

Bilateral Cooperation to Develop Thailand-Malaysia Border Economy to Promote Human Security

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This study utilised an anthropological approach and aimed to comprehend the attributes of the Thailand-Malaysia border economy; understand the problems, and limitations of the border economy which obstructs human security to occur; and propose a model to develop the bilateral cooperation between Thailand, and Malaysia on the border economy that is related to human security. The study found that the Thailand-Malaysia border economy has been based on the long term ethnicity, kinship, and social relations of the local people of the two countries. Moreover, the border economy has mostly been in the informal sector, which is an opportunity for ordinary people with low economic power to make a living. However, the informal economy has a high risk, and high cost for the ordinary people to be exploited by authorities. The problems, and limitations of the border economy which obstruct human security to occur, includes: the stagnation of Malaysia's economy, the status of Thai nationalities as illegal workers in Malaysia, the leading role of the military to administer the southern border, and the lack of participation by local people in border administration. This study proposes several suggestions to develop the Thailand-Malaysia border economy for human security, such as the management of local products to suit the border economy; the adjustment of smuggled goods, and prohibited goods to support the local people's livelihood; the redress on the lives, and employment conditions of Thai migrants in Malaysia; the promotion of the border economy aligned with the local culture; the initialisation of a bilateral cooperation on the Thailand-Malaysia relationship in border tourism; and the reduction of the military's role in the development of the border.

Keywords: *Bilateral cooperation, Border economy, Human security, Thailand-malaysia border, Anthropological approach.*

Background

The border economy can be managed and developed to support human security. According to the definition of the United Nations (UN), ‘human security’ means the well-being of humans based on freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity. Human security is in accordance with the framework of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), focussing on the making of marginalised people to receive a good quality of life, equal opportunity, and rights protection. The border economy, consisting of formal, and informal economics activities, is a main source of making a living for the poor, and the marginalised (Manaswee Achunaga, 2018).

The border is the area connecting and circulating people, goods, and information, which is based on the border economy of the two neighbouring countries. It is an important area to be managed to promote human security. The border economy is not only important to the national economy through foreign investments, and the values of import, and export, it is a source for the poor, and the marginalised to help them make a living. The border economy also brings income, employment, and opportunities for small-scale trading, and investment (*see* Womack, 1994; Peter, 2005; Sugantha, 2016; Piyanonthasin, 2017; Traiyarach, 2013).

The border economy can be formal or informal. A formal border economy, in contrast to an informal one, is run under the customs and tax regulation of both neighbouring countries. It is interesting that an informal border economy plays an important role in moving the border economy forward. People in border areas can utilise ‘informality’, such as a kinship relation or cross-border ethnic networks to obtain benefits in trading, and cross-border working to compensate their economic limitations, especially a lack of access to capital. To promote the informal border economy will be useful to ordinary people, as well as the vulnerable or marginalised, by helping them attain human security (*see the cases studied from* Leepreecha & Jantakad, 2018; Taotawin & Taotawin, 2018).

However, there are some problems, and limitations of the border economy. The problems or limitations are related to uncontrollable factors, such as the economic protection policies of Malaysia, which can cause the decrease of import, and export values. Another uncontrollable factor is the strict security measures of both Thailand, and Malaysia, which sometimes lead to the shutting down of border checkpoints. At the same time, the border economy has a high value, and enormous business benefits. This leads to corruptions by officers, and exploitations on small-scale traders or entrepreneurs, which increases the investment cost for people in the border economy (Interview with local businessmen and vendors, 21 June 2019). Moreover, the unrest in southernmost Thailand, which is causing fear among local people (Jernsittiparsert & Ruangsilp, 2017), and mistrust between people, and authorities, has

created a difficult situation for the border economy. Therefore, it is almost impossible that the border economy brings human security.

In addition, in the context of the border trade economy, 'national security', and 'human security' are often opposite. Although the Thai State has tried to promote the open-border trade in the context of neoliberalism, which the flows of people and goods should be more convenient, 'national security' has still been the first priority. The Thai State has still put in place mechanisms, rules, regulations, and power to control people, and the border area everywhere. Interestingly, the actions of the Thai State are more beneficial to the capitalists than to the ordinary people (Leepreecha & Jantakad, 2018; Taotawin & Taotawin, 2018).

However, for ordinary people of the border, who have depended upon the border economy and lived in the uncontrolled structural conditions, they have struggled and negotiated in various ways. They have negotiated in their daily lives, such as avoiding the detection of officials in importing or exporting goods; cooperating with each other to share labours, and the space of selling; utilising social networks, such as friendship, and kinship; and depending on influential persons to gain access of trade (Khemakhunasai & Dangsuwan, 2017; Lertchavalitsakul, 2018). They have also negotiated formally, such as building cooperation with academics or civil sectors to conduct research projects to solve the problems. However, without the cooperation between the Government, and the people of both countries at the national, provincial, and local levels, based on the ASCC, the negotiations by ordinary people can solve only a few immediate problems, and cannot reach the goals of human security.

This research project tried to determine the ways to promote human security through bilateral cooperation for the development, and administration of the Thai-Malaysia border economy. By doing so, it is required to comprehend the attributes, as well as the problems and limitations of the border economy of the Thailand-Malaysia border.

Scope and Methodology

This research was conducted during the period of June to October 2019, in the Thailand-Malaysia border within the Tak Bai, Sungai Kolok, and Waeng Districts of the Narathiwat Province. The researchers also collected data in Tumpat, Kelantan, Malaysia. This study is a qualitative research consisting of a literature review, non-participant observation, interviews, and a focus group of people related to the border economy, especially traders, labourers, government staff, and civil sector members.

Concepts and Frameworks

Border

This research project views the border as a connecting space of relations of people of the two neighbouring countries, who share ethnicities, religions, and kinship relations. Although a modern state has put a lot of effort to utilise its power to supervise, and control people's border crossing, it has not totally controlled the border. People, goods, and culture can still flow across the border intensively. Therefore, the border is multicultural, and transnational with the investments from abroad. The border is also a space for negotiation, and meaning construction for resistance, and obtaining protection from a State (Nail, 2016; Laungaramsri, 2002; Kanemee, 2017).

For the border economy, this research project focusses on an informal one that is often 'smuggling' trade across borders. The informal trade has existed from the past, and it has been the economic network far from State power. An informal economy also includes transborder labours in neighbouring countries. Although the informal border economy is illegal, it allows poor people, who have no means to make a living in the formal economy, the ability to live. In addition, the State is often unable to meet the basic needs of the people at borders. Therefore, this pushes these people to make a living in the informal economy. However, it is important to note that the informal economy is full of risks for people, including from being arrested, and living without law protection. The risk includes the payment of tribute or under table money to officials of both countries (Laungaramsri, 2002; Kanemee, 2017).

Border Trade

The border trade can be informal or smuggled, seemingly opposite to State power, and the formal economy. It is important to note that informal or smuggled border trade started when the nation's border line was established. Furthermore, the informal economy is not necessarily a threat to the State power over the borders because they can compromise their overlapping interests (Sangkhamanee, 2012; Wantanasombut, 2012).

Informal border trade has always existed with the marginalised. Even though it is against the law, it helps the marginalised people to have ways to make a living in the border area, in response to the failure of a State in caring for its people's lives. In addition, it is interesting that women are often the main characters in the informal border trade, which helps women gain a better economic status, and have more power, and roles in both the family, and community (Sangkhamanee, 2012).

Networks or social capital is a factor determining the success, and failure of the border trade. It helps guarantee stability, to not be betrayed by business partners of an adjacent county and

pay excessive bribes to officials of both countries. The border trade is deeply rooted in society, kinship, friendship, and ethnicity. As well as cross-border labours, mostly working illegally in Malaysia, networks, and social capital have helped them continue working abroad (Peter, 2005; Boonmak, 2013; Khemakhunasai & Pinsuwan, 2009).

However, there are studies arguing that the network, and social capital work only in normal situations. During a critical period, where one has to make decisions or negotiate, the new institutional economic concept should be utilised in calculating cost, price, risk, and power for each party to proceed the business smoothly, such as a trader calculating how much to pay a bribe or calculating by officers on how much the bribe will be collected (Sangkhamanee, 2012).

Cross-Border Labours

Migrant workers are an important component of the border economy. There are labourers from neighbouring countries, such as Laos, and Myanmar, who cross the border to work in Thailand, as well as Thai labourers crossing the border to work in the neighbouring country, Malaysia, which has a better economy, and higher wages than that in Thailand. Most Thai migrant labourers in Malaysia are illegal, and their illegal status has been able to continue based on the social, and cultural links of the people from both sides, since in the past, the border control by nation states was not yet as strict as now. Illegal migrants, especially of the neighbouring border cities, have been supportive for both sides of the issue. Malaysia needs labourers, and Thailand has excess labourers to support (Bunmak, 2011).

In the past, local communities have usually had a role in managing the cross-border labourers on the basis of kinship relations, and locality. Even today, the local communities have become more formalised, such as having formal village leaders, and sub-district headmen or having local government organisations. Local communities still have an ability to manage transborder labourers (Bunmak, 2011). This brings forth proposals from several research projects on migrant workers, which propose that the Thai State must change the way to manage the border from the hard one or the 'wall style' to the soft one or the 'management style', as well as creating the joint management as a model of the friendship city of the border provinces of the two countries.

In addition, the management of migrant workers, which requires social welfare promotion, should be based on the understanding of the nature of the workers. One of their main natures is that they usually travel and change jobs. Travelling to work with families is another nature of them. There are several generations, both young and old, which come with migrant labourers. Therefore, the existing transborder labour welfare does not support the real nature of labour, and members of the accompanying families (Kittireangrab, 2008).

Research Results

The Attributes of the Thai-Malaysia border Economy in the Narathiwat Province

The shared ethnic, religious, and kinship relations of the people of Thailand, and Malaysia living around the border of Narathiwat, and Kelantan are the foundation border economy of the area. Although the kinship relations have been lessening among the current generation, cross-border trade, and employment have been creating new social, and economic relations to compensate the old ones. The new relationship has enabled the border economy to continue. By the way, the status of border area, which has provided opportunities for livelihood, has attracted many people from various areas — not only Muslim-Malays, but also Muslim-Thais, Buddhist-Thais, and Chinese-Thais — to settle here. This has created inter-ethnic, and inter-religioned relations, which are based on the border economy. The diversity of the people, and their relationships have made the border economy of the area enlarge, and grow continually.

Three border communities with immigration customs are housed in the Narathiwat Province, consisting of Sungai Kolok in the Sungai Kolok District, Tak Bai in the Tak Bai District, and Buke Ta in the Waeng District. Sungai Kolok is a large municipality with economic significance. It has markets, a business area, and many forms of entertainment, and hotels. For Tak Bai, it is a much smaller municipality than Sungai Kolok. Tak Bai is a border market community along the river, which is called by local people, ‘Taba market’. The people living in Sungai Kolok, and Tak Bai are rather diverse with different religions, and ethnic identities comprising of Muslim-Malays, Muslim-Thais, Buddhist-Thais, and Chinese-Thais. These diverse peoples migrated to the area to make their way forward in life. In contrary, Buke Ta is a small and quite sub-district community.

The border economy of the three areas has been important to the local people, as the main source of income for family, and relatives. The border economy has also created a chain of employment in the communities nearby. It is important to note that the value of imported, and exported goods of the customs of the three areas is rather less than those of the Sadao Customs House, and Padang Besar Customs House, in the Sadao District of the Songkhla Province. However, the border economy of the three areas provides a highly significant role to the local economy. The list of main exported, and imported goods of the three customs houses includes live cattle, and lumber, as well as smuggled goods, such as rice, garlic, red onion, costume, and ornaments, which are different from those of other border areas of Thailand, and Malaysia. This presents a specialty of the border trade between Thailand, and Malaysia in Narathiwat.

The border market is a main component of the Thailand-Malaysia border economy in Narathiwat. The border market is an area for bustling trade in both the retail, and wholesale of local people. Most customers of the border markets within the Thailand side are Malaysians.

The border market is a source to make a living and for all kinds of diligent persons, including major traders, small traders, and labourers.

The informal border trade, especially the trading of smuggled goods, is another important component of the Thailand-Malaysia border economy in Narathiwat. The informal border economic activities also include that the workers from Thailand smuggle to work in Malaysia. The informal economy may not be opposite to the formal economy regulated by the State. The informal economy cannot exist and continue without compromising by the State power. The local government officials may feel sympathetic, and view the trade of smuggle goods as a limited way for the poor to make a living. The local government officials may also view smuggled goods as an opportunity for poor customers to attain quality goods from the neighbouring country to consume. At the same time, the Malay authorities may see undocumented workers in Thai restaurants (Tom Yum Restaurants) benefit Malaysians by helping them to be more convenient on food. However, as being an informal border trade, it lacks the protection of law. Therefore, the traders in both countries are at risk of being cheated or violating agreements, as well as at risk of being arrested. The traders also have a burden upon 'the payment under the desk' to various parties on both the Thai, and Malaysian sides of the border for the convenience of smuggled goods transportation.

Problems and Limitations of the Border Economy in the Narathiwat Province

The main problem of the Thailand-Malaysia border economy is an economic stagnation, which has started since 2004, when the new unrest in the deep south of Thailand began. The unrest has affected Sungai Kolok continually. However, the stagnation of the Sungai Kolok economy has been also caused by the change of pattern of tourism of Malaysians from entertainment-based tourism to family-based or religion-based tourism. Lately, Malaysian tourists favour travelling to world renowned provinces for beautiful nature experiences, such as Phuket, and Krabi. However, the result of economic stagnation, which widely affects most people, is the falling of the Malaysian ringgit, which is causing Malaysians to pay more in buying goods from or in Thailand. When the ringgit is down, Thai labourers working in Malaysia receive less income when they exchange their ringgit into Thai baht. The falling of the ringgit makes the overall economy of southern Thailand stagnate.

For cross-border labourers, which is another main component of the border economy, there are over a hundred thousand people of the deep south of Thailand working in Malaysia, in various sectors. These include the service sector, such as in Thai restaurants; the construction sector; and the agricultural sector, such as working on a paddy field or rubber plantation. Most of these labourers are Malay-Muslims. Some work on a daily roundtrip, as they live around the border line and can get jobs that are not far from home. Others work in other cities or states of Malaysia, which are far from home. However, most Thai cross-border labourers in Malaysia are unskilled, and undocumented labourers. Subsequently, they have never been taken care of

by Thai officials, whom lack data on their numbers, wages, and work conditions. Therefore, these labourers lack the opportunity to develop their quality of life, and working skills, and have a lack of labour rights protection.

State's Role to Administer Border Area

In Thailand, the Fourth Army Area has played an important role in administering the Thailand-Malaysia border. The Fourth Army Area provides policies, and supervises other government agencies, including civilian agencies, and local government through the Thailand-Malaysia Regional Border Committee (RBC), which is led by the Commander of the Fourth Army Area. The committee members are appointed from various government agencies. The committee not only supervises on national security issues, but also on the economy, and development of the Thailand-Malaysia border.

In regard to the role of national security, Thai security is deeply concerned about the cross-border relations of local people on both sides of the border. Thai security considers that the border crossing of people without State surveillance allows Thai insurgents to easily escape into Malaysia. As a result of this concern, the Thai authorities must take many measures in terms of security, comprising of intelligence work, eliminating dual citizenship, and controlling all borders. It is interesting that the measure on border control by Thai authorities has been inversely related to the economic condition. The stricter the country is on border inspection — full of garrison soldiers at border markets, and marine police boats floating in the rivers — the more sluggish the border economy is, as Malaysians do not want to travel into Thailand.

For the role in the economy, the Government under the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) is very determined to develop the economy of the Narathiwat Province. In 2015, the NCPO's government assigned the Narathiwat Province to be a Special Economic Zone. In 2016, the cabinet agreed to have a model city project, "the triangle of stability, wealth, and sustainability (2017–2020)". Later, the system was set to connect various government agencies to create a seamless economy which linked production, trade, and service sectors to support the Special Economic Zone. Under the plan of the Special Economic Zone, Sungai Kolok is assigned as a pilot city on border trade and will be developed on infrastructure to be a commercial centre, and a distribution centre to neighbouring countries. At the same time, the Jehe Sub-district of the Tak Bai District is designated as a centre of logistics, water transport, and cultural tourism. The Loh Jut Sub-district of the Waeng District is designated to support the border transportation, and ecotourism.

However, the role of the Thai Government in the border economy is minimal, hardly having impacts on the development or growth of border trade. It is important to note that existing business on the border trade has been mainly settled and developed by the hands of ordinary

people. The State-subsidised activities, such as the trade fair, for example the one held at AEON Mall Kota Bharu, do not bring a continuation and trade expansion, as the Government expects. At the same time, there is no government role in organising border producers, and traders to collaborate in the planning of production, and marketing. In other words, the roles of the Government in the economy have not yet been linked to or touched the problem of ordinary people who earn a living with trade, and employment across borders.

Interestingly, the State's roles in administering the Thailand-Malaysia border in Narathiwat — to maintain a good relationship between the two countries, and to make the border economy run smoothly — have been mainly run at the local level through informal relationships between local officials, such as the police head, sheriff, and deputy mayors of the two countries. It seems more difficult to formally facilitate the cooperation of Thailand, and Malaysia at the national level. Notably, the policies of the Thai Government, as the project, "the triangle of stability, wealth, and sustainability (2017–2020)", requires national cooperation, as the policies are beyond the responsibility of operational or local officers. Moreover, Malaysia's political structure, and conditions also affect the bilateral cooperation to develop the border economy. The status of Kelantan, as a federal state, in which the opposition party has won the general election continually for decades, has confused the bilateral cooperation as to whether Thailand should coordinate with the Kelantan local government or with the Malaysian central government.

Proposals to Develop the Thailand-Malaysia Border Economy in Narathiwat towards Human Security

As discussed earlier, the limitations of the Government's role to develop and promote the border economy may not be able to bring human security for vulnerable or marginalised groups, and the economically powerless. This research project provides proposals for organisations related to ensuring that human security occurs:

1. *Facilitating the border crossing to border markets and cities:* the convenience in travelling cross-border is the main factor of border trade expansion. It will encourage more Malaysians to cross the border to shop, consume, and travel in the Thai border markets or cities.
2. *Making projects on infrastructure supporting the local economy:* although the Thai Government has a master plan to develop trade, tourism, and border investment that leads to various projects in infrastructure, especially roads, cross country trains and bridges, and international airports, most of these projects have not yet been started or have not yet benefited local people. Therefore, the primary actions the Government

should take is to alleviate the suffering or accommodate people, such as solving the problem of the cross-border ferry at the Tak Bai border checkpoint.

3. *Planning on production and management of the products of farming, livestock, and fishery:* since there have hardly been agricultural products of locals sold at border markets or exported to Malaysia farming. Instead, the products sold here have been ordered from wholesale markets near Bangkok. Therefore, government agencies should promote the agricultural productions of local people and should also help establish systems to collect, and transport local agricultural products, as well as to support the marketing in the context of the border trade.
4. *Managing smuggled goods and prohibited goods to support local people's livelihood:* several small border traders would like Thailand, and Malaysia to have an appropriate taxation, which does not burden people making a living. Interestingly, the knowledge from the literature review, in this research, shows that turning informal border trade into a formal one, always makes small traders disadvantage larger entrepreneurs. However, several small traders here hope that they can be in a formal or lawful trade system, as they do not want to take risks from being arrested, fined, and exploited by the informal tribute.
5. *Attending to the living and employment conditions of Thai migrant workers in Malaysia:* as the majority of Thai labourers in Malaysia are informal, and unlawful without a work permit, they have to live hiddenly, and lack opportunities to improve their quality of life, and working skills. They neither receive any benefits or worker rights protection. The Thai Government should act urgently to gather basic information about these workers regarding the number of them, the amount of wages, and the conditions of their employment. The Thai Government should also accelerate cooperation with the Malaysian Government in resolving the issue of work permits and fees to reduce the number of Thai workers arrested, detained, and deported by Malaysian authorities.
6. *Promoting the border economy aligned with the local culture:* the cultural, and religious capital shared by people in the southern border provinces or 'Patani', and Malaysians is an especially useful factor to promote the border economy. The economic, religious, and cultural activities in the southern border area have a high economic value. If promoted, and managed well, it can help stimulate the economy, and income distribution in the region. Also, the economic base of border cities, such as Sungai Kolok, should be changed from a 'negative economy', which based on the entertainment venues or sex sales to a 'positive economy', which is based on ecotourism, cultural tourism, and family trips.

7. *Initiating bilateral cooperation on Thailand-Malaysia border tourism:* even though the unrest has caused tourism in the southern border provinces of Thailand to stagnate, the cross-border travel among local people from both the Thai, and Malaysian side of the border has continued. Travel is a way of life of the people here. If there is good logistics management, and cooperation to develop local tourism connecting the two countries, it will create more jobs, and income for the local people.
8. *Appointing the committee supervising the development of the border area led by civilian agencies and supporting the role of local governments in developing the border area:* in Thailand, the Fourth Army Area has supervised the Thailand-Malaysia border since the military coup in 2014. This makes the border management stiff, and conform to the military security framework, rather than the human security framework. In this regard, having a civilian agency or committee to supervise the development of the border area will be more flexible, and create a better atmosphere. In addition, the role of local governments in managing the border area will have good results in many ways. The administrators of the local administrative organisations are all local, so they would be aware of the suffering, and needs of the local people. These administrators often have kinship, and social networks with the people in Malaysia, which will help facilitate the coordination with the Kelantan Government officials.

Forms of Bilateral Cooperation of Thailand, and Malaysia to Develop the Border Economy to Promote Human Security

From the proposals above, to develop the Thai-Malaysian border trade economy in the Narathiwat Province for human security, several proposals can be pushed, and solely operated by the Thai Government. Some require cooperation or agreement by local agencies at the district level or provincial/state levels of both Thailand, and Malaysia. Others require the power of the central governments of both countries, in making decisions.

The proposals that the Thai State can implement on its own consist of: 1) the production planning, and the management of local agricultural products, livestock, and fishery linked to the border trade; 2) the development of the border economy that is in line with the religious, and cultural lives of the local people; and 3) the assignation providing civilian agencies the responsibility to supervise border areas and terminate the military's role, as well as the providing of the significant participation of local administrative organisations.

For the proposals which require the cooperation or agreement of local agencies on the district level or provincial/state levels of both Thailand, and Malaysia, the most important is the facilitation of border crossings to the border markets, and cities. Previously, the border crossing



of local people, who come to the border markets, has been informally allowed by local officers in both Thailand, and Malaysia, as to not have to pass the immigration process. As well as Thai labourers crossing the border daily to work in Malaysia, they do not have to pass through the immigration process each day. However, the informal permission depends upon each individual officer at the checkpoints, so it is uncertain. People crossing the border without an immigration process are still at risk of being illegal immigrants. Therefore, there should be a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) of the local agencies to accommodate a temporary border crossing to promote the border economy.

In the past, there were several kinds of cooperation on border management at the local level, especially the cooperation between the Narathiwat Provincial Administrative Organization, and the Kelantan State to manage car ferries, and passenger boats crossing the border. This cooperation should be improved to allow for greater cross-border convenience, and safety. In the case of the Thai side, it may be necessary to allow local administrative organisations, which are closer to the area, such as the municipality, to play a role in the car ferry, and boat management.

Another proposal that can be made through the cooperation or agreement of the local authorities of the two countries is the development of tourism cooperation between Narathiwat, and Kelantan. This should bring a centre for tourism coordination and promote a special model of local tourism travelling in Kelantan, and the southern border provinces.

There are also proposals out of the responsibility of the local agencies, which require the power of the central governments of both countries to make decisions. Therefore, it must create cooperation at the national level. The mechanisms to push these proposals should be organisations which are directly authorised by the central government, such as the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC). The main proposal here, is to help Thai workers in Malaysia regarding work permits, and fees. To push the proposal requires negotiation between the Thai Government, and Malaysian Government. There is also a proposal to manage smuggled goods, and forbidden goods to support the livelihood of local people, which requires cooperation at the national level in setting duty-free zones for a local market, so that small traders can make a living legally, and not suffer.

Moreover, a proposal for dealing with people who have lost their status through citizenship registration. Recently, the Thai Government has carried out a DNA testing program to use the testing result to prove Thai citizenship. However, these stateless people may be blood-related to their relatives, both in Malaysia, and in Thailand. Therefore, the Thai Government should cooperate with the Malaysian Government to provide opportunities for the people who have a DNA connection to Malaysians, to choose whether they want to be a Thai citizen or Malay citizen.



Conclusion

The border economy, which consists of the formal, and informal variations, has been a dependency source for ordinary people, especially the vulnerable, and marginal groups. The border economy or border trade can be managed and developed to support ‘human security’, which means a good quality of life, equal opportunity, and rights protection. However, there have been obstructions for doing so, which include the stagnation of the economy of the partner countries; the exploitation of, and illegal status of migrant workers; and the focus on the security of the border, rather than the border economy development. With these obstructions, the border economy has grown by the hands of ordinary people, who have built the foundation of an economic network on their own. To develop the border economy for human security, there should be the improvement of border crossing process, infrastructures, agricultural production, customs duties, migrant worker management, and cross border tourism to support small-scale traders, and local people in the context of the border economy.

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