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Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
اَ	a		اَ، اِيَّ	an
اُ	u		اُو	un
اِ	i		اِي	in
اَ، اِ، اِيَّ	ā		اَو	aw
اُو	ū		اَي	ay
اِي	ī		اُو	uww, ū (in final position)
			اَي	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: <http://rotas.iium.edu.my>

Exploring the Interdependence Model in Malaysia-Indonesia Relations: Insights from Sabah, Malaysia

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Eko Prayitno Joko****

Nordin Sakke*****

Abstract: The historical similarities between Malaysia and Indonesia, apparent in geographical proximity and social-cultural dimensions, significantly influence perspectives and discourse on their bilateral relations. Despite frequent assertions of shared kinship and racial ties, relations between Malaysia and Indonesia are consistently characterised by rivalry, marked by numerous disagreements and challenges. This paper posits that conflict is a minor element in the broader discourse of relations, emphasising the importance of cooperation due to the complex interdependence between these two countries. Using Sabah as a case study, this paper highlights the significance of interdependence between Malaysia and Indonesia, delving into pivotal issues that shape the dynamics of their bilateral relationship. It focuses on several issues such as the

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population and kinship ties, the reliance of the Sabah economic sector on the Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), consumer goods and everyday necessities, interdependence in the security sector, and finally haze and environmental pollutions to outline the dynamics of interdependence between Sabah (Malaysia) and Indonesia. All facets describing these relations are emphasised since they demonstrate that these two countries are interdependent and share common interests in nearly all sectors. This paper contends that despite facing various contentious issues and problems, the interdependence that occurs contributes to a harmonious relationship and is able to avoid conflict between the two countries.

Keywords: Interdependence, Security, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sabah.

Abstrak: Persamaan sejarah antara Malaysia dan Indonesia, jelas dalam melalui kedekatan geografi dan dimensi sosial-budaya, memainkan peranan penting dalam membentuk perspektif dan wacana dalam hubungan dua hala kedua-dua negara ini. Malangnya, walaupun sering mendakwa berkongsi hubungan saudara dan serumpun, hubungan antara kedua-dua negara ini secara konsisten dicirikan oleh persaingan, ditandai dengan pelbagai perselisihan dan cabaran. Makalah ini menegaskan bahawa persaingan adalah elemen kecil dalam wacana yang lebih luas mengenai hubungan ini. Ia menekankan bahawa saling kebergantungan yang kompleks adalah penting untuk memahami hubungan ini. Menggunakan Sabah sebagai kajian kes, makalah ini menyerlahkan kepentingan saling kebergantungan antara Malaysia-Indonesia dan menyelidiki isu-isu penting yang membentuk dinamik hubungan dua hala ini. Antara isu utama adalah seperti hubungan penduduk dan persaudaraan, pergantungan sektor ekonomi Sabah kepada Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI), barangan pengguna dan keperluan harian, saling kebergantungan dalam sektor keselamatan, dan akhirnya jerebu dan pencemaran alam sekitar yang memperlihatkan dinamika saling kebergantungan antara Sabah (Malaysia) dan Indonesia. Semua aspek yang menggambarkan hubungan ini ditekankan kerana ia menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua negara ini saling bergantung dan berkongsi kepentingan bersama dalam hampir semua sektor. Kertas ini menegaskan bahawa walaupun menghadapi pelbagai isu dan masalah yang menjadi perbalahan, namun saling kebergantungan antara kedua negara mampu mengelakkan konflik serta menyumbang kepada hubungan yang harmoni antara kedua-dua negara.

Kata kunci: Saling kebergantungan, Keselamatan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sabah.

Introduction

Indonesia and Malaysia are two neighbouring countries that share not just land and sea borders, but also the same language and historical roots. Thus, the relation between these two countries is exceptionally intimate and unique. However, at the same time, these factors also contribute to problems and conflicts in the relationship. This can be seen clearly after both gained their independence following World War II. Starting with *Konfrontasi*¹ at the beginning of independence until today, the two countries are plagued with various issues and problems to the extent that it can bring tension in their relations. Therefore, this paper attempts to understand Malaysia-Indonesia relations via the perspective of interdependence. Utilising the state of Sabah, situated in East Malaysia and sharing both a land and sea border with eastern Indonesia, this paper demonstrates that interdependence between these two nations would enhance cooperation and act as a deterrent against conflicts or wars. Although there are flaws in the relationship between these two countries, their interdependence will compel them to continue working together to solve issues in an increasingly challenging environment.

Malaysia-Indonesia Bilateral Relations

The Malaysia-Indonesia relationship is often characterised by nicknames like “little-big brothers”, reflecting a shared destiny since both nations were colonised and tied to kinship due to cultural, historical, and religious similarities. These shared characteristics contribute to

¹ The *Konfrontasi* (1963 to 1966) was an armed conflict sparked by Indonesia's opposition to the idea of the Federation of Malaysia. This historical episode was characterised by a breakdown in political, economic, and social relations, culminating in armed incursions, subversion, and destabilisation. In the specific context of Sabah, pivotal military engagements unfolded in Kalabakan (14 series) and Pulau Sebatik (14 series). The Kalabakan incident was the most significant, witnessing eight fatalities and 18 injuries among Malaysian security forces. Meanwhile, Sarawak also witnessed a multitude of battles, notably in Tebedu (83), Simanggang/Sarikin (36), Palampu and Nagayat (12), Kapit (10), and Barrio and Ba'kelalan (5). One of Sarawak's intense battles took place in Long Jawai, Tebedu, and situated 48 km from the Sarawak-Kalimantan border, when 21 Border Scouts, 6 Gurkhas, and two police officers were ambushed by 200 Indonesian soldiers (Mackie, 1974; Nik Mahmud, 2000; Mad Ali @ Abang, 2021).

a cordial relationship. Early studies, including those by Abdullah (2003), Abubakar (2008), Wan Hassan & Dollah (2010), Chong (2012), Bustami, et al. (2021) Maksum (2018), Liow (2003, 2005) and Chan (2018), explore the relationship's ideational perspective, focusing on kinship factors, shared history, and identity. Chan (2018) emphasises the 'special relationship,' highlighting reciprocity, trust, and loyalty, while examining the interplay between power dynamics and shared identities. Jibrán (2018) also argues that international organisations, such as ASEAN, play a crucial role in ensuring harmonious Malaysia-Indonesia relations.

Changes in domestic and international politics have significantly altered the interaction between Malaysia and Indonesia. Globalisation and the rise of international markets have compelled all nations to pursue a competitive identity. This shift is particularly evident in Malaysia-Indonesia ties, where this decade has witnessed the emergence of rivalry between the two nations. According to Abubakar (2008) and Maksum (2018), the primary policy in both Malaysia and Indonesia is to compete globally, overlooking the traditional notions of a little-big brother relationship or '*serumpun*' (similar stock or race). They argue that Indonesia-Malaysia relations are often viewed as overly emotional and fraught with various problems. Consequently, characterising Malaysia-Indonesia relations as genuinely amicable remains elusive, given the persistent diplomatic disputes that significantly hinder development and stability.

Since their independence, Malaysia and Indonesia's bilateral relations have been shaped by historical challenges, notably the '*Ganyang Malaysia*'² during the *Konfrontasi* era (1963-1966). This legacy persists, with ongoing issues encompassing mistreatment of Indonesian migrant workers, terrorism, cultural and territorial disputes

² The '*Ganyang Malaysia*' or "Crush Malaysia" campaign, declared by President Sukarno on September 25, 1963, was a concerted effort to protest the proposed establishment of Malaysia. In executing this campaign, Sukarno initially employed a multifaceted approach involving political, economic, and propaganda strategies to stop this idea. This encompassed measures such as cutting off diplomatic ties with Malaysia. However, when these actions didn't work, he decided to launch military attacks against Malaysia (Mackie, 1974; Nik Mahmud, 2000).

in the Celebes Sea (Block ND6 and ND7 or Ambalat) and the Sulu Sea (involving conflicts in Sipadan and Ligitan). These problems reflect the inherent complexities in their relationship. The post-*Konfrontasi* period has seen the overlapping claim in the Celebes Sea (ND6 and ND7) emerge as a particularly contentious issue (Druce & Baikoeni, 2016; Schofield & Storey, 2005; Meng & Chrisnandi, 2013; Maksum, 2016; Arsana, 2010), intensifying negative portrayals of Malaysia in Indonesian media (Maksum, 2017). This disagreement is further fuelled by allegations of inhumane treatment of Indonesian workers in Malaysia. The potential escalation of these issues highlights the need for careful and serious addressing to prevent further strains in the bilateral relationship.

However, the disagreements and challenges between Malaysia and Indonesia are not likely to escalate into a full-blown conflict or war. Recent developments in domestic and regional security challenges have compelled both governments to collaborate, enhancing cooperation due to the changing security landscape. This perspective aligns with liberalism, which argues that international cooperation is the most effective way to address bilateral issues. In contrast to realism, liberalism suggests that despite anarchy in international relations, elements like the interdependence of states can mitigate potential conflicts. Recent developments, such as President Jokowi's proposal to move the Indonesian capital to Kalimantan, indicate a potential expansion of cooperation and interdependence between Malaysia and Indonesia (Gulasan *et al.*, 2021). This is particularly relevant for Sabah, an East Malaysian state sharing land and sea borders with Kalimantan, prompting careful scrutiny of the proposal to maximise potential benefits.

The state of Sabah encompasses an area of 72,689 square kilometres of land with its maritime territory occupying 360 square kilometres, constituting 30 percent of Malaysia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (Jafar, *et al.* 2022). Geographically, Sabah extends from the South China Sea in the west to the Sulu Sea in the northern region of Kudat, encompassing the eastern coast, which spans the Sulu Sea and the Celebes Sea in the Semporna and Tawau areas. Furthermore, Sabah also shares territorial waters on the borders with three neighbouring countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Brunei. The state coastline stretches approximately 1,860 kilometres, extending from Cape of Mengalong, Labuan to Sebatik Tawau Island (JUPEM, 2005; Hazani,

2020). Therefore, leveraging on the model of complex interdependence, this paper illustrates several examples based on the existing relationship between both countries, demonstrating how this framework can effectively elucidate the dynamics of their bilateral relationship.

The Model of Complex Interdependence

One of the primary theories in international relations that underscore the importance of cooperation is liberalism. In contrast to realism, where classical political realism and neorealism are fundamentally distinct concepts, liberalism, especially in its neo-liberal form, maintains a coherent framework in its assumptions and approaches concerning the functioning of the world. Neo-liberalism extends the same foundational liberal assumptions to the contemporary environment, taking into consideration the conditions of globalisation and the post-World War II and post-Cold War era. For liberalism, the anarchic and conflictual nature of international politics is subject to change. Liberalism symbolises a decrease in conflicts, an avoidance of wars, and a pivot towards cooperation as the predominant form of international relations. According to liberal theory, achieving this transformation is possible through the implementation of rules, norms, institutions, and values. In the liberal perspective, these elements should not only guide international relations but also regulate the behaviour of states.

Furthermore, within the broader framework of liberalism, another significant concept that has evolved is the complex interdependence model. In “Power and Interdependence” (1977/2011) Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye explored the concept of complex interdependence. This term refers to the complex nature of relations among states, characterised by a multitude of channels connecting societies. Beyond traditional intergovernmental diplomatic relations, complex interdependence encompasses trans-governmental officials and numerous informal ties among non-governmental elites and corporations. Keohane and Nye emphasise that these diverse connections form multiple networks among states, contributing to the complexity of interdependence. In this framework, the agenda of interstate relationships involves a range of issues that lack a clear or consistent hierarchy. This model continues to be pertinent in elucidating diverse facets of international relations until today. As opposed to the theory of realism, the concept of complex interdependence rejects major assumptions in realism on world

politics. Instead, Keohane and Nye (2011) propose three assumptions in international politics: First, other than the state, there are other non-state actors whose roles are significant in international relations; second, hierarchical order is absent in explaining a variety of global issues internationally; third, the military strength as an instrument for conflict resolution has become obsolete (Keohane & Nye, 2011: 20-25).

Nonetheless, this paper contends that Keohane and Nye's model requires a reconfiguration with diverse concepts and terminology to comprehensively grasp the intricacies of interdependence. The interactions among nation-states present numerous complexities, demanding a nuanced scholarly approach to international relations. In the realm of security studies, for example, a more comprehensive understanding of interdependence can be achieved by incorporating concepts like "common security" or "cooperation among adversaries" (Møller, 1996), "mutual security" (Smoke 1991), "reciprocal security" (Booth, 1985), or "cooperative security" (Nolan, 1994). This broader conceptualisation enhances the comprehension of interdependence in the context of security discourse. Despite the varied terms, the underlying idea is that a state's security is intricately linked to the security of its neighbouring countries. Thus, in explaining Sabah's security, this concept suggests that instability in neighbouring Indonesia will impact the stability and security of Sabah. In this relational context, it can be argued that the more prosperous and secure the neighbouring countries, the greater the security enjoyed by the state.

The assumption accurately reflects the situation in Sabah, where regional stability significantly influences the state's security considerations. Malaysia has adopted the "prosper thy neighbour" strategy in its foreign policy to achieve this objective. This proactive approach signifies Malaysia's efforts to strengthen regional cooperation with neighbouring countries, ultimately enhancing Malaysia's security (Dollah & Joko, 2015). Former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir introduced and advocated for this concept in 1997.

“...about win-win-win strategies, about the multitude of opportunities in Asia for everyone... I would like to explain again that it simply means if you help your neighbour to prosper you will prosper along with it. When countries are prosperous, they become more stable and their people need not emigrate to your country. Instead, their prosperity

provides you with a market for your goods, with opportunities to invest and to enrich yourself even as you create jobs and wealth for them". (Dollah & Joko, 2015: 80)

Hence, the discussion in this paper underscores the significance of Malaysia-Indonesia relations within the framework of interdependence. By examining various instances that illustrate the interactions and connections between the two nations, the authors contend that this interdependence will exert a notable influence on the future trajectory of their relationship.

Navigating Complex Interdependence in Malaysia-Indonesia Relations

The bilateral relations between Malaysia-Indonesia are a perennial concern predating as early as the formation of Malaysia until the present day (Maksum & Bustami, 2014; Maksum, 2017). In the specific context of Sabah, the relationship has experienced fluctuations over time for both countries (Dollah *et. al.* 2019; Joko *et. al.* 2019). Therefore, a comprehensive examination is necessary to harness the model of complex interdependence to gain a thorough understanding of this relationship. In the remainder of this article, we examine five sectors utilising the framework of complex interdependence, highlighting various actors through which Malaysia and Indonesia may closely cooperate. These sectors include people-to-people relations, cultural and kinship ties, Sabah's economy and Indonesian migrant workers, consumer goods, security dynamics and cross-border crime, and haze and environmental challenges. Each of these issues demonstrates the complexity of Sabah-Indonesia relations, involving diverse actors and a myriad of concerns. In doing so, we seek to clarify how this complex interdependence in these sectors could potentially transform the dynamics of the relations towards greater cooperation rather than competition.

Bonded Connections: People-to-People Relations, Cultural Affinities and Kinship Ties

The cross-border movements of people form a crucial aspect in understanding the Sabah-Indonesia relationship. Historically, prior to colonial-imposed territorial borders, the Borneo region had fluid interactions due to the absence of defined boundaries (Mat Kib, 2017). Colonisation led to the establishment of territorial borders,

dividing kinship ties among clans and communities. The Sabah-Kalimantan border division has separated populations in areas like Sebatik Island, Kalabakan, Sook, Keningau and Nabawan creating challenges for border communities (Karulus & Suadik, 2010; Othman, 2019). Notably, on Sebatik Island, residences are divided by the border, presenting unique challenges in border community's daily life (see., Dollah et. al 2019). The need for valid documentation for border crossings within the contemporary nation-states of Malaysia and Indonesia has resulted in a crisis affecting both nations, emphasising the complexities of relationship in Borneo's border area. Attention must be given to the welfare of border communities, which often lack development and essential human necessities. Despite these challenges, both Malaysia-Indonesia demonstrate commitment to improving the well-being of border communities. Various agreements, including the Basic Arrangements on Border Crossing signed in 1967, showcase the dedication to securing and facilitating the processes for border communities in both countries' territorial spaces. Balancing human needs with legal frameworks remains crucial in this collaborative effort (Dollah et. al 2019).

After *Konfrontasi* between Malaysia-Indonesia, both countries began to take practical steps in easing the cross-border movements of people. Both countries introduced the Cross Border Pass (PLB, "*Pas Lintas Batas*") as an alternative to the legal documentation replacing the use of international passports in the border area. The issuance of PLB by the Malaysian government is targeted at Malaysian communities in the border areas. Based on the website of Malaysia's Immigration Department, the PLB is specifically issued for Malaysian citizens who reside for more than six months in several districts in Sabah. These districts in Sabah are Pensiangan, Tenom, Sipitang and Tawau. Meanwhile, in the state of Sarawak, these districts consist of Lundu, Bau, Kuching, Serian, Simanggang and Lubok Antu. The document is valid for a year from the issuance date, and it can be used for several journeys across the borders. The permission to stay in Indonesia should not be more than 30 days for each entry (for further information, please refer to Malaysia's Immigration Department, 2020).

The close relationships among border communities on both sides play a pivotal role in facilitating the movement of goods into Sabah. Tawau, situated strategically near Indonesia and coastal areas, serves

as a key gateway for Indonesian citizens entering Sabah. This district's advantageous location enhances its potential for a substantial increase in people's movements and could emerge as a primary gateway for both the entry and exit of goods and individuals if the capital city relocation takes place (Gulasan et al., 2021). The entry of people from the border necessitates a comprehensive analysis of the longstanding interdependence between Malaysia and Indonesia. Warren (1985) for example explores economic relations and people's movements in the Sulu archipelago and Sulawesi Sea, dating back to the colonial era. Additionally, specific east coast districts in Sabah, such as Sandakan, Lahad Datu, and Tawau, have historically been focal points for copra traders and seafood from North Borneo, Indonesia. This relationship is further strengthened by factors like kinship ties, social relationships, the demand for labor in Sabah's economic sectors, and the demand for Malaysian goods in Indonesia.

Cross-Border Labour Dynamics and Indonesian Migrant Workers

The demand for cheap labour has increased significantly since decades ago and this result in the Sabah state accepting a large scale of migrant workers from Indonesia. As a result, it is not surprising that one of the most prevalent and contentious issues concerning interdependence between both countries are the demands of the labour workforce for all economic sectors in Sabah. Moreover, Indonesia has the highest population, and the country could provide the need for a labour workforce. This has resulted in Sabah being a destination for migrant workers from Indonesia who arrived in the state both through legal and illegal channels. The crisis can be traced back to the time prior to Sabah achieving its independence after North Borneo joined the Federation of Malaya in 1963. The situation became direr when Sabah was hailed as a booming economic power in the 1960s, which led to an influx of migrant workers in the state (Kurus et al., 1998; Dollah & Abdullah, 2018; Syed Mahadi, 2014; Hugo, 2000; Kassim, 2005, 2012; Wan Hassan & Dollah, 2011; Maksum, 2022; Dollah, 2023). This scenario distinctly illustrates how the movements of people have strengthened the interdependence across various economic sectors in the state of Sabah, prompting an increased need for migrant workers.

The influx of Indonesian workers into Sabah, especially Tawau is not a recent development; its historical trajectory traces back to the

origins of Indonesian arrivals in the region, spanning from the colonial period through the post-colonial era (Sintang, 2007; Goodlet, 2010; Kahin, 1947; Tregonning, 1965; Kaur, 1989). This challenge is notably pronounced in the forestry and other major commodity sectors, where a persistent labour shortage has been an ongoing concern until today (Kurus et al., 1998; Syed Mahadi, 2014; Dollah & Abdullah, 2018; Wahab & Dollah, 2023). The Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975) underscored a critical labour shortage crisis in Sabah.

“...unless employers can manage to raise wages to a more attractive level, which, unless commodity prices rise substantially, seems unlikely given their high costs, estates will find it difficult to have sufficient workers without large immigration of foreign workers who are prepared to work for lower wages.” (Rachagan, 1987: 259)

In the plantation sector, dominant companies like Felda and Kretam rely heavily on migrant workers, constituting over 90 percent of their workforce (Dollah & Abdullah, 2018; Peters, et. al. 2022; Dollah, 2023). Despite the issuance a significant number of licenses, the labour demands in Sabah persisted, leading the state to explore alternatives such as sourcing labour from China (Dollah, 2023). Notably, Tawau experienced a substantial influx of Indonesian migrant workers, reaching 1,070,771 between 2003 and 2005, with subsequent years seeing fluctuations, revealing the interdependence between labour demand in Sabah and the availability of Indonesian workers. Sectors like palm plantations are particularly impacted, and the recent closure of borders has heightened concerns about labour shortages, especially in small-scale farming and plantations (Joko *et. al* 2019). This scarcity poses challenges, affecting economic and social development in Sabah, with the 5D sectors witnessing a concentration of migrant workers sectors in Sabah where the local are not keen to work in these challenging and demanding sectors.

Following the resolution of the Covid-19 threat, Sabah faces an ongoing challenge of labour shortage, particularly in the plantation, construction, and agriculture sectors, risking economic decline by 2024 if not addressed (Utusan Borneo, 28 Jul. 2022). The scarcity is intensified in the plantation sector due to increased demand driven by rising cooking oil and commodity prices globally (EMPA, 2023). Adeline Leong, Chairman of IDS (Sabah), expresses concern over this

post-Covid-19 development, highlighting that “The shortages of migrant workers have also led to a significant decline in crop production, with many planters unable to harvest their crops” (Borneo Post, 21 Mar. 2023). Consequently, this post pandemic nature on reliant on migrant workers underscoring the post-pandemic situation’s alignment with the interdependence framework.

This complex interdependence extends beyond the influx of migrant workers from Indonesia to Malaysia. Simultaneously, from the Indonesian perspective, the expansive labour market in Malaysia represents an opportunity for the country to export its labour surplus and address challenges related to employment opportunities domestically (Hugo, 1995). Djafar (2012) emphasises income and unemployment levels as pivotal factors shaping Indonesian migration patterns to Malaysia, highlighting the enduring priority of this policy for the Indonesian government. Sabah serves as a crucial source of employment for Indonesian citizens, demonstrates the economic interconnection between Indonesia and Sabah within the complex interdependence model.

Symbiotic Relationship of Supply and Demand of Consumer Essential Goods

A major concern in the state is the interdependence of essential consumer goods that can be easily and affordably brought from Sabah to Indonesia. This will significantly affect the source of goods and potential imports from Sabah to Kalimantan, considering Jakarta’s considerable distance from the region. Both countries are interdependent, particularly in terms of accessing daily goods and necessities imported from Sabah. Previous studies also aim to explore the movement of goods and services, highlighting Tawau’s geographical location as a key area connecting Malaysia and Indonesia.

On the Indonesian side, the country relies heavily on nine types of basic goods (known as *Sembilan Bahan Pokok* - SEMBAKO) such as rice, sugar, vegetables, fruits, meat, cooking oil, eggs, salt, oil, and gasoline (Dollah, 2023). As such, it is not surprising that smuggling activities, other illicit and Gray-economic activities as well as the dynamics of labour have become a pressing concern in the region (Sarjono, 2022). The demands for nine types of essential goods (SEMBAKO) reinforced the trade involving these goods including subsidised goods from

Malaysia. There are also movements of money in a form of remittance either through online as well as informal mechanisms, and exchange of goods from Malaysia to Indonesia (Mahmood *et. al* 2013). In this regard, Dollah & Mahmood (2006), Omar et al. (2005), Dollah, Maraining, & Abas (2019), argue that the economic exchange of goods between Malaysia and Indonesia has also become a concern that contours the relationship between both countries.

Similarly, Sabah actively engages in the importation of goods from Indonesia, with a particular focus on basic goods such as vegetables, fruits, used clothing, and fisheries. These goods are transported between Tawau and Kalimantan or Sulawesi, establishing a mutual exchange. Conversely, Malaysia imports high-quality fisheries from Kalimantan, meeting market demands for items such as milkfish, golden snapper, and white fish. On the other hand, Indonesian demands for fisheries tend to concentrate on smaller fish varieties like sea bass. Upon observing the Tawau market, it is evident that the enforcement of the Movement Control Order (MCO) in March 2020 to curb the spread of Covid-19 resulted in a significant surge in the prices of goods in Tawau and along the Indonesia-Malaysia borders. Brown sugar, typically priced at RM5.00, experienced a substantial increase ranging between RM10.00 and RM14.00, while chilli prices soared from an average of RM20.00-RM25.00 to RM70.00 per kilogram. Additionally, the closure of borders and heightened border controls, particularly along sea and land routes, contributed to shortages of various goods in certain areas of Sabah. The escalation in the prices of goods in key markets such as Tawau, Kota Kinabalu, and other districts in Sabah vividly illustrates the interdependence inherent in the relationship between both countries.

Therefore, the plan to move of the Indonesia capital city to Kalimantan posed a comparable situation. In this regard, the shift of the capital city of Indonesia from Jakarta to Kalimantan will not halt the movement of goods between both countries. It anticipates the emergence of a new trend in the movement of goods, with a notable increase in quantities flowing from Indonesia to Sabah. Even though many argue that the relocation from Jakarta to Kalimantan will not change the existing economic patterns in Indonesia, the shift alongside the movement of people and government headquarters will certainly lead to the rise of demands for essential goods. As a consequence of heightened demand for goods, there is a potential risk of oversupply, necessitating

the exploration of new markets to mitigate the looming crisis. Sabah emerges as one such potential destination, given its substantial demand for goods. The ability of Indonesia to produce a large quantity of products at a lower cost, owing to reduced labour expenses, serves as a catalyst for the importation of goods from Indonesia to Sabah. Notably, key clothing producers in Tanah Abang, Jakarta, could be identified as potential primary suppliers in this context.

Moreover, the discernible nature of interdependence becomes particularly evident in matters concerning border communities. Recognising its importance, both the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia have taken proactive steps by implementing various measures and policies to promote border economic cooperation. An exemplar of this cooperative dynamic manifests in the practice of barter trade within the Malaysia-Indonesia borders, notably prominent between Tawau (Malaysia) and various provinces such as Nunukan, Tarakan and Banjarmasin in Kalimantan, as well as other provinces in South Sulawesi. As for the state of Sabah, the practice of barter trade through import and export is a perennial trade activity. The barter trade can be traced back as early as the colonial period involving three colonial powers of the British, the Dutch, and the Spanish in the region. Trade activities have been practised traditionally in the region through the barter trade. Warren (1985) for example, through his writing, argues that the trade relations between Mindanao, Sulawesi, and several districts in Sabah such as Sandakan and Lahad Datu can be traced back as early as the pre-colonial period of colonisation in the region. The strategic location of Sabah under the rules of the Sultanate of Brunei and Sulu has made the state an important centre of routes of barter trade in the region (Dollah & Mahmood, 2004). The traders often did not reside very long in Sabah, as they often travelled from one port to another to access goods. The Maranos people from Lanao, for example, brought goods from Sabah and then imported these goods to Mindanao for commercial activities. As such, it is not surprising that there is a significant number of speed boats operating in Zamboanga, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and other locations for barter trade in Sabah (Omar et al., 2005; Dollah et al., 2019).

To ensure the smooth movement of goods, Malaysia and Indonesia cordially signed the Basic Arrangement on Border Crossing on May 26, 1967 in Kuala Lumpur. The agreement further known as the Border Trade Agreement (BTA) is to strengthen the trade relations throughout

the borders between the Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia on August 24, 1970. This trade agreement was further enhanced by the Agreement on Travel Facilities for Sea Border Trade Between the Government Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia signed on October 16, 1973, and the Basic Agreement on Trade and Economic Relations in May 1976 (Dollah *et. al*, 2019). Several efforts that have been taken by both governments to evaluate all previous border agreements enable strategic improvements for the population residing throughout the borders (for further information, see, Damajanti, 2020). As an illustration, in July 2023, both nations reached a mutual agreement to amend the border trade agreement, aiming to streamline and enhance support for the border community (Strangio, 09 Jul 2023). In addition, several agreements emphasise regional cooperation such as the BIMP-EAGA (Dent & Richter, 2011) and the Socio-Economic Cooperation between Malaysia and Indonesia (SOSEK-MALINDO) (Sudiar & Irawan 2019). The welfare and survival of the local communities along the borders are one of the pressing concerns that have orchestrated the issues of interdependence between both countries.

Enhancing Security Cooperation Amidst the Dynamics of Cross-Border Crime

In the realm of security, the longstanding establishment of interdependence between Sabah and Kalimantan has undeniably played a significant role in fortifying the border's security measures. During the colonial period, both regions enhanced cooperation in dismantling the threat of maritime piracy that often disrupted the barter trade throughout the sea routes used by commercial boats (Warren, 1985). The threat of piracy in the region has become a significant threat to sea commercial activities. As of May 1961, there were 13 cases of piracy attacks reported on the Sulawesi Sea involving 10 deaths and 23 injuries. As a result, the British colonial power sent two vessels, the HMS Houghton and HMS Fiskerton to the Sulawesi Sea. Following this, two pirate boats were captured in the coastal areas (Straits Times, 13 May 1961).

The emerging trends of the non-traditional security threats such as kidnapping for ransom, terrorism, religious extremism, and smuggling of prohibited goods, have even further reinforced the regional cooperation to deal with the varieties of security threats. While there is an establishment of enforcement in the region particularly in the

coastal seas of Sulu and Sulawesi, the capacity of this enforcement is also limited to dealing with these emerging security threats (Dollah *et al.* 2019; Nor Ahmad, *et al.* 2021). Examples of the emerging security threats include radicalism and religious extremism that began to expand in the region in the 1990s. In the context of Sabah, the cooperation among various radical groups indicates their capacity to destabilise both countries without any preventive security measures.

Past arrests reveal that extremist groups in the region have exploited the state of Sabah as a transit route. These radical organisations, spanning both countries, have infiltrated and utilised routes along porous borders, including Philippines-Sandakan-Lahad Datu-Tawau-Nunukan. In Nasir Abas' book "*Membongkar JI*," a former JI member, various instances and locations along the East Coast of Sabah are highlighted as routes frequently exploited by extremist groups (Abas, 2005). Indonesia's major newspapers in early 2006 reported that radical extremists have been roaming around the region freely, particularly in East Kalimantan, Indonesia to Sabah, Malaysia, and Mindanao in the Philippines. Hambali, the main leader of JI also announced Sabah as one of the JI's main areas in Southeast Asia (Nor Ahmad, *et al.* 2021). Moreover, JI aims to establish an Islamic state involving three locations (known as "*wilayah*") consisting of Mindanao-Sabah-Sulawesi. Consequently, the JI's threat and its geographical expansion highlight the fact that Indonesia and Malaysia must enhance their cooperation to enhance the security of both countries. In 2003, several JI members were arrested in Sabah as announced by the Malaysian former Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammad. The Commissioner of Sabah Police, Ramli Yusuff in 2003 also confirmed that there were six members of JI that have been arrested by the police in Sabah. Other radical groups that emerged in Sabah such as Darul Islam Sabah (DIS) in 2006 were found in Sandakan and Tawau aimed at establishing the Islamic State. The existence of DIS shows that extremist groups in the region can potentially exploit the east coast of Sabah.

Although Sabah is only used as transit, these groups could potentially recruit the local population to serve their interests. For example, Amin Baco, a member of DIS and a Malaysian is a wanted man after the incident of Marawi Siege in the Philippines. He was also perceived as a "tri-border emir of Southeast Asia" (Singh, 30 Nov. 2017). As such, the representation of these security threats also depicts the interdependence

between both countries to mitigate the security threats in the region. Nevertheless, both countries showed their mutual commitment to preventing security threats. Following this, an agreement known as the Trilateral Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was signed by both countries in July 2016 (Febrica, 2017).

Following the signing of the TCA, the Trilateral Maritime Patrol (TMP) was initiated on June 19, 2017, deploying warships from all member countries. Up until August 2023, TMP has successfully carried out 47 patrols since its inception. However, the Covid-19 led to a temporary halt in TMP activities from 2020 to early 2023. Simultaneously, Trilateral Air Patrols (TAP) were introduced to enhance capabilities and security systems in the shared maritime area. Launched from the RMAF Base in Subang, Malaysia, TAP operations commenced in the Sulu-Celebes Sea on November 8, 2017. By June 2023, 81 series of patrols had been completed. To improve coordination, Maritime Command Centres (MCCs) were established in each member countries to oversee maritime and aerial patrols, enabling intelligence sharing, and facilitating Quick Response. MCCs have proven instrumental in addressing security threats, including Kidnapping for Ransom, sea piracy, smuggling, and illegal migration.

Over the years, Malaysia and Indonesia have grappled with challenges in their relationship, particularly concerning territorial disputes. The most notable contention revolved around Ligitan and Sipadan Islands, prompting both nations to present the case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Haller-Trost, 1998). Despite the ICJ awarding both islands to Malaysia in 2002 based on the effectiveness factor (Nik Mahmud, 2003), tensions lingered. In 2005, a fresh disagreement emerged with the ND6 & 7 dispute in the Celebes Sea (Schofield & Storey, 2005). To address the Ambalat crisis, Malaysia and Indonesia chose diplomatic channels (Druce & Baikoeni, 2016; Meng & Chrisnandi, 2013; Maksum, 2016; Arsana, 2010). In March 2005, both countries agreed to resolve the issue through dialogue and cooperation (Wan Hassan *et al.*, 2017). In mid-2023, the issue resurfaced as Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim and Indonesian President Jokowi reportedly signed a cooperation agreement to address the dispute diplomatically (Tan & Mahavera, 08 Jun. 2023; Strangio, 09 Jun. 2023). While official details of the agreement are pending (Sinar Harian, 24 Aug. 2023), many perceive it as a collaborative effort toward joint development for

resource exploration in the contested area (CNBC, 13 Jul. 2023). In this context, bilateral security collaboration and cooperation in the Celebes Sea exemplify the interdependence between the two nations.

Collective Action in confronting Haze and Environmental Challenges

Environmental pollution, particularly haze in Southeast Asia, is one of the pressing concerns between both countries. Since the 1980s, the crisis of wildfire has contributed to haze in the region. In 1983 alone, Indonesia incurred a financial loss of nearly USD9 million due to the destruction of 3.6 million acres of forest in East Kalimantan, equivalent to 56 percent of Singapore's land area. Meanwhile, the 1997 haze crisis had far-reaching environmental consequences that affected neighbouring countries, rendering it a historically noteworthy occurrence of regional pollution (Heil & Goldammer, 2001). The crisis compelled President of Indonesia, Suharto to openly apologise for the environmental hazards as he acknowledged responsibility for exacerbating the haze crisis (Cotton 1999: 342).

Similarly, Malaysia also faced haze crises in 1997, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2013, and 2015. Several domestic and regional factors led to environmental hazards in the region, such as the El-Nino phenomenon. Scholars argue that the environmental hazards in the region are caused by several factors. The first factor is that the plantation chooses the cheapest option in terms of cost by opening large farming through wildfire; second, this is followed by the transfer of agricultural activities by small- and large-scale industries that led to deforestation in rural areas in Sarawak (Malaysia), Sumatra and Kalimantan (Indonesia) (Cotton, 1999; Rosenberg, 1999; Ahmad & Md Hashim, 2006; Mahmud, 2014; Latif, Othman & Kamin, 2017). In the haze incident in 2015 for instance, it was estimated that nearly 206 million acres of forest and plantation in Indonesia had to undergo the process of deforestation through open fire between June and October 2015 for agricultural purposes.

The substantial alteration in land usage bore extensive consequences, culminating in the dispersal of hazardous haze to neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. Indonesia recorded the worst hazard with the Air Pollution Standard Index (ISPU) exceeding 2,000 and the country suffers loss worth USD 33.5 billion (Mat Seman & Mustafa, 2019). In the context of Malaysia, the wildfire posed negative consequences for its environmental sustainability. In August 2005, the haze incident led to

the declaration of a National Emergency on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. On August 10, 2005, the Kelang Port located in Selangor faced severe air pollution with the worst air pollution record of 392 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in the morning, which increased rapidly at 5 pm with 424 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. A body of statistics recorded that a haze particle in Klang Valley exceeded both standard ratings by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which is 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, and the Malaysian Department of Environment (JAS), which is 90 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. This is particularly alarming in Klang Valley during the haze season. Two locations recorded the lowest particle in the air that did not exceed 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, indicating an average pollution level (Ahmad & Md Hashim, 2006).

Several efforts were taken within both the regional and domestic contexts. The ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (THPA) signed on June 10, 2002, signalled an important milestone in mitigating the crisis (see, Varkkey, 2012; Heilmann, 2015). Despite this initiative, all countries should partake and establish the cooperation to enhance the environmental hazards in the region. Due to the proximity of Sabah and Kalimantan, environmental issues clearly illustrate the need for the enhancement of cooperation between both countries. From the plan to relocate of Indonesia capital city, policymakers in Sabah should provide a strategic risk assessment related to the environmental issues and their hazards, especially during the preliminary stage of the proposal to relocate the capital city from Jakarta to Kalimantan.

Conclusion

In summary, this comprehensive analysis sheds light on the complexity that shapes the interdependence dynamics between Sabah (Malaysia) and Indonesia. The reciprocal nature of this relationship is evident, with certain sectors highlighting Sabah's significant reliance on Indonesia, while others underscore Indonesia's dependence on Malaysia. Moreover, there are sectors that demonstrate a mutual interdependence, illustrating the complex web of connections binding both nations. These symmetric interdependent dynamics have significant consequences, paving the way for a more extensive cooperation between the two countries. As we delve into the nuances of these interdependencies, it becomes clear that these factors contribute significantly to the potential for enhanced cooperation and a strengthened relationship between the two countries. From a broader perspective, these identified area of interdependency

align with liberal principles, emphasising cooperation and mutual reliance. Examining the prospective landscape using the interdependence point of view, we anticipate a trajectory marked by harmony rather than conflict in the relations between Indonesia and Malaysia. The robust connection between these two nations is expected to play a pivotal role in ameliorating longstanding issues that historically strained their bilateral relations. In essence, the interdependence framework offers a promising avenue toward fostering sustained harmony and cooperation between Sabah and Indonesia. This, in turn, lays the groundwork for a more resilient and mutually beneficial relationship in the years to come.

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Al-Faruqi & al-Faruqi (1986)

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Chapter in a Book

In-text:

Alias (2009)

Reference:

Alias, A. (2009). Human nature. In N. M. Noor (Ed.), *Human nature from an Islamic perspective: A guide to teaching and learning* (pp.79-117). Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.

Journal Article

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Chapra (2002)

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Chapra, M. U. (2002). Islam and the international debt problem. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 10, 214-232.

The Qur'ān

In-text:

(i) direct quotation, write as 30:36

(ii) indirect quotation, write as Qur'ān, 30:36

Reference:

The glorious Qur'ān. Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali (1977). US: American Trust Publications.

Ḥadīth

In-text:

(i) Al-Bukhārī, 88:204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)

(ii) Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

Reference:

(i) Al-Bukhārī, M. (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.

(ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, A. (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

The Bible

In-text:

Matthew 12:31-32

Reference:

The new Oxford annotated Bible. (2007). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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