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KALIMANTAN BORDER: CASE STUDY IN KERANGGAS
GAYAU, SRI AMAN, SARAWAK**

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CROSS BORDER MOVEMENTS ALONG SARAWAK-WEST KALIMANTAN BORDER: CASE STUDY IN KERANGGAS GAYAU, SRI AMAN, SARAWAK

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Introduction

Cross-border movement is not a new phenomenon. It has occurs for centuries, and the movements of people into the other side of their own territories often occur regardless of the existence of a formal boundary between countries. Cross-border movements could include any one, or a combination of, these activities: trades, labour migration, and family visits. Hence, what does a border mean to the borderland communities in the context of cross-border movements and activities?

Historically, borders are often decided during the colonial eras and, more often than not, the borders were demarcated based on political agendas. The territorial boundary between Sarawak and Kalimantan, for instance, was demarcated based on the Anglo Dutch Treat 1824. The signing of the 1824 treaty had resulted in the division of the Indo-Malay Archipelago into two territories, i.e. the British Territory and the Dutch Territory, without taking into consideration the existing local kingdoms in the region¹ as well as the ethics grouping and kinship ties in the area. This treaty had formed a basis for the current international border between Malaysia and Indonesia (Castles, 2003). The question is how does the demarcation of this international border affect the movements of the borderland communities living at both sides of this border?

¹ There were several local kingdoms in the Malay Archipelagoes at that time. The Kingdom of Sambas is one of the local kingdoms in Borneo at that time (Castles, 2003).

This paper seeks to examine the patterns of cross-border movements which occur at the international border between West Kalimantan (Indonesia) and Sarawak (Malaysia) with special reference to Keranggas Gayau, Sri Aman, Sarawak. It aims to explain the patterns and nature of cross-border movements and activities from the perspectives of the local communities in Keranggas Gayau.

Border permeability and borderland communities

A boundary or border, is a term which refers to a line, real and/or imagined, that actually divides and defines a territory. McDougall and Phillips-Valentine (2004: 23) explain that “*physical borders are those seen as physically dividing one state from another*” and that it functions as the limit of state jurisdiction. This is the most common (and traditional) definition of boundary from the geographical and administration perspectives.

Additionally, Shafee Saad (2008) explains that the demarcation of a border could be in these three forms i.e. land boundary; maritime boundary and/or natural boundary (e.g. based on terrain, rivers and other natural features). This means that a boundary could be erected along natural features, such as a river, a mountain, a strait or any other natural features that existed in an area. Newman (2001: 140) further explains that the common boundary typologies focus on their location in and along certain types of terrain or other historic evolution of different boundaries under different systems. In other words, this type of border is physical in nature and easily identifiable based on the natural features on the area. The Malacca Strait, for example, acts as the maritime territorial boundary between Malaysia and Sumatra, Indonesia and the Kelingkang Range acts as the (land) boundary between Sarawak and Kalimantan.

However, in the recent years, the concept of border and/or boundary had undergone some changes. Newman (2001), for instance, argues that a boundary should no longer be referring only to a fixed territorial line but should encompass other multidimensional functions. He elaborated that, in this day and age, boundaries should include social,