THE BENEFIT OF JOINT BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA THROUGH SOSEK-MALINDO COOPERATION IN NORTH KALIMANTAN PROVINCE

Ignatius Agung Satyawan¹

¹Center for ASEAN Studies Universitas Sebelas Maret, Solo, Indonesia

Corresponding author’s email: agungsatyawan@staff.uns.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Indonesia and Malaysia have long borders on land and sea on the island of Kalimantan. Sarawak and Sabah on the Malaysian side are bordered by the provinces of West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan and North Kalimantan on the Indonesian side. Border cooperation has been started since 1967 which focused on security aspects and then developed including economic aspects in 1984. In 1995 a Malaysia-Indonesia Working Committee was formed on the Socio-economic Work Cluster or Sosek-Malindo Cooperation between East Kalimantan and Sabah. In 2013 when several districts in East Kalimantan Province were made into the new Province of North Kalimantan, the Sosek-Malindo Cooperation then included Sabah and the new province. This article analyzes the benefits of the Sosek-Malindo Cooperation from North Kalimantan Province point of view. This research is using descriptive qualitative method with collecting data through interviews and secondary data analysis. The conclusion shows that Sosek-Malindo Cooperation has not brought much benefit to the province of North Kalimantan regarding goods and other living necessities are still supplied from Malaysia.

Keywords: Joint border cooperation, Sosek-Malindo, Sabah, North Kalimantan Province

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has the sea and land borders with ten states: Papua New Guinea, Palau, Timor Leste, Australia, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and India. Furthermore, from the ten states bordering with Indonesia, the dynamics that occur on the border between Indonesia and Malaysia is the most prominent, mainly in the island of Kalimantan. In this island, Malaysia has two states, namely Sabah and Serawak which are directly adjacent to Indonesia's province of West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan and North Kalimantan. Fluctuations in Indonesia's relations with Malaysia is largely influenced by the conditions at the border between the historical sentiment of confrontation at the time of President Sukarno, the dispute over Sipadan and Ligitan, the case of Ambalat in North Kalimantan, border shifts, and also transnational crimes such as human trafficking and illegal logging.

Aware of the complexity of border issues, the two nations agreed to form the General Border Committee (GBC) between Indonesia and Malaysia. This Committee is in charge of handling the
issues that emerges in the border region. In 1985, a working committee was formed in the GBC with socio-economic issues or more famous with the name of the Sosek-Malindo Working Committee. In the same year, Sosek-Malindo was formed between Serawak and West Kalimantan and in 1995 it was formed the Sosek-Malindo handling the border between Sabah and East Kalimantan. This Sosek-Malindo cooperation holds annual meetings taking place alternately between Indonesia and Malaysia. Specifically for the Sabah-East Kalimantan, there are seven working papers becoming the priorities, they are the construction of cross-border checkpoint on port, the construction of cross-border checkpoint on land, smuggling prevention, social projects, educational projects, health projects, and the projects in the fields of economics and trade (Sudiar, 2014). When the North Kalimantan province split from East Kalimantan province in the year of 2013 through the law number 20, 2012, several working papers of Sosek-Malindo between Sabah and East Kalimantan were adopted by the Sosek-Malindo between Sabah and North Kalimantan. This article discusses the implementation of cooperation between the Sosek-Malindo Sabah and North Kalimantan since 2013.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD
  2.1. Theoretical framework

Nowadays, there is no state that can be self-sufficient. In such condition, cooperation between states needs to be done. Through cooperation, the states involved will gain mutual benefits and minimize losses. To achieve maximum benefits and minimize losses, a cooperation need to be institutionalized and transformed into rule-based (Mitrany, 1975).

In the international relations literature, study about international cooperation is still relatively new. Previously, this phenomenon was combined in the study of international organizations. As usual, in the new study, there were debates about the definition. Milner (1991; pp. 467-8) seeks to integrate various ideas about cooperation so that he concludes the definition as follows: “Cooperation as occurring when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy coordination. Policy coordination, in turn, implies that the policies of each state have been adjusted to reduce their negative consequences for the other states”. This brief definition illustrates that cooperation is an act of harmonizing state behavior aimed to anticipate other states’ behavior through public policy coordination. In this position, a state must be able to adjust and to reduce the negative impact of other states’ behavior. The cooperation can be bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

Milner (1991) further explains, there are two main things that need to be taken into consideration by scholars of international cooperation. First, the behavior of a state will be guided by the objectives it pursues, including the objectives in cooperation. Secondly, state that cooperates will always take into account favorable rewards or achievements. If the results obtained are deemed unprofitable, state may quit the cooperation that has been agreed. Therefore, international cooperation is always
continually negotiated and re-negotiated to perpetuate it (Keohane, 1984). Every party involved in cooperation always wants certainty from the cooperation that has been made and therefore, cooperation needs to be accompanied by a legalization process (Finnemore & Toope, 2001). Meanwhile, Abbott et.al. (2000, p. 17) interpret legalization as “a particular set of characteristics that institutions may (or may not) possess. These characteristics are defined along three dimensions: obligation, precision, and delegation”. According to Abbott et.al (2000) and Mugasejati (2006), legalization has not guaranteed certainty because it depends on the loose tightness of the desired cooperation. The related elements in this legalization include the obligations of all parties involved, the accuracy of the agreed points and the level of delegation in the implementation of cooperation.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that international cooperation is a complicated process but must be carried out by the state in order to meet its needs. To get maximum results, there are several things that need to be considered. First, the parties involved in cooperation must always be responsive to the policies of other states and continuously make adjustments to their circumstances. Second, cooperation needs to be institutionalized and legalized to ensure compliance with principles or rules. Cooperation between Malaysia – Indonesia in the border area, although these two states are allied and have many similarities, it is not easy to harmonize.

2.2. Literature review
Research on Indonesia's cooperation with other states is still relatively small. There are several articles which analyze cooperation between Malaysia and Indonesia in the border area. Cooperation involving local governments such as Sosek-Malindo experienced many obstacles. Novianti's study (2012) for example, highlights the position of local governments in international cooperation. Cooperation in the border regions of the two states is the authority of the local government, but because it crosses national boundaries, the cooperation is in the hands of the central government. The attraction between the center and the local is often found in cooperation at the border. Although in Law No. 37 of 1999 concerning Foreign Relations has stated that the local government has the right to establish external relations, in fact there is still overlapping between the interests of the central government and the local government.

Furthermore, Sudiar (2014) examines the dynamics of Sosek-Malindo cooperation. Ideally, in the cooperation that has been agreed upon together, the parties involved are obedient to what has been decided. Sudiar found that the Malaysian side often disobeyed what had been decided together on the reason that what had been decided do not in-line with its national interests. Similar things were also found by Nugrahaningsih (2015) who examined the construction of cross-border checkpoint in Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan. The construction of this cross-border checkpoint was not optimal because of the lack of participation of the local community. This project tended to be elitist and on the Malaysian side, this cross-border checkpoint was not an urgent priority.

A study by Putra (2015) on the border between Nunukan (North Kalimantan) – Tawau (Sabah) facing the problem of bureaucratic decision-making between local governments and the central
government. In the era of local autonomy, the authority of local governments was getting bigger, including border areas which were completely divided into local government administrations. On the contrary, the central government feels more authorized because international cooperation is in its domain.

Based on the studies carried out as described above, there have been no studies that comprehensively analyzed the problems as well as benefits that Indonesia has gained in the cooperation of Sosek-Malindo. In addition, there has been no study focusing on Sosek-Malindo's cooperation in North Kalimantan Province after being released from the East Kalimantan Province.

2.3. Method
The research that took place in North Kalimantan Province was qualitative research. Data are collected through observation, documentary study and interviews. The collected data is then validated through source triangulation techniques as a basis for drawing conclusions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Description of North Kalimantan Province
North Kalimantan is the newest province in Indonesia established under Law No. 12, 2012. The 34th province took territory from East Kalimantan Province including City of Tarakan, Regency of Nunukan, Malinau, Bulungan and TanaTidung. The location of this province is in the northern part of Indonesia which borders with Malaysia. Its territorial area is 75,467.70 km² with a small population of 691,058 consisting of 366,677 male and 324,381 female (Central Statistics Agency of East Kalimantan Province, 2018).

North Kalimantan is still lagging behind compared to other provinces in Indonesia. This can be seen from its Human Development Index in 2017 was 69.84, ranked 20th out of 34 provinces in Indonesia. The average length of school is 8.62 years while the life expectancy of the population is 72.47 years (Central Statistics Agency of East Kalimantan Province, 2018).

North Kalimantan has abundant natural resources, yet has not been managed optimally because of its remote location and lack of infrastructure. This resulted in prices of basic commodities relatively more expensive than in other regions of Indonesia. Frequently, there is also a scarcity of energy, especially electricity and Liquid Petroleum Gas. Meanwhile, the export of North Kalimantan Province is dominated by non-oil exports, amounting to US$ 917.27 million. In 2017 there was an increase of 12.16% from the previous year. Export destination states are India, Malaysia and Japan amounting to US$ 318.90; US$ 92.95; and US$ 152.96 respectively. While the import figures for 2017 amounted to US$ 22.61 million, up 31.91% from the previous year. The trade balance of North Kalimantan Province shows a positive value. Total commodity imports from Malaysia amounted to US$ 21.47 million. Although the trade balance between North Kalimantan Province and Malaysia is a bit surplus, daily necessities in North Kalimantan Province still depend on Malaysia. (Central Statistics Agency of East Kalimantan Province, 2018).
3.2. The implementation of Sosek-Malindo
After the confrontation era in 1966, the leaders of two states agreed to cooperate more closely. The cooperation between the two states began with the security aspect by signing the Agreement on Security Rules in Border Areas in 1967. This agreement was the basis for the establishment of the Malaysia-Indonesia General Border Committee (GBC Malindo) which was responsible for managing the Malaysia-Indonesia border. For Indonesia, the Chair of the GBC is the military commander. This agreement was revised twice in 1972 and 1984. A year later it was agreed to establish a Malindo Socio-Economic Working committee at the national and local (provincial and district) levels. The main task this committee is to study and plan joint projects on both sides of the Indonesian and Malaysian borders to improve the welfare of both nations (Nugrahaningsih, 2015).

Since 1984, the GBC has not only carried out security functions but also includes socio-economic functions. SosekMalindo has a vision: “To achieve harmony and continuity of socio-economic development for mutual benefits, particularly between the two states, through the Sosek-Malindo Cooperation” (Rahim, 2017, p 59). A year later the Sosek-Malindo Serawak-West Kalimantan Province was formed and then in 1996 Sosek-Malindo Sabah-East Kalimantan Province was formed. For the border between Malaysia Peninsula and Sumatra Island, in 2001 Sosek-Malindo Johor-Riau Province was founded and in 2009 Sosek-Malindo Johor-Riau Islands Province was established. Finally, in 2013 Sosek-Malindo Sabah-North Kalimantan Province was formed. The organizational structure of Sosek-Malindo consists of General Border Committee on the top level,
followed by Staff Planning Committee, Working Committee on Sosek-Malind (National Level), then the Working Committee on Sosek-Malindo (state/province level).

There are several projects that can be implemented according to the plan so that they also can be beneficial for the people on both sides. These projects are directly related to the needs of the community, namely the projects in the field of social, health, education, economy/trade and smuggling prevention. Although these projects are beneficiary for Indonesian side, it still found that daily stuff is supplied from Malaysia. In other words, it needs more efforts to maximize Sosek-Malindo Cooperation.

On the other hand, there are two projects which do not comply with the agreement. Both of these projects are related to infrastructure development, namely the construction of cross-border checkpoint on port and land. From Indonesian side, it has been carrying out construction according to the agreement, namely the port on the river Lamijung and the establishment of cross-border checkpoint in Simanggaris. On the other side, Malaysia do unilateral change by reason that the location of the development that has been agreed on the part of Malaysia do not have the support of the national government, because it is considered as economically less advantageous (Sudiar, 2014; interview with an officer from Agency for Local Planning, Research and Development of North Kalimantan Province, September 28, 2018).

The implementation of Sosek-Malindo projects also faces several obstacles so that the results are less maximal. Obstacles faced by the Indonesian side include: First, the long chain of bureaucratic organizational structure resulted in the slow pace of decision-making. Project implementation at the local level has to be approved in the provincial level, and in the central government. Second, Coordination meetings held each year alternately between Indonesia and Malaysia are felt too long so that it cannot take decisions rapidly. Third, many agencies handle the border issues, so that it is possible that there can be an overlapping policy. For example, there is a Border Management Body from the Ministry of Domestic Affairs which overlaps with Sosek-Malindo. While foreign Cooperation is related to the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Fourth, limitations of the human resources capabilities of either the bureaucrats in the area and local people who become the objects of the projects implementation and the fifth North Kalimantan Province is new a province, so it is still less experienced to workon projects together with other states and also the limitations in terms of financial and human resources.

4. CONCLUSION

Sosek-Malindo Cooperation between Sabah and North Kalimantan Province is positive efforts to make close relationship for people who live in the border of the two states. On Indonesian side, even though the Sosek-Malindo Cooperation project brings benefits to the border community, it is not enjoyed by all the people of North Kalimantan which is marked by a dependency on the supply of basic commodities from Malaysia.
However, in the future Sosek-Malindo Cooperation can be enhanced by improving project management as well as shortening bureaucratic chain so that decisions can be taken quickly and reduce overlapping authority. In addition, the most important thing is to increase human skill with the result that the implementation of cooperation becomes more effective and efficient. In the long run, negative sentiments and historical irritation between the two nations can be reduced.

5. REFERENCES


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