

OPENING OF THE SKOUW AND WUTUNG VANIMO CROSS-BORDER BORDER CROSSING LAND ROAD CROSSING AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE PACIFIC REGION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to obtain an in-depth analysis and description with clear data related to the opening of land roads in the context of land crossings, vehicles, goods and services, and people on the Northern Papua-Papua New Guinea border, namely at the Skouw National Border Post which is connected to Vanimo, Papua New Guinea. The importance of opening this crossing lane certainly has a positive and at the same time negative impact on the crossing area, so it is important to conduct this study in the perspective beyond the Westphalian System which not only makes the country only on maintaining the sovereignty of the country or the border but rather on the unification of the country's borders or de-borderless so that the development goal of advancing the community around the border of the two countries provides high benefits. The method used in this study is a qualitative research method, namely explaining the phenomenon of the border between two countries with valid data obtained through primary and secondary data so that the data is valid and clear. The results of this study show that the opening of the crossing of goods, services and people on the Skouw-Vanimo border will have an impact on increasing economic activity for the two countries, increasing the socio-cultural activities of the border communities of the two countries, strengthening good relations between the two countries, becoming a hub or link for economic and trade activities with other Pacific countries, reducing tensions between countries in the Pacific region. become a strategic partner because of the connectivity built in the Pacific region and even the Indo-Pacific.

KEYWORDS

Opening of Vehicle Flow Crossings, Roads, Borders, Papua New Guinea, Pacific



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INTRODUCTION

The borders of countries anywhere in the world have different characteristics and problems. State borders, in addition to being state borders as a form of state sovereignty, are also the country's frontier borders that are directly visible to other countries. The country's borders are a good link or bridge for many countries in the world to carry out various activities such as human crossing activities, goods crossing and also services. The border can also be used as an area for the development of various other cooperation such as cooperation in education, health, skills training for border communities, as a tourism area and also a working area for two or more bordering countries. Of course, there are various accompanying impacts, both positive and negative impacts.

Indonesia's border at the eastern end between Papua Province and Sandaun Province in Papua New Guinea has also been built various national border crossing posts, including the first one built, namely the Skouw National Border Crossing Post (PLBN) which borders the Wutung Border in Vanimo, Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea. Since PLBN Skouw was built in 2016 and inaugurated on May 9, 2017 until now, it has only been used as a traditional crossing between residents around the border of the two countries. Although a border market has been built around this PLBN and it has become a routine activity for border residents to shop at this Indonesia border market. In addition to the market, there are also immigration officers, human and animal quarantine officers as well as customs officers and border security officers, namely the TNI.

The construction of the Skouw International Freight Terminal is also one of the manifestations of improving the quality of service and road transportation infrastructure in the border area. The Skouw Dry Port (TBI Skouw) is used to regulate export and import flows between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. In addition, it serves as a gateway for other countries to pass through for logistical needs that can improve the economy of people in the Pacific region. Skouw Dry Port can be used as a place to cross logistics borders between countries. Logically, shipping goods by land is cheaper and faster. The role of the International Freight Terminal is becoming increasingly important to support the development of Indonesia's economic corridor and strengthen national connectivity. This is the same as what is done by the Indonesia government on the border of Entikong and Sarawak Malaysia. This is in accordance with the Presidential Instruction of the Republic of Indonesia (Inpres) Number 1 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Economic Development in the State Border Areas in Aruk, Motaain, and Skouw.

As the meeting of Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Papua New Guinean Prime Minister (PM) James Marape during their official visit to the Bogor Presidential Palace, West Java, Monday, July 15, 2024, resulted in four cooperation agreements. In a joint press statement, President Joko Widodo said that bilateral cooperation discussed with PM Marape, including defense cooperation, is very important to strengthen the security of the two countries. "Indonesia also welcomes the implementation of the second 'joint business forum' and the signing of two cross-border land MoUs for the transportation of passengers and goods," President Jokowi said at the Bogor Presidential Palace on Monday. The President assessed that cooperation in the field of cross-border land transportation for passengers and

goods is very important to improve the economy and strengthen relations between citizens at the border.

The two cooperation agreements or memorandums of understanding (MoU) on cross-border transportation are the first "Cross border movement for commercial bus and goods" or cross-border movement for buses or other commercial transportation. This collaboration regulates how the transportation mechanism of public transportation crossings from Jayapura, Indonesia to Vanimo, Papua New Guinea. The second cooperation is about cross-border transportation with motor vehicles or "Cross border transport of goods by motor vehicle". This MoU regulates the crossing of goods carried by public transportation passengers across the Jayapura and Vanimo borders.

President Jokowi also appreciated the renewal of the cooperation agreement in the health sector. The cooperation agreement, which has been in place since 2018, expires in 2022. This cooperation regulates a number of general welfare issues on public health issues on the Indonesia-Papua New Guinea border. The fourth cooperation agreement agreed covers the education sector to provide a legal umbrella related to training and capacity building of educators and scholarships for students.

"The renewal of the health cooperation agreement and the signing of education cooperation to strengthen collaboration between the two countries," said the President. President Jokowi also emphasized the importance of continuing discussions on preferential trade agreements to increase trade between the two countries. President Jokowi also appreciated the renewal of the cooperation agreement in the health sector. The cooperation agreement, which has been established since 2018, expires in 2022. This cooperation organizes a number of welfare in general on public health issues on the Indonesia-Papua New Guinea border.

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As a comparison of fellow PLBNs, namely PLBN Entikong, Sangau Regency, West Kalimantan Province, which borders Tebedu, Sarawak, Malaysia, it can be known that the data on cross-border activities that stand out in PLBN Entikong as a comparison is in the form of the crossing of people, goods, and

vehicles, with a daily average of 1,552 crossers. Meanwhile, the value of trade recorded until November 2023 reached IDR 40,415,109,664 with the main commodities being fruits and agricultural products. Not only that, PLBN Entikong also crosses freight transportation back to back and passengers in the form of intercountry buses that allow direct passage to neighboring countries, both to Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. Records regarding domestic tourist visits are also high, reaching 75,558 people until November 2023. These cross-border activities are a hope when the crossing of goods and vehicles will be opened at PLBN Skouw.

President Joko Widodo said that the Government of Indonesia through PT PLN (Persero) officially supplies the electricity network in the border area of Wutung, Papua New Guinea to support the activities of the local community. This was conveyed by President Joko Widodo when receiving an official state visit from Papua New Guinea Prime Minister (PM) James Marape at the Bogor Presidential Palace, West Java, Monday, July 15, detained by Antara. "Regarding the construction of the electricity network by PLN on the Skouw-Wutung border, I can convey that this cooperation began today and the electricity has been turned on in Wutung today," President Jokowi said in a joint press statement. On that occasion, PM James Marape also expressed his appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for the electricity that has illuminated Wutung City. "I hope to be able to harness the electricity from Jayapura in the future from the various hydro potentials in PNG and the geothermal potential," said PM James. PM James also hopes that environmentally friendly electrical energy from the potential of hydropower plants in Papua New Guinea can be utilized so that economic activities in Indonesia can be obtained from clean energy.

Based on the information gathered, PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN) is collaborating with Papua New Guinea's electricity company, PNG Power to supply electricity to Wutung, Papua New Guinea, which is a village on the border with Papua. The cooperation is a follow-up to President Joko Widodo's bilateral visit to Papua New Guinea on July 5, 2023. Using a transmission and distribution network in the Skouw area, Jayapura, PLN supplies additional electricity needs in Wutung City, Papua New Guinea.

Based on the above conditions, it is interesting to examine how the sustainability of the opening of land crossings for vehicles and goods, including humans, on the border between Skouw and Wutung Vanimo and the accompanying impacts that will occur when this crossing is actively used as a link between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and at the same time with other Pacific countries in the region.

Transnationalism is a description of relationships and interactions that transcend national boundaries and involve individuals, organizations and movements operating in various countries, building complex networks and relationships that transcend geographical boundaries. The figure of transnationalism theory, Robert C. Keohane, has made the greatest contribution to the theoretical development of transnationalism since the 1970s. Keohane focuses his work on new issues about the world's political economy that are shifting international security issues, issues about new actors in relations between nations that are no longer centered on the state, but transnational actors, issues about new

forms of international interaction that are no longer 'interstate relations', but transnational and 'transgovernmental relations', issues about new outcomes of international cooperation that do not only talk On the conflict between nations, Issu was about a new international institutional structure that was not entirely anarchic, for which he provocatively hyped that the new international structure would be solid after the decline of the hegemony of the United States.

Keohane's thought as a form of criticism of the theory of Realism finds a gap to build a theoretical foundation about institutional structures and international relations that provide more opportunities for the development of peaceful relations between nations than what Realism describes as a world full of anarchism and tends to conflict or war. It is believed that due to the emergence of new actors in transnational relations, especially related to international economic-political issues, relations between nations will be more likely to be non-conflictual, but mutually beneficial or positive sum. Keohane argues that the international order is of great value to governments/countries not because they can impose ties on other countries, but because they consciously see the possibility for their governments to make mutually beneficial agreements. They will empower their ruler rather than shackle him. The second contribution of Keohane's thinking after the optimism of the positive-sum in transnational relations is that power relations between countries are formed not by the possession of coercive sources of power, but by asymmetrical circumstances related to specific issues in interdependent relations between nations. In an asymmetrical interdependent relationship, the more resources a country has, the stronger it will be, but conversely, the fewer it has, the weaker it becomes.

Keohane identified five impacts of transnational interactions, namely, first, the occurrence of attitude change or attitude change, where interactions between communities, individuals directly between nations will provide alternative attitudes and opinions that are different to each person. Similarly, transnational communication networks that are transmitted electronically in both the form of words and images, will encourage this change in attitudes. Second, the occurrence of international pluralism. What is meant by the growth of international pluralism is the increasingly close network links between national-based interest groups that develop networks to the transnational level, and usually by involving transnational organizations for its coordination. Third, the formation of dependence and interdependence, especially related to transportation and international finance. The integration of a country's financial system into the global financial system is an undeniable practice of dependency today, because isolation in this financial system can have very serious consequences for a country. Meanwhile, interdependence can be seen from international policies related to the environment and global warming. Fourth, the increase in the attitude of some governments from certain countries to influence other countries. Here, transnational interactions used by certain countries for political purposes, for example, international tourism is used for espionage activities, or instilling sympathy for certain ethnicities in other countries, or even cultivating sympathy for certain religions, are examples of how to penetrate the state informally. Fifth, the emergence of 'non-state' autonomous actors in international relations by bringing a pattern of 'private' foreign policies that are likely to collide with state interests/policies or at least there is a lack of

synchronization with state policies. These actors include international trade unions, and MNCs (Keohane and Nye, 1971).

NATO Secretary General, Dr. Javier Solana in the Symposium on the Political Relevance of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, in Mnster, Germany, November 12, 1998, Solana is of the view that the principles of humanity and democracy are two principles that are essentially irrelevant to the Westphalian order, and can be adopted as a reference in building a new international system, because the Westphalian system contains a number of old things. The Westphalian system is built on the foundation of absolute sovereignty of a state that gives rise to rivalries with each other, and does not create a peaceful community of states or the international community. Sovereignty is an exclusion so that it does not function as an integration. In the end, the Westphalian system was not able to guarantee the security that it had been for three centuries.

Why did Europe feel this shift in the Westphalian system so much, even for the first time compared to the rest of the world? This is inseparable from the dramatic development of European economic cooperation that later grew into the European Union as it is today, where the borders of countries became very blurred, and even by most of the population were considered as 'troublesome disruptors' of their mobility. European integration has given rise to a phenomenon that is in principle contrary to the Westphalian spirit, which is a process of de-bordering the world of states, as Hüsamettin Inanc and Hayrettin Ozler put it: 'Declining transaction costs and cost of organizational connections across national boundaries have increased the flow of information, capital, service, goods and people around the globe. This so-called globalization phenomenon is expected to close the gap between cultural, economic and political differences. Yet globalization does not always mean association between national political and economic societies or the emergence of a global society. The fact seems to be rather a process of 'de-bordering the world of states' in which the governments or the nation states diffuse to or 'share' their exclusive policy-making power with some international and sub-national actors. This conception signals the emergence of a novice political order beyond so-called the Westphalian system.' In Inanc and Ozler's view, the phenomenon of globalization that occurs due to the increase in the flow of information, capital, services and the traffic of people and goods, is expected to close the gap between cultural, political and economic differences between nations, although globalization does not necessarily mean the economic and political unity of a country's society. The facts show that globalization is more of a de-bordering process or the process of eliminating state boundaries among the nations of the world, where countries share the exclusive authority of their policy-making with international actors as well as with their sub-national actors. This conception gave rise to a new political order outside of what is commonly referred to as the Westphalian System.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is classified as Descriptive-Qualitative research, and the focus of the research is in Muara Tami District, Skouw Village, Jayapura City, which borders Wutung Vanimo, Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea. The choice of this border is based on the consideration that in these two regions there is the Skouw

National Cross-Border Post (PLBN) and the Wutung Cross-Border Post in Vanimo, as well as their geographical proximity to each other. Primary data was obtained through direct observation of the author in the Skouw border area and secondary data through literature studies in the form of news in online media and official information sources. The data from the survey and document tracing were analyzed through 3 (three) stages (Creswell, 2009: 165-186), namely carefully recording all the information obtained, grouping and categorizing the information, and third, interpreting all the information obtained from interviews and documents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Border Connectivity between Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific

Connectivity of national borders is an increasingly important strategic issue in the era of globalization. State borders, once physical dividers, are now complex points of meeting and interaction. Technological developments, international trade, and human mobility have changed the way countries view borders.

The border area of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea has been established since May 22, 1885, namely at the meridian of 141 east longitude, from the north coast to the south coast of Papua. The treaty was continued between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in 1895 and between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea in 1973, stipulating that the border starts from the north coast to the Fly River at the meridian of 141° 00' 00" east longitude, follows the Fly River and the boundary continues at the meridian of 141° 01' 10" east longitude to the south coast of Papua.

The Skow-Wutung area, Muara Tami District, Jayapura City is the gateway between Indonesia and PNG. The area is the focus of attention because apart from being a gateway, there are also many problems that have the potential to be a source of conflict between the two bordering countries.

The prominent problems along the border areas of Indonesia and PNG are mainly related to infrastructure development and welfare problems of people who live around the border areas. Infrastructure development, especially related to transportation, is still limited and uneven in border areas. In terms of economy, the level of people's income is still low and limited to the agricultural sector. Likewise, education and health facilities and infrastructure are still low. In addition, political issues related to the places of departure of extremist groups opposed to the government to neighboring countries (PNG).

Regarding connectivity, the Skouw-Wutung border is one of the good land links between the two countries for several reasons, namely First, this border area is very close geographically and is an asset for both countries in the context of developing Cooperation; Second, because of the connection and close distance, the mobility of people between the two countries can be carried out well and smoothly, and it will even be very easy to carry out human movement activities between the borders of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, thereby encouraging the acceleration of the development of the two countries due to the high flow of people; Third, these two co-ordinated borders will facilitate cooperation in the field of infrastructure so that the state of the border between the two countries will be better; Fourth, the connected border becomes a bridge for the development of goods and services for the people of the two countries so that export, import and trade activities for the two

countries as well as for the Pacific region and its surroundings will be encouraged and increased so that the convenience of connectivity in this border area is felt by the people of the two countries and the Pacific region; Fifth, the connectivity of the two borders that can be passed by vehicles also facilitates cooperation in the education sector which will make it easier for border communities close to school access and improve the quality of human resources in border areas; Sixth, bringing health access closer for border communities of the two countries and increasing the life expectancy of border communities; Seventh, connectivity is a capital for the development of the investment, tourism and business sectors for capital owners, thus opening up job opportunities for border communities of the two countries and other Pacific countries.

Opportunities and Challenges of Opening Vehicle, Goods and People Crossings at the Skouw-Wutung Border

Border Connectivity Opportunities

The opening of the border between the two countries will provide benefits and open up opportunities for cooperation that are beneficial for the two countries. Various opportunities that will be received by Indonesia and Papua New Guinea as well as the Pacific region with the connection of this region and the passage of vehicles and the movement of goods, services and people, there are several advantages, including: First, providing an increase in trade, both exports and imports for the two countries but also for the Pacific region; Second, bringing the availability of public infrastructure facilities both health, education and infrastructure closer to the border community; Third, increasing the number of border officers who are qualified in terms of skills, both Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Security personnel so that crossing activities run effectively and efficiently but also prevent illegal activities such as illegal border crossings, narcotics trafficking, smuggling of both humans and weapons and make the border area safe for the people of the two countries; Fourth, border communities get many job opportunities when this area becomes a tourist destination and a place of business for capital owners so as to improve the standard of living of border communities of the two countries and on the other hand increase kinship relations between these border communities who both have a Melanesian race; Fifth; increasing opportunities for regional cooperation with other Pacific countries and maintaining regional stability in the Pacific region; Sixth; become one of the gateways for international markets and global resources in the Indo-Pacific region.

Connectivity of national borders is a complex and challenging strategic issue. However, with the right strategy and strong cooperation, the connectivity of national borders can be a great opportunity to improve economic growth, prosperity, and regional stability.

Challenges of Skouw-Wutung State Border Connectivity

The borders of the connected countries will of course experience various problems as challenges that must be managed by the two bordering countries, in this case by Indonesia and by Papua New Guinea. In the plan to open land routes for the crossing of vehicles, goods and services as well as people at this border, there

are several challenges that must be understood by the governments of the two countries, namely the border of Skouw and Wutung, which are located very close to each other, so far it has become a crossing area legally and illegally without documents. This is due to the many rat roads that are passed by the border natives who are indeed descendants of indigenous people in this region so that morning to evening they cross the border either from Skouw to Wutung or vice versa to garden and return to their homes in the territory of this border country in the afternoon/night.

Another challenge is the rampant illegal activities such as the rampant entry and exit routes of marijuana-type drugs in this region as happened on July 28, 2024 at this border where joint TNI and Polri personnel succeeded in thwarting the smuggling of marijuana-type narcotics weighing 1,180 grams in the border area of the Republic of Indonesia and PNG Skouw, Jayapura City, Papua,

In addition to the rampant illegal activities in this border area, there are also other social problems such as the condition of poor people, far from the availability of education, health and economic facilities and infrastructure such as markets and banks became a challenge when this connecting road was opened for the two countries. So it is important for the two countries to regulate regulations and policies in each country so as not to hinder the flow of goods, services, and people. It is important for Indonesia and Papua New Guinea to create and approve and establish various derivative regulations or MOUs that have been agreed upon by the two countries in the crossing of vehicles and goods by road at the Skouw-Wutung border. The two countries also need to coordinate related to funding for the development of various sectors when these two regions are open.

CONCLUSION

Connectivity of national borders is a complex and challenging strategic issue. However, with the right strategy and strong cooperation, the connectivity of national borders can be a great opportunity to improve economic growth, prosperity, and regional stability. Likewise, the plan to open a land road for vehicles, goods and people to cross in the border area of Skow and Wutung, Papua New Guinea is one of the good opportunities for the two countries in order to maintain sovereignty and increase stability in the Pacific region, namely by making this border a hub or bridge for the people of the two countries. The impact is economic growth, improving the living standards of border communities, increasing the global competitiveness of the Pacific region and increasing cooperation between various countries in the region.

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