

## Moken's Tactics on the Thai-Myanmar Border Crossing

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**ABSTRACT** This paper aims to analyse the cross-border connectivity of the Moken (also known as Sea Nomads or Sea Gypsies), who lived on the islands and coastlines of the Thai-Myanmar borderland. This paper argues on the way the Moken have been negotiating the ongoing presence of a common cross-border ethnic identity, by using these aspects of their existing ethnicity and their enduring cross-border movements within the ethnic circle. They have somehow convinced government officials that they are not breaking the law when crossing the border in this way, even though many of these same officials fail to recognise their right to citizenship, land or fisheries ownership, and other basic human rights.

### INTRODUCTION

The Moken are indigenous people who have resided on the upper islands of the Andaman Sea for centuries. They live in the Mergui (or Myeik) Archipelago in southern Myanmar and western Thailand. The 'Moken' are assumed to be descendants of the Proto Malay group and were the first to migrate to the Malay Peninsula (Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre 2014: 73). They have their own spoken language but no written language in the Austronesian languages (Austroasiatic languages) (Kraisame 2018: 2). Traditionally, the Moken, as mobile people who have been living in this area for a long time, are free to move without any national border concerns. International borders in the maritime area were not precisely defined until Thailand and Myanmar did so in the past century due to the formation of these two nation states. This started to have a marked effect on people who live along the coast and the island. As a result, in some ways of life, cultures, and traditions of those people have been devalued including the Moken.

However, a border crossing between Myanmar and Thailand is often done by the Moken according to the traditional way of life. The Moken's border crossing on the Thai-Myanmar border was motivated by the desire to flee persecution, access to natural resources, seeking public service, crossing the border to see relatives, and joining the transnational family tradition, as well as look for

better jobs. However, these folks continue to make a living from the ocean, as well as cross-border travel between two countries along a traditional route from time to time. Though they lived before the formation of nation-states, these two states did not count Moken as citizens of the states in the last century until now. Both the Thai and Myanmar governments have limited knowledge of the Moken way of life.

Although both nation states have tried to produce a sense of the native since the last century through various discourses of citizenship and non-citizenship, there has been a creation of ethnonationalism in Myanmar but not in Thailand, but that does not mean that it is absolute. Moken groups on both sides still have some connection by having family members, which helps to build strong bonds. Therefore, having a cross-state family is the kind of relationship the Moken have had from the past to the present and it is one of the main reasons why Moken in Thailand and Myanmar still interact with each other today.

Therefore, nation-states formulate policies based on their own assumptions and classify Moken identities according to their misinterpretations. As a result, the Moken are different when they cross the national borders of these two countries. Considering the geography of Southeast Asia, many areas are now developed in line with the fishing and touristic industries in both Thailand and Myanmar, causing the sea dwellers in many communities to continually seek new areas and posing new challenges to their existence in the region as well (Sather 1997: 327-328). However,

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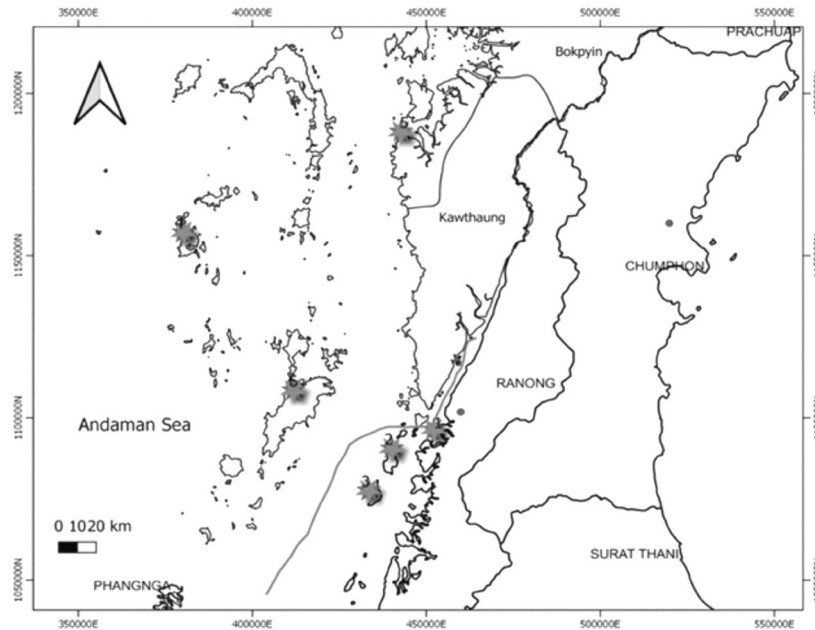


Fig. 1. Moken on the Thai-Myanmar Border

a survey of the above studies shows that there is still a lack of study of the dimensions of the struggle for civil rights in the context of nation-state border crossings. In particular, the Moken, who rely more on marine natural resources for their livelihood than other groups, will fight and adapt, because, at present, some of these people are still stateless and almost all of them are marginalised. They were marginalised in many cases and in some cases conflicts with the state led to secession for self-government. The Moken issue has gained attention by academics, INGOs and governments, and a trend of protecting indigenous people's rights has arisen (Fig.1).

The aim of this paper is to study the Moken's existence and adaptation in the context of border crossings between Kwanthong province, Myanmar, and Ranong province, Thailand. It provides an insight into the Moken's transnational border phenomenon, questioning their tactics on the Thai-Myanmar border crossing. How do the Moken negotiate with sets of border regulations imposed by Thailand and Myanmar government agencies? In a multinational context, recent developments in society and the economy are causing a change

in the nation's borders, and people's mobility (according to Vertovec 2009: 86) is merely an extra component. Although, recently this border area has been linked to national security issues, such as human trafficking, the border crossing of Moken did not count among this as compared to other borders between Thailand and Myanmar.

### Objective

1. to study Moken people on the Thai-Myanmar border.
2. to study the cross-border variables and perspectives of Moken at the Thai-Myanmar border.
3. to analyse Moken's strategies and shifting lifestyles along the Thai-Myanmar border

### Literature Review

This part will review the concepts of indigenous peoples and the survey (a study of the Moken). The indigenous peoples are defined by the modern state as former inhabitants retaining some or all of the nation-state's customs, cultures, social, economic

and political institutions. They are the group of people whose linguistic and cultural identity lived inland or in an area before the nation-state and were ruled by outsiders (Gray 2003: 8). Furthermore, indigenous people studies are concerned with more than just racism, ethnicity, or religion. They are also concerned with the complex relationship between the land they own and state claims. It is a conflict of land and resource occupation under modern property rights as well (Wilmer 2006: 33). Because indigenous peoples are defined in territories that were previously under Western colonial control, it strengthens the knowledge of explanatory power between the groups of power and powerless (Somboonboorana 2019: 44). According to Hernandez et al. (2007), some studies say that indigenous people do not play a role in modern state structures.

For example, the political rights of indigenous peoples in Malaysia are inconsistent with the political rights recognised by international law (Yahya et al. 2020). The nationalism in Indonesia's legal system towards the allocation of natural resources is driven by a state-centred approach. As a result, indigenous peoples have not been accorded the benefits they deserve (Kadir and Murray 2019). Bolivian constitutions and laws seem to support indigenous autonomy but limit their scope, especially with regard to indigenous territorial control (Tockman and Cameron 2014: 64).

Gregg (2020) presented the "Indigenous Rights State (IRS)" in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), which proposes addressing three issues, that is, individual rights and collective rights, group rights versus political liberties, and universality in states with indigenous rights. The IRS is a proposal for local politics to be as realistic as possible and manageable. The development of the IRS is essential to overcome some limitations, such as intolerance of political activism and diversity.

Thus, the concept of indigenous people can apply to explain the Moken's claim for different citizenship and cross-border connectivity between Thailand and Myanmar as marginalised indigenous groups. It can help to show their attempt to present themselves in such a way as to create similarities with or belonging to most other people. It shows citizenship efforts and various forms of bargaining power. The authors will draw upon a literary approach to study the Moken more as follows.

The following research works can be used to deepen the study of the Moken. Efforts to adapt to social and economic changes are key factors that enable indigenous peoples to migrate so that they can live in changing contexts. Rungmanee and Cruz's (2005), "The Knowledge that Saved the Sea Gypsies", studied the Moken in Myanmar. There are more than 200 people living on the island of Yan Chuek who have moved to the Surin Islands, Thailand, with their relatives. They argued that living in Myanmar was difficult. If Myanmar soldiers are forced to work without pay, and if they refuse, they will be jailed for three or four days. Men were forced to carry heavy soil and sand for construction, and women were taken to collect rocks, but the problem was that the Surin Islands were under Thai rule and national park officials did not allow the Moken to relocate. The writing reflects the injustice suffered by the Moken labour force, as they had to find new homes and lacked the security of living.

In addition, a study by Sinsomboon (2015: 387) found that the Moken remained primarily following a maritime occupation. In particular, traditional fishing is the main occupation of most Moken, but there are many limitations, such as the decline in marine life and a lack of modern equipment. The designation of state conservation areas, for example, the Moken's fishing, is also contextually adjusted. Currently, the Moken's fishing practices include traditional fishing practices that have been done since their ancestors and the use of labour on fishing boats, which increased after the tsunami in 2004. However, some Moken switched to other occupations in order to survive.

Because the Moken still have frequent migrations, enumeration is therefore more difficult than in other populations. A study by Sinsomboon (2015: 387) found that the Moken population is approximately 2,000-3,000, consistent with the Human Rights Watch (2015: 4) survey of Moken living along the southern coast of Myanmar, and the west coast of Thailand has the population of approximately 965, including the 2017 Myanmar census data, which shows that the Moken population in Myanmar has dropped to 2,000 (Thai Business in Myanmar 2019). According to surveys by various agencies, there are different numbers because these people have to move their farms to different islands, which include working at sea for a

long time. However, the problem is that a Moken's quality of life needs to be improved.

The literature review of the Moken people in Southeast Asia can be classified into four groups. The first group entails understanding lifestyles and identities, the second group is a study of the impacts of social, political, economic and natural changes, the third group is a study of collecting and restoring identities, traditions and culture, and the fourth group as a study of movement operations, fighting, and negotiating as marginalised people. The number of studies in this group is still very small, especially the Moken group needs to be studied to build more knowledge to understand them as indigenous people and lead to sustainable solutions. Because indigenous peoples are culturally diverse, education to build a body of knowledge means different dimensions can be strung together and linked to the problems or situations they face, especially the Moken group that lives on the Thai-Myanmar border. They obviously need assistance to survive under a rapidly changing nation-state.

### Research Framework

Although the nation-state has tried to produce discourses to create a sense of the people's solidarity through various forms and methods, it has created Moken under both the Thai Nation State and the Myanmar Nation State to focus on statehood, national rather than ethnic. But that does not mean that it is absolute. Moken groups on both sides still have some connection by having family members, which helps to build strong bonds. Therefore, having a cross-state family is the kind of relationship the Moken have had from the past to the present and it is one of the main reasons why Moken in Thailand and Myanmar still interact with each other today.

The consequence is living with the limitations of creating a 'border' according to modern state guidelines. As a result, migration and traditional ways of life are more restrictive. This leads to settlements that live together as permanent or semi-permanent communities. An interesting point is that indigenous communities located along state borders are affected by their acceptance and are not counted as citizens of any state, thus making them stateless. Even people who are legally allowed to live and work can be forced into a lower status with little money, which can hurt their quality of

life and jobs. Therefore, this research methodology will help to study how the Moken lived a close life with marine resources and had little adaptation to mainland societies. Affecting the characteristics of the residential community are their power relationships, structure, and social status.

This paper is based on a researchers' study of both documentary research and field research. Documentary research is the study of Moken data through documents and records of individuals or agencies, including books, research, photographs, official documents, or other evidence that has been collected to bring such documents to analyse the basic context of economic, social, cultural, and community relations systems. It includes related documents such as journals, news, and newspapers related to the news about the Moken.

Field research focuses on interviews with 50 Moken groups in Thailand and Myanmar, to study the life of the Moken, including their relationship with the people in the community. This includes interviews with business owners and entrepreneurs as well as relevant local authorities in both countries. The researchers travelled to the islands where the Moken reside, namely the islands in Thailand (Koh Lao, Koh Chang, and Koh Phayam) and in Myanmar (Koh Chalan, Meyee, and Koh Sadejji) between 2018-2020. The Office of the Committee for Research Ethics, Social Sciences, Walailak University, gave the Ethical Consideration certificate number WU-EC-PH-LI-0-1274 approval to this study. The respondents were given informed consent to participate in the data collection process of this study taken into consideration by human dignity, privacy and secrecy.

## RESULTS

### Mokens' Crossing Factors on the Thai-Myanmar Border

#### *By Avoiding Tyranny*

It is revealed from the journal of the former maritime police, Tawee Rodaitoon, that he witnessed Moken people were treated inhumanely by the authority due to the fact that they were not satisfied with how the Moken work. Sometimes, the Moken were tortured to death. This exemplifies that the Moken are oppressed and exploited. The field work has confirmed that although the Moken are entitled

to the right to citizenship in these present days, their human rights are still violated on the daily basis, as they are either forced into slavery or illegal labour. Moreover, the outsiders tend to take advantage of the Moken, which brings them to a powerless position. As security and stability on the particular island do not belong to the Moken, they have to move to another place in search of opportunities for security and better well-being. Therefore, this demonstrates that the Moken are not only nomadic by nature, but the wish to escape from oppression and violation are also the important contributing factors to the movement of the Moken.

#### *Access to Natural Resources*

From the data collected during the fieldwork on both areas (Myanmar and Thailand), it was found that the main occupation of the Moken was fishery. As the Moken have always been living on the coastal area, fishery was a major part of their daily lives. However, the access to natural resources was restricted by the authority. In Thailand, the area where the Moken used to make a living, it has suddenly been designated as a national park by the Department of National Parks. Referring to The National Park Acts 2562 Protection, Maintenance, Care and Preservation of National Parks, this part it said, "collecting, taking away or otherwise endangering or deteriorating wood, soil, rocks, gravels, sand, minerals, petroleum or other natural resources or carrying out any other act affecting the ecosystem, biological diversity and natural resources and the environment; and making an entry for performing any activity with a view to seeking a benefit" (Office of the Council of State 2019). Meanwhile, in Myanmar, fishery has been commercialised, which allows foreign investors to take part in the industry. The advent of advanced fishing technologies has greatly impacted the marine ecosystem in reducing the number of marine creatures. These two conditions force the Moken to change how they make a living because the resources are eventually inaccessible. In consequence, the Moken needs to be on the move to search for new areas. From the observation, it appears that the Moken prefer to go to Myanmar to catch fish rather than Thailand.

The Moken have lived off marine resources since ancient times. Fishing is a profession that they are good at and have been doing until now. However, now the Moken's livelihood area has decreased because Thailand and Myanmar are both developing their tourism industries. There are now many boats and tourists in the sea and a lack of peace results in fewer resources, causing them to find a new area farther away. Advances in fishing technology by both the Thai and Myanmar fishing industries are also reducing the number of marine animals in the sea. This directly affects the Moken's livelihood. Therefore, they have to continually search for new areas, but fishing areas are restricted, and the government decided to protect the area by making it a non-fishing zone. When they want to catch fish, the Moken prefer to go to the sea in Myanmar rather than Thailand.

#### *Seeking Public Services*

Undeniably, public services are essential to the livelihood of people. In many countries around the world including Myanmar, public services are accessible to citizens only. The problem is that Moken are often denied the rights to citizenship, which means that they cannot access public services. In this study, interviews with Moken people were conducted. One of the Moken villagers in Myanmar said, "*I want to live in Thailand because I want my children to go to school and have good food to eat. I know that in Thai schools, students get free lunch and milk*". This reflects two things. The first issue is that public services are an important factor that convinces the Moken to relocate because they want a better standard of living. The second issue is that the interview implies that Thailand has better public services even for non-citizens. According to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2017, Rights and Liberties of the Thai People (Office of the Council of State 2017), it stated, "A person shall have the right to receive public health services provided by the State. An indigent person shall have the right to receive public health services provided by the State free of charge as provided by law. A person shall have the right to the protection and eradication of harmful contagious diseases by the State free of charge as provided by law". This shows that although the Moken are not recognised as Thai citizens,

they are still able to access public services such as education and healthcare. Thus, the main reason for the Moken both crossing the border and striving for Thai citizenship is the access to public services.

It is important to be responsive to basic needs. Most of these appear in the form of public services operated by the government, such as medical care, education, service, vocational promotion, etc. But public service is often limited to citizens of the state only. Therefore, the pursuit of public service takes the form of acquiring citizenship by obtaining legal citizenship. When comparing the demand for public services in Thailand and Myanmar, Moken's prefer to receive Thai services because of the higher standards. Some of the Moken's cross-border journey was because they saw a chance to get public services from Thailand, so they tried to get Thai citizenship to obtain those social services.

#### ***Crossing the Border to Visit Relatives and Participating in the Tradition***

Moken in Thailand and Moken in Myanmar have a very close relationship. The Moken's interactions and bonds in different areas were manifested through kinship. Many people travelled to the islands because relatives or family members married and settled in another home. So, some Moken still travel frequently across borders. Most of them are middle-aged men or older. It can be said that most of the ties between Moken's in different areas stem from the kinship system. The bond between them remains intact even after time has passed. The modern era of communication with technology makes it possible to know the news of their relatives of another nation. Therefore, travelling across borders occurs when important events occur. The activities of tradition are still the main reason that binds the two Moken together.

#### ***To Find Better Work***

Job opportunities are another key factor that lead to border crossing. On the coastline, available occupations for the Moken are limited. Consequently, it is necessary for the Mokens to commute to where there are job opportunities. According to the interview with Nan, one of the

Moken who frequently crosses the border, "*I got married and decided to stay at Laem-Sra, Myanmar. I have lived there for 3 years. After that, I moved back to Thailand at Koh Lao because I think it is easier to find a job. Also, I want to get a Thai ID card. Well, I already have an identity card for non-Thai people*". Currently, Nan lives in Thailand and works as a labourer on the fishery boat. Apart from being a labourer on a fishery boat, the Moken also work in the marine tourism industry. Both fishery and marine tourism are a seasonal occupation. In some months, it is a high season for marine tourism in Thailand and not in Myanmar. On this account, the Moken will start to commute again. Hence, this shows that the Moken move to a place where there are opportunities. When the season changes, the Moken will move and change the way they make a living.

#### ***The Result of Moken's Cross-border Power Bargaining***

The Moken's relationship on the Thai-Myanmar border reflects the effect of their strategy and bargaining power. The focus on nation-state borders by drawing geographic maps and defining borders to show the geopolitics of each state, regardless of cultural borders, had an impact on the Moken. They have more obstacles to travelling and living. Part of the Moken then negotiated to maintain the old way of life, which can be classified into two main networks, namely the outer island network and the coastal network.

Outer Island Network is a network of outlying islands that are further offshore and have the same geographical characteristics such as Surin Island and Phayam Island in Thailand, and Cha Lan Island, Majot Galak Island, and Sdet Ji Island (Yan Chuek Island) in Myanmar. Many families live in both Thailand and Myanmar. The outlying island network continues to interact with the local fishermen. They make trips to meet friends and relatives, as well as have a family across the state. So the Moken's interactions have continued.

Coastal Network is a network of coastal Moken communities and islands not far from the mainland, comprising Koh Chang, Koh Lao, Thailand, and Laem Sa (Mujee), Sdet G Island, Myanmar. Contact is by land, ship, or online. Consecutive travel is most

evident through the traditional fishing practices of daily life. For land, contact is becoming more frequent. Although most of the Moken community will be on the island, road developments have made travel easier. Some Moken have opted to travel by car to the point closest to the island they wanted to travel to and then boarded a boat. Communication of the Moken network along the shore is via telephone and more modern communication devices.

#### ***Attitudes toward the Borders of the Nation State***

If one looks at the borders of the nation-state as an imaginary line that blocks the way of life, creates travel restrictions and reduces Moken's identity, this makes them unable to adapt to the new context and they eventually become marginalised. Of course, all living beings on this planet, including all humans, need to adapt to survive, but they must accept the differences and abilities of each person that are not the same. Some people need time and opportunity. The emergence of borders inevitably creates obstacles. The Moken tried to adapt to survive. For Moken, the nation-state borders were so inconsistent with cultural boundaries that they sometimes questioned "Why are borders there and for what?" because they were directly affected, such as the inability to travel to cemeteries outside the nation-state, despite having practised for many generations.

Having limited access to essential government services while travelling to another state due to a secondary status within a nation-state and being suspected of belonging to the ethnic minority. These are only a few examples of how restrictions affect Moken emotions. Additionally, individuals do not instantly profit from the border formation since they are ignorant of its importance. The limitations of life only then become clear. When examining national-state borders that are governed by the government, their points of view may be seen.

The first group looked at the boundary in a manner that admitted that it was a barrier blocking people on both sides. This group of Mokens chose to live within the nation-state and communicated only with Mokens within the state. Travelling across borders is a huge and challenging task for these people.

The second group viewed boundaries as not being accepted as fixed dividing lines that could block people on both sides. At the same time, they were trying to adjust the bargain to be able to live

a normal life as usual. The daily lives of these Moken continued to traverse between Myanmar and Thailand. They have a regular network of communication with each other.

#### ***Attitudes toward Government Officials***

Since the tsunami in 2004, the Andaman Sea region has attracted more investors, along with the government's policies, especially the rehabilitation of tourism after disasters, causing rapid development under the neoliberal economy. The tourism industry is growing by leaps and bounds.

Lately, government officials have become stricter on border crossings. The main reason is because both Thai and Myanmar maritime areas have been developed into tourist areas. There are many tourist boats crossing each day. Most tourists will come from Thailand. This may be due to the development of Thailand's tourism industry with higher service standards in addition to which other marine activities have increased in this area, making some people use this channel to commit illegal acts.

As evidenced in many cases, peace is affected along the border, such as trafficking in people, drugs, transport of goods, theft, etc. Variety of border areas have existed since the past but have increased in recent times. Because there are more, there must be more policies on border care, especially during the high season, as illegal activities are often detected among tourists. At the same time, Myanmar is currently opening a tourist attraction, thus more and more people are required to be monitored and more stringently so. Of course, this will affect the Moken's way of life as an indigenous person who continues to travel across borders the same way. But they understand and agree to the process of inspections, raids, and other cooperation.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Border: The Rights of Indigenous People**

A border restricts the freedom of movement of the Moken while the Moken strives to keep their lifestyle. The previous studies explain that the nation-state borders are created under the modern state concept, which excludes racial/ethnic borders. Minahan (2016) views that the creation of borders regardless of demographic

or racial geography is problematic, as it often becomes a burden for people who live on the borderline. The findings above also showed that the Moken's freedom of movement is restricted by the border. Consequently, the Moken have to adjust themselves in order to resume their nomadic lifestyle. The mechanism that the Moken adopts to preserve their way of life is that they create their own network both within and outside the state so that they can collectively carry out their activities as an ethnic group. The situation of the Moken nowadays is not very different from two decades ago, as in Sather (1997) described that nation-state borders are barriers to everyday life, and has created more than the past, where Moken existence was more limited than the Bajau Laut and Orang Laut in Malaysia. Border restricts the freedom of movement of the Moken, while the Moken tries to keep their lifestyle.

In fact, they have cultural borders that nation-states overlook. When nation-state borders were made more significant, it hindered the traditional way of life by restricting mobility, regulating access to sea resources, and denying the Moken state aid. Blitz and Lynch (2011: 9-10) noted that the way states characterise intra-state citizens, past immigration, climate, and worrisome is the non-registration of newborn children. Increasing, in these vulnerable populations, is a common cause of statelessness. When creating a nation-state, it was established that the peoples living in that country as citizens formed a relationship between a person and a state, whereby the person had certain obligations and was entitled to protection from the state (Britannica 2021).

In other words, borders and government officials in control of the border resonate on the Moken. They accept and understand their duties and do not resist, while cooperating and treating officers with dignity as governors until trust is established. But they sometimes question the standard practice of individual officers more, because in many cases, the Moken are not treated by the same standard. The Moken's limited existence has resulted in their efforts to claim more rights today due to the need to travel across borders. At present, the Moken have received more help from external agencies and organisations, introducing them to one another providing help from those groups both with knowledge and support of the movement. Thus, the Moken had a different idea from the past.

### **Border: Adjustments and Negotiations**

Many Moken have stated that Thailand is more readily available for government services, such as hospitals with higher standards and a better education system. There is help from many agencies, so they try to have a Thai identification card to receive rights and welfare that the government provides. However, Myanmar's marine resources are more and having a Myanmar identification card means they can also access marine resources. Many Moken families want this, that is, Myanmar citizenship is for occupation, and Thai citizenship is a status for receiving welfare from the state. Holding two cards, by seeking Thai and Myanmar identification cards as collateral for border crossings and receiving services from the government as well as other social opportunities, their attempts to become legal citizens in both states came from them knowing it would bring better life opportunities. It is consistent with Lapanun (2018), which suggests transnational migration analysis shifted from a mixed-cultural new area to a focus on adapting to living in the destination. And most recently, the citizenship framework focuses on legal citizenship in the destination area.

Receiving help from agencies shows that they do not intend to damage the state and are not persons who pose a threat to its security. This includes building trust among government officials in a variety of ways to prove that they are not a threat to security. Losing sovereignty in a globalised world is no longer an argument for states. The Moken's adaptation to national-state rules and borders by seeking both Thai and Myanmar national identification cards as a legal guarantee means that they can travel without the problems and obstacles created only by the modern state. The Moken understand that it is the duty of those involved, especially when travelling during the busy period soldiers or other officers will inspect the ship and inquire about the intent of the voyage. If it was an officer who had been there for a long time, they would know it was a Moken. Knowing each other is no problem. But if they are not known to each other, checking is very time-consuming, including checking the identification card and knowing that it was Moken and he was allowed to travel.

Geographically they look like the same islands but drawing the border line makes it a foreign



country in spite of the fact that the journey takes less than an hour while the journey ashore for cross-state permits can take no less than three hours. Moken's border crossings have no means to harm the state, thus, they are not a threat to national security.

On this particular point, Miller and Baumeister (2013) suggested that migration border controls due to the concern regarding the loss of sovereignty should no longer be an excuse of the nation. Additionally, transnationalism is not the main factor in the transformation of the nation state. Burki (2017: 1384) mentions that many minorities are eligible for citizenship but unable to prove their identity due to ongoing migration and discrimination by the authorities. These are the main factors contributing to the problem of statelessness. Moken adapted to the rules and borders of the nation state by seeking for both Thai and Burmese identification cards so that they could travel without the barriers created by the modern state.

### CONCLUSION

In the rapidly changing world, people are required to be adaptable, and so do the Moken. Much of the Moken's occupation was also tied to local fishing. However, local fishing limitations and both the announcement of the marine park and the boom of the tourist industry, etc., caused the Moken to work in modern jobs instead. The choices of Moken are limited, so the options they have are to adapt and strive to survive are as follows.

#### Tactic and Bargaining

A border restricts the freedom of movement of the Moken, as they try to keep their ways of life. Boundaries of borders are systematically established by land and sea, including more intense control over border areas. This affects people living in border areas who have had a way of life of travelling between states since the past. Especially the Moken group, who are indigenous people who live in this area. They interact with each other and have travelled in this area for a long time, the key factor being access to natural resources, escaping tyranny, seeking public service, the need for a better career, having a transnational family and kinship including joining the tradition because it is a group of people with the same cultural society. Thus, the Moken's tactics at the Thai-Myanmar

border crossing serve as an explanation and adaptation of the Moken's livelihood on the border of Thailand and Myanmar.

#### Network and Connectivity

Moken's border crossing bargaining power has resulted in their relationship in the Thai-Myanmar border region that cannot be broken. Some Moken have continued to travel across nation-state borders and interact continuously. A cross-border network is created in which the outlying island and coastal island networks are formed and there is a communication journey arising from negotiations for crossing national borders, which occur in everyday life. However, because of the contradiction between state borders and cultural borders along with the legal process and practice of state border crossing, this is not conducive to their lifestyle. Importantly, the Moken's border crossing does not play a big role in how the nation-state border changes and their crossings are not intended to harm the country's security. Therefore, a connectivity for border crossings means that non-compliance with the law has occurred. As a result, some Moken have continued their cross-border livelihood.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers thereby make the following suggestions and recommendations.

1. The Thai and Myanmar governments should cooperate to formulate a policy to sustain Moken's identity, such as creating a museum or learning community and developing new occupation skills, etc. Most importantly, they should build security settlements such as protected areas for Moken along the Thai-Myanmar border.
2. For further study, the study of Moken should be more concerned with human rights issues. Importantly, researchers should respect their human dignity because they have their own culture and mostly have mobile lives without citizenship along the Thai-Myanmar border.
3. The life database of the Moken group should be compiled and disseminated to create a collaboration among the state, civil society, and NGOs in delivering support that is in

accordance with the Moken group's concerns and requirements.

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