

Border Tourism

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Buffer Area in Merauke

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Abstract

Border tourism model is one of alternative ways for strengthening the development and increasing the welfare of border community. The border tourism can be initiated by deliberating the existing potency and activity in border area. By using the model of growth that put the economic activity as a central point for developing a border area, accordingly border tourism in Merauke could endorse Sota as a center of economic activity in border community. Meanwhile, the surrounding area could be functioned as a buffer area by its contribution in fulfilling the demanding goods and services in that central point area. And also by functioning traditional market as a place for attracting visitors, ecotourism could be functioned as a part of the development of border tourism. This article will highlight the importance of community economic activity for developing an area, especially border area. Started from this matter, the border tourism will be developed together with the development of buffer area for supporting the central economic activity.

Keywords: Border Tourism, border crosser traditional market, buffer area.

Introduction

Border tourism has not been well developed in Indonesia. The distance between one place and another and the minimum facilities provided in this area become the obstacle of attracting the travelers to visit the border areas. Meanwhile, in the other hand, tourism is one of the important things that can lead the community to a better welfare. Sota in Merauke as one of the border areas in Indonesia has a chance to become a border tourism destination. Besides being situated in the traffick route of crossborder to go in and out Papua New Guinea, Sota also has attractive natural resources due to its location inside the Wasur National Park.

In November-December 2016, the Ministry of Tourism held a cross border festival in Papua. This festival is a 3 border festival, where the 2 border festival was held in Skouw Jayapura and 1 was in Sota, Merauke. The program performed a number of dances and music. Besides inviting a local group who performed traditional dance and music, some singers and bands from Jakarta also participated to make it more festive. In Skouw, a band from Vanimo also joined and performed in the crossborder festival. Meanwhile the crossborder festival in Sota, Merauke, was the first festival and it was a success being held on December 3rd, 2016. The event was visited by hundreds of Papua New Guinea's citizens. The festival was also welcome by the local citizens of Sota. It took place in Sota square, Merauke, and various shows and games were performed. Abraham Lebalauw, the general consul of Republic of Indonesia for Papua New Guinea hoped that this activity could become an annual agenda in the border of Papua-Papua New Guinea (Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Vanimo, 2016).

In fact, such activity has been held by Sota District in commemorating August 17th. In collaboration with the military personnels who guard the border area, the celebration of August 17th was held by inviting Wereaber and Weam villagers, the closest village of Papua New Guinea border. Every year, there is not less than 500 citizens of PNG came and spent some days in Sota. They use some public facility like school building. They come, both male and female, youngster or the elderly and also children. During their stay in Sota, the head of the district provide food and drink from the donation of some institutions and local people. Of some government's institution and local people. In the other hand, Sota citizens came to Wereaber and Weam on the invitation to attend the same celebration (interview, August 17th 2014).

The attention toward border areas in Indonesia began to increase in the recent years when the welfare approach started to replace security approach in managing the border areas. It is

assumed that a good welfare can be the good border defense as well. Therefore, border areas are not viewed as a cast port that protect everything inside and cut any access and facility any longer. Border area is in turn viewed as the front verandah of a country which is managed in cooperation with the neighbor country to result in good mutual relationship.

A research by Fauzan et al. about the development of Sota region as a border tourist resort shows that it is important for Sota to start to develop a border tourism through two main pillars, namely, eco tourism and culture tourism. This idea is constructed by taking local natural resource and culture around the border area that can attract the travelers' interest to see the uniqueness of the nature and culture of the area into account. These two main pillars are supported by four additional pillars, namely, people empowerment, integrated promotion, the development of facilities, and the local government's policy that supports the development of tourism. This research also shows that there are many things that have to be prepared ³ in order to support the development of the tourism in border area of Sota to become a border tourist resort such as physical facilities and integrated policy. Considering the minimum amount of the eco and culture tourism in the area, this article is highlighting the importance of Merauke to develop Sota as a cluster of economic activity as the attraction of border tourism which is supported by the development of the buffer areas in the surrounding districts. The sustaining areas are those that can contribute to the economic activity of the border area. For that reason, the border tourism can be addressed to the domestic tourist and tourist from Papua New Guinea or other countries (Fauzan, 2014: 125-248).

The Significance of Developing the Border Market and the Buffer Area

The border area of a country, according to Tarigan, can grow and develop through economic activities that have to be able to survive by paying attention to the aspect of attainability and threshold (Tarigan, 2005: 85-87). The notion of attainability aspect is related to the vastness of an area, and its impact to the geographical service. The notion of threshold is more related to the minimum number of population in order that a product or service center can survive because of the existence of the consumers who get the service/product. Referring to the two things, besides the existence of sufficient public facility to support the community's economic activities, a border area also need an amount of economic actors that is sufficient for making a market alive (there are demands and offers).

It is agreed by Husnadi that a border area is possible to be an economic cluster if there are intensive movements of people and goods. An important note added by Husnadi is that the situation can give profit to the border area, however, it also can be the vise versa: it will edge the local community when they have low competition powers, have no bargaining object, have weak natural resources management, and lack infrastructure facility. In that reason, in order to make a border area have a better welfare level, it must be developed into a center of community economic activities (Husnadi. 2006).

Both Tarigan and Husnadi perceive that the community's economic activities in the form of a market can be an impeller of the development of a border area. Also Bangun's thesis conclude that trade is a cluster of the development of the border area of China-Vietnam can be adopted in developing the border area of West Borneo-Serawak. In China-Vietnam, the two countries do a collaboration to give facility and rule that support the trade among local community. Meanwhile in the border of Kalimantan-Serawak, Bangun gives a note that the big difference in economic levels demands a model of area development in border area. If it is based

on the trade between China-Vietnam, it must be followed by a strategy of altering the development of infrastructures, strengthening the condition of social and economy of the people in border area, ⁵ human resources development, and strengthening the good institutional aspects. This means, in accordance with Tarigan although there are a number of individuals who are evitable for economic activities, it has to be followed by the service of public facility (Bangun 2014).

Not only public facility, traditional trades exist around the borders of Myanmar, China, Thailand, and Laos developed well in the supports of a special regulation that support border activities through CBTA or the Cross Border Transport Agreement. The development of trade area done by the government is among others ¹ the Mohan Border Trade Zone and Biten Border Trade Zone in the borders of China and Laos in Yunnan Province. Meanwhile, China invests in Laos such as in the province of Namtha and Bokeo, Laos. The borders of the four countries are getting more advanced by the opening of free trade between Thailand and Yunnan province in 2003. Of course foreign investments and also the opening of free trade was well appreciated by Laos and Myanmar that economically need more support to administer public facility and improve their economic activities. Although the four countries have different views in the Corridor of North South Economy, in the implementation of border management they are able to keep mutual relationship for the sake of economy development (Tsuneishi. 2009).

However, a border area might be not a potency demands and offer by seeing some obstacles such as tariffs and different policies between the two border areas that cause the economic potencies in the area do not grow in their best way due to the lack of market attainability (Niebuhr dan Stiller, 2001). This matter can be a consideration in developing the border area by paying attention to the connectivity aspect of the cluster and buffer area,

transportation, accommodation and communication are the requirements in developing border area. The study from Bappenas in 2003 stated that the development in border areas can be done with growing model where the aspect of service facilities in border areas must be fulfilled, for example, the border posts, industrial area, bonded areas, and citizen's dwelling (Koespramoedyo, 2003: 30-34).

Some traditional trades in border areas show positive trend with the increment of the trade involvement among the community of two countries. a case of traditional trade in Silawan village, district Belu, Nusa Tenggara Timur that border with Timor Leste was highly appreciated by the citizens if the two countries. Although the market is not done daily, the traders' enthusiasm from noth countries is great. The buyers are mostly coming from Timor Leste while the sellers are mostly Indonesians. Using dollar as the means of trading, Silawan market become the cluster of economic activities of the community in border area (Rachmawati and Fauzan, 2013). It also happens in Vietnam and Laos, traditional trade (informal trade) of vegetables and fruits, clothing and plastic goods become a trade line that is more capable of giving a better chance to the traders because of the more competitive prices than what formal traders give. The support of transportation facility and the easiness of the regulation can propel the increment of the trade volume every year (Myers and Whartoned, 2005).

The trades that occur in border areas become an important thing that can boost the deveopment of the border area and can give a better living for the local community. A research by Awang (2013) about Serikin Market in he border of Malaysia and Indonesia shows positive things for the new economy and the community's welfare. The traditional market was developed not only as an economic activity that can fulfill the daily needs and enhancing the people's welfare, but also developed as other economic activity, that is, tourism (Blatter, 2000). Serikin

Market is capable to serve as a new shopping tourism in Serawak, Malaysia. Many citizens of Malaysia come to the market on weekend to buy certain goods such as mukenah, Dayak handicraft, rattan handicraft, or simply having a culinary tour (Gadingga, 2016).

The trading activities in border area also become one part of cross border activities in Padang Besar, a border of Maaysia-Thailand. Since 1950s, this area has become the border trade center that attracts more and more visitors. The tourist who come to Padang Besar are mostly come from Maaysia either for shopping, because the low price offered, or simply spend their weekend in the border area of Thailand. Because, besides offering shopping tourism, Padang Besar also has historical tourism such as Malay kingdom Pattani and Tarutuo islands. The existence of this border market gives support to a better living in the surrounding villages like Wang Kelian and Kaki Bukit (Azmi, 2015).

Referring to border trade activity that can be one of the tourism product is surely widening the chance for the local border community to increase their welfare. People come not only to meet their economic needs but also to enjoy the trade itself. They have fun in shopping. For Miller, trade is a part of tourism product that can be sold to meet the need of shopping tourism for a particular group of people. Miller includes 'shopping' as a part of motivation for a number of visitors and hence made the term shopping tourism. Shopping tourism in border area offers a chance for the border area to be a center of economic activity where there is economic activity namely offers and demands on both goods and service. It also can be an economic activity cluster of the community which will promote the existence of economic activities in the area and its surrounding. The extension happened because the center of economic activities needs other area that can accomplish the demands in the economic activity cluster. The buffer area of the economic activity is needed to supply goods and service needed by the economic activity cluster

area. Blair (1995) calls this as economy agglomeration, that is, when an economic saving occur due to the economic activity happen in the same location and give a big contribution toward the development of an area or city. However, economic agglomeration is only supported by the interrelationship between economic activities in a geographic area that is relatively limited where the form of the relations includes the relation on production, service and market (offer and demand).

A center of economic activity with economic agglomeration in a border area finally can reach multiplier effect where the prosperity will widen to the surrounding area. This is not impossible because border area between countries is a strategic area because it can be the starting point of the growth of regional or national economy. Through this region, trade activities between countries can be done easily, quickly, and in low cost, which in turn will promote the increase on the community production activity, the community's income and finally the community's welfare (Husnadi, 2006).

The Border Market in Sota Merauke as an Economic Activity Cluster

Nowadays Sota is a border area between Indonesia-Papua New Guinea that become the shopping destination of Papua New Guinea citizen especially from Wam and Wereaber. Every month on average there are 200 people from PNG come to Sota, whereas on average 100 Indonesians come to PNG (Immigration Post of Sota, 2013). PNG citizen who come to Sota usually buy their daily needs such as noodle, sugar, coffee, rice, clothing, and many more. In the period of 6 months (January –June) the purchase omset of PNG citizen reach Rp. 250.000.000 (Office of Cooperation of Sota, 2012). They come to Sota with some goods such as mutton, cassowary and some simple farming tools. In recent years, the border crossers from PNG start to

sell some lances, bags, or other handicrafts as souvenirs and this is managed by a local citizen. Using cross border pass, they get a special treatment to be able to cross the border between Indonesia-PNG only in certain areas. They often only bring a letter from their village chief but they are still permitted to get in with the reason of humanity.

In order to reach Sota, PNG crossborderers have to walk in an uneasy journey. Besides the road conditions which are not supportive because the conditions are still wild and they often become swamps if there is unstoppable rain in the area, and the means of transportation is very limited to bike. If the rain hours and the water raised, they cannot use bicycle. The fact that there is no road built from Wereaber and Weam to Sota make it is very difficult for crossborderers from PNG because Sota is the only town close to them that they can accomplish their daily needs. The advantage of the high exchange rate (1 Kina= Rp 4000,00) is very helpful for PNG citizen in fulfilling their needs.

The development model of the growth of an area that paces the citizen's economic activity as the main cluster could be done by enhancing the economic activities among the people in the community. Traditional trade that occurs between the local citizens and PNG citizens is an embryo of a bigger economic activity. This can be carried out by promoting the growth of the volume and kinds of the trade. The community involvement in trade can be a part of other survival effort according to Tarigan, next to the development of public facility (Tarigan, 2015).

The involvement of economic practitioner is more aimed to activate the offer and demand, in the effort of developing the border area. This is held by attracting them into the industry of market based border tourism introducing them to the production and distribution activities and also financial advantages can become the way to encourage more individuals to get

involved. The efforts that can be done are persuading them to involve in a competitive production or distribution of goods and services activity. By looking at the existing pontency, that is the productions of cajuput oil, vanilla extract, vegetables and fruits, forest honey, and various handicraft made from cassowary feather will be a unique attraction to be developed as border tourism in Sota.

The case of border market in Serikin Malaysia, border market in Padang Besar Thailand, the trade ¹ in the border of China and Vietnam and border market in Silawan Belu show that traditional or non formal trade could become swarming traditional markets. They are not only visited by traders, but tourists who also want to see the trade activities contribute to make the trade activities more packed. If there are more people involved in the activities of selling and buying, this will be a multiplier effect for the area around the economic activity cluster. The surrounding area could serve as buffer areas by providing merchandises that are suitable with the market needs. What are produced by the community around the market could also support the activity such as cajuput oil, handicrafts, snack, and many others.

Besides accomplishing the demands of PNG citizens on their daily needs, the traditional market can also become the tourism destination. For local tourist this place could become an education tourism in border area about the social relations of international trade. Besides, Sota also provides ecotourism object with its scarce Musamus. A local citizen has initiated a small park in the border area. On weekends, this park is packed with visitors who travel and spend their time socializing in the park. Some times ago that park was abandoned because of the different vision and mission between some bureaus about border area. This insident made Pak Ma`ruf, the keeper of the park intitiated to run a small souvenir shop in his private house, a small

food tavern and two cages of cassowary and kangaroo he kept as one part that started to be rarely visited by the visitors ⁴ in the border area.

The issue of the management of the park in border area indicates that there is a problem in the policy making of border area. It needs to be handled soon because the overlap between regulations and interests will become an obstacle for the development of the border area. The area was under the control of Ministry of Forestry and at the same time under the supervision of The Body of Border Area Administration (Badan Pengelolaan Perbatasan Daerah). This situation makes this area full of the interests of each bureau.

Conclusion

The case of border management in Sota implies that the approach of border management that based on the focus on military security should be altered into border management on the basis of economic potency development. This idea needs support from all stakeholders, namely Badan Pengelola Perbatasan Daerah (The Body of Border Area Administration), the Body of Local Development Planning, Bureau of Agriculture, Bureau of Industry, Bureau of Tourism and Bureau of Culture. The synergy from those stakeholders is very crucial to construct an integrated and continual masterplan so that the management of border area will not stop solely at the plan but also on how each party can keep the endurance of the program to reach success.

The labor to manage Sota a tourism object and economy cluster also need some support and contribution from the community. The effort to make the community aware of the need to develop the local potency should be carried out continually, considering that the activities of developing economic potency are still relies on certain people (community top figures). The development of economic potency is for sure impossible if done only by 1 or 2 persons, but it

needs the involvement to the whole community. For that reason, the community should be continually persuaded to involve themselves in the movement of developing economic potency and border tourism potency.

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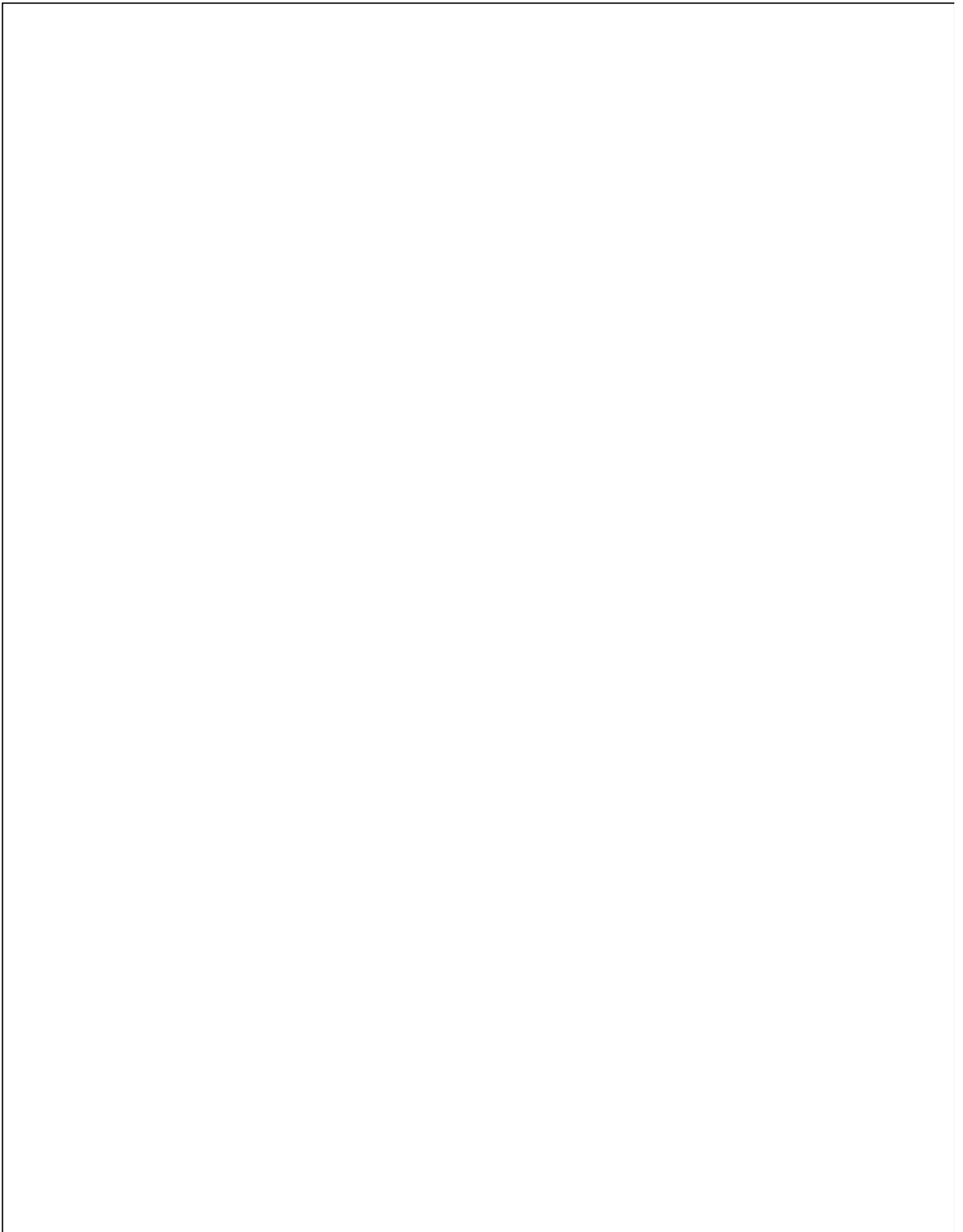
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