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### THE EXISTENCE OF “SAPI/PISANG” PEOPLE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDONESIA-PHILIPPINES BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT

#### *KEBERADAAN ORANG SANGIR SAPI/PISANG: TANTANGAN DAN KESEMPATAN DALAM PEMBANGUNAN DAERAH PERBATASAN INDONESIA-FILIPINA*

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#### ABSTRAK

Kawasan Perbatasan Indonesia di Kepulauan Sangihe yang berbatasan dengan Filipina bagian selatan, tergolong sebagai daerah tertinggal. Untuk mempercepat pembangunan kawasan tersebut, Indonesia dan Filipina dapat melaksanakan strategi yang memanfaatkan konektivitas sosial yang sudah dibangun oleh masyarakat perbatasan yang dikenal dengan istilah Sangir-Philipina (Sapi) atau Philipina-Sangir (Pisang). Berdirinya Indonesia dan Filipina sebagai dua negara yang berdaulat sejak berakhirnya Perang Dunia II ternyata tidak menghentikan orang Sapi/Pisang untuk melakukan kegiatan lintas batas tradisional untuk tujuan sosial, budaya, dan ekonomi. Tulisan ini menganalisis bagaimana dampak negatif dan dampak positif dari konektivitas sosial di atas dalam membangun kawasan perbatasan Indonesia-Filipina. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, diskusi kelompok terfokus, penelitian lapangan dan studi pustaka. Tulisan ini menyimpulkan bahwa konektivitas sosial antar orang-orang Sapi/Pisang di sisi Indonesia dan di sisi Filipina menimbulkan masalah berupa orang-orang tanpa kewarganegaraan, kegiatan lintas batas ilegal, dan aktivitas terkait terorisme. Namun demikian, Tulisan ini juga menemukan dampak positif dari konektivitas sosial di atas berupa terjalinnya kerja sama lintas batas tradisional dan perdagangan, pembukaan jalur kapal feri Davao-Bitung, dan kerja sama antarpemerintah daerah. Sebagai langkah ke depan, penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya kehendak politik yang kuat dan partisipasi aktif dari kedua negara dalam memanfaatkan konektivitas sosial untuk membangun kawasan perbatasan bersama.

**Kata Kunci:** “Sapi/Pisang”, perbatasan, konektivitas sosial, pembangunan, Indonesia-Filipina.

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## ABSTRACT

Indonesia's border region to the Philippines, especially to the Sangihe Islands which borders to southern, is mostly a less developed area. To accelerate development of this border region, Indonesia and the Philippines need to exercise a strategy which optimize social connectivity which has been existed since centuries by the Indonesian Sangihe people known as Sangir-Philippines ("Sapi") or the Philippines-Sangir ("Pisang"). Although they are sovereign states now with their sovereign territorial rights, these facts do not prevent these peoples to continue their traditional - border for the purpose of social, culture and economic activities. This paper examines how their social connectivity could be utilized to develop border area between Indonesia and the Philippine. By using qualitative methods, the data for this paper is collected from interviews, focus group discussions, field research and literature reviews. This paper concludes that social connectivity among Sapi/Pisang people on the Indonesian and the Philippines respective side raises some challenges such as problems of stateless people, illegal cross-border activities, and terrorism-related activities. However, this paper also found out some positive impacts from their social connectivities, such as the establishment of traditional cross-border cooperation and trade, the opening of the Davao-Bitung ferry line, and cooperation between regional governments. As a step forward, this research emphasizes the importance of strong political will and active participation from both countries in utilizing social connectivity to build a shared border region.

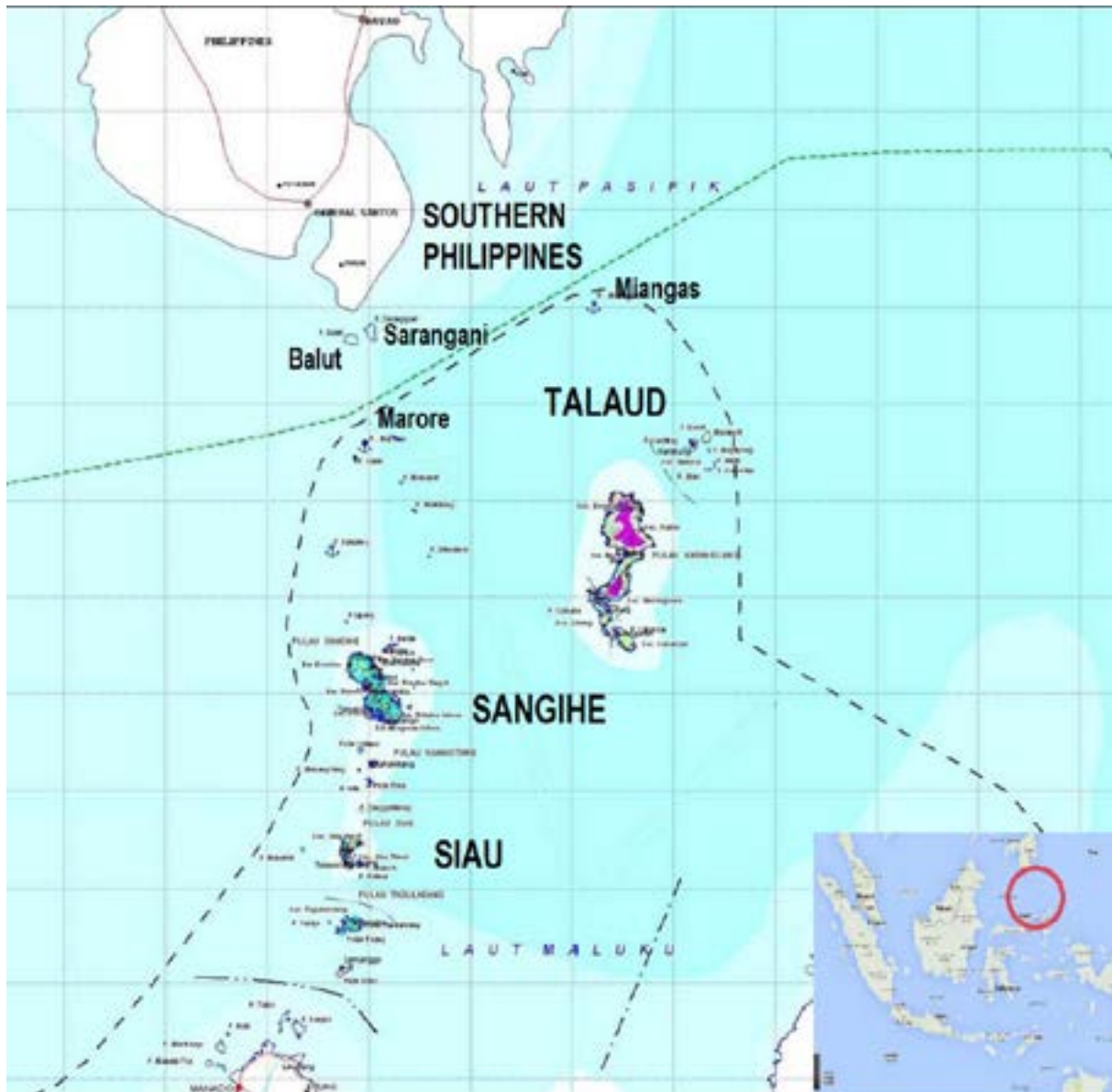
**Keywords:** *Border, Development, Indonesia-The Philippines, Social connectivity*

## INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia is an area consisted of states which were free from colonization since the post-World War II, except Thailand (Keling et.al, 2011). These countries inherited territories whose borders were determined by the colonialist, in which the determination was rarely consulted with the local king, local sultan, and other local authorities (Wain, 2012). As a result, in some cases, the border divides a single community into two parts of different countries. This is what happened to the Sangir community on the Indonesia-Philippines border. For the past centuries, they have inhabited Nusa Utara (Northern Islands), from the Sangihe and Talaud Islands in the south to the Balut, Sarangani, and Mindanao Islands in the north. Unfortunately, following the establishment of Dutch Indies colonialism in Indonesia and Spain/United States in the Philippines, Sangir community then was

After the independence of Indonesia and the Philippines, the area inhabited by the Sangir separated by the imaginary line of state sovereignty. community faced a similar problem, namely a low level of welfare compared to the central regions of their respective countries. According to the Human Development Index (HDI) 2017, the HDI in the Sangihe Islands is 69.14. It is lower than the HDI of its province, North Sulawesi (71.66) and the national average of Indonesian HDI (70.81). As a statistical tool, this index represents a region's overall achievement in its social and economic dimensions (BPS Sulawesi Utara, 2018).

Similar to the Sangir community, the social and economic conditions in the Sangihe Islands community is also poor. Research conducted by Raharjo et. al in 2016 shows that the Sangir community living in the small island of Marore is prone



**Figure 1**  
**Nusa Utara (Northern Islands) in the Indonesia-Philippines Border**

Source: Regional Development Planning Agency of Talaud Islands Regency, Melonguane, Talaud, 3 April 2012 (modified by author).

to the natural phenomena of strong winds, huge waves, and earthquake due to its geographical position near the Pacific Ocean and its ring of fire. It is also exacerbated by the limited government's fulfillment and service on basic infrastructures such as transportation, communication and energy (Raharjo, 2018). It certainly contradicts to the fact that Nusa Utara region and its surrounding waters are very rich in natural

resources, such as fish (333.600 tons/year) and coconut (Ministerial Decree of Marine Affairs and Fisheries No. 45, 2011). In terms of human resources, most of its people are skilled fishermen and copra growers. As noted by Alami & Raharjo (2017), the poor social and economic condition in the region showed that the wealth of the fisheries resources has not yet positively contributed to the people's economy (Alami & Raharjo,

2017: 45). There should be an effort to effectively manage its natural resources in order to enhance Sangir people's welfare. In the midst of such an alarming condition, there is still another potential condition to develop the region with the presence of social connectivity between 221,171 Sangir people in Sangihe and Talaud of Indonesia<sup>1</sup> with thousands of Sangir people in the Southern Philippines, which is famously called as Sangir-Philippine ("Sapi") or Philippine-Sangir ("Pisang") (BPS North Sulawesi, 2018: 51) National Commission for Culture and the Arts: 2015). They conduct traditional cross border activities such as social visit and traditional trade, both legally and illegally. Due to their geographical proximity, they only need to sail the sea for two hours by a small pump boat to reach the neighboring country's territory. In 2015, for example, there was 872 people which exercised their traditional border crossing activities through Marore Exit/Entry Post in Sangihe Islands. While 461 crossers were Indonesian citizens and 234 people Indonesian citizens which inhabited in the Philippines, the rest was Philippines citizens (see Table 1) (Raharjo, 2018).

The present of social connectivity between the Sangihe-Talaud people and Sapi/Pisang communities can actually be exercised to accelerate border areas development between the two countries. Therefore, this paper will examine how the utilization of social connectivity in cross-border cooperation to develop Indonesia-

<sup>1</sup>Total population of Sangihe Islands Regency and Talaud Islands Regency in 2017.

Philippines border area. To do so, this paper employ a set of data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and literature reviews, as well as field research carried out by the authors in the Nusa Utara.

### **"SAPI/PISANG": TRACING HISTORY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL TIES**

"Sapi/Pisang" ("Cow/Banana") is an abbreviation of the descendants of Sangir-Philippines/Philippines-Sangir. Some say that the title "Sapi" refers to those whose father is from Sangir and mother is Filipino, while "Pisang" refers to those whose father is from the Philippines and mother is Sangir ("Pisang Sapi" Si Pencuri Ikan Harus, 2017).<sup>2</sup> However, in the author's observation during the field research on Sangihe and Talaud Islands in 2013-2016, the two words are often used by the community both ways, regardless of father or mother lineage.

Sapi/Pisang are declining to have settled in the coastal areas of the islands adjacent to the Indonesia-Philippine border, both on islands that are part of Indonesia's sovereign territory as well as part of the sovereign territory of the Philippines. In parts of Indonesia, they mainly spread in the various islands of Sangihe and Talaud, which are also often called Nusa Utara, located in the northern part of North Sulawesi Province bordering the Philippines, such as on the islands of Marore, Matutuang, Kawio, and Kawaluso. While in parts of the Philippines, they are mostly settled in the southern part of Mindanao Island, such as General Santos, Davao, Balut

<sup>2</sup>In Indonesian language, "sapi" means cow, while "pisang" means banana.

and Sarangani ([“Pisang Sapi” Si Pencuri, 2017](#)). In 1954, when the Indonesian and Philippines governments first discussed the existence of Sapi/Pisang residents, the Philippines submitted an estimate number of Indonesian nationals who were in the Philippines which numbered about 6.000 people. While the Indonesian side declared the estimate of Filipino citizens who are in the region are about 300 people (Undang-Undang No.77, 1957). However, it is difficult to obtain accurate official data on the number of Sapi/Pisang. Some argue that their number reaches thousands of people. In an interview, for example, Saud Tamba Utama, Deputy Commander of Lantamal VIII, Manado claims that the majority (90%) of the population in the southern Philippines of Balut Island consists of Sapi/Pisang. The same thing is also found in Matutuang in the Sangihe Islands Regency, in which the population mostly comes from Sangir-Phillipines. While in parts of the Philippines, their numbers also reach thousands of people (Vice Commander of Lantamal VIII, 2014). As stated by Cahyo Pamungkas, the number of Sapi/Pisang in the southern Philippines is around 30.000 peoples. Yet, the registered people at the Indonesian Consulate General in Davao are only 5,200 residents ([Pamungkas, 2016: 69](#)). This means, many of them are not registered as residents in the Philippines. This resulted uncertainty of citizenship and to an extent even stateless among those people.

Discussing the existence of Sapi/Pisang community is not a new phenomenon. Their existence can not be separated from

the history of cross-border relationship that has been established by the two residents in the border area of Indonesia-Philippines since about five centuries ago, which was in line with the rampant trade that occurred in the area. Relations with the outside world then indirectly played an important role in the early history of the Sapi/Pisang people's existence.

Until the end of the 14th century, Nusa Utara was an isolated area from the outside world. This area began to open itself in the fifteenth century with the merchants and sailors from mainland China passing the archipelago on their way to the eastern archipelago, from Amoy (China) through Nusa Utara to Maluku, or from Malacca via Borneo, Nusa Utara to Maluku ([Ulaen, 2003: 158](#)). The charm of spices from the archipelago also then attracted the attention of the Europeans, especially Spain to conduct an expedition in 1524 and stop at Sangihe. This expedition further encouraged the Portuguese in 1526 to begin building trade routes from Ternate to Borneo via Sulu and the Sangihe archipelago ([Velasco, 2010: 100](#)). Through interaction with the outside world, Nusa Utara at that time then developed into a zone of shipping and advanced commerce.

In line with these development, Nusa Utara, or in the records of the Governor of Maluku Robertus Padtbrugge called noordereilanden, also evolved as a traditional commercial area. Inter-visitation among residents took place repeatedly between the residents. On one hand, these mutual visits create commercial networks

that begin with the exchange of goods. Agricultural products, especially copra from Nusa Tenggara, is brought to the southern Philippines to be bartered with household goods (Ulaen, 2003: 3). On the other hand, the visits among residents also led to the occurrence of kinship network through marriage between Sangihe and Mindanao residents.

The inter-visitation of the above citizens which later led to the trade and marriage networks, in turn caused residents from Sangihe and Talaud to settle permanently and / or seasonally in parts of the Philippines. In contrast, there are also residents who come from the Philippines in the south whom later also lived permanently and / or seasonally in parts of Indonesia. The inhabitants of the Sangihe and Talaud Islands warmly received relatives from the Philippines to settle on their islands, as did those in the Philippines.

There are several factors that encourage mutual visits between people in Nusa Utara with residents in the southern Philippines, especially in Balut, Sarangani and Mindanao Islands. The First is the geographical proximity factor. There is a close proximity between the islands of Sangihe and Talaud with the southern Philippines, such as Marore Island with Balut Island and Sangarani Island, and Mianguas Island with St.Agustin.<sup>3</sup> Second is

<sup>3</sup>Distance of Mianguas island to the nearest Indonesian island, namely Karatung Island (Talaud Regency) about 58.6 miles. While the distance Mianguas to Melonguane (capital of Talaud District) and Manado (capital of North Sulawesi Province) are respectively 93.7 miles and 325.1 miles. This distance is still much further than the distance of this island to the Philippines. Distance

the economic factor. The inhabitants of the Nusa Utara Islands produce copra, nutmeg and other plantation products that can be exchanged with materials originating from the Philippines such as rice, clothing and other necessities of daily living. Third is the socio-cultural factor. Visitation among citizens is being done with the purpose of visiting relatives as well as visiting family's burial sites (Undang-Undang No.77, 1957). In addition, the visit is also for educational purpose. When the Spanish colonized the Philippines, the colonial ruler ran a Catholic missionary work to cover the border area around Mindanao and also establish relationships with the Sangir kings. This relationship indication is seen when King Siauw sent a royal family member to a Catholic school in Manila.

Relations between regions on the Indonesia-Philippines border also occur through relationships between local kingdoms. Historically, Kandahe kingdom in the main Sangihe Islands has close ties with the sultan Buayan of Mindanao. This kingdom also established outposts on the islands of Balut and Sangarani. But in the 19th century, the kingdom of Mindanao began to lose the prestige of power, while the Sulu kingdom increasingly plunged as a new political and economic power house. This kingdom then become not only as a trading post for forest products and fisheries for the Chinese market, but also the center of

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to St.Agustin, a district in the Philippines closest to Mianguas is only 69.1 miles and to Davao about 108.5 miles. This distance is calculated via GPS by the Head of Mianguas District during his interview with Ganewati Wuryandari, Mianguas. 27 April 2012.

the slave trade. These slaves were Sangihe and Talaud residents who were captured by the Sulu pirates (Shinzo, 2010; Velasco, 2010; Ulaen, 2003).

The mobility of the citizens of Sangihe and Talaud to the Philippines also occurred in line with the Dutch colonial presence in Indonesia around the 17th century. This was partly driven by the economic hardship experienced by them as a result of Dutch colonial policy to make Batavia the center of Dutch East Indies colonial government and at the same time become the center of trade. This shifting of commercial and shipping lanes has dampened the prestige of Nusa Utara. Reduced commercial activity and subsequent voyages resulted in the decline of economic growth in the region. This situation has unwittingly caused the Nusa Utara to become a "marginalized area". This condition encourages Sangir people to look for opportunities to work outside their area. Not only to other parts of Indonesia, such as Minahasa, but also to the southern part of the Philippines (Ulaen, 2003: 158-9). At the time of colonialism, Portuguese and Dutch colonials made an agreement to divide the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies in each of its respective domains, which then transformed the Sangihe and Talaud Islands and the southern part of Mindanao from commercial routes into border areas (Ulaen, 2003: 161). As a result, the traditional practice that has been done for centuries in the region is considered illegal by the colonial authorities. The border as an imaginary line that marks the

limits of political sovereignty, is not well understood by both local communities. There are Sangir people who still go in and out of the Philippines without permission, and vice versa. As a result, illegal practices of these cross-border activities occurred and continued even after Indonesia and the Philippines became independent states respectively in 1945 and 1946.

Even though their entrance is illegal, the presence of Sangihe and Talaud residents during post-independence in reality is accepted with open arms in the Philippines. In addition to the historical ties and strong social relationships formed over generation, the arrival of Sangihe and Talaud residents in the Philippines in the 1950s gained strong support from Filipino businessmen. At that time, the Philippines began to build its isolated territory on the border of General Santos, Davao, which is not far from the Indonesian border area on Miangas Island, only about 5 miles away. The arrival of Sangir people is a blessing because they provide cheap labor in the plantation and fishery sectors. As an illegal worker, their wages are also much lower than that of local workers. Meanwhile, domestic political and economic instability in Indonesia during that period is also another trigger factor for Sangir residents to seek better living opportunities in neighboring countries bordering Indonesia (velasco, 2010: 102). There are some Sangir residents who subsequently decided to settle, even illegally in the Philippines, but there are also some people who go back and forth in the territory of both countries.

In the concept of the modern state, the practice of Sapi/Pisang people in and out of the border regions of Indonesia and the Philippines has been running for centuries and presumably such a thing has become a custom, but still considered a violation to the provisions of immigration rules. Their activities are illegal because without the completeness of official documents. Whereas the rules of immigration stated that any activities which cross the borders of other countries must be accompanied by official documents, such as passports. Illegal and even stateless status causes their vulnerable positions to obtain legal protection. This will also make it difficult for them to gain full rights of citizens in the social, economic and political spheres.

Recognizing the importance of handling these issues, Indonesian and the Philippines governments further worked to overcome it by making cross-border agreements. Efforts made since the 1950s have resulted some agreements. Both countries represented by Soehardjo Wijopranto (Indonesia) and Jose Fuentebella (Philippines), for example, succeeded in signing the agreement on 4 July 1956 in Jakarta. In essence, this agreement is about the existence of citizens (both Indonesian citizens and Filipinos) who are not valid in the territory of both countries (Ulaen, 2003: 163). This Agreement is subsequently incorporated into Law Number 77 of 1957 concerning the Approval on Unlawful Citizens in the Regions of the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of the Philippines. This regulation primarily

regulates two main points, namely: (1) the settlement of questions about residing citizens of each other in the territory of the other party illegally; and (2) solving the problems of the movements of their citizens into the territory of the other party. In the first context, for example, governments of both countries seek to repatriate citizens. As for the second point, the two governments agree that the residents of the Indonesian-Philippines border areas have to obtain border-crossing card that allow them to travel to the other side of the border for up to 59 days for the purpose of family visits, religious worship, and pleasure (Undang-Undang No.77, 1957).

On September 14, 1965, the two countries also ratify the Immigration Guidelines, the Joint Directives and Guidelines and the implementation of Immigration Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of the Philippines. Under this agreement, cross-border passers who meet specified requirements are no longer considered illegal. The agreement also establishes several islands in the Sangihe and Talaud regions and some areas in southern Mindanao as the Border Crossing Area (BCA). In Indonesia's side, the BCA covers (1) BCA Marore unit which includes the islands Marore, Kawio, Kawaluso, Tinakareng and Bukide; and (2) BCA Miangas Unit covering the islands of Miangas, Karakatung and Marampit. As for the Philippines, BCA includes Balut, Sarangani and Mati islands (Marore: Suatu Kampung, 2008). In addition, traffic activities on the border are also considered

valid if through a check point harbor. In Indonesian territory, there are check points in Marore and Miangas of Sangihe and Talaud Islands, as well as in Tarakan of Kalimantan. While in the Philippines, three ports as exit gates are in Batugading on Balut Island, Tibanban in Davao Oriental and Bongao provinces on Tawi-tawi island (Ulaen, 2003: 164).

To help smoothen the interests of inter-goods traffic at the Indonesia-Phillipines border, the two countries subsequently developed a trade regulation in the border area agreed by the two parties on 8 August 1974, namely Agreement on Border Trade Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Republic of the Phillipine. This agreement consisting of 10 Articles essentially regulates cross-border trade procedures. The value of goods will be 1,000 peso or 62,250 rupiahs (equivalent to about 150 US dollars per single trip in the case of sea vessels, the value of goods carried by one kumpit or boat shall not exceed The total amount of 10,000 peso or 622,500 rupiahs (equivalent to about 1,500 US dollars) .The citizens who are allowed to cross-border trade are also limited to the people living around the border of the two countries, namely Nanusa islands, Kawio islands, and Bukide islands (Indonesia ) And Balut island (Philippines). The time of their visit should also not exceed 30 days.

From the important points of the agreement signed by Indonesia-Philippines above, it really underscores the reality that the government can not just construct the border

politically. The practice of supervision and restriction on such transboundary activities showed its incapability in eliminating the socio-cultural and economic interactions of the two neighbors in the Indonesia-Philippines border region. Therefore, both governments need to continue to provide social space for people living in the border areas of both countries. They should allowed sociocultural and economic interactions that have lasted for hundreds of years to continue with reference to the provisions agreed upon by the two countries set in the border crossing agreements above. The agreements show the function of the border itself which gives more weight to the social aspect, not merely on the political aspect. This is in line with what Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly said, that the borders are not merely about the physical aspects of the boundaries of sovereign and territorially demarcated states. The understanding of border is much more complex, as there is a strong connection between the physical and community aspects that occupy the region and with the economic and local culture activities (brunet-Jailly, 2005: 634).

### **“SAPI/PISANG” PEOPLE: PROBLEMS OR OPPORTUNITIES?**

The presence Sapi/Pisang people in the Nusa Utara has influenced to the dynamics of the Indonesia-Philippines border region. These “Indonesian diaspora”, as also named by Talampas, have traditionally lived in South Mindanao, especially in South Cotabato, General Santos City, Davao Del Sur, and Sarangani (Talampas, 2015).

They frequently travel to the neighboring country's territory, through some exit/entry points, namely Marore and Miangas in Indonesian side as well as Mabila in the Philippines' side. To illustrate their frequent travelling, table 1 shows border crosser through entry/ exit station at Marore. The total number of border crosser from January-December 2015 is 872 people. Indeed, this border crosser give negatively and positively impacts to the development of cross-border activities. On the negative side, the existence of the Sapi/Pisang people in Indonesia and Philippine has frequently raised some border issues. The first problem relates to the issue of "stateless" of the Sapi/Pisang people. Unfortunately, it is difficult to ascertain their numbers. It is due to the incompleteness of the documents they have, the few number of those who report their status to the Indonesian Consulate in Manila, and the similar physical appearance between Sapi/Pisang people and the local people of South Mindanao, which make it difficult to distinguish them from others. According to United Nations, their number is around 3,325 people in 2013. Moreover, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Republic of the Philippines states that their population is 7,514 people (National Commission for Culture and the Arts. 2015). Meanwhile, according to Indonesian Consulate in Davao City, their number is 7,946.<sup>4</sup> This is nearly similar amount stated by Hayase (2007) which is 7,483 people (Talampas, 2015: 133). In response to this stateless people, some Filipinos say they

should be sent back to Indonesia. However, some others are prefer to employ them as cheap labors. They feel proud to have Indonesian housemaids at home (Talampas, 2015: 134).

The second problem is the low level of welfare. Most of Sapi/Pisang people in the Southern Philippines live in poverty. According to one of Sapi/Pisang people who reside in Balut-Sarangani, the Sapi/Pisang's welfare is worse than those who are in Marore Island, Indonesia. This information is supported by their Human Development Index (HDI). HDI Sarangani in 2012 is 43. It is lower than the Philippines' national average and the Sangihe Islands which are respectively 64.4 and 65.87 (The Philippine Statistics Authority & Human Development Network, 2012; BPS of Kepulauan Sangihe Regency, 2015). They usually work as labors in coconut farm, banana and sweet potato farmer, as well as traditional boat maker (Talampas, 2015: 139). Geographical nature of Sangihe Islands as relatively an insular isolated area which far from national economic center is allegedly the key factor to this low level of HDI. Furthermore, for Sarangani of Southern Philippines, long-running conflict and perceived government neglect are being accused as factors of underdevelopment (ADB, 2009; Abas, no date).

The third problem is illegal cross-border activities. These activities are mostly driven by economic necessity. Some residents in the Indonesia-Philippines border engage in smuggling some prohibited items, such as alcoholic beverage of "Tanduay",

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<sup>4</sup> Talampas, "Indonesian Diaspora...", p. 133.

**Table 1**  
Border Crosser through Entry/ Exit Station of Marore, 2015

|              | <b>ENTRY</b> |             |             | <b>EXIT</b> |             |             |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|              | Indonesian   |             |             | Indonesian  |             |             |
|              | Citizen but  |             |             | Citizen but |             |             |
|              | Indonesian   | Philippines | Philippines | Indonesian  | Philippines | Philippines |
|              | Citizen      | Resident    | Citizen     | Citizen     | Resident    | Citizen     |
| January      | 5            | 0           | 0           | 11          | 0           | 0           |
| February     | 8            | 2           | 0           | 18          | 4           | 10          |
| March        | 20           | 3           | 7           | 24          | 3           | 2           |
| April        | 23           | 2           | 17          | 10          | 1           | 3           |
| May          | 23           | 21          | 12          | 39          | 12          | 16          |
| June         | 35           | 21          | 18          | 25          | 18          | 7           |
| July         | 25           | 7           | 5           | 26          | 8           | 10          |
| August       | 12           | 3           | 2           | 13          | 4           | 3           |
| September    | 17           | 22          | 16          | 10          | 9           | 7           |
| October      | 7            | 9           | 2           | 16          | 19          | 8           |
| November     | 21           | 21          | 16          | 17          | 13          | 5           |
| December     | 19           | 17          | 6           | 37          | 15          | 5           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>215</b>   | <b>128</b>  | <b>101</b>  | <b>246</b>  | <b>106</b>  | <b>76</b>   |

Source: Border Crossing Agreement Team of District Marore ([Raharjo, 2018](#)).

fighting cocks, cigarette of “Surya”, as well as subsidized gasoline. Moreover, they also conduct illegal fishing in the Indonesian territory.

The above problems take place since the border population in Indonesia and the Philippine are in mutual dependence. They did illegal activities not just for profit orientation, but more on survival motivation. As above explained, the border areas in respective District of Sangihe Archipelago and Talaud (Indonesia) and Sarangani (Philippines) are less developed regions. They are also still undeveloped compared to other regions in their respective countries. This poor condition is exacerbated by the weak supervision and law enforcement from the formal authorities of both governments towards the illegal cross-border activities.

Despite the above negative side, the social connectivity that exist among Sapi/Pisang people in the Indonesian-Philippines border area also brings some potential opportunities that can be exercised to enhance their lives. As Talampas said, diaspora phenomenon can be considered as some form of social capital that can be exercised by both Indonesia and the Philippines ([Talampas, 2015: 134](#)).

First, the social connectivity of Sapi/Pisang becomes a strong basis for bilateral agreement on cross-border cooperation between the government of Indonesia and the Philippines. This cross-border cooperation generally composes of two types. The first type is the Border Crossing Agreement. The two governments to facilitate traditional cross-borders to business, family

visit, religious worship, or pleasure. In this regard, they subsequently agree to appoint some entry-exit stations in each of country territory and provide a Border-Crossing Card. It is a document similar to passport, but it is simpler in its mechanism (Immigration Agreement on Repatriation and Border Crossing Arrangement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of the Philippines, 1956). The second type of border crossing cooperation is Border Trade Agreement, in which Indonesia-Philippines exempt import customs duties for cross-border trade with certain quotas. As explained in the previous section, a person with Border Crossing Card could bring goods with a maximum value of 1,000 peso or 62,250 rupiah (equivalent to about 150 U.S. dollar) per single trip in case of sea vessels. If they use kumpit or boat, the value shall not exceed the total amount of 10,000 peso or 622,500 rupiah (equivalent to about 1,500 US dollar) (Agreement on Border Trade Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, 1974). However, the Minister of Finance of Indonesia in its regulation Number 188/PMK.04/2010 ensures to customs value granted exemption is US \$ 250 per person/month (Regulation of the Minister of Finance No.188, 2010). In Marore Border Crossing Station, the US\$ 250 quota is the standard.

With specific regard to the implementation of cross-border trade cooperation above, some people in Marore Islands employ this facility to become fish

traders. They collect fish from small-scale fishermen and preserve it in a cold box. If it reaches about 300 kilo gram, they will sell it to the Philippines, whether in Balut or/and in General Santos. They subsequently spend their Peso to buy some goods, such as hook for fishing, paint, plywood, and nails, for being sale in Marore. In addition, there are also some Philippines' border crossers with a big boat called "fuso" coming to Marore island and buying fish directly from the local fishermen. From these cross border economic activities, therefore, the Philippine fishermen earn money by selling Marore's fish, while the fish collectors in Marore receive benefits from selling goods of the Filipino-made (Raharjo, 2018).

Secondly, in addition to traditional cross-border cooperation, the above social connectivity also become a strong reason for the government of Indonesia and the Philippines' agreement to operate Roll on Roll off (Ro-Ro) Ferry with Davao-Bitung route. Its first voyage was inaugurated by Rodrigo Duterte, the President of Phillipine, and Joko Widodo, the President of Republic of Indonesia in Davao on 29 April 2017. It mainly brought flour from Davao and arrived in Bitung on 2 May 2017. Unfortunately, this ferry is still for goods, not yet for passengers. In the future, cross-border passenger transportation needs to be built, especially sea transportation that stop over at the border islands. There had already been a regular Manado-Davao flight route. But, it was terminated due to the lack of its passengers. With regard to the low level of economy condition among

Sangihe and Sapi/Pisang communities, sea transportation modes which covered many remote areas and low cost, seems to be the most appropriate choice in strengthening this social connectivity.

Thirdly, another opportunity are cooperation between local government in the Indonesia-Philippine border. Indeed, this cooperation can be utilized to improve public services and promote development in the border areas of both countries. Some local governments have initiated this cooperation. In 1993, for example, Manado and Davao set their plan to establish Sister City program (Herviansyah, 2011). The kinship relationship that exists between the border communities in the Indonesia-Philippines border area is a social capital that makes it easier to any initiative to build cooperation between border areas government. As an illustration, Mayor and Vice Mayor of Sarangani Municipality in the Philippines, Virginia and Jerry Cawa, are in fact descendants of Sangir Indonesia. They usually invite the sub-district government of Marore of Indonesia to come to Sarangani to attend the celebration of the Philippines's Independence Day.

Fourthly, the socio-cultural affinity between the border community of Indonesia and the Philippine effectively demonstrates to prevent radicalism. At least for the last two decades, the Southern Philippines has been known as an important area for regional and global terrorist groups, such as Jama'ah Islamiyah and al Qa'ida. This region has also become training grounds for Indonesians, Malaysians, Singaporeans,

Thais and Arabs who subscribe to jihadist-Salafism (Riviere, 2016). In this regard, both countries can take advantage of the Sangihe and Sapi/Pisang communities to exercise community-based surveillance on cross-border terrorist activities through their region. Their cooperation have effectively shown their success, for example, in their response to the Marawi attack by ISIS-affiliated Maute group on May-June 2017. The authorities of two countries carried out their prevention action to terrorism threat by attached poster of suspected terrorists along the border area.

The above explanations imply a concern on the importance of empowering social connectivity among Sapi/Pisang communities in Indonesia and the Southern Philippines to build better cross-border cooperation. Not only to enhance economic development through traditional border trade and Davao-Bitung Roll On –Roll Off Ferry, this cooperation is also pivotal to maintain socio-cultural network with family visit and local governments' cross border visit, as well as to create a more secure border area through security cooperation in combating radicalism and terrorism. To do so, governments and the people from both parties should aware of, and overcome some problems which have been identified earlier above on the problems of stateless, less prosperous and the practice of (illegal) border-crossing activities by Sapi/Pisang people. The effort to overcome these problems and to develop cross-border cooperation should be conducted in parallel way. In doing so, the improvement of

Sangihe and Sapi/Pisang people's welfare in the border area could be achieved fast.

## CONCLUSION

As sovereign states, Indonesia and the Philippines hold their respective authorities to manage their border areas. Political dimensions and the approach of state security to the border usually gain a central place in the border management. This brings about the position of border areas and their communities seen as peripheral areas in the relation between the center and the region. Knowledge of the border line is politically constructed to distinguish the administrative boundaries of the country which contain controls and restrictions on cross-border activities. However, controls and restrictions on border residents in Indonesia-the Philippine border are becoming increasingly difficult, especially with regard to the existence of Sapi/Pisang people. They have settled in the coastal areas of the islands adjacent to the Indonesia-Philippine border, both on islands that are part of Indonesia's sovereign territory as well as part of the sovereign territory of the Philippines. Therefore, the implementation of hard border management endanger to cross-border activities that have been traditionally practiced by them since about five centuries. Sapi/Pisang people, which are separated by administrative political boundaries, indeed originate to similar indigenous peoples. They claim to belong to the descendants of the same ancestor, share the same cultural identity, and share

the history and experience of living together in the past. Moreover, cross-border socio-cultural activities take place almost daily in both border areas, especially for family visits as well as traditional ceremonies.

Yet, the practice of Sapi/Pisang people in and out of the border regions of Indonesia and the Philippines which has been running for centuries and presumably such a thing has become a custom, in the concept of the modern state it is still considered a violation to the provisions of immigration rules. Their activities are illegal because without the completeness of official documents. Illegal and even stateless status causes their vulnerable positions to obtain legal protection. This will also make it difficult for them to gain full rights of citizens.

Indonesian and the Philippines governments have put some efforts to overcome these problems by making cross-border agreements. Efforts made since the 1950s have resulted some agreements, such as the Border Crossing Agreement 1956 and Border Trade Agreement 1974. Unfortunately, the practices in the border area showed that the implementation of the border cooperation are not yet optimal. Although official exit / entry points have been established, there are still many citizens who choose to engage in illegal cross-border activities. There are due to some several factors, such as incomplete documents because of their stateless status, low levels of welfare that stimulate smuggling of illicit goods, as well as complicated immigration procedures that enforce them to spend more

time and money.

In the future, the Indonesian-Philippines governments are necessary to focus on developing border cooperation that can overcome the above problems. In regards to their stateless status, the two governments can work together to set a comprehensive repatriation program, which is not only cover location plan, it also sets strategy for their occupational adaptation in the new appointee areas. Moreover, in order to eradicate poverty in Indonesia-the Philippine border areas, the two governments also need to cooperate together for developing border economy. It could be carried out, for example, through some training on business management and processing industries of their harvest of local natural resources to get more added-value products. Even both parties could also propose “Special Border Economic Zone” development program through the sub-regional economic framework of BIMP-EAGA (Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia, Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area). As for immigration procedures, there needs to be more exit / entry points in new locations / islands other than those already existed. Then, for example, Kawaluso Island residents in Indonesia who will go to Balut Island in the Philippines could take care of Custom, Immigration and Security procedures at their own island without the need to transit on Marore Island which is now the existing border crossing station. In order to establish an effective border cooperation between Indonesia and the Phillipines, therefore it essentially requires

political will of respective governments as well as inclusive to participation of Sapi/Pisang people. With this cooperation, the people of Sangir, especially to Sapi/Pisang community will be more prosperous and harmonious.

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