

Societal Security as an Alternative Approach for Development in Indonesia-Malaysia Border Area in North Kalimantan

Sonny Sudiar*
 Universitas Mulawarman
 sonny.azzam.sudiar@gmail.com

Abstract. North Kalimantan shares the borderline with Malaysia in Nunukan and Malinau regency. However, the condition of the border area residents in those areas is marked with severe underdevelopment. Responding to the issue, Indonesian border policy began to adopt an economic and environmental approach besides the traditional security approach which emphasizing military presence in the border area. The intention is to boost the economy and increase the prosperity of the border area residents. Nevertheless, this article argues that the Indonesian government needs to include the societal security approach in the policy as the people who live in the border area have their unique customs and traditions that could be at odds with the current policy. The adoption of the societal security approach will complete the picture of the North Kalimantan border policy and could go hand in hand with other approaches as a border development program.

Keyword: North Kalimantan, border area development, societal security approach

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as an archipelagic state comprises of thousands of islands and pluralistic societies with their respective customs. As a developing country, Indonesia is lagged in terms of prosperity and development compare to Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand in the Southeast Asia region. Unfortunately, if we categorized Indonesia on areas, the poverty rates are mainly found in rural and border areas. Those regions are characterized by their underdevelopment compared to the other area, their remoteness from the Indonesian capital city, and also their distinctive social life.

If we look for research on the Indonesian border area policies, the main theme will undoubtedly focus on the traditional paradigm of military security with notions of state' sovereignty, boundary mark, illegal cross border are heavily colored the research [1], [2]. While it indeed remains an essential aspect of the Indonesian border area, but to solely focus on such a traditional paradigm will obscure our understanding of what

happened in the Indonesian border area. The economic aspect of the border area has caught many observers' attention. Therefore, the literature discussing the border area's economic potentials now begins to emerge. But still, we could not see the whole picture of the Indonesian border area if we still abandon the societal aspect of its people. With its rich culture and custom border area inhabitants possess economic potentials in terms of tourism for example. This is further supported by the fact that the natural environment in the border area is still protected and safe from human exploitation. Even though it incorporates the social aspects of border area inhabitants, but it still revolving around the economic aspect, what is missing here is the social security in the term of their cultural protection over the national development plan that tends to homogenize the mechanism of area management.

In the North Kalimantan border area, lives Dayak people who have their own unique culture and custom, and because they have lived there for so many years before, the presence of modern state could be seen as a threat to their culture and societal security. Dayak people live on both sides of the border, so they are separated by the border and nationalities. Because they belong to the same kinship, they often regard the borderline as a mere mark without any significant means and would travel cross border freely. Of course, this activity would violate both state's rule and easily regarded as an illegal activity, even though their intention might just to visit their siblings on the other side of the border.

It is for that purpose, this article is written, to explore the richness of the border area's inhabitants in terms of their customs and distinctive way of life. This article will then switch to examine the North Kalimantan border area where the population reflects Indonesia's pluralism but keep their traditional legacy of kinship, and customs that oftentimes overlap and even crossing national boundaries.

METHOD

This article the output of descriptive research conducted since 2015 that aimed to portray the condition of the North Kalimantan border area and its previous policies designed to overcome the issues of borderline problems and

underdevelopment. The primary data were taken from several interviews with qualified officials both in the national and regional level, while the secondary data were obtained from relevant documents such as official reports from the agencies that involved in the border area management, books, and articles that write information regarding North Kalimantan border area both in printed or electronic version.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

North Kalimantan Province was officially founded by Law No. 20 the Year 2012 on the Establishment of North Kalimantan Province. Administratively, North Kalimantan Province divided into four regencies and one city, those are Bulungan, Malinau, Tana Tidung, and Nunukan Regency and Tarakan City. The province comprises of 72.567,49 Km². As the youngest province in Indonesia, North Kalimantan becomes the 34th province in the Unitary State of Indonesia. While the primary intention to divided North Kalimantan from East Kalimantan was to cut the distance of public service and boost North Kalimantan region development.

As a former colony of the Dutch and Great Britain, Indonesia and Malaysia were granted the colonial territory after their independence along with their borders based on *uti possidetis* principle. Besides that, the determination of Indonesia-Malaysia borderline was also set with the self-determination principle and treaties with neighboring states [3]. Aside from the administrative issues, the management of the Indonesian border area is heavily attached to the security paradigm. This can be seen from the fact that the main institutions for Indonesian border management are military institutions like the National Army and the Department of Defense that have significant authority in the decision-making process. It is a normal situation and happened in every state, however, with its tendency to emphasize the security approach, the other aspect was neglected like the economy and environment aspect. Things are slightly changed when the National Border Management Agency was established in 2010. The new institution incorporates prosperity and environmental approach in the border area development programs. Nevertheless, even with the official slogan and programs intended to shift the traditional approach (security in military terms) in the North Kalimantan border area, it remains an important part of Indonesian border policy. Some changes have been made, indeed like more allocation of resources to the economic and environmental aspects of the border area, but the security approach still leads the paradigm of North Kalimantan border policy [4].

However, this article argues that they are still missing one thing to complete the whole picture, namely the societal security approach. This is important because in North Kalimantan border area residents have unique customs and traditions that need to be addressed in the national border policy. The majority group in the North Kalimantan border area is Dayak Tribe. Identity then becomes a pivotal part of discussing the North Kalimantan border policy because there occurs the overlapping of multiple identities such as the identity as locals (Dayak), Indonesian, and Malaysian due to their dependency on Malaysian supply. Here the societal security concept could come in handy. As an academic concept, societal security concerns about “...the defense of a community against a perceived threat to its identity” [5]. The difference between state' security and societal security lies in the fact that in the former, it's aim is to guard the state's sovereignty while in the latter it aims to preserve their identity [5]-[7].

In the context of the North Kalimantan border area, there are at least two distinct communities who live on the borderline of Indonesia-Malaysia, the community of Dayak Kenyah in Malinau Regency and Dayak Lundayeh in Nunukan Regency. Their existence as a community that has a common identity has exceeded the existence of modern states of Indonesia and Malaysia. The emergence of modern states with their principles of sovereignty based on fixed territorial appears to create a problematic situation because on both sides of the states live people who share a common identity as they belong to the same tribe.

The other thing is a concern with their way of life. Their traditional livelihood as farmers makes them rely on the agriculture sector. What makes it problematic is now they have to accept that their homeland is located in the Heart of Borneo area and National Park where the forest is protected by national and international regimes. So when they open land in the forest for agricultural purposes or cut the forest for their house it would be perceived as a violation of national and international regulations. This creates a problematic situation given their remoteness, to rely on supply from the other parts of Indonesia is nearly impossible thus they have to cross the border to fulfill their daily needs from their counterparts in Malaysia, and most of the time they would use their path to cross the border instead of the official post due to low accessibility to the border posts. On the other hand, they still have to rely on agriculture to support their life and open the protected forest.

The underlying problem here is indeed the severe underdevelopment in nearly all border areas in North Kalimantan and for that purpose, the national government created the National Border Management Agency and adopted the economic and environmental approach to tackle the issue as

well as improving the lives of border area residents. However, this article argues that if the national government failed to address the identity dimension of the border area residents it will result in a more problematic situation in the future.

Indeed, there is no extreme situation in North Kalimantan border area in the social security context as those happening in other parts of the world where the identity of groups is locked at odds with the national identity or transnational one [6], [8], [9]-[12]. The main problem is the lack of effective development programs by national governments to improve the border area. However, while pushing the economic approach in border management the national government needs to accommodate the societal approach as well. The development program of the border area could not neglect the long and established identity of the border area residents to prevent the possibility of some actors to create perceived threats to the Dayak identity for example. The national government and also regional governments need to design the policy that accommodates their traditions and customs such as their traditional livelihood of farming and their shared identity with the Malaysian Dayak community. This is to prevent criminalizing the Dayak community for doing what they are used to do because it's their way of life, like traveling to visit their siblings in Malaysia or opening the forest for agricultural reasons. After all, it's their tradition and part of their identity. To keep criminalizing their traditions could result in a situation where they see the state with its regulations as threats to their identity.

CONCLUSION

Indonesian border policy has been transformed to adopt the economic and environmental approach besides the traditional security approach where the military presence is seen as the most important feature of the border policy. However given the fact that most of the border area residents have their unique customs and traditions, the societal/identity dimension of the border people also needs to be taken into consideration. This is particularly true in the context of the North Kalimantan border area in Nunukan and Malinau regency where the Dayak community lives. Severe underdevelopment in those areas forced them to depend heavily on Malaysian supply to fulfill their daily needs. This problem is addressed by the Indonesian government with its economic approach to boost development in the border area. however, the triangle of the security-economy-environmental approach of Indonesian border policy failed to recognize the societal/identity aspect of border area residents-such as the Dayak community in Nunukan and Malinau regency. Because their identity as one

community has been established long before the modern state of Indonesia and Malaysia were founded, their traditional activities like traveling to visit their siblings or opening the forest for the agricultural purpose could regard as an illegal activity while the Dayak community might see them as part of their identity as was passed by their ancestors. The "criminalization" of their traditional customs and way of life could be evolved into perceived threats to their identity as one community by the unsatisfied securitizing actors. That's why the national government should accommodate the identity dimension of border area residents into their policy to ensure that the worst scenario would not happen in the future.

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