of the socio-economic dynamics on the West Kalimantan border. All in-depth interview data has received permission from the informants for publication. Secondary data, however, is from open sources, thus presenting ethical issues.

Data analysis followed the thematic analysis approach developed by Braun & Clarke (2021), which consists of six stages: familiarization with data, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition and naming, and writing the analytical narrative. The main themes analysed in this study include: (1) state representation and legitimacy, (2) fiscal affirmation and service access, (3) spatialization of development, and (4) perceptions of exclusion in non-NBP areas (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Findings

The findings reveal that asymmetric policies in Indonesia's border regions are deeply rooted in the *Nawa Cita* agenda, specifically the third point: 'developing Indonesia from the periphery' under President Joko Widodo's administration. This agenda serves as the normative foundation for implementing asymmetric decentralization, aimed at narrowing socioeconomic disparities between regions, particularly in underdeveloped and frontier areas.

Empirically, there are five strategic pillars of the national asymmetric decentralization policy: (1) strengthening local governance and quality; (2) developing rural and remote areas; (3) advancing underdeveloped regions; (4) developing border zones; and (5) restructuring new autonomous regions to enhance community welfare.

This study also finds that border areas have been formally designated as NSZ, prioritized in spatial planning due to their critical significance for national sovereignty, defense, security, and socio-economic and environmental sustainability.

However, at the implementation stage, field findings indicate that asymmetric treatment has not been fully internalized within the development cycle, particularly during the planning phase. The national 'bottom-up' planning mechanism (*Musrenbang*) is still applied uniformly across all regions. Consequently, border areas do not automatically receive special priority within this standardized planning workflow.

The study also identifies the existence of a specialized national forum for border priorities; however, in practice, many submitted proposals are unrelated to border-specific needs. This indicates a gap in understanding and coordination among government entities regarding the proposal mechanisms that should ideally be facilitated by the NBMA as the lead coordinator for regional development.

On the regulatory and strategic front, research findings confirm that the legal basis for asymmetric policy is derived from Law No. 3/2008, Law No. 23/2014, the National Medium-Term Development Plan, and various Presidential Instructions that explicitly mandate the accelerated development of border regions.

The research demonstrates that asymmetric policies have contributed significantly to accelerating development in the West Kalimantan border regions. The approach is both affirmative and selective, targeting areas burdened by geographic, social, and economic constraints. Empirically, this acceleration is reflected across five key dimensions: (1) political support; (2) regulatory frameworks; (3) fiscal allocations; (4) territorial planning; and (5) infrastructure development.

Regarding the political aspect, findings show a strong commitment from the central government through the development of National Border Posts (NBPs) in Entikong, Aruk, Badau, and Jagoi Babang. These posts function as state gateways, public service hubs, and nodes for economic activity.

In terms of regulation, the study identifies various affirmative legal instruments, including Presidential Instructions and Regulations, as well as West Kalimantan Governor Regulation No. 67 of 2019, which strengthens the institutional capacity of border management.

Fiscally, the findings record that total affirmative fund allocations for West Kalimantan between 2019–2024 exceeded IDR 8 trillion. These funds were utilized for border roads, educational facilities, healthcare services, clean water systems, and infrastructure in underdeveloped (3T) villages.

Within the territorial dimension, the research highlights the designation of strategic centers, such as Paloh–Aruk and Jagoi Babang, as national strategic development hubs integrated with national spatial planning.

Meanwhile, infrastructure development serves as the most tangible evidence of asymmetric policy, with the construction of over 1,800 km of border roads, clean water systems, border markets, and public service centers that have enhanced connectivity and stimulated local economic activity.

## 4.2. Discussion

### 4.2.1. Origins of Asymmetric Policy in Border Regions

The third point of the Nawa Cita agenda—"developing from the periphery"—under the administration of President Joko Widodo laid the foundation for Indonesia's asymmetric decentralization policy. This approach prioritizes regional development equality, especially in Eastern Indonesia, and aims to reduce socio-economic disparities. Five key directions have since shaped the national asymmetric decentralization agenda: (1) strengthening governance and improving the quality of local government; (2) developing rural and remote areas; (3) developing disadvantaged regions; (4) developing border regions; and (5) reorganizing new autonomous regions to enhance public welfare.

Given the complexity of border issues and their status as the nation's frontlines, border regions have been designated as National Strategic Areas. These are zones prioritized in spatial planning due to their national significance in terms of sovereignty, defense, security, economy, socio-cultural integration, and environmental value—including those designated as world heritage sites.

Ideally, asymmetric policy implementation should span across all development phases: planning, implementation, and evaluation. In reality, however, some border regions report a lack of differentiated treatment. Indonesia's planning mechanism is bottom-up and consensus-based—Musrenbang (development planning forum)—beginning at the village level and progressing through sub-district, district, provincial, and national levels. Yet, this mechanism applies uniformly to all regions. Border areas often do not receive any special treatment or prioritization within this planning sequence.

Although the national government has established a dedicated forum—National Border Area Priorities—to deliberate border development proposals, many proposals included in this scheme are unrelated to border areas. There is a need for better dissemination and coordination by the central government to ensure that local governments understand that proposals under this scheme should come through the Border Area Management Agency as the regional development coordinator. Proposals outside of these priority border locations should be directed to other national priority forums. This structure represents one form of asymmetric governance by allocating dedicated space for border-related proposals.

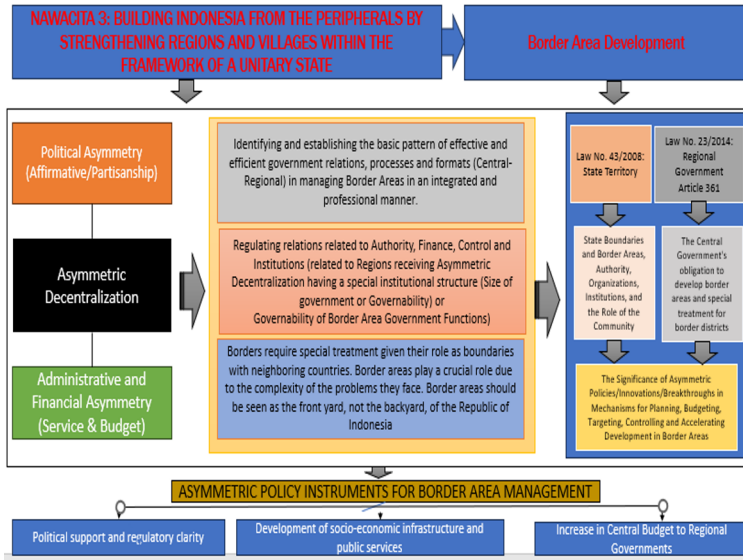


Fig.1 Foundation of Asymmetric Border Policy

Source: Modified from National Development Planning Agency, 2015

The legal and strategic basis of asymmetric policy can be derived from Law No. 3/2008, Law No. 23/2014, the National Medium-Term Development Plan (NMTDP), and several Presidential Instructions on NBP development acceleration.

Table 1. Aspects, Forms, and Implementation of Asymmetric Policy

ASPECT / INSTRUMENT	OBJECTIVE	TYPE	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
Political	Strategic priority for frontier development	Presidential commitment (Nawa Cita), Governor and Parliament speeches	Designating border as the frontline of Indonesia; accelerated NBP development (Entikong, Aruk, Badau, Jagoi Babang); proposal for limited special autonomy
Regulatory	Providing legal flexibility for border development	Law No. 23/2014; Presidential Instructions No. 6/2015, 1/2019; Presidential Regulation No. 18/2020; Presidential Instruction No. 1/2021; West Kalimantan Governor Regulation No. 67/2019; District spatial plans	Designation of Kalimantan border as National Strategic Area; strengthening PABM and DABM; accelerated NBP and support facility development
Fiscal	Allocating special funds for border regions	Thematic DAK (Special Allocation Funds); physical and non-physical DAK	Sambas district APBD for roads; ADB funding (IDR 300 billion); West Kalimantan MTDP allocated border funds; total estimated allocation IDR 8.2 trillion for basic socio-economic infrastructure

Infrastructure	Strategic and integrated physical development	Integrated NBP, border roads, water systems, border markets	Completed revitalization of Entikong, Aruk, Badau NBPs; Jagoi Babang 95% complete; over 1,800 km of roads built; 30 L/s Water System in Aruk; markets in Jagoi & Aruk; housing and social facilities developed
Territorial	Spatial planning and zoning for border zones	PKSN designation (Strategic Centers) in Paloh–Aruk and Jagoi Babang; integration of national and regional spatial plans	Zoning of economic areas, buffer zones, social spaces, trade routes, and integrated NBP spatial plans

Source: Compiled by researchers from various sources, 2025 (BPIW, 2024; *Indept-Interview with Mr. Irwan NABM*, 2024; *Indept-Interview with Urai Nurbaini PABM West Kalimantan*, 2024)

#### 4.2.2. Interpreting Asymmetric Policy as an Instrument of Accelerated Development

The findings indicate that asymmetric policy has played a significant role in accelerating development in West Kalimantan's border regions. Rather than applying a uniform approach, the policy is affirmative and selectively targeted at areas with disadvantaged geographical, social, and economic conditions. The effectiveness of this policy can be analysed through five core dimensions: political support, regulatory framework, fiscal allocation, territorial planning, and infrastructure development.

First, in terms of political support, the central government's commitment is reflected in the Nawa Cita vision, particularly the third point: "developing Indonesia from the periphery." This political backing is manifested in the development of NBPs such as Entikong, Aruk, Badau, and Jagoi Babang. These NBPs not only function as national gateways but also serve as hubs for public services, economic activity, and symbols of state presence. Their establishment has elevated the strategic value of border regions in the national development narrative.

Second, regulatory asymmetry is demonstrated through specific legal instruments such as Presidential Instruction No. 6 of 2015, Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019, Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020, and Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2021. These regulations explicitly prioritize border development as part of the National Strategic Area agenda. At the regional level, West Kalimantan Governor Regulation No. 67 of 2019 strengthens the institutional capacity of the PABM, enabling more flexible and focused planning and coordination of development programs.

Third, fiscal asymmetry is realized through the implementation of Thematic Special Allocation Funds (SAF), Regional Incentive Funds (RIF), and other affirmative transfer schemes. The cumulative estimated allocation for West Kalimantan from 2019 to 2024 exceeds IDR 8 trillion. These funds have been used to build essential infrastructure such as border roads, schools, Community Health Centers, water supply systems, and facilities for 3T (frontier, outermost, underdeveloped) villages. The impact is evident in the rising Human HDI scores in border districts and improved access to public services and logistics.

Fourth, territorial asymmetry is implemented through the designation of specific zones as National Strategic Development Centers, such as Paloh–Aruk and Jagoi Babang. By integrating regional spatial planning with the National Border Spatial Plan, border areas are no longer seen as marginal zones but as spatially designed development clusters oriented toward economic growth, social protection, and national defense.

Fifth, infrastructure development stands out as the most tangible evidence of the asymmetric approach. The construction of NBPs and their supporting facilities—such as over 1,800 km of national border roads, water systems, border markets, and public

service centers—has transformed these areas into new growth poles. NBPs have not only improved connectivity but also stimulated local mobility, supported MSME growth, and reduced dependency on Malaysian goods across the border.

Taken together, the integration of these five policy dimensions demonstrates that the asymmetric approach—originally designed to address regional backwardness—has evolved into an innovative model for region-based accelerated development. However, several challenges remain: intra-district inequality (particularly in non-NBP villages), uneven institutional capacity among local governments, and the need for stronger vertical and horizontal coordination among agencies.

Therefore, while asymmetric policy can be considered effective in promoting development acceleration, it must be carefully monitored to avoid generating "new inequalities within existing disparities." Future policy design should adopt a needs-based asymmetry approach, strengthen local institutional capacity, and promote more inclusive and adaptive governance frameworks.

#### **4.2.3. Policy Implications**

These findings yield several critical implications for the future design and implementation of border development policies.

First, the success of accelerated development through an asymmetric approach indicates that differentiated treatment does not contradict principles of justice or existing regulations. On the contrary, special treatment based on local needs and vulnerabilities can serve as a pathway to more equitable distribution of development outcomes.

Second, the spatial concentration of development around NBPs demonstrates the effectiveness of geographically focused interventions. However, this also presents a risk of intra-regional disparity. Policy adjustments are therefore needed to extend affirmative programs to border villages that do not yet hold prioritized status. This will require micro-level mapping based on spatial and social data to ensure that the logic of asymmetry does not result in development exclusivity.

Third, cross-sectoral governance must be strengthened, especially in terms of regulatory harmonization and institutional integration. Asymmetric policy cannot be implemented by a single institution such as NABM alone; rather, it demands close coordination among the Ministry of Home Affairs, The Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Finance, and regional governments. A collaborative model grounded in multilevel governance is essential for the long-term success of affirmative development.

Fourth, the administrative capacity of local governments in border regions must be enhanced. The effectiveness of asymmetric policy depends heavily on the ability of local governments to plan, absorb, and account for budgets, as well as to promote community participation. Fiscal asymmetry must be accompanied by strengthened local institutional capacity to ensure that development extends beyond physical infrastructure to include institutional and social transformation.

These findings resonate with Lele (2019), who emphasized the importance of flexible approaches within unitary state systems to bridge spatial and social inequalities. However, unlike special autonomy regions such as Papua or Aceh—which are based on ethno-political identities—the asymmetric model in West Kalimantan is primarily technocratic and spatial. (the PABM of West Kalimantan, 2024). This creates new challenges, particularly the exclusion of non-priority areas within a single district, as voiced by local leaders from Ketungau Hulu and Silat Hulu during field interviews.

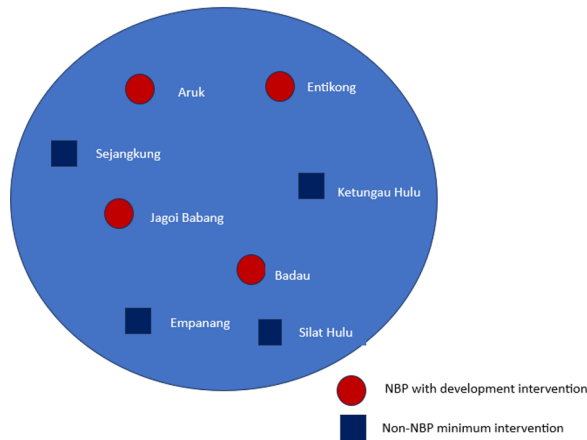


Fig.2 Spatial Concentration of Border Development in West Kalimantan

- Red Dots (NBP): Areas receiving substantial development intervention through integrated border posts and affirmative programs (Entikong, Aruk, Badau, Jagoi Babang).
- Blue Squares (Non-NBP): Border villages that, despite being geographically adjacent to the border, receive minimal intervention—such as Ketungau Hulu, Silat Hulu, Empanang, and Sejangkung.

The spatial visualization (Fig.2) highlights a pattern of development concentration around NBPs (red dots), while other border villages (blue squares) appear largely untouched by major interventions. This suggests that asymmetric policy has yet to fully address internal spatial disparities, and instead risks reinforcing a new center-periphery dynamic within border districts.

### 5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that asymmetric policies—through political support, regulatory instruments, fiscal affirmation, territorial planning, and infrastructure development—have demonstrably accelerated development in the border region of West Kalimantan. This approach has enhanced physical connectivity, improved the quality of basic services, fostered economic mobility, and strengthened the state's presence in historically marginalized areas.

This research contributes to the academic discourse on affirmative policy and governance in peripheral regions, particularly within the complex framework of a unitary state like Indonesia. It opens new possibilities for designing needs-based asymmetric policies that are spatially just and locally responsive. However, the current pattern of acceleration remains selective and concentrated, giving rise to new challenges in the form of intra-district disparities. As such, asymmetric policy must evolve toward a more inclusive, decentralized, and responsive model tailored to local needs.

The following policy recommendations are proposed:

1. Expand the scope of affirmative policies to include non-NBP villages that are geographically and socially part of the border zone.
2. Strengthen institutional and human resource capacity in local governments, particularly in participatory development planning and fiscal management.
3. Establish integrated policy frameworks across sectors and levels of government through permanent coordination platforms and shared development roadmaps.

4. Promote the active participation of border communities in every stage of planning and program evaluation to ensure sustainability and policy acceptance.
5. Develop spatially and socially sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems that can detect internal disparities and respond to dynamic regional changes.

### Acknowledgments.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Directorate of Research and Community Service, Budi Luhur University, under the Budi Luhur Cakti Education Foundation, for their support through the Main Research Grant scheme for this work. This funding was provided in accordance with Research Contract Agreement Decree No. A/UBL/DRPM/000/115/11/2024.

### Disclosure of Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### References

- Alunaza, H., & Sudagung, A. D. (2020). Kebijakan Nawa Cita sebagai Dasar Pembangunan di Kawasan Perbatasan Kalimantan Barat. *JRP (Jurnal Review Politik)*, 10(2), 167–189. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jrp.2020.10.2.167-189>
- Benz, A. (2024). *Rethinking Multilevel Governance* (1st ed.). Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035306299>
- BNPP. (2023). *LAKIP Sekretariat BNPP 2023*.
- Borrás, S., & Edquist, C. (2019). Holistic Innovation Policy: Theoretical Foundations, Policy Problems, and Instrument Choices. In M. L. Bemelmans-Vidéc, R. C. Rist, & E. Vedung (Eds.), *Oxford University Press* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press, UK.
- Bouckaert, G., Peters, B. G., & Verhoest, K. (2010). *The Coordination of Public Sector Organizations: Shifting Pattern of Public Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230275256>
- BPIW. (2024). *Informasi Bahan Dukungan Kementerian PU dalam Kerja Sama Multipihak dalam Pengelolaan Kawasan Perbatasan*.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. Sage Publication.
- Brunet-Jailly, E. (2007). *Borderlands: Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe* (1st ed.). the University of Ottawa Press.
- Cheema, S. G., & Rondinelli, D. A. (2007). From Government Decentralization to Decentralized Governance. In G. S. Cheema & D. A. Rondinelli (Eds.), *Decentralizing Governance, Emerging Concepts and Practices* (pp. 1–20). Brookings Institution Press. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5\\_3918-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_3918-1)
- Cramer, C., Sender, J., & Oqubay, A. (2020). Unbalanced Development. *African Economic Development*, July, 132–160. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198832331.003.0006>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications Inc.
- Eaton, K., Kaiser, K., & Smoke, P. (2011). The Political Economy of Decentralization

- Reforms - Implications for Aid Effectiveness. In *World Bank* (1st ed.). World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-8840-2>
- Grindle, M. S. (2007). *Going Local DECENTRALIZATION, DEMOCRATIZATION, AND THE PROMISE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- Guo, R. (2012). *Cross-Border Resource: Management Theory and Practice* (2nd ed.). Elsevier B.V.
- Habibi, M., & Zuhriyanti, E. (2019). Kecemburuan Daerah Penghasil Setelah Praktek Desentralisasi Asimetris. *Www.Researchgate.Net/Publication/330424411*, 1–22.
- Harlow, C., & Rawlings, R. (2007). Promoting accountability in multilevel governance: A network approach. *European Law Journal*, 13(4), 542–562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0386.2007.00383.x>
- Haryanto, Lay, C., & Purwoko, B. (2018). Asymmetrical Decentralization, Representation, and Legitimacy in Indonesia. *Asian Survey*, 58(2), 365–386. <https://doi.org/10.1525/AS.2018.58.2.365>
- Holzhaecker, R. L., Wittek, R., & Woltjer, J. (2015). Decentralization and Governance for Sustainable Society in Indonesia. In R. L. Holzhaecker, R. Wittek, & J. Woltjer (Eds.), *Decentralization and Governance in Indonesia* (1st ed., pp. 3–29). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-22434-3\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-22434-3_1)
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2003). Unraveling the central state, but how? Types of multi-level governance. In *American Political Science Review* (Vol. 97, Issue 2, pp. 233–243). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000649>
- Hurrelmann, A. (2021). Democratizing multilevel governance. In *A Research Agenda for Multilevel Governance* (pp. 37–55). <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789908374.00009>
- Indept-Interview with Mr. Irwan NABM (2024).
- Indept-Interview with Urai Nurbaini PABM West Kalimantan Barat (2024).
- Irfan Ridwan Maksum. (2020). Desentralisasi Simetris Dan Asimetris. <https://Adjisuradji.Blogs.Umrah.Ac.Id/>, 1–18.
- Kanbur, R., Venables, A. J., & Wan, G. (2005). Introduction to the special issue: Spatial inequality and development in Asia. *Review of Development Economics*, 9(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9361.2005.00260.x>
- Lele, G. (2019). Asymmetric Decentralization and the Problem of Governance: The Case of Indonesia. *Asian Politics and Policy*, 11(4), 544–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12493>
- Maggetti, M., & Trein, P. (2019). Multilevel governance and problem-solving: Towards a dynamic theory of multilevel policy-making? *Public Administration*, 97(2), 355–369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12573>
- Maksum, I. R. (2018, July 23). *Desentralisasi Asimetrik*. <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/desentralisasi-asimetrik?>
- Manor, J. (1999). *The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization*. IBRD/The World Bank. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/386101468739238037/pdf/multi-page.pdf>

- Metz, F., Leifeld, P., & Ingold, K. (2018). Interdependent policy instrument preferences: A two-mode network approach. *Journal of Public Policy*, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X18000181>
- President Regulation No.18/2020 (2020).
- Pierre, J. (2019). Multilevel governance as a strategy to build capacity in cities: Evidence from Sweden. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 41(1), 103–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2017.1310532>
- Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2018). The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 11(1), 189–209. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjres/rsx024>
- Rondonelli, D. A., Nellis, J. R., & Cheema, S. G. (1983). *Decentralization in Developing Countries: A Review of Recent Experience*. Sage. <https://doi.org/10.1201/noe1420052756.ch96>
- Rusdiyanta. (2017). Strengthening of the Coordination of the National Agency for Border Management (BNPP) in Border Management in Indonesia. *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 15(18), 515–520.
- Tan, E. (2019). *Decentralization and Governance Capacity: The Case of Turkey*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tauda, G. A. (2018). Desain Desentralisasi Asimetris Dalam Sistem Ketatanegaraan Republik Indonesia. *Administrative Law and Governance Journal*, 1(4), 413–435. <https://doi.org/10.14710/alj.v1i4.413-435>
- Vedung, E. (2017). Policy Instruments: Typologies and Theories. In M.L. Bemelmans-Videc, R. C. Rist, & E. Vedung (Eds.), *Carrots, Sticks and Sermons: Policy Instruments and Their Evaluation* (6th ed., pp. 21–58). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315081748-2>
- Veljanovski, A. (2010). The model of the asymmetric fiscal decentralisation in the theory and the case of Republic of Macedonia. *Iustinianus Primus Law Review*, 1(1), 23–43.
- Wastl-Walter, D. (2016). *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* (2nd ed.). Taylor & Francis.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

