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4-1. Presentation

SOME ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE BORDER DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: The Case of Malaysia and Indonesia

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Abstract

Border issues are considered important in terms of strengthening the relationships amongst Southeast Asian countries. This is understandable, since on the one hand, every country in the region needs to improve its social, cultural, political and economic competitiveness in order to increase the prosperity of its local community, and on the other, there are still many crucial problems in the contexts of human trafficking, illegal logging and terrorism. Therefore, all countries need to develop some strategies to maintain good neighbour relations by improving their policies in the border regions. This paper will address some pertinent questions related to the border areas between some countries on the mainland and in insular Southeast Asia. These questions are: Firstly, What kinds of problems have emerged in the border areas? Secondly, How do the two countries manage these border problems? and, Thirdly, What can we learn from those countries' experiences in managing their border policies? These are the main questions that need to be elaborated in order to have a better understanding of the development of border areas in Southeast Asia.

Keywords: border regions, local community, government policies and sustainable border development and Southeast Asia.

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I. Introduction

The disintegration process in Europe, particularly in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s affected the political situation in many regions including those in Southeast Asia. Additionally, every country in Southeast Asia including Indonesia and Malaysia, recognized the efforts of the Thai government and its people to successfully survive despite the Asian economic crisis that began with the collapse of the Thai Baht in mid-1997. This along with the haze pall which hung across Southeast Asia as a result of enormously destructive forest fires in Indonesia, swung attention to the downside of the seemingly fast-fading miracle (Grant Evans, Christopher Hutton and Kuah Khun Eng 2000: 1.²) Many countries realized that the central powers that controlled national stability in terms of economic development should reduce their authority and begin to give more opportunities to the peripheral areas to arrange their interests. This happened in Malaysia, for instance, by the Dayak in Sarawak and Sabah complaining about the central power from Kuala Lumpur. They perceived that the development programs in Malaysia were strongly controlled by the Malays, while they, in the peripheral regions, could only play a minor role.

In Indonesia too, due to the external political events that took place in Europe and the domestic political dynamics such a situation occurred. Indonesians generally thought that we should learn from what happened in Europe and consider the possibility of granting greater autonomy to the local people in the Indonesian Archipelago. They realized the extent of the social, economic and political impacts of the New Order in power for more than 32 years through its implementation of authoritarian and central policies. As a result, there were gaps in economic and political development in the central and peripheral regions. After one decade after the disintegration process in the Soviet Union, particularly at the beginning of 2001, there was finally initiated the concept of local autonomy. This means that there were some opportunities to improve the local interests in the context of nation-state building.

There are some images of how after the introduction of local autonomy, the local people (local community) have had greater political bargaining power with the central government in regard to good governance not only at the national level, but also at the local levels. This development affected any new policies on restructuring new administrative government at the local level when the government introduced the concept of "making something blossom or *pemekaran*", by which one province was divided into two provinces. By implementing this policy it seems that the local community had more choices in how they should develop their regions based on the characteristics of their environment and people.

There are certain issues in the border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia, namely illegal workers, illegal fishing, terrorism, conflict management between the Indonesian and

² Grant Evans, Christopher Hutton and Kuah Khun Eng (eds.) 2000, *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social & Cultural Change in the Border Regions*, White Lotus and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Bangkok and Singapore : 1.

Malaysian governments and also what kinds of lessons must be learned in order to have a better understanding of border management, particularly in the context of sustainable border development in Southeast Asia in general, and between Indonesia and Malaysia in particular.

II. The Social, Cultural, and Economic Gaps between Indonesia and Malaysia

Indonesia and Malaysia have a close relationship due to historical and migration processes. The Dayak people in both countries (East-South-West and North Kalimantan Provinces in Indonesia and Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia) believe that their ancestors came from China. Like the Chinese, Indians came to Malaysia in an earlier time. Ardhana³ (2007: 53) notes that the Indians and Malays live on the Malay Peninsula while most Chinese and the Dayak reside in Sarawak and Sabah. On the Malay Peninsula and Sarawak and Sabah, Indian and Chinese cultures have influenced the local culture. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, for instance, the Balinese are also strongly influenced by the Indian or Indic culture, since they are mostly followers of the Hindu religion. From this picture it can be said that both Indonesia and Malaysia have a similar cultural tradition as multicultural societies. However, like other parts of the world, these regions maintain their diversity in terms of traditions, culture, and religion. Regarding the close relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia it can be seen, that the Prime Minister of Malaysia, D S Najib is directly descended from the Gowa Sultanate in South Sulawesi in the 19th century from the 19th Raja of Gowa known as *I Mappadulung Daeng Mattimung Karaeng Sanrobone Sultan Abdul Djalil Tumenanga ri Lakiung*.⁴

Prior to Malaysian Independence, the Dayak people in East and North Kalimantan (Kaltara Province or Kalimantan Utara Province) were more developed than the Dayak in Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia. Now, the Dayak in East and North Kalimantan have become more dependent on their neighbouring-states of Sarawak and Sabah. From research I carried out in collaboration with Jayl Langub, the head of Majelis Adat in Kuching Sarawak funded by SEASREP the Toyota Foundation and called "Border of Ethnicity and Kinship: Cross Border Relations between the Kelalan Valley, Sarawak and the Bawan Valley, East Kalimantan", *Borneo Research Bulletin* (Ardhana 2004), it can be said that lack of transportation for long distance travel leads to the strong dependency of the Dayak in Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia (Ardhana 2007: 54). Other issues that have emerged in recent times in the border regions of Indonesia and Malaysia is the threat of terrorism since the borders are probably used by terrorists to spread to other parts of Southeast Asia. It is noted

³ I Ketut Ardhana, "The Minority Groups and Multiculturalism in Sabah, Malaysia", in Carmencita T. Aguilar (ed). *Ethnicity: Socio-Cultural and Economic Challenges*, International Federation of Social Science Organization (IFSSO), Manila.

⁴ (http://www.kompasiana.com/zarulazlan/pm-malaysia-saya-keturunan-langsung-raja-gowa-sulawesi-selatan_55290ce96ea834b2268b457e).

that the terrorist responsible for the Bali Bombing was captured in East Kalimantan (now North Kalimantan). In general, the border between Indonesia and Malaysia is considered a developed region, at least along the coast. It is very useful for economic regional development due to the proliferation of goods and people. However, it is considered to be a dangerous place because of the terrorist movements from the southern parts of the Philippines and also from Indonesia through those borders between Indonesia and Malaysia. From this it can be seen that seawaters can be for the terrorists a possibility to cross the border in the Southeast Asian regions. As Adam J. Young in his conclusion in *Contemporary Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia: History, Causes and Remedies*⁵ argues

While joint co-operation is ultimately necessary to address transnational security issues like piracy, the first priority must be to establish domestic security regimes and capabilities that address the issue. If states like Indonesia and the Philippines are not able to secure their own waters, control the development of independent loci of power within their states, and offer their people a way out of poverty, transnational cooperation will be problematic. Regional security is being compromised from within these states, so that patrols with their neighbors on the outside of their borders are of little use in addressing where and how these security problems are developing.

In terms of terrorism activities that are in the name of Islam (Graham Gerard Ong, 2005: 50), the perpetrators could be protected by the local people who are Muslims (Ardhana 2007: 57). Therefore, these kinds of issues should be worked on together by the Indonesian and Malaysian governments and involve other countries like the Philippines, particularly the southern parts of that country. Lamijo, in his paper "History of Trade Contacts in the Border Regions in Southeast Asia" notes that there are many criminal gangs known to operate in a number of those borders and the local areas have been sources of and transit points for trafficking in drugs, women and girls for prostitution and for smuggling a range of goods (Research Center for Regional Resources, 2004: 81, Lamijo 2009: 47).

In addition to this, the recent economic development both in Indonesia and Malaysia shows that uneven economic development attracted cross-border movements between Indonesia and Malaysia and has given a greater impetus to trans-border migrations. A massive influx of Indonesian workers to Malaysia is a well-known manifestation of this impact. Indeed, it is calculated that the number of unemployed Indonesians searching for jobs and accommodation in Malaysia has reached two million. Apart from illegal movements of people, illegal fishing is taking place everywhere in the border regions in Indonesia. Currently, the Indonesian government under the Ministry of Sea even instructs that any ships crossing Indonesian borders without permission, should be seized. It seems that no authority of either of the two governments, Indonesia and Malaysia is capable of preventing illegal border crossing. As well as the illegal fishing, there are other issues on terrorism in the border regions between Indonesia and Malaysia. Graham Gerard Ong in his "Ships Can Be

⁵ Adam J Young 2007, in his conclusion in *Contemporary Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia: History, Causes and Remedies*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies-the Netherlands: International Institute for Asian Studies, Singapore: 116

*Dangerous, Too: Coupling Piracy and Terrorism in Southeast Asia's Maritime Security Framework*⁶, notes:

Piracy continues to be an enormous problem in Southeast Asia especially in Indonesian waters and along the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, which serves as the jugular of maritime trade in this region. ...Indeed, 60% of Australia's traffic goes through the adjacent Indonesian waters. Singapore's harbour, as the world's busiest transit port, sits on the straits as a key hub in the global economic lifeline.

From the above, can be seen the challenge to the Singapore position facing the Indonesian border regions. The Indonesian people who move to the borders lack skill in certain professional work and in the English language, so, it can be understood that due to lack of infrastructure and human resources, the local people do not have the capacity to manage this opportunity.

In the hinterland such as on the border with Malaysia in Long Bawan – Ba Kelalan for instance, the local people who can speak good English can arrange programs for tourist visits to, for example, the orchard plantations and to see the beauty of the Kalimantan nature. However, due to the lack of good professional skills or English, the Indonesian workers can only work in the “background” or in the forest or palm plantations, while the Filipinos have possibilities to work in the “front yard” in the clinics, hospitals, restaurants and other places since they are good at English. This means that the Indonesian workers are not competitive in working in the Malaysian borders or even in Kuching (Sarawak), Kudat (Sabah), Tawau (Sabah) or in Kuala Lumpur (Semenanjung Melayu).

III. Management of the border between Indonesia and Malaysia

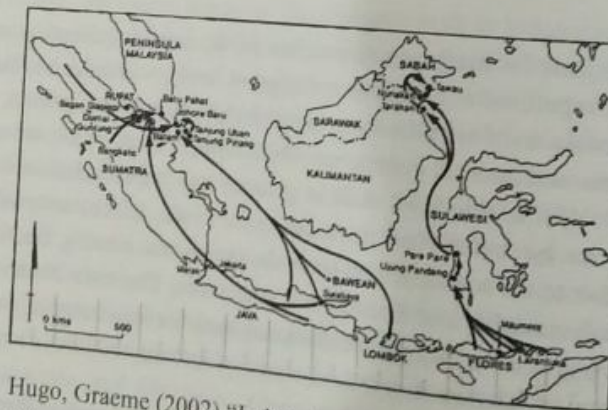
Borders are magnets for many people and one of the most important groups, both in sheer volume and socio political implications are migrant workers. Indeed, border areas like certain places in Indonesia and Malaysia draw many mobile population groups, including traders, business persons and general commerce which brings many truck drivers to the regions (Ardhana 2009: 47). In Southeast Asia in general and between Indonesia and Malaysia in particular, it can be noted that there are two kinds of characteristics of the border management, due to the economic and trade developments, namely, Firstly, free trade which is managed professionally, and Secondly, border trade. The term border trade refers to the flow of goods and services across international land borders between two countries in this case Indonesia and Malaysia. It is indeed a part of normal trade that flows through standard

⁶ Graham Gerard Ong 2005, in “Ships Can Be Dangerous, Too: Coupling Piracy and Terrorism in Southeast Asia's Maritime Security Framework”, in Derek Johnson and Mark Valencia (eds.), *Piracy in Southeast Asia: Status, Issues, and Responses*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies-the Netherlands: International Institute for Asian Studies, Singapore.

EXIM frameworks of nations. But, the economic, social and political implications of the border trade are far deeper than normal trade that flows through sea and air ports. In addition to this, border trade is the increased trade in areas near a national border caused by a price difference either generally or only for particular products in two countries like Indonesia and Malaysia (Ardhana 2009: 29).

The management of free trade is due to balanced economic and trade development, while the border trade is due to the uneven economic and trade development (2008). The border trade between Malaysia and Singapore is managed by implementing free trade and is managed professionally, while the border trade between Indonesia and Malaysia in some parts is still managed by implementing the concept of border trade. By looking at this kind of border management it seems there are many opportunities for people particularly those who reside in the border areas and are using illegal trafficking or illegal fishing etc. As the state does not manage its border professionally, it seems that both illegal trafficking and illegal fishing take place. Therefore, the central and local governments should improve their policies so that there are no opportunities for people residing in the border regions to engage in illegal activities.

The conditions on the islands in the Indonesian Archipelago are not easy to manage since Indonesia has more than 17.676 islands of which 9000 are without a name. In addition to this, there are many illegal gates (*jalan tikus* or mouse roads) that have been used by the local people to provide economic and trade opportunities with neighbouring countries. The problem is what are the possibilities for the local people in the border regions to engage in these illegal trades? Secondly, why are the central and local governments too weak in manage these economic and trade activities? and Thirdly, how should the people, entrepreneurs and governments manage these illegal trade activities to be more legal so that they can reduce any problems in the context of sustainable border development?



Hugo, Graeme (2002) "Indonesia's Labor Looks Abroad",
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=53>

The issues on illegal trade have actually lasted for a long time in the border trade history of Indonesia and Malaysia. It is even said, that it arose long ago before the emergence of modern states in Southeast Asia in general and between Indonesia and Malaysia in particular. There are many reasons why these illegal trade activities take place. First of all, if we look at the emergence of modern states in Southeast Asia due to the weakness of the central governments and traditional rulers to control the peripheral trade activities, as can be understood for instance, in the Mataram period both in terms of Mataram Hindu and Mataram Islam. In the earlier periods it seems, the kingdom or sultanate had certain traditional views or cosmological and astrological order views about the world from its centre from which then developed its peripheral places. It means that the centre played an important role rather than the peripheries. Therefore, it can be understood that the king or sultan played a major role in the centre of his power. Accordingly, there were many resistances, rebellions and conflicts between the centre and the peripheral areas. This view lasted in the traditional bureaucratic system in Indonesia even until the end of the New Order regime that was in power for more than three decades in the modern Indonesia state. A similar situation it seems occurred in Malaysia, with Kuala Lumpur as a main city playing a dominant role in comparison with other cities in the region.

The other reason is that both countries Indonesia and Malaysia have the same ethnic groups known as Malays. There is no fixed evidence when actually the Malays spread from West Sumatra to Malaysia. But, it seems that the migration of the Malays from West Sumatra to Malaysia due to the concept of *Merantau* was in the period when both Indonesia and Malaysia were still subject to European colonialism and imperialism or even in the long period prior to the coming of the Europeans. It means that the man in a family used to go away from his motherland outside the region particularly to South or North Sumatra and even to Singapore, Malaysia and other regions in Southeast Asia.

As both Indonesia and Malaysia have the same ethnic groups, it means that they have the same cultural traditions, language and also the same religion, Islam. This is also so with the Dayak or the Bugis people though they do not know about the concept of *Merantau*. In fact, many Dayak and Bugis have migrated to Malaysia particularly to Sarawak and Sabah in East Malaysia. It is not surprising, for instance, that most of the taxi drivers in Sarawak are Chinese and in Sabah, Bugis due to its geographical location close to the border regions in Malaysia. Because of the ethnic linkages, particularly in the border regions, it can be said that both in Sarawak and Sabah there are never conflicts amongst the people, though sometimes at the state level there emerge conflicts due to border issues.

IV. A Lesson-learnt: Towards Sustainable Border Development in Southeast Asia

There are two characteristics of the borders in Southeast Asia, namely in the mainland and insular areas of Southeast Asia. The trade and economic contacts in maritime Southeast Asia are more dynamic, in the sense of more open, in terms of social, cultural, and economic systems, than on the mainland of Southeast Asia that is more isolated and underdeveloped (Ardhana 2009: 1). Though some regions are located on the mainland and even are "landlocked" like Laos, it does not mean that the local people of Laos (the Lao) do not have a good policy on borders with their neighbours like Vietnam, Thailand and others. Although unlike Laos and Vietnam, Thailand has never been subject to French colonialism, the people though they are from different ethnic groups, like the states, can cooperate and help one another as for the Lao people to have access to the sea. However, Indonesia and Malaysia home to the same ethnic groups, namely the Malays, in fact, cannot really work together and even still have claims on the border issues. As we know, Indonesia and Malaysia though they are members of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asia Nations), in reality have border problems that seem not to be able to be solved in such an organization, but must be brought to the International Court in Europe, seen in the case of border conflicts between Indonesia and Malaysia regarding Sipadan, Ligitan islands and Ambalat Block in the past. This means that the border conflicts between the two countries have been solved by international efforts rather than regional ones, though we know that the population of both consists of similar ethnic groups namely Malay, Chinese, Indians, and has the same traditions in the context of a multicultural society.

It can be understood that due to the same ethnic groups, traditions, language and culture it is easier for both sides, the Indonesians and Malaysians to contact each others. This is seen in why border trade is still practiced by the local people in the border regions between Indonesia and Malaysia rather than free trade or professional border management. The main reason is that they have the same ethnic-groups like the Malay and the Bugis in the border regions between Sebatik Indonesia and Sebatik Malaysia on Sebatik Island as well as with the Dayak in the Ba Kelalan Sarawak which they call Long Bawan, but in Long Bawan (Indonesian part) they call Lun Dayeh. It is noted that rice, noodles, palm oil, soap and other daily needs for the local people in the border regions are transported from Surabaya and Pare-Pare (South Sulawesi). The local people get these kinds of supports every three months. The problem is that if the weather is fine, there is no problem, however, if the weather is bad it becomes a big problem to transport these goods from Surabaya to Balikpapan, Tarakan Nunukan and bring it to Long Bawan and Sebatik Island. The lack of daily needs in the border areas, particularly in the Indonesian parts such as in Long Bawan and Sebatik Indonesia cause the local people who reside in the border areas to perceive that they are dependent on their neighbours in the Malaysian parts such as in Ba Kelalan, in Sarawak and in Long Pasia in Sabah (East Malaysia). The same problems also emerge in the Malaysian borders as mentioned by Daud Amatzin as follows (Ardhana 2009: 181):

the labour shortage in Malaysia is becoming a serious threat to the...development of the nation's economy (The Planter, Kuala Lumpur, 1980).

The single most pressing issue facing the plantation industry is shortage of labour. ISIS Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 1992).

the biggest issue facing the oil palm industry today is the shortage of workers (ISP International Planters Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 2000).

These problems cause the people on the border in Malaysia to strongly bargain with the local people on the Indonesian side.

The long distances between small cities in the border regions cause many other ethnic groups like the Timorese, the Javanese and the people from Flores to have an opportunity to act as brokers like those called *Ojek* who use motor bikes to bring people and goods from the hinterland to the border regions with Malaysia as happened, for instance, in the 2000s, when I carried out my research in the border between Indonesia and Malaysia, particularly in Ba Kelalan-Long Bawan (Sarawak) and Long Pasia (Sabah). It seems that there are many people working illegally in Sarawak and Sabah. However, if the Malaysian police catch them, the illegal workers just cross the border and stay for three days to one week on the Indonesian border then return to work as usual. On the Malaysian border, Malaysian soldiers control the traffic of goods and people, and the local people on that border control the economic and trade traffic, particularly in rice, vegetables, fruit, and other goods. From the Malaysian borders they buy gas, electrical devices, cloths, shoes, bags since the prices are cheaper than on the Indonesian borders.

Table 1. Foreign Workers in Malaysia (January 1, 2002)

No.	Citizenship	Number (persons)	Share (%)
1	Indonesia	566,983	73.7
2	Bangladesh	105,744	13.7
3	Nepal	48,257	6.3
4	Philippines	17,287	2.2
5	Myanmar	6,539	0.8
6	Thailand	2,440	0.3
7	Pakistan	2,218	0.3
	Other	20,098	2.6

Source: Lin Mei 2006.

It is noted by the Home Ministry, that the daily food and administrative costs for housing about 68,000 undocumented foreign workers in 10 detention centres across the Malaysian borders total nearly 2.4 million ringgit (\$731,000). Besides that, it is also reported that under the current drive, immigration authorities aim to arrest and deport about 400,000 illegal immigrants and 45,000 employees from various regions in Southeast Asia. Thus it can be understood that the aim is to help cut surplus labour and trim the huge social costs that arise from hosting a population of foreigners that comprise more than 16% of the total workforce in Malaysia of around 29 million people. In relation to this, circa 1.3 million of an estimated two million undocumented foreign workers had registered with the amnesty program, which started in October 2011 and ended in September 2012. However, only about 500,000 received legal documentation, while around 330,000 were repatriated.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/indonesiarealtime/2014/01/21/malaysia-gets-tough-on-illegal-immigrants-as-amnesty-program-expires/>.

Table 2. Statistics on Temporary Work Permits, in Malaysia 2004

Citizenship	Indonesian	Indonesian	Filipino	Filipino	Total	Total
Category	New pass	Old pass	New pass	Old pass	New pass	Old pass
Household help	261	512	11	36	271	548
Refinery	342	977	30	36	373	1012
Unirrigated fields	2725	4377	155	202	2880	4579
Construction	92	74	30	40	122	114
Service	96	234	79	89	178	323
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3526	6874	396	402	3825	6576

(Source: Ardhana 2009: 183)

From the above Table, it seems that there is a number of increasing Indonesian and Filipinos working in Malaysia, particularly in unirrigated fields like in a palm oil plantation. According to the formal report in Kota Kinabalu in 2008 to 2009 (it was only for one year) there were around 120,000 Indonesian workers and 95,000 workers from the Philippines who had applied to the Malaysian Government to work in Malaysia (Ardhana 2009: 197). The success of the migration of Indonesians to Sabah is due to their family linkages through

which they sell their goods. Chew Sang Hai (2004: 47) names Malaysia a 'Paradise' in Southeast Asia (Ardhana 2004: 187—188):

The political stability, the competence of the leader, a relatively high standard of living, compatible culture and language with neighbouring countries, as well as abundant job opportunities have made our country a kind of magnetic hub for the influx of foreigners especially from the Philippines and Indonesia. It is, therefore, not surprising that the vacuum of job vacancies in the construction industry is automatically filled up by foreigners who are willing to work in the dirty and dangerous environment and at low wages, as this is still better than the conditions in their homeland.

Not only in the economic and trade activities but even on certain holydays like Christmas and the anniversary of the 17th August of the Indonesian people, the local people from Malaysia come to the Indonesian borders to share in the conviviality there. It is interesting to see that although the local people on the border between Indonesia and Malaysia have different citizenship, on the anniversary day they can come together, to have a party and enjoy sports together as a symbol of their unity in terms of ethnicity, traditions, religion and language.

The characteristics of the maritime regions bring about an increased number of trade activities, not only for economic but also for political interests. Ardhana⁷ (2009: 163) refers to the Amazin notes as follows:

The influx of Indonesian workers is great, especially during the last few years when they have become the dominant foreign workforce on almost all palm plantations. With large concentrations, they tend to become organized in a gang-like fashion and become very demanding. They 'down tools' readily and cause industrial unrest on plantations. Indeed they have become selective, choosing to carry out only jobs that offer the highest rates of pay which in turn, creates big problems for the management to realize the completion of work programs. The tendency to abscond is prevalent amongst Indonesians, who with their excellent network of communications and movement within the country, pay scant regard to rules and regulations and often exhibit a "tidak apa" attitude towards documentation. They appear to be prepared to work illegally if it means earning more and not paying the levy to the government. Many of them believe that even if they are caught they will merely be detained and sent home to Indonesia without any other punishment.

A model of trade and economic relationship in the border region will be useful in understanding the border issues between Indonesia and Malaysia. The border regions between Indonesia such as at Tebedu, Long Bawan and Sebatik and Malaysia at Entikong, Ba

⁷ I Ketut Ardhana 2009, *Trade Contacts in the Border Areas between Malaysia and the Philippines*, LIPI Press, Jakarta: 163.

Kelantan and Sebatik Malaysia should be considered as international borders, significant in the context of future development in the Asia Pacific region in particular and Asia in general (Ardhana 2009: 2).

V. Conclusion

The border issues in Southeast Asia in general, and between Indonesia and Malaysia in particular, cannot be separated from the long dynamics of history. The term "border regions" was created after the establishment of modern states, especially after the Western imperialists occupied certain countries in Southeast Asia, except Thailand which has never been colonized. In Asia in general and in Southeast Asia in particular, the traditional kingdoms, sultanates and "states" were strongly controlled by their centres rather than by boundaries in remote areas, underdeveloped and marginalized. The power of the kings, sultans and rulers was revealed not by the territory, but by the number of people he controlled. It can be understood, that due to there being no boundaries between countries, all the local traders in the borders of Southeast Asia could move freely to conduct trade in their regions. In the maritime regions like Indonesia and Malaysia it seems that the history of the borders has also been influenced by foreign traders and powers. This affected the borders in the maritime regions to be more open and more dynamic. Therefore, on the one hand, the borders between Indonesia and Malaysia are considered to be international borders, based on export and import relationships and on the other hand, it seems that trade activities in the border regions in Southeast Asia in general, and in Indonesia and Malaysia borders in particular, are still regarded as border trade, in which ethnic groups living on the borders play a dominant role. It can be said, that the similarity in climate and social and cultural aspects have affected the relationship among the people which can still be seen at the present time (Lamijo 2009: 72).

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