



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Pattern of Dependence of the Aruk – Biawak Border Communities in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic A global pandemic

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Abstract

Aruk is located on the direct border between Indonesia and Malaysia. The national border in Aruk is classified as one of the seven Integrated Border Crossing Posts. The one located in Indonesia. The following locations are integrated: Others in Entikong, Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan; Motaain in Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara; Badau in Kapuas Hulu District; Motamasin in Malacca District; Wini in North Central Timor District; and Skouw in Jayapura. President Jokowi has officially inaugurated the seven borders, which are collectively known as the Seven Indonesian Borders. Aruk facilitates cross-border activities, particularly with Malaysia, thereby enhancing regional economic prospects. Conversely, the presence of this advantageous location might also result in reliance on the inhabitants of Kab. Sambas, particularly in Aruk and other regions along the Malaysian border.

Keyword: The Pattern of Dependence; Aruk-Biawak; Border; COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

The process of intensifying security measures has been historically prevalent at borders and frontiers (Walters, 2006; Squire, 2011). The issue of border security has been a prominent subject in politics ever since the enactment of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (Jones & Els, 2013). To comprehend borders, one must grasp the functioning of nations and how boundaries can be utilized to enhance territory, security, identity, emotions, memories, and different sorts of national socialization (Paasi, 2012).

The border region presents a multitude of opportunities as well as intricate challenges, particularly with the economic interdependence of border settlements with adjacent nations. The multi-location model explores the correlation between geographical shapes and economic costs. It suggests that a reduction in trade costs leads to increased economic activity in certain border locations, while other places may not experience the same effect (Redding & Rossi, 2017).

Furthermore, numerous studies have established a correlation between trade openness and the geographical dispersion of economic activities inside nations. This research is deemed significant due to the substantial economic prospects it has (Ades & Glaeser, 1995). The wellbeing of individuals is significantly impacted by the caliber of economic progress, which typically leads to a decrease in the poverty rate, an elevation in the Human Development Index, and an enlargement of work prospects. The Aruk-Biawak border possesses the potential to be owned, and if the surrounding regions effectively utilize this potential, it will significantly contribute to the growth of the regional economy through foreign trade. Consequently, this will lead to a reduction in the

poverty rate in West Kalimantan, particularly in Sambas Regency. Additionally, it will have a positive impact on the increase of the Human Development Index and the expansion of employment opportunities.

West Kalimantan possesses significant potential in the form of abundant natural resources, including mining minerals such as bauxite and petroleum, as well as agricultural, plantation, marine, and fishery resources. Nevertheless, the poverty rate in West Kalimantan in 2020 remains the highest among the Kalimantan area, while still lower than the national average. The poverty rate in West Kalimantan was 7.17 percent in March 2020. Despite a decline of 7.28% compared to September 2019 and 7.49% compared to March 2019. The population of impoverished individuals in West Kalimantan stands at 366.77 thousand, with the majority residing in rural regions, accounting for 282.41 thousand persons. The source of this information is kalbar.bps.co.id, and the data is from the year 2021. According to data from the West Kalimantan BPS, the population percentage in Sambas Regency is the second highest in West Kalimantan, with a rate of 11.63 percent, following Pontianak City. Due to its high population proportion, Kab has the second highest population after Pontianak City. Sambas requires resources to meet his everyday demands. The distance from the City of Sambas to the provincial city is 229 kilometers, and the travel time is approximately 5-6 hours. Upon reaching the Aruk-Biawak border, it will take an extra 1.5-2 hours to meet your demands. Therefore, fulfilling your wants from the provincial city will require a considerable amount of time (kalbar.bps.co.id, 2021).

The Aruk Border serves as a contiguous boundary between Indonesia and Malaysia. The national border in Aruk is classified as one of the seven Integrated National Border Posts. The one located in Indonesia. The remaining Integrated National Border Posts are located in Entikong, Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan; Motaain Integrated in Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara; Badau Integrated National Border Posts in Kapuas Hulu Regency, Motamasin Integrated in Malacca Regency; The Wini Integrated in North Central Timor Regency, and the Skouw Integrated in Jayapura. President Jokowi has officially

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established the seven limits, which are known as the Seven Borders of Indonesia (pu.go.id, 2023).

The Aruk Integrated National Border Posts facilitates cross-border activity with neighboring nations, particularly Malaysia, thereby enhancing the economic potential in the region. Conversely, the presence of this advantageous location might also result in reliance on the individuals residing in the Regency. Sambas is particularly prevalent in Aruk and adjacent regions around the border with Malaysia. Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 in Indonesia, the borders with Malaysia were blocked due to Malaysia's implementation of a lockdown. This also impacts the socio-economic circumstances in the Aruk border region.

Given the aforementioned context, this study will concentrate on Aruk, Kecamatan Sajingan Besar, West Kalimantan. The area's economic potential lies in its convenient access for international trade via the border with Malaysia, which has the capacity to enhance the local economy. Given the analysis and description provided, the researcher will concentrate on studying the Dependency Patterns of the Aruk – Biawak Border Communities during the Covid-19 Global Pandemic.

Method

The objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the dependency pattern exhibited by the Aruk - Biawak border community during the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. This paper employs descriptive qualitative research methodology. Descriptive research involves the systematic examination of societal issues and the specific practices that occur within certain communities and circumstances. This type of research aims to uncover factual information and provide accurate interpretations of many aspects such as relationships, actions, attitudes, perspectives, and continuous processes. The impacts of social phenomena, as discussed by Nazir (1999) and Sugiyono (2005). By employing this approach, research findings become more comprehensive, thorough, reliable, and significant, hence enabling the attainment of study goals.

Results and Discussion

In the present day, national boundaries have adopted various manifestations and have emerged as a pivotal domain for every nation that shares borders. Nearly all countries currently possess borders with other nations (Balibar, 1998). The establishment of these limits is impossible to imagine without the distinct identities that give them legitimacy (Kolossoff & O'Loughlin, 1998). The issues in border regions are quite intricate, with one of them being the reliance of border communities on adjacent nations, particularly in the realm of economics. Border regions can serve as "ethnic homelands" where many ethnic or cultural groups have traditionally coexisted and are collectively regarded as the birthplace of their respective identities (Yiftachel, 1999; Elyta et al, 2023). Addition is a developmental issue that frequently arises in third world nations. This development issue can be analyzed from multiple perspectives, including the economic component, population, and other indicators of underdevelopment. Indonesia is a developing nation that falls under the classification of a third world country. The persistence of a substantial poverty rate in several regions of Indonesia, especially border areas, is unsurprising. Indonesia shares direct borders with several neighboring countries, namely Malaysia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, and Singapore. Naturally, the close proximity of these regions fosters a sense of connection among the inhabitants residing in the border region. An overview of the key concepts in frontier studies reveals their thematic and disciplinary diversity, as well as their dispersion and differentiation (Newman, 2009; Newman, 2011).

Given these circumstances, the Aruk-Biawak border villages can be categorized as interdependent and integrated border groups (Redding, 2016). West Kalimantan is a province with multiple border regions, including Sintang Regency, Bengkayang

Regency, Kapuas Hulu Regency, Sanggau Regency, and Sambas Regency. Sambas Regency contains two border areas: Paloh District, which includes Temajuk Village-Teluk Melanau, and Sajingan Besar District, which includes Sebunga-Bawak Village. This geographical location is of strategic significance due to its function as a conduit for the movement and transportation of individuals and commodities. Specifies that the border region is categorized into four distinct groups: alienated, co-existent, interdependent, and integrated borderland. According to Anderson (1983), nationalism is characterized by an internal focus to bring together nations and regions, as well as an outward focus to differentiate one nation and territory from another. The assertion made by the Regent of Sajingan Besar that "the reliance on the Aruk-Biawak border community has been in existence for a considerable duration, predating its establishment" is indeed well-founded. From this statement, it is evident that the dependency in question has a lengthy historical background.

This phenomenon is undoubtedly driven by various causes, including the disparity in growth between urban areas and border regions. The Head of Sebunga Village stated that historically, due to the challenging accessibility to the city of Sambas, residents opted to purchase essential items in Malaysia.

This decision was influenced by the shorter distance and the comparatively lower pricing of Malaysian goods. Based on this term, it may be inferred that border communities rely heavily on meeting their fundamental needs, particularly basic necessities. Despite the heavy reliance of border towns in Sajingan, particularly Aruk, on essential food supplies from Malaysia, the establishment of cross-border traditional trade is closely linked to social and cultural elements. It is well-known that the people of Indonesia and Malaysia have a history of alliance. A similar occurrence transpired within the Aruk-Biawak border village, which comprises a collective of Dayak tribes. Subsequently, the District Head of Sajingan Besar noted that the border communities in this area share a strong connection with the monitor lizards, namely the Dayak tribe. If there is a traditional event or Dayak Day, we are included in the invitation. Similarly, if there is an event called Gawai Dayak, we are also invited. This relationship has endured for a significant duration, and the geographical location is the one factor that distinguishes us. In addition, the Head of Sebunga Village disclosed that the level of interaction across border villages is quite significant due to the fact that a majority of Sebunga's citizens have relatives or families residing in Biawak. China has also experienced a similar trend, where greater trade openness has led to a significant concentration of industrial activity in the southeastern coastline region (Kanbur & Zhang, 2005; Elyta & Sahide, 2021).

From the aforementioned analysis, it is evident that there exist several reasons contributing to the reliance on border communities, including economic, social, and cultural ones. The reliance that has occurred has a lengthy and established history. Eventually, it reached Aruk, which had undergone extensive renovations and transformed into a splendid structure. Undoubtedly, the existence of this presence will also create fresh prospects for the border villages of both nations. The presence of Aruk, particularly Aruk, has a profound impact that leads to several positive outcomes, such as enhanced movement of individuals, products, and vehicles, expanded economic prospects, and improved potential for cross-border tourism. According to Martinez, the relationship between the border settlements of Aruk and Biawak can be classified as interdependent border groupings. This is evident in the correlation between the two countries in addressing the demands associated with the trade of Malaysian and Indonesian goods. Over time, the dependency dynamics in the Aruk-Bawak border community have undergone alterations. The Head of Sebunga Village affirmed that historically, the Aruk community had a dependency of almost 95% on the Biawak community. Specifically, the Sajingan community relied heavily on products from Malaysia to fulfill their necessities. requires as a result of the current limited state of road conditions and development.

The primary objective is to fulfill the requirements for urban access in Malaysia. However, the current reliance on this pattern remains unchanged as it involves a business component. Individuals only need to make a decision between purchasing Malaysian or Indonesian products, as there is a price comparison available. In addition, Indonesian products are readily available, given the convenient accessibility to urban areas. The topic primarily concerns the social boundaries that might have political implications through the transcendence, confirmation, or reconfiguration of these borders (Bürkner, 2006; Islam et al, 2023).

From the aforementioned explanation, it is evident that growth in border regions can alter the community's reliance dynamics. Previously, the Aruk people were predominantly reliant on Malaysia, but now there is a mutual interdependence between both parties based on their respective needs. The condition is closely tied to physical development factors that can promote economic openness for the Aruk-Biawak border community.

Public sentiments on immigration and border security policies have experienced fluctuations from the inception of the nation, oscillating between embracing the arrival of individuals into the country and attempting to hinder their entry (Alden, 2012). The epidemic has posed challenges to many kinds of activity and relationships at the border. Upon implementing a lockdown, Malaysia promptly restricted access at its borders, so halting export-import activities. Covid-19 protocols at Boundary Post: a. The movement of vehicles and residents between countries is prohibited, except for emergency cases. Immigrants in Malaysia are required to undergo mandatory quarantine in hotels specified by the Sarawak government. b. The operating hours have been shortened, starting from 5am and ending at 2pm instead of 5pm. c. Indonesia is still accepting Indonesian citizens who are returning from Malaysia (Hermawan, 2017).

Following the outbreak of the pandemic, many measures have been implemented in Indonesia, such as the imposition of limitations and temporary halts, including the prohibition of vehicular movement and residents crossing borders, as well as cutbacks in operating hours. This state also significantly affects the relations between local border communities, necessitating a shift from their former reliance patterns to adapt to the changing circumstances. The economic conditions at the border during the Covid-19 pandemic can be described as follows: a. The villages are empty and there is a lack of business activity; b. Various job sectors at the border have experienced significant job losses, including travel services, public transport drivers, hawkers sellers around Integrated Border Crossing Posts, shuttle workers, goods carriers, motorcycle taxi drivers, and goods collectors for export; c. Indonesian citizens are no longer able to engage in trade with Sarawak, and vice versa; d. Malaysia is giving priority to local workers and has implemented stringent border security measures (Yohanes et al, 2023; Hermawan, 2017).

Given the prevailing pandemic circumstances, it is evident that economic conditions at the border have been significantly impacted. As observed in previous instances, the villages located along the border have experienced a decline in business activities, leading to a noticeable decrease in overall economic activity. Consequently, certain border operations have been temporarily halted or ceased altogether, while cross-border traffic has been subject to restrictions. Only for miscellaneous items. Malaysia has strengthened its border security in response to urgent emergencies. The shutdown implemented by Malaysia is a measure taken by the country to curb the transmission of Covid-19. Consequently, given these circumstances, both the state and border towns are endeavoring to make adaptations in order to create economic prospects and explore additional domains. Moreover, the transition from regular circumstances to pandemic circumstances necessitates border communities, particularly the Aruk border, to seek alternate options in the export-import industry. According to the Head of the Sajingan Besar District, the residents of Sajingan are increasingly relying on Jagaai Babang for their import business. This shift is mostly

driven by large traders who have improved their financial status due to the increased distance involved. Currently, the Aruk people have been strategically changing their border routes in order to sustain their import industry. According to field observations, this business activity was limited to one direction, specifically from the Indonesian side, Aruk, to Malaysia. Generally, Sajingan was unable to export its agricultural products to Malaysia, resulting in a decrease in the prices of agricultural products for the people of Sajingan. and even experienced a sharp decline. The Head of the Sajingan Besar District communicated some fundamental aspects concerning the economic and welfare repercussions of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts.

The impact is beneficial, since it establishes itself as an emblem of Big Saddle. Amidst the ongoing pandemic, numerous individuals engage in photography, followed by potential retail activities and visits to cascades. Despite the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Aruk tribe managed to continue their selling activities. The impact on the town is quite minimal as the economy continues to function, albeit with a minor reduction. The only noticeable effect is a decline in the income of the local residents, while their fundamental requirements remain relatively unaffected. The government's performance during this lockdown has been suboptimal. TKI has the capability to enter and exit through this, in addition to the arrival of commodities. In regards to the administration of the border region, several political, economic, social, and cultural initiatives have been implemented at the Aruk-Biawak border. Management, with regards to cultural aspects like Gawai Dayak, involves the invitation and participation in various activities. From a political perspective, our aim is to establish cooperative relations that facilitate the entry of Indonesian goods into Malaysia, and vice versa. Furthermore, our Indonesian Consulate frequently extends invitations to investors to invest in Aruk and also acquaints them with agricultural products that have potential for marketing in Malaysia.

There are other strategies that can yield more advantageous economic advantages. Border management can be approached either from a state-centered perspective or a community-centered perspective. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been suboptimal management practices. Additionally, the local population in Aruk continues to adhere to traditional customs and beliefs. In order to accomplish it, it is necessary to undergo training. The local community has yet to fully capitalize on market opportunities despite its limited progress in development. A significant number of indigenous residents engage in land transactions with external investors, often neglecting to take into account the legal framework of a lease agreement. Sosek Malindo previously engaged in walking activities prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This experience demonstrates that a pandemic can also alter the course of government projects, necessitating their temporary suspension. The importation of energy from Malaysia was the initial step of the MEA project, however there was no subsequent action taken. In fact, it operates in both directions, including both the state and society. The state possesses the authority, as stipulated in Presidential Instruction (Presidential Instruction) No. 1 of 2021. However, the implementation of community-centered empowerment remains constrained. Sajingan Besar District is actively seeking direction from BUMDes, indicating that both entities are currently operational. BUMDes Sebunga operates a transportation enterprise that provides services from the border to the terminal, with a minimal fee of a few ringgit. However, the business is currently inactive owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The BUMDes Kaliau operates a Wi-Fi network that spans over international borders, specifically Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. This network serves the communities by providing internet connectivity. Under Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 1 of 2021, community-centered empowerment is now constrained by several limitations.

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The BUMDes Kaliau operates a Wi-Fi network that spans over international borders, specifically Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. This network serves the communities by providing internet connectivity. The purpose of this project is to establish connections between Singapore and Indonesia, and to provide direct linkages to various settlements. BUMDes Sebunga operates a transportation enterprise that provides services from the border to the terminal, with a minimal fee of a few ringgit. However, the business is currently inactive owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The BUMDes Kaliau operates a Wi-Fi network that spans over international borders, specifically Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. This network serves the communities by providing internet connectivity. BUMDes Sebunga operates a transportation enterprise that provides services from the border to the terminal, with a minimal fee of a few ringgit. However, the business is currently inactive owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. BUMDes Kaliau operates a Wi-Fi network that spans across international borders, specifically Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, to give internet access to rural communities. Singapore and Indonesia) and offer hyperlinks to rural settlements. BUMDes Sebunga operates a transportation enterprise that provides services from the border to the terminal, with a minimal fee of a few ringgit. However, the business is currently inactive owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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The BUMDes Kaliau operates a Wi-Fi network. Then, if it pertains to whether economic reliance arises from development that is only focused on cities or solely on district and provincial capitals. Malaysia's rapid development across borders dramatically contrasts with the untouched state of Aruk prior to the establishment of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts. Presently, the government's initiative for border regions is operational. The Aruk people rely on the central government for their needs. Based on the other assumptions of dependence, the Regent of Sajingan stated that there is no correlation between dependence and global economic inequality. The economic reliance of the Sajingan people stems from the convenient access to goods from neighboring countries. Economic dependency on items from Malaysia, among other factors, is attributed to external conditions and the enormous distances involved. Furthermore, the family and culture share the same customs. When examining the cross-border trade at the Aruk-Biawak border, one can observe the regular exchange of various commodities between Malaysia and Indonesia. The residents of Sebunga Village frequently transport agricultural commodities, such as pepper, dragon fruit, and durian, to Biawak. In Malaysia, basic food holds the highest market share due to its comparatively lower price compared to our location, Indonesia. The economic and welfare impact of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts on the community of Sebunga Village is significant in various aspects, including the economics. Due to the presence of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts, the condition of the roads in Sebunga Village has significantly improved. Due to the favorable road conditions, the transportation of agricultural produce or any other product is facilitated.

Previously, the road conditions were favorable, allowing for a travel time of 5-6 hours from Aruk-Sambas. However, the current road conditions have significantly improved, reducing the travel time to just 1 hour. The Integrated Border Crossing Posts prioritizes the building of communication facilities, such as towers, to enhance signal connectivity at the border. Prior to the construction of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts, commercial communication was limited to interactions among the residents of Sebunga village. The establishment of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts, business communication can now take place among the residents of Aruk, Sambas, and even Pontianak. Furthermore, via the utilization of Integrated Border Crossing Posts and communication infrastructure, the Aruk community has the ability to market and distribute its

merchandise or commodities to Kuching. The Integrated Border Crossing Posts has a significant influence on the economic development of Sebunga village and has a favorable effect on the surrounding area of the Sajingan Besar sub-district, depending on the goods that attract the Biawak people from Malaysia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Third World countries naturally exhibit a state of dependence. When it pertains to border regions, this reliance becomes inherent due to the constraints of the current border areas. Given the prevailing pandemic circumstances, it is inevitable that the economic conditions at the border have been affected, as has been observed in the past. The villages located along the border have experienced a decline in business activities, with some border-related operations being temporarily halted or even ceasing altogether. Additionally, there have been restrictions imposed on cross-border traffic between countries. Only for miscellaneous items. Malaysia has strengthened its border security in response to urgent problems. Malaysia enforced a lockdown as part of its endeavors to curb the transmission of COVID-19. Economic dependence on products from Malaysia is attributed to external causes, particularly the significant distances involved. Due to shared family and cultural affinities, the people residing along the Aruk-Bawak border rely on one another as a result of these commonalities. Is reliance solely derived from economic challenges resulting from the concentration of development in urban areas or regional capitals? Before the establishment of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts, there was a noticeable disparity in growth between the urban area and the border region in Sambas Regency. This is evident from the state of the infrastructure, particularly the roadways. During that period, the distance between Aruk and Sambas could be covered by car in around 5 to 6 hours. Consequently, the residents of Sebunga Village are compelled to depend on the Biawak market in Malaysia in order to fulfill their everyday need. Currently, in instances where the road conditions are favorable, the economic association has transformed into a mutually advantageous commercial alliance between the two parties.

Based on the other dependency assumptions, it is not due to global economic inequality that dependence occurs in the Sajingan District itself. From an economic standpoint, the dependence of the Sajingan people is attributed to the convenient access to goods from neighboring countries. If we examine if reliance is perceived as antithetical to progress and the elements that contribute to this contradiction. Based on the findings from observations and informant interviews, it can be concluded that the relationship between the Aruk people and Malaysia in the past was characterized by a forced reliance. This is primarily attributed to the lack of progress or advancement near the border. Presently, due to the establishment of the Integrated Border Crossing Posts, the Aruk people's reliance on Malaysia is no longer overtly apparent, since the commercial interaction between the two has diminished.

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