

INDONESIA-MALAYSIABORDER COMMUNITY SOCIAL INTERACTION: A CASE STUDY OF ENTIKONG OF WEST KALIMANTAN

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Abstract

The border is a two-faced, into the open gates as the face of the country and the border as closed backs two states. Border communities in Indonesia and Malaysia allied supposed to interact with associative, promote each other and are not mutually antagonistic. Uniquely border communities are communities with its characteristics, although never happened hostility between countries Indonesia and Malaysia they have distinctive social interaction based on their social institutions, namely the norms and values of border society of the two countries. Norma is the local rules or customs in society. Value is something that's a superb, the bad one in the community. Norms and values form the basis of society in synergistic social interaction. This study will examine the social order of border communities in social interaction in Indonesia and Malaysia. The method used is qualitative with the concept of social institutions: the norms and values. Results of the study: to explain the norms and values that are in the border communities of two countries. Conclusion: to prove the assumption that the norms and values in the society social institutions border of the two countries the basis of social interaction are associative, suggesting the form of institutional strengthening of the social order of border communities in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Keywords: Social Institution: norms and values, the border communities and social interaction.

Introduction

It has been awhile that the management of border areas is treated as "backyard," bringing some implications such as the lack of awareness of border areas regarding infrastructure, social and economy. Not only that, it has been profoundly influenced by historical roots regarding social or separatist conflicts, which then encourages the state to secure those areas. This action, in fact, puts a centralistic system ashore, putting forward the stability of security rather than social-, economy-, or culture-developing approaches on the societies living in border areas. These long-established approaches of the security stability, however, have neglected the society's welfare in the border areas, cognizant that real potentials in that area are not fully exploited.

Certainly, border areas retain key roles, for they envisage a state in which the citizen and their interests pass through incessantly. Therefore, border areas may also be defined as areas representing particular sovereignty within which lies a cultural one that foregrounds a country's identity. Although divided by the country's border, the cultural values and the social interaction have already existed far before these border areas emerge. Such emergence is, in fact, a reminder that those interactions are perpetuated by the border communities from two different countries.

In its development, this border area has brought about a distinctive characteristic of society. The interaction between the Dayak people in Entikong and those in Sarawak has stimulated a distinctive one. This demonstrates that in border areas, a change stemming from inside the society and outside is simply inevitable, which is parallel to what Hortsmann has contended (in Prasojo 2013: 429) that a border is a laboratory for imperative social and cultural vicissitudes so that they become strategic points in the study of social changes.

The interaction built up between two different societies in Malaysia and Indonesia, particularly in Entikong, is enthralling to analyze, for there occurs an apparent change in which the infrastructure of Malaysian border is expanding rapidly, while that in Indonesian quite slowly. This difference, indeed, invites a unique interaction between two societies in that border area. Furthermore, it is also influenced by the solid relationship between Entikong and Malaysians, making those societies feel liberated to visit each other. The Malaysian government itself, in fact, accommodates the arrival of Dayak people coming from Indonesia at the annual event of "Gawai," a Dayak custom ceremony. Besides, Malaysia grants free access to the Dayak families living in a border area to visit their relatives without a passport or any official document.

The developing cultural interaction between Indonesia and Malaysia should be of concern to be discussed, not only on how social institutions in Entikong develops itself and any interaction between the people in Entikong but also on which social values are fortified between those two.

This paper, none the less, does not attempt to secede the developing structural or cultural relations between the two societies but to see more lucidly the cultural interaction in two different societies with underlying changes, as well as to find out whether this interaction gives impact to the developing structure in the border area.

Border Communities as a Plural Society

It is inevitable that border area retains a lot of points of interests for the society although the infrastructure of Indonesia's border area is lagging far behind from Malaysia. However, this handicap is perceived by the newcomers or outsiders as an opportunity. Border areas have come to be a prospective area for those who search fortune. This condition has made the border area as that which attracts many people from different ethnics. Entikong, one of many other legal border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia, has been perceived as an area of attraction to many tourists, having at least five ethnics: Dayak, Melayu, Jawa, Batak, and Minang, with Dayak being the majority in the area.

Nonetheless, ranging from different ethnics, the diversity does not cause the interaction to be rigid. Instead, it is developing to be a plural society, applied to the society by developing a consensus on behalf of fundamental values deeply inculcated in the paradigm of border communities. This integration in that society occurs because at the same time it becomes part of the society and integral social elements. Therefore, these elements should be presently neutralized by dual loyalties from each of the society's members. The structure constructed by the state does not, in fact, hamper the interaction between border communities, particularly those of Dayak who indeed has familial roots and historical relationship.

Social Interaction of Border Communities of Indonesia-Malaysia in Entikong

At least three types of interaction developing in border communities in Entikong is that of occupation, trade, and family. Referring to the continental division, the society once did not realize the limitations among them. They

were aware of the fact that they were neither in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia nor Malaysia. This ignorance, indeed, made them easy to visit their relatives or siblings residing in both countries. The government of Malaysia itself, indeed, accommodates the annual event of “Gawai,” a Dayak custom ceremony, granting free access to the Dayak families residing in the border area to visit each other. Moreover, they also were given liberty to have two different identity cards if they often travel for work—that is, one card for Indonesian and another for Malaysian.

This family bonding was what strengthened the communication between the border communities between Indonesia and Malaysia. Besides, a highly different situation between the facilities that Indonesians get and those by the time they enter Malaysia to buy their needs also plays a key role in this context. This is, indeed, what gets themselves accustomed to the situation in Malaysia rather than in Indonesia.

The familial interaction happening in this border area is initiated by Dayak people because Dayak people from both territories maintain a proper familial relation. Therefore, it is highly reasonable if each is willing to keep the relation working despite their being separate from each other. Such familial relation is, indeed, what reinforces their communication between two border communities, knowing that it could be a way of fulfilling their necessities, as it is known that there is a highly different situation between the facilities that Indonesians get and those that Malaysians get. It could be argued, then, that Indonesians residing in the border area gets accustomed even more to the Malaysian situation.

The difficulty of access in fulfilling the necessities in Indonesian territory also gives impacts to another aspect such as education. With the government’s program “Wajib Belajar 9 Tahun” (Obligatory Learning for 9 Years), on the one hand, it has given birth to an astronomical enthusiasm on elementary schoolers, which is apparent when the first examination in school takes place. On the other, students living in remote areas find this program disconcerting. There is, indeed, a strong parental guidance, viewed from the absence for which reason is to follow the parents’ path to help them sell resources to Malaysia or work in a barn. In other words, the difficult access and economic situation have impelled those students to abandon school to help build up the family’s economy.

It is unavoidable that the choice taken by that society is a rational one, knowing that they are on the brink of economic state; meanwhile, those students must do the examination in the city or downtown with, unfortunately,

difficult access and lack of budget. Therefore, the choice to help their parents and leave school is considered relatively acceptable. In other words, educationally speaking, many people do not graduate elementary school; even some people in border communities claim that they do not feel like having a state. Simply put, they do not understand what the definition of a state, knowing that from one generation to another, they live, breed, and feed into it without even questioning what sort of place it. This time around, the government's distinctively created for infrastructure territories, remote and border areas, called "Guru Gugus Depan," (Frontier Teachers), whose objective is that each community could make a good relation to help each other as border communities. Their relations, indeed, derive from the same economic and cultural background. Both countries are on Borneo Island, and when that country makes a treaty, the society of one ethnic is divided into two areas in two countries. However, they are connected to each other in an economy like trade, by Indonesians selling resources to the Malaysians; therefore, Indonesians are paid by *ringgit*, which is available to purchase stuff in Malaysia.

At this point, the interaction between border communities of Indonesia-Malaysia is not facilitated by a particular organization or group while the familial relation between the two has far long been established. To cater this problem, an event called "Titian Muhibah," a meeting to maintain the relation between both countries, is held annually by the government of Sanggau District as well as Malaysian District. Legally facilitated by the government of Sanggau District and the authoritative of Malaysia, this event involves several public figures, including chieftains, *temenggung* (ancient Malay title of nobility), head of the village, headman, and warlords (the latter shows up most seldom knowing that conflicts in border areas rarely happen; In fact, only when an invasion from outsiders of the village takes place, one would put in an appearance.)

Such mutual relation between Indonesia and Malaysia is fundamentally based on one thing: the fulfilment of each other's necessity. Indonesians sell their barn products to Malaysia, and Malaysians the daily stuff to Indonesian with *ringgit*. This strategy is used most often so that the Indonesians in the border area uses it more than they use *rupiah*. However, the Indonesians do not have the capability of carrying their stuff they bought from Malaysia, allowing smuggling to go through. What the society knows, all in all is that they earn a living by working and get money. At that time, there

are people who would provoke, then the public figures who voice out what has happened all this time in the field would rise from the dark.

The existing industries in Malaysia are upstream industries, while downstream industries are located in such cities as Java and Sumatra Island. Therefore, the distribution of products to Borneo and other remote areas requires an unreasonable amount of money for transportation. As a result, the retail price sold here is high while they could simply walk few steps to the border area and get the stuff they need with, in a surprise, lower price, which is commonplace for the people there. Conflict-solving is persuasive, through having a discussion with public figures being voicing out their opinions in those meetings. Because they feel like part of the Republic of Indonesia, they have the rights and obligations as a slice of that unity. Not only do they convince themselves nationalists, but they also believe that their rights are safeguarded by the Constitution, or in this case, the state. Hence, all actions are their efforts in maintaining their fundamental rights as a citizen.

The trade relation implemented by these border communities has enabled the border area in Entikong to be one of the border areas that is economically dense with a penetrating money circulation. Although the majority of those traders use *ringgit*, the economic rise is shovelled to the edge. The trade somehow has shaped a unique character because it becomes a win-win solution for both countries. At this point, we can see that the Indonesians in the border vend their assets while Malaysians sell theirs with a far better price than in Indonesia.

Secondly, the relation of occupation, implemented by the Indonesians to beseech a better job in Malaysia, particularly as labour in Malaysian farm. Working in a Malaysian farm, to our surprise, fascinates people in the border area even more because of its lofty wage. Although not all Indonesian workers own legal documents, the company, all in all, needs their services. That is why many Indonesians still come to the Malaysia despite their not having documents or a proper portfolio.

From the three interactions above, it could be argued that the interaction based on the relation is that which dominates all, which brings about not only the economic interaction such as trade, and occupation but also social interaction, like education. Therefore, regardless of its plurality, Entikong remains an area with a satisfactorily unyielding Dayak ethnics.

Economically speaking, the development of the cooperation, or more affordably-called as Credit Union (CU) in the Dayak society in West Kalimantan, has garnered many interests. CU, despite being a money

repository, also gives an undemanding access for investment in the society, with the mission of developing the economy and increasing the society's welfare, has allegedly transformed the society's paradigm which in the first place do not want to school their children. None the less, the savings in CU made the society eventually aware of the urgency of education.

Furthermore, it too has become a thorough institution for being a savings and loan institution, which has been trusted by many partners to sell resources, most of which are raw materials, and re-produce them to be semi-raw materials. Therefore, this procedure leads to an increase of the economy influx from the commodities such as gum being sold to the foreigners.

The society's interaction in the context of theory of Structural Functional

Human social interaction has become an integral part of viewing the development of society; it becomes one of the human's necessities, for it fulfils life's needs. Giddens (2006: 130) mentions three reasons why social interaction has garnered a great deal of sociologist's attention. Firstly, it is constantly used in our daily activities with other people, which eventually gives a certain structure and shape of what we do next. We can learn so much about ourselves as a social being and about social life itself. Therefore, our life is organized in the same pattern from day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year.

Secondly, the study of daily life gives us a description about how humans may act creatively to shape the reality. Although social behaviours are guided to a certain limit by roles, norms, and hopes, an individual sees his reality based on his background, interest, and motivation. They keep shaping reality through decisions and actions they dare to take. In other words, the reality is not static, creating somehow, in its essence, human interaction.

On the other hand, thirdly, by learning social interaction in our daily lives and highlighting social systems and bigger institutions, it should be reminded that all big-scale social systems, in fact, depend on the pattern of the social system in which we involve ourselves regularly.

From the above explanations, it could be argued that the more pluralistic society, with its various activities in the border area, the more developed and more complex is the social interaction. Therefore, a grand structure like a state that has separated one community from another should indeed not be a handicap in developing the interaction between communities.

Moreover, Giddens (2006: 131) contended that social interactions also require a great deal of nonverbal communication, like information exchange and meaning through facial expressions, gestures, and body language. Interactions as well have regulations although routinely using nonverbal gestures in our behaviours that we could do in a leisurely conversation with other people. That expression indicates that the relation between the Dayak society in Indonesia and that in Malaysia has fortified the interaction between two societies in the border area. This interaction is strong, for there is an exchange of exchanging commodities which cover the economic transaction, as well as other transactions routinely implemented by two border communities through the event of "Gawai."

In addition, in social interactions, there is a concept of facial, bodily, and linguistic function, in which daily interaction that we do, depends on the relation between what we say in terms of facial expressions and bodily gestures and what we say regarding the content. Sometimes, in interaction, we use the former to fulfil what we *need* to communicate verbally and to identify whether they are sincere with what they say (Giddens 2006: 141). Therefore, a focused interaction might occur when an individual talks face-to-face. Moreover, a social interaction often involves exchange, both focus and not focus. Goffman (in Giddens 2006:142) mentioned a sample of a focused interaction like greetings, which we do many times in our life. Meanwhile, in the concept of time and space interaction, Giddens (2006:147) asserts that to understand how an activity is distributed in time and space and to understand a social life as a whole, we must know that both are basic things to analyze, for example, a meeting. All these interactions happen at a certain place and last for a certain period. Therefore, our activity in a day, let alone the concept of regionalization that will help us understand how our social life is, tends to be categorized in, in fact, time and space.

Referring to the explanation of social interaction foregrounded by Giddens, the social interaction happening in Entikong border communities could be viewed as that of facial, bodily, and linguistic function. From the interaction concept, we can *see*, *feel*, and *articulate* the meanings of that interaction more deeply. Therefore, the development of social institution like "Gawai", a Dayak custom ceremony regularly implemented by the border communities in Malaysia and of the people's credit sector in the cooperation or Credit Union in Indonesian border area—all of this show that the social interaction between Indonesians and Malaysians has encouraged the development of social institution in the society. In a nutshell, it could be

asserted that more developed social institutions in the border area are the result of the “domino effect” of the systemized interaction between two societies living in two countries. Moreover, the process of this social interaction is coined as an “interpretative process”—a process that ensues with the meaning given in a particular condition so that that meaning could eventually be changed or justified based on the interpretation that an individual makes.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The conclusions of this interaction between border communities; first, the norms of the custom have become the elixir of the harmony of the relation between border communities. That relation between the Indonesian Dayak and Malaysian Dayak caters the conflicts between two countries in border areas. Second, the norms of custom intertwined in each border area have opened up a room for initiations and fulfilment of each other's needs, through trading between the border communities. Third, the rapid development of border areas in Malaysia has also encouraged many Indonesians to earn a living in Malaysia and fourth, although a pluralistic territory, Entikong is dominated by Dayak culture. This shows that the societies from different ethnics residing in the border area have shown their ability to integrate well; therefore, they succeed in developing a new social character.

While the recommendations are; first, a paradigm dichotomizing a state from another has compelled the government to fix the infrastructure in the border area presently. This is crucial to show that that state is full-heartedly willing to develop a border area and make it competitive in the face of the neighbouring country. Second, such infrastructure could also embolden the awareness of border communities to access education, narrowing the gaps in human resources. Besides, this effort will enable the society not to school their children in a neighbouring country.

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