ANALYZING SELF-DISCLOSURE PATTERNS WITHIN THE SEBATIK ISLAND COMMUNITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

a Hasrullah Hasbullah

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study seeks to examine the perception of nationalism among Sebatik Island residents, one of Indonesia’s integral pillars. The main goal is to identify the factors shaping their nationalist sentiments and propose potential strategies for the government to facilitate comprehensive development on Sebatik Island.

Theoretical framework: The research adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to comprehensively explore the level of nationalism among Sebatik Island inhabitants towards Indonesia.

Method: The research employs focused group discussions and tailored questionnaires to gather data. The qualitative analysis covers responses from 62 participants, revealing that 66% exhibit a high level of nationalism, while 34% display a low level. Various factors influencing Sebatik’s nationalism emerge, including deficient infrastructure, tribal diversity, youth involvement, educational and healthcare inadequacies, resource utilization, and government policies concerning border area development.

Results and conclusions: The findings indicate a generally positive perception of Indonesian nationalism among Sebatik Island residents, despite challenges stemming from their reliance on Malaysia. The study underscores the importance of enhancing welfare as a means to collaboratively develop the Indonesian-Malaysian border region. By prioritizing the well-being of the Sebatik community, their sense of Indonesian identity can naturally flourish, contributing to increased security and patriotism in the border area.

Originality/Value: This research contributes original insights into the nuanced factors influencing nationalism among Sebatik Island residents, shedding light on the intricacies of their perspectives within the context of a shared border with Malaysia. The proposed welfare-focused approach presents a valuable strategy for bolstering Indonesian identity in border regions.

Research implications: The study's outcomes call for a reevaluation of policies related to border area development, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and resource management. The significance of addressing these aspects for fostering a strong sense of nationalism and security is evident, particularly in the unique context of Sebatik Island.

Keywords: nationalism, Sebatik Island, self-disclosure patterns, Republic Indonesia.

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ANÁLISE DOS PADRÕES DE AUTO-DIVULGAÇÃO NA COMUNIDADE DA ILHA SEBATIK E SUA RELAÇÃO COM A REPÚBLICA DA INDONÉSIA

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo procura examinar a percepção do nacionalismo entre os residentes da Ilha Sebatik, um dos pilares integrantes da Indonésia. O principal objectivo é identificar os factores que moldam os seus sentimentos nacionalistas e propor estratégias potenciais para o governo facilitar o desenvolvimento abrangente na Ilha Sebatik.

Enquadramento teórico: A investigação adopta uma abordagem de métodos mistos que combina metodologias qualitativas e quantitativas para explorar de forma abrangente o nível de nacionalismo entre os habitantes da Ilha Sebatik em relação à Indonésia.

Método: A pesquisa emprega discussões em grupo focadas e questionários personalizados para coletar dados. A análise qualitativa abrange respostas de 62 participantes, revelando que 66% apresentam um elevado nível de nacionalismo, enquanto 34% apresentam um nível baixo. Surgem vários factores que influenciam o nacionalismo de Sebatik, incluindo infra-estruturas deficientes, diversidade tribal, envolvimento dos jovens, inadequações educativas e de saúde, utilização de recursos e políticas governamentais relativas ao desenvolvimento da área fronteiriça.

Resultados e conclusões: As conclusões indicam uma percepção geralmente positiva do nacionalismo indonésio entre os residentes da Ilha Sebatik, apesar dos desafios decorrentes da sua dependência da Malásia. O estudo sublinha a importância de melhorar o bem-estar como forma de desenvolver de forma colaborativa a região fronteiriça entre a Indonésia e a Malásia. Ao dar prioridade ao bem-estar da comunidade Sebatik, o seu sentido de identidade indonésia pode florescer naturalmente, contribuindo para aumentar a segurança e o patriotismo na zona fronteiriça.

Originalidade/Valor: Esta investigação contribui com conhecimentos originais sobre os factores diferenciados que influenciam o nacionalismo entre os residentes da Ilha Sebatik, lançando luz sobre os meandros das suas perspectivas no contexto de uma fronteira partilhada com a Malásia. A abordagem proposta centrada no bem-estar apresenta uma estratégia valiosa para reforçar a identidade indonésia nas regiões fronteiriças.

Implicações da investigação: Os resultados do estudo apelam a uma reavaliação das políticas relacionadas com o desenvolvimento das zonas fronteiriças, infra-estruturas, educação, cuidados de saúde e gestão de recursos. A importância de abordar estes aspectos para promover um forte sentimento de nacionalismo e segurança é evidente, particularmente no contexto único da Ilha Sebatik.


1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of the border region, particularly the border between Indonesia and
Malaysia, has recently gained significant attention. Following the 2002 case involving Sipadan Island and Ligitan Island, which was successfully won by Malaysia through international court arbitration, Indonesia appears determined not to concede again. Given the numerous Indonesian islands that directly border neighboring countries, including Malaysia, the government and non-government institutions are actively working to strengthen nationalism in these border areas. This includes efforts such as bolstering the military presence and fleet in the region.

In essence, state borders have historically been seen as abstract lines depicted on maps. However, these lines hold legal and formal significance as they demarcate the separation of territorial, legal, economic, and political sovereignty between two countries. From a cultural standpoint, these borders also symbolize the distinct national identities of the people residing in each respective state.

The living conditions in the border area remain unfamiliar and challenging for the common people to comprehend (DeVito, 2001). Geographically distant from the country’s center, the border area has received limited infrastructure development, contributing to its relative isolation. Moreover, social studies within the border areas are still in their early stages, leading to constraints faced by local researchers in producing comprehensive and academically rigorous works due to bureaucratic issues and limitations in analyzing the condition. Consequently, the understanding of Indonesia’s border region is often limited to a territorial perspective, whereas it should be viewed as an inseparable part of neighboring countries’ social and historical territories.

Historically, the formation of nations in Asia was not solely based on cultural, religious, linguistic, community mobility, or social relations and traditional trading networks (Lukum, 2013). According to Lumenta (2011), the formation of countries in Southeast Asia was largely influenced by the political and economic interests of colonial rulers in the 19th and 20th centuries. These rulers territorially segregated the regions in Southeast Asia without considering the perspectives or knowledge of the local populations (Muhtar et al., 2023). As a result, state borders alone cannot be used as a reliable differentiator of national identity when comparing countries in the region.

From a socio-political perspective, the state border region is often viewed as a point of intersection where national sovereignty and the interests of neighboring countries converge (Truong et al., 2023). Consequently, the region tends to be associated with the stereotype of being ‘vulnerable’ to cross-country mobilization by specific
communities with diverse interests, both historically and presently.

Moreover, the mass media’s portrayal of border areas exacerbates the negative perception of ordinary people living in these regions. This is achieved through the emphasis on issues such as illegal logging, human trafficking, and the circulation of narcotics and other harmful substances. Furthermore, another concerning aspect is the inadequacy of our education curriculum in effectively conveying the historical development of the concept of the ‘state,’ which has been shaped by cultural diversity, to the younger generation of our nation.

Presently, Indonesia is home to various ethnic groups that extend beyond the formal boundaries of the Republic of Indonesia and even encompass territories in neighboring countries. This presence of diverse ethnic groups demonstrates that cultural and social relations in Indonesia transcend national borders. For instance, one such border area is Sebatik Island, situated between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Sebatik Island is a geographically divided island, with its southern part falling under the jurisdiction of Indonesia (south of Pulau Sebatik), while the northern part is governed by Malaysia (north of Sebatik Island). Originally, Sebatik was a sparsely populated and unproductive forested area. However, it later gained significance as a pathway and refuge for Indonesian migrant workers, known as TKI (which stands for in Indonesian Language “Tenaga Kerja Indonesia”), en route to Tawau, Malaysia. The majority of these workers belonged to the Bugis-Makassar tribe and achieved success in their endeavors abroad, which prompted them to invite their relatives to explore this island.

In 1998, Indonesia experienced a severe monetary crisis that led to a significant increase in the prices of essential commodities. However, the crisis did not affect Malaysia, ensuring the safety of the workers there. Consequently, the TKI community took a cooperative approach by utilizing their stopover point on Sebatik Island before reaching Tawau, Malaysia. Over time, they gradually acquired land from the indigenous population and established a settlement on Sebatik Island. This strategic move was intended to facilitate their seamless transition to Tawau for employment opportunities and sustenance, ensuring they faced no hardships in their pursuit of livelihoods.

The island of Sebatik offers a multitude of fascinating facts worth exploring. Firstly, the linguistic landscape of the local community is quite diverse. One prominent language spoken is Buginese, owing to the significant presence of the Bugis tribe among
the island’s population. Consequently, the Bugis language is widely used in everyday conversations, allowing the community to preserve its rich cultural heritage. Additionally, the Malay language, often infused with elements of English, is prevalent among children who have completed their primary education in Tawau (Malaysia) before relocating to Sebatik Island, facilitated by the government’s construction of school facilities. While these educational resources remain somewhat limited, they have alleviated the need for Sebatik Island’s children to seek education abroad. Moreover, Indonesian is occasionally employed as the instructional language exclusively within schools on Sebatik Island.

Secondly, in terms of economics, Sebatik Island, operates with dual currencies—the Indonesian rupiah and the Malaysian ringgit. The presence of two currencies is a result of the island’s economic activities being predominantly centered in neighboring Malaysia. Sebatik’s residents primarily engage in the distribution and sale of their crops to Tawau, Malaysia, as it offers closer proximity and comprehensive transportation access. Moreover, the selling prices in Tawau are considerably higher compared to those in Nunukan. Additionally, the availability of food and daily necessities from Malaysia surpasses that of Indonesian products, making them more accessible. Consequently, a humorous expression has emerged among the locals, humorously stating, “Garuda in my chest, Ringgit in my pocket, and Malaysian Products in my gut.”

Thirdly, in terms of infrastructure, Malaysia surpasses Indonesia in modernity and sophistication. One notable example is the telecommunications tower network, which serves as a vital connector and facilitates cellular communication. Malaysia possesses a significant number of towers that are more robust compared to those in Indonesia. Consequently, if one is on Sebatik Island, the signal provided by Malaysia would be stronger than that of the Indonesian cellular providers. Regarding infrastructure, the palm oil and cocoa processing industry greatly influences the lives of Sebatik residents. Unfortunately, the processing plants are exclusively located in Tawau, Malaysia, with no presence on Sebatik Island. As a result, farmers on the island are more inclined to sell their produce and engage in cultivation activities in neighboring countries. The lack of educational and healthcare facilities is a pressing social concern on Sebatik Island. This exacerbates the socio-economic gap between the Indonesian community on the island and their Malaysian neighbors, further disadvantaging the Indonesian society.
Will these issues contribute to the perpetuation of the stigma surrounding the “erosion of nationalism” among the people of Sebatik Island in the eyes of ordinary Indonesians? Or will it ultimately fade away as an overlooked facet of diversity?

Based on the findings of the BPS survey conducted from May 27th to 29th, 2011 (Wingarta et al., 2012), it was confirmed that 99 percent of the surveyed individuals were aware of the existence of Pancasila. Additionally, 80-86 percent of respondents demonstrated knowledge of the 1945 Constitution, while approximately 67-78 percent were familiar with NKRI and Bhineka Tunggal Ika. These results indicate that the perception of Indonesian citizens regarding NKRI and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as the foundations of national and state life is somewhat lower compared to the recognition of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of self-disclosure regarding the values nationality (Pancasila, 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and NKRI) within the Sebatik Island community. The choice of self-disclosure analysis stems from De Vito (2011) definition, which characterizes self-disclosure as a form of communication where individuals reveal previously concealed information about themselves to others. De Vito (1986) further emphasizes that this information should be new and unknown to the recipients, typically being information that is typically kept private. The information can be shared either verbally or in written form. By utilizing self-disclosure analysis to explore national values, specifically concerning NKRI, within border communities such as Sebatik Island, the government can formulate well-informed and comprehensive policies. Therefore, we have selected the title “Self-Disclosure Analysis of the Sebatik Island Community and its Relationship with the Republic of Indonesia” to encapsulate the study’s focus.

We elaborate and discuss the perceptions and opinions of the people living in the border area of Sebatik Island regarding the Republic of Indonesia, which is one of the four pillars of nationality. We also discuss factors influencing the sense of nationalism among the community of Sebatik Island. Based on this, we suggest the government of a formulation on the multi-dimensional development policy for the border area of Sebatik Island.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Republic of Indonesia is a country formed through the agreement of the
Indonesian nation, based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. This agreement demonstrates the Indonesian nation’s recognition of multiculturalism and the significance of pluralism in the nations and the state’s existence. For a nation to truly pursue its ideals, it must not only be founded on aspirations and objectives, but also on a shared sense of spirit, solidarity, and the shared destiny experienced in the course of national life.

Article 25A of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia elucidates that Indonesia is a unique archipelagic nation, distinguished by its territories defined by law. This signifies that Indonesia, being an archipelago, occupies a strategic location at the crossroads of continents and oceans. The geographical position of Indonesia not only holds physical significance but also renders it susceptible to a diverse range of influences, both social and otherwise, that can impact various aspects of national life. Consequently, it becomes imperative to enhance national strength in order to effectively confront the multitude of challenges, threats, obstacles, and disturbances that may arise externally or internally and potentially jeopardize the nation’s ideology and the resilience of the state.

Several research and scientific papers have been published on NKRI, serving as references for the research team in developing this research roadmap. One of these papers is “Perceptions of TNI Members about the Concept of NKRI in Makorem 043 Gatam, Bandar Lampung, Year 2012” by Agustinus Tampubolon, Adelina Hasyim, and Zulyaden Abdulhay. According to their research (Tampubolon et al., 2012), the findings indicate the following: The perception of TNI members regarding the concept of NKRI, with Pancasila as an indicator and the 1945 Constitution, was categorized as good for 25 TNI members, accounting for 50%. The perception of TNI members regarding the concept of NKRI, with the concept of national resistance, was categorized as good for 30 TNI members, accounting for 60%. The perception of TNI members regarding the concept of NKRI, with the indicator of Bela Negara, was categorized as good for 27 TNI members, accounting for 54%. The perception of TNI members regarding the concept of NKRI, with indicators of National and State Integrity, was categorized as quite well for 24 TNI members, accounting for 48%.

The second paper is “The Importance of Nusantara Insight and National Integration” by Sigit Dwi Kusrrahmadi (2017). This scientific paper is motivated by past events of national disintegration in Indonesia, such as the independence of East Timor, the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM), the Free Papua Organization (OPM), and the Republic of South Maluku (RMS). Sigit emphasizes that factors such as
globalization, trade liberalization, and the growing awareness of ethnic rights have led peripheral regions to demand their social, political, and economic rights for accelerated prosperity. The paper concludes by highlighting the significance of archipelagic insight in achieving national integration.

Another notable example is the paper titled “Efforts to Improve the Understanding of Nusantara’s Insight as a Means of Increasing the Spirit of Nationalism for Indonesian Citizens” by Roni Lukum (2013). This paper provides valuable insights on how enhancing the understanding of the archipelago’s unique characteristics can contribute to fostering a stronger sense of nationalism among Indonesian citizens. Based on this study, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the current understanding of the archipelago’s insights can be evaluated through the central government’s struggles in achieving stability both domestically and internationally. Secondly, the decline in the comprehension of the archipelago’s insight and nationalistic sentiments is influenced by both internal and external factors. As previously mentioned, there are several inhibiting factors, such as a lack of understanding among state officials and society regarding the concept of our nation’s sovereignty as an archipelagic country, as well as the prevalence of egocentrism, ethnonationalism, and a narrow interpretation of regional autonomy that perpetuates ethnocentric attitudes among local communities. Thirdly, it is crucial for the Indonesian government, particularly those specializing in Indonesian Unity, to prioritize and improve the understanding of the archipelago’s insights among its citizens. Fourthly, raising awareness about the archipelago’s significance in the lives of the society, nation, and state can be achieved through both formal and non-formal education. By introducing the concept of Indonesia as an archipelagic country, one can refer to the Djuanda Declaration signed on December 13, 1957, which expanded the country’s territorial waters from 3 miles to 12 miles, thereby connecting all inter-island waters within Indonesia.

Based on the three aforementioned research findings and scientific papers, it can be concluded that the issue of NKRI (the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia) is of significant importance and merits further study. The emergence of recent instances of national disintegration has undermined the spirit of nationalism among Indonesian citizens, making this issue even more critical to address.

2.1 RESEARCH ON INDONESIAN BORDER AREA

Research and scientific exploration of social themes and research locations in the
border region of Indonesia began in the 1990s, providing only a partial understanding of this area. Sebatik Island, located in North Kalimantan Province, stands as one of the outermost islands, sharing a direct border with Malaysia. Currently, one of the prevailing challenges is the stark developmental disparity compared to other regions in Indonesia. This discrepancy stems from a historical development paradigm that relegated the border area to a secondary position within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Consequently, the border area is presently characterized by isolation and underdevelopment from both social and economic perspectives (Bappenas, 2004).

Therefore, according to Bappenas (2004), there is a need to change the paradigm in order to accelerate economic growth in the border area, particularly in Sebatik Island. This can be achieved by shifting the development policy’s focus from being inward-looking to outward-looking. By adopting a prosperity approach and a security approach, the area can be effectively utilized as a gateway for economic and trade activities with neighboring countries.

Aligned with Bappenas’ perspective, the central government implemented Law No. 17 of 2007, known as the National Long Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005-2025. This law emphasizes the development of border areas through two approaches: the security approach and the welfare approach. By combining these approaches, the government aims to promote the economic well-being and security of the border region.

In the realm of managing remote small islands, the government has taken significant steps to ensure effective governance. Notably, Pepres 78 of 2005 on the Management of Small Outermost Islands was introduced with the primary objective of safeguarding the territorial integrity of NKRI, bolstering national security and defense, fostering regional stability, and promoting sustainable development by responsibly harnessing natural resources. Furthermore, this initiative seeks to empower local communities, ultimately enhancing their welfare and well-being.

The Government has recently enacted Law No. 43 concerning the Territory of the State, which addresses various significant matters. One of its key provisions focuses on the allocation of authority among the central, provincial, and local governments regarding the administration of state and territorial boundaries. This law empowers regional governments to take a leading role in driving social and economic development initiatives. Additionally, it introduces the establishment of central and regional management bodies responsible for overseeing Boundaries and Border Areas. These
bodies are entrusted with tasks such as policy and program formulation, budget planning, coordination of implementation, evaluation and supervision, as well as fostering community engagement in safeguarding and preserving the state’s territory, including its border regions.

However, despite the establishment of various laws and policies by the government to manage border areas, these measures have not necessarily resulted in prosperity for the people residing in these regions. This is evident from several research studies and scientific papers that highlight the government’s failure in effectively managing the border region and transforming it into a thriving hub for the State of Indonesia. In particular, research conducted on Sebatik island has shed light on significant social issues in the region. One such study, conducted by Sutaat from Puslitbang Kesos in 2006, diagnosed social problems in West Sebatik Nunukan District. The findings of this study revealed that the development programs implemented in West Sebatik have had minimal impact, leaving the region significantly lagging behind other areas. Limited access to higher education is a key concern, which can be attributed to inadequate infrastructure. Moreover, the population in the area faces various social welfare challenges, including poverty, inadequate housing, abandonment, and vulnerable families. Therefore, the research proposes the following recommendations to address these issues: (1) enhancing and upgrading existing infrastructure, particularly in the education and transportation sectors, as well as inter-island connections, to stimulate regional progress and improve the lives of the population, and (2) implementing social sector programs aimed at empowering underprivileged communities, enhancing environmental conditions, improving housing standards, and strengthening and expanding the resources available for social welfare support (PSKS).

Another research conducted in the Sebatik island, titled “Border Society Survival Strategy: A Case Study on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Central Sebatik Community in Nunukan Regency, East Kalimantan” by Andi Nurlela, Maria Pandu, and Syaifullah Cangara, it was found that the community of Aji Kuning village (Sebatik Tengah) consists predominantly of transmigrants from Java, Flores, and Bugis (Nurlela et al., 2012). As immigrant communities residing in frontier villages, they face significant socio-economic disparities compared to other villages, necessitating a process of adjustment in terms of livelihood, social relations, and basic needs fulfillment in order to sustain their lives.
2.2 SELF-DISCLOSURE ABOUT NKRI IN BORDER AREA

Building on the preceding research findings, the research team unanimously decided to delve into an examination of the significance of nationality, with a particular focus on the fundamental pillars of NKRI, within the community residing in the border area of Sebatik Island. To carry out this investigation, the team opted for a self-disclosure analysis methodology.

The team acknowledged the scarcity of prior research conducted in border regions, specifically centering on the self-disclosure of communities regarding their perception of nationality. Employing self-disclosure as a communication approach, this study seeks to unravel and comprehend the intricate tapestry of nationality values interwoven within the fabric of the Sebatik Island community.

The objectives of this research are as follows: Firstly, to gain an accurate understanding of the perception and opinions of people residing in the border area (Sebatik Island) regarding one of the four pillars of Indonesian nationality, namely the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Secondly, to identify the factors that influence the sense of nationalism among the Sebatik Island community. Lastly, to develop an inclusive framework that the government can employ to formulate multidimensional development policies for the border area (Sebatik Island).

This research will give several benefits as follows: Firstly, the results of this study are expected to be useful for the development of science, particularly in the field of communication science in relation to the strengthening of national integrity. Secondly, it can provide valuable information and insights for both central and local governments regarding the perception of the Sebatik Island community on the concept of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Thirdly, it can serve as a valuable resource for future researchers who aim to delve deeper into the study of national integrity. Fourthly, it will contribute to the expansion of scientific knowledge, particularly in the areas of theories related to national integrity and self-disclosure.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted on Sebatik Island, located in the Nunukan District of North Borneo, over a period of six months. This study adopted a mixed-method research approach to analyze the perception of the Sebatik Island community towards NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia) on a large scale. To ascertain the
prevailing tendency, quantitative content analysis was employed, while qualitative content analysis was utilized to refine and delve deeper into the contributing factors.

Both primary and secondary data were utilized in this study. Primary data was gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs) and questionnaires, providing valuable firsthand insights. Secondary data was collected from various sources such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, research reports, and other pertinent documents to complement and support the research.

The research population comprised the community of Sebatik Island, distinguishing between the general population and the specific target population. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, with samples divided into two groups: FGD participants representing diverse individuals from ordinary citizens to local government officials, and survey respondents residing in remote areas of Sebatik Island.

To clarify the concepts used, operational definitions were provided for self-disclosure, NKRI, Sebatik Island, and nationalism. Self-disclosure referred to the honest sharing of confidential information, while NKRI represented a state founded on the principles of nationalism. Sebatik Island was an island located on the Indonesia-Malaysia border, and nationalism was a political ideology fostering loyalty towards one's nation.

Data collection techniques included FGDs, questionnaires, library studies, and documentation. These techniques provided a comprehensive understanding of the research subject. The research focused on two variables: self-disclosure and nationalism, exploring various aspects such as attitudes, opinions, tastes, interests, school perceptions, finances, personality, and physical well-being.

Variable nationalism was observed through the lens of national resilience, based on the Astagatra model. This model identified eight crucial elements contributing to national resilience, including territorial extent and quality, population, national resources, ideology, politics, economy, socio-cultural aspects, and security and defense.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed for data analysis, utilizing FGDs and surveys. A Likert scale with four alternative answers was used to gauge self-disclosure among learners. The concept of childbirth was assessed through the Asta gatra indicator, encompassing both natural and social aspects.
By combining the findings from these two research methods, a holistic understanding of the Sebatik community’s perception of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) can be achieved. Additionally, the factors that influence their perception and possible recommendations for the central government regarding the development of the Sebatik Indonesia area can be formulated.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted in two stages: conducting a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and distributing a questionnaire to assess the nationalism of the citizens of Sebatik. The FGD took place on August 5th, 2017 at the Sebatik Induk Sub-district office in Nunukan, North Kalimantan. A total of 11 people participated in the FGD. Here are the details of the participants:

The FGD results, which have been implemented using the astragatra model, reflect the concept of national resilience on Sebatik Island.

4.1 TERRITORY

The element of regional factors plays a crucial role in determining national resilience within the astragatra model. The research team focuses on this element while examining the infrastructure development on Sebatik Island. Overall, the responses from the informants unanimously indicate a significant increase in infrastructure developments on Sebatik Island.

The most notable advancements encompass road infrastructure, electricity, clean water, and various other public facilities. However, Mr. Hasrul puts forth an intriguing statement regarding the infrastructure development on Sebatik Island:

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<th>No.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Representation of Youth Association</td>
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<td>Sunardi</td>
<td>Resident of Sebatik</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Andi Amir</td>
<td>Head of Tanjung Karang village</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Hasrul</td>
<td>Staff of Central Sebatik subdistrict</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sawaluddin</td>
<td>Staff of West Sebatik subdistrict</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mardiana</td>
<td>Secretary of Sebatik Induk subdistrict</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Ebiet</td>
<td>Resident of Sebatik Induk</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Indra</td>
<td>Resident of West Sebatik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Wahyuddin</td>
<td>Subdistrict head of East Sebatik</td>
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Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)
“When discussing progress on Sebatik Island, it is indeed an advanced frontier compared to other border regions, as you mentioned. Three years ago, the development here was quite substantial, but it may not be perceived as such by individuals who come from outside Sebatik. For the local community, the progress does not seem as remarkable. The reason being that our point of comparison is one step ahead, namely the city of Tawau, where our society witnesses towering skyscrapers daily. In contrast, such progress is yet to be realized here on Sebatik Island.”

In relation to the statement, participants in the FGD discussion addressed the regional aspect by comparing Tawau (Malaysia) and Sebatik Island (Indonesia). One of the participants, Mr. Wahyuddin, highlighted the disparity between the two regions in terms of infrastructure and pointed out the following:

“The imbalance between Tawau and Sebatik is primarily due to our differing administrative statuses. Tawau is a district, whereas Sebatik is a regency. However, this doesn’t mean we cannot strive for equality. If our central government designates this area as an Autonomous Region New (DOB), there is a possibility that development in this region can reach the same level as the neighboring area in the next 10 to 20 years. It is crucial for us to acknowledge the advice from our colleagues worldwide, who emphasize that instead of constantly comparing ourselves to others, we should focus on our own progress. Though it may not be true now, once we are granted the authority as a new autonomous region, I believe we can achieve equality.”

Mr. Syawaluddin also emphasizes the connection between infrastructure development and nationalism. For instance, in western Sebatik, a water company (PDAM) has been established. However, it has faced repeated budget reallocations and, consequently, remains non-operational to this day. As concerned citizens, we fervently hope for the prompt activation of the water company (PDAM). If the government intends to develop border areas, it is essential to address all aspects comprehensively. By ensuring the quality of infrastructure, including well-maintained roads and reliable water supply, I believe a sense of nationalism will naturally emerge.

4.2 SOCIETY

The astagatra model of social resilience considers two key aspects when assessing the population: quality and quantity. The quality aspect encompasses factors such as education, skills, work ethic, and personality traits. On the other hand, the quantity aspect focuses on population size, growth, distribution, equity, and achieving a balanced population distribution across different regions of the country.

Applying this model to Sebatik Island, it is evident that the population is composed of various tribes, as suggested by Mrs. Mardiana. She emphasizes the
remarkable diversity on the island, both in terms of tribal representation and the governance of community life. It is worth noting that the diversity is not limited to the tribes alone but extends to the way of life and governing structures within the community.

Mr. Kurniawan emphasizes the crucial role of the younger generation in fostering and upholding the spirit of nationalism, an aspect that the government should prioritize. In addition to this, there are evident shortcomings in defense. If the state genuinely prioritizes the defense of the Republic of Indonesia, we must first focus on safeguarding the well-being of our youth, including children. It is essential to address issues such as drug trafficking, support farmers, and tackle other related challenges. Without these efforts, how can this generation thrive and bring about positive change? It becomes even more doubtful when we consider the rampant drug issues at the borders. As Javanese from the central region, we possess a youth demographic with immense potential. However, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the significant decline that exists within this demographic. This decline represents one of the critical problems that needs urgent attention.

Mr. Indra also highlighted the significance of youth during the 1990s, emphasizing their role in fostering nationalism. Although back in 1995, essential services like telecommunications were not yet available, we still possessed a strong sense of nationalism. Even as we celebrated our 17th anniversary, our nationalism remained unwavering, demonstrating the continuity of our efforts throughout the years. The spirit of youth nationalism from that era still persists, and they continue to be passionate.

Hence, Mr. Kurniawan believes that the younger generation should be safeguarded, particularly in the education sector. He emphasizes the need for improvement in education development, as the youth will be the future representatives of Sebatik and the successors of officials in Nunukan. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance their educational opportunities and provide them with a solid foundation. In the context of population, some participants in the FGD also mentioned the contrasting characteristics between Tawau and Sebatik Island. Mr. Andi Amir expressed, “The human characters are different, I’m not sure of the cause, but there is a difference. For instance, when assistance is provided, the wealthy suddenly act as if they are poor. This is not the case in Malaysia because their society is smaller, and their welfare systems are indeed well-established.” However, Mrs. Mardiana observes another aspect of the
character difference between Tawau (Malaysia) and Sebatik (Indonesia), stating, “While their facilities are guaranteed, when it comes to nationalism, if Indonesians compete against Malaysians or vice versa, we have a significant advantage because our nationalism is much stronger than theirs (Malaysia). Their comfortable living conditions, for example, lead to ignorance and indulgence among the native inhabitants of their territory, particularly when it comes to matters like identity cards (IC) where they display a lack of awareness and are easily pampered.”

Mrs. Mardiana emphasized the educational needs of Sebatik Island residents, specifically addressing the importance of government support in this area. She shared a personal example of her brother, who currently resides in Malaysia and has a child in junior high school. Due to the limited educational opportunities available to migrant workers’ children in Tawau, Malaysia, her nephew holds dual citizenship. To ensure his continued education, her brother had to change his son’s last name to “bin Anas,” while their family name remained Ibrahim. Mrs. Mardiana suggests that the Indonesian government should consider establishing schools specifically for the children of migrant workers in Tawau. Similarly, Mr. Syawaluddin echoed the importance of education, expressing his view that constructing colleges in Sebatik with competent lecturers would greatly benefit the community.

Furthermore, Mr. Andi Amir emphasizes the importance of the Indonesian government’s attention to education in Sebatik Island. He suggests that measures should be taken to facilitate the admission of children from the border area into public universities, such as Unhas, in order to enhance the educational opportunities for the local population. Additionally, there are issues with the Indonesian government services related to people administration on Sebatik Island, as expressed by Mrs. Mardiana. She highlights the stark contrast between the government’s provision of facilities for its citizens and those of neighboring countries. For instance, while Malaysian citizens have had their IC (identification card) for years, the situation with our electronic ID cards (e-KTP) in Indonesia is far from satisfactory.

Mr. Andi Amir also shares his personal experience comparing the services provided by the Indonesian government with those of Malaysia. He recounts an incident from a week ago when he visited Tawau. He noticed that at the immigration office in Nunukan, Malaysians were given priority and served first. The same was observed in Tawau, where Malaysians received preferential treatment. This highlights the disparity
in how the two governments prioritize and serve their respective citizens. For example, when Malaysians come to Indonesia, they are efficiently processed using patrol (fort rider), while Indonesian citizens or TKIs (Tenaga Kerja Indonesia) face challenges when they go to Malaysia. In light of these observations, Mr. Andi Amir hopes that the Indonesian government will show greater appreciation for its own citizens, just as Malaysia does for its people.

A similar experience was also encountered by Mrs. Mardiana, who shared her perspective on the service issue when visiting Malaysia. Consequently, she has developed a reluctance to travel to Malaysia, as her previous visits have left a lasting negative impression. She recalls visiting Malaysia only once during her childhood, and then again as an adult when she had to attend a family event in Tawau. However, the treatment she received reflected the assumption that she and her companions were job applicants rather than tourists. They were subjected to long queues, prohibited from engaging in conversation, and even the slightest laughter would anger the officers. This impersonal treatment left Mrs. Mardiana and her fellow travelers with low expectations of enjoying a pleasant trip to Tawau.

Furthermore, the influence of health problems on the population element in the astragatra model cannot be overlooked. Mrs. Mardiana’s personal experience provides insight into the disparities in healthcare between Malaysia and Indonesia. As a young girl, she underwent an emergency appendectomy without having her passport or other necessary documents. This incident revealed a striking difference in the treatment of Malaysian citizens compared to Indonesian citizens. While Indonesian citizens had to pay 800 ringgit solely for the surgery, Malaysian citizens were guaranteed medical services free of charge. The discrepancy extended beyond the surgery costs, encompassing the quality of care and the interaction with medical professionals. Mrs. Mardiana recounts that upon her arrival, before any meetings or the presence of her family, who happened to be doctors, the service she received was extremely poor and accompanied by rudeness. However, once her family intervened and introduced her, the treatment improved significantly. The disparity in administrative procedures, services, and costs became apparent, highlighting the critical role of insider assistance in navigating the healthcare system effectively.

Mr. Syawaluddin expressed his concerns regarding the health services on Sebatik Island and conveyed his wishes to the central government. He emphasized that, in
addition to the existing educational challenges, the lack of adequate healthcare facilities was a major issue. As Mardiana mentioned earlier, accessing treatment on Sebatik Island is often limited, and patients are frequently referred to Nunukan. If the medical condition cannot be managed there, further referrals to Tarakan or even South Sulawesi are required. Unfortunately, this process is time-consuming and financially burdensome. To address this issue, Mr. Syawaluddin proposed the construction of a comprehensive hospital on Sebatik Island, staffed with skilled healthcare professionals. This would eliminate the need for residents of Sebatik and Nunukan to travel to Tarakan, or even to Makassar or Balikpapan, for medical treatment.

Mr. Sunardi also shared his unsettling experience regarding health issues in the border area, which further reinforces the importance of establishing a specialized hospital in Sebatik. He narrated the urgency by recounting an incident when his wife needed medical assistance during childbirth. Despite their efforts to seek help throughout Indonesia, their search proved fruitless. In Nunukan, they were unable to find a doctor, and while considering Tarakan as an alternative, he was concerned about the potential risks to their newborn. Eventually, they had no choice but to transport his wife to Tawau in Malaysia. Thankfully, both mother and child were safe, but Mr. Sunardi highlighted the additional complications he encountered in Tawau, where he faced challenges due to the lack of an identification card (IC), resulting in the need for guarantees.

4.3 NATIONAL RESOURCES

National resources encompass the vast potential of Indonesia’s natural resources and their utilization, along with the necessary control mechanisms. Sebatik Island, located in Indonesia, holds great promise in terms of its natural attributes, as emphasized by Mr. Hasrun: ‘Sir, the condition of Sebatik Island reveals tremendous potential due to its unique geographical characteristics. We are blessed with abundant palm oil and plantation resources here, Sir. Allow me to provide an overview of the plantation dynamics. Despite being situated in an inland area without a coastal region, Sebatik Island stretches over a significant distance, spanning from stake 3 to stake 11.’

Mrs. Mardiana also highlighted the abundant natural resources present on Sebatik Island; however, their potential utilization remains underutilized. Many of us, as citizens, prefer to sell these resources in their raw form rather than cultivating them to increase their value. For example, there used to be a surplus of bananas here. Although
they are sold elsewhere, we neglect to process them. Similarly, there is a preference for selling seaweed and anchovies in their raw state to Sebatik and Tawau respectively, instead of processing them locally. This lack of government mentoring contributes to the situation. The community possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to process these resources, but without guidance, marketing becomes challenging. Consequently, the resources are sold as they are and eventually processed by Malaysia before being sent back to us. This situation is not solely due to the island’s condition but also because selling directly to Tarakan or Sulawesi incurs high costs and extended transportation time. Thus, the choice to send the resources in their crude form is considered more convenient, disregarding the complexities of processing and marketing.

Mr. Syawaluddin raised a similar issue regarding the lack of processing community products on Sebatik Island. He mentioned that the majority of the island’s agricultural produce, including our garden’s harvest, is taken to Malaysia for sale. I have accompanied several ministry officials on various occasions, including representatives from the ministries of defense, education, and culture. According to them, the border area predominantly focuses on plantation crops, with vegetables and other varieties accounting for only 10% of the production. They questioned why we do not utilize these resources locally and instead allow them to be directly sold to Malaysia. It is suggested that we should first provide local accommodations for the plantation products until there is a demand for them here.

In addition to agriculture, Sebatik Island possesses significant potential in marine and fisheries resources, which are considered part of Indonesia’s territorial waters. However, the lack of skills and knowledge required to tap into this potential remains a major weakness in this sector. Mr. Shawwal highlighted a concerning issue related to the fishermen on the island. Some fishermen have suffered from health issues, such as vomiting, after consuming fish. Surprisingly, these fish were originally caught by the local fishermen but were eventually sold to Malaysia. When the fish remained unsold, they were treated with formalin by the Malaysian buyers and then resold. Tarakan University has conducted a study on this matter.

One of the factors hindering the exploitation of Sebatik Island’s natural resources, particularly within the fishing industry, is the implementation of a law prohibiting the use of trolling as a fishing method.

Mr. Syawaluddin also expressed his views on the matter, stating, "Sir, earlier, the
government, through the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries, banned the use of trolls for fish catching. In Sebatik, the majority of the population depends on fishing as their livelihood. Out of the five districts, only one district focuses on plantations, while the other four are centered around the marine sector. Dried fish and flat fish are particularly iconic for us in the western district as fishermen. However, if the use of these small trolls is stopped, our iconic livelihood will vanish. As far as we understand, the banned troll may refer to the large-scale trolls used in Malaysia, whereas our trolls are much smaller. If our small trolls are still prohibited, we, the fishermen of Sebatik, have no problem obeying the government regulation, but we request a solution. If we are prohibited from using trolls for fishing, we need guidance on alternative tools that can ensure the survival of both ebi fish and flat fish. We are willing to abide by the rules set by the Marine and Fisheries Ministry, but we kindly ask for a replacement tool. Yesterday, we observed a tool for catching crabs, but it is not suitable for our needs. Our children in western Sebatik depend on the income from selling ebi fish, flat fish, and other varieties, enabling them to pursue an education. If no solution is provided, our citizens will be severely impacted.”

4.4 IDEOLOGY

Ideology is a crucial component of astragatra, playing a vital role in the concept of national resilience. Broadly speaking, ideology can be described as a comprehensive and systematic collection of ideas, beliefs, and values. The ideology of the Sebatik Island community primarily revolves around nationalism and the usage of currency in daily life. In terms of nationalism, Mr. Kurniawan asserts that it is deeply ingrained in the people of Sebatik. When posed with the question of whether they identify as Malaysian or Indonesian, the community unequivocally affirms their allegiance to Indonesia, which serves as a testament to their strong sense of nationalism. Additionally, the issue at hand pertains to the use of the Malaysian ringgit as a medium of exchange while residing in Indonesia. From a nationalist perspective, the adoption of the ringgit is justified due to the significant number of individuals crossing the border to make purchases in the neighboring country. This phenomenon directly impacts the consumers and necessitates the utilization of the ringgit.

Furthermore, Mrs. Mardiana also discussed the topic of nationalism. When observing Sebatik Island, there may be some doubts regarding nationalism, particularly
concerning the prevalent use of the ringgit for shopping. When we inquired about their preferred currency, the majority expressed a preference for the ringgit due to the prevailing circumstances. Exploring the historical context of Sebatik Island, we find that it was initially settled by immigrants, predominantly from the Bugis tribe. Their main source of income was indeed the ringgit, creating a significant dependency on it. However, despite this economic reliance, there is no doubt when it comes to their sense of nationalism. Hence, this context is relevant to discussing Malaysia and Indonesia within the context of Sebatik Island.

Mr. Andi Amir shared a similar opinion to Mrs. Mardiana regarding nationalism. As you mentioned earlier, Sir, due to the lack of a sense of nationalism, the prices of goods in stores are in ringgit instead of rupiah. Allow me to provide an example: when my wife and I went to the border at stake 3, I asked a person whether they were Malaysian or Indonesian, but they did not answer. This lack of a sense of nationalism made them hesitant to respond, even though they were already in Indonesia. I, on the other hand, would proudly state my nationality as Indonesian if I were in their shoes. The hesitation can be attributed to economic factors, Sir. Malaysia’s economy is more advanced compared to ours, although our economy is also advanced, we often fail to recognize it. That’s the essence of it, Sir.

Mr. Ebit further emphasized the ideology of the Sebatik Island community regarding nationalism. “Speaking of nationalism, I believe it is, as you mentioned earlier, a necessity. It can be described through a saying, 'Garuda is in my chest, Malaysia is in my gut.’ This signifies that the society has no choice but to embrace their national identity. Just as the Bugis people say, ’Kandang Passa,’ which means loyalty to one’s homeland. One of the factors influencing the Sebatik Island community’s ideology on nationalism is the economy, as expressed by Mrs. Mardiana.

Let me provide an example that relates to my own sibling. My brother works as a food entrepreneur, transporting goods from Malaysia to Sebatik, specifically from Tawau to Sebatik. Sometimes he expresses his frustration, as it appears to be easier to become a Malaysian citizen than an Indonesian citizen. Therefore, when he witnesses his hard work and the relatively higher income earned by our family members in Tawau, the idea of being Malaysian seems appealing at times.

Politics in the context of national resilience can be categorized into two distinct forms. The first form revolves around territorial acquisition, expansion, or defense, while
the second form pertains to the policies implemented by the state. Addressing the relationship between Sebatik Island, Indonesia, and Tawau, Malaysia, Mr. Awal argues the following: “Sebatik Island shares a border with Malaysia, and among the residents, there exists an interdependent relationship that necessitates mutual support. It is our responsibility to ensure that this symbiotic relationship benefits both parties equally, with a fair distribution of resources, a true fifty-fifty arrangement. It is important to dispel the perception that Malaysia is merely a rival; instead, we should view Malaysia as a friend. Friends should seek mutually beneficial outcomes, rather than one party gaining at the expense of the other. We must contemplate ways to increase profits for both sides. The local population acknowledges the importance of unobstructed growth, which can be achieved through proper regulations and legal channels. This would result in improvements across various sectors, including tourism. For instance, during the durian season, it is crucial that people are aware of Sebatik’s appeal, encouraging visitors to come here. Increased media coverage and journalist visits would undoubtedly spread the word, subsequently benefiting services, transportation, and culinary tourism. Local culinary establishments would experience a surge in demand due to the influx of new visitors. It is not just the people from Sebatik who should be frequenting their neighboring region. In Malaysia, sir, there is also a need for their products. If the neighboring visitors refrain from making purchases, the turnover of businesses in Malaysia would inevitably decline. Most of the laptops we use are imported from Tawau. Consequently, if no one buys their products, their revenue will decrease. Therefore, we must consider their desire to come here and make purchases. For instance, they may require fashionable clothing, an area where they lag behind. In Tawau, the prevailing fashion trends revolve around floral patterns, which have become outdated. On the other hand, Sebatik can provide them with the latest fashion options without them having to undertake a long journey to Bandung. Establishing a supermarket or department store on Sebatik that caters to their fashion needs could greatly benefit our economy. To conclude, I firmly believe that Malaysia should be regarded as a friend, not a rival, and that we should view this relationship as an opportunity to enhance the economic prospects of Sebatik.”

Mr. Wahyuddin expressed his viewpoint on the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia, focusing on the border area of Sebatik Island. He highlighted the concern of smuggling activities in the border region and emphasized the need to prioritize the
welfare of the local communities. Currently, the border area heavily relies on Malaysia for essential commodities such as rice, sugar, and gas cylinders. However, the sea toll program initiated by the central government aims to reduce this dependence and promote connectivity, particularly with Surabaya. Mr. Wahyuddin agreed with Mr. Awal’s statement that Malaysia should be seen as a friend rather than a rival. He suggested establishing mutually beneficial rules through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the governments of both countries. Currently, there are restrictions on Sebatik Island travelers, limiting them to carrying only 600 ringgit. However, this restriction may lead to illegal practices, as shopping expenses often exceed this amount. In Mr. Wahyuddin’s opinion, instead of imposing strict regulations, the rules could allow for higher spending limits. Additionally, he mentioned that Sebatik Island is divided between Malaysia and Indonesia, with each country having ownership of one side of the island.

Mr. Hasrul echoed Mr. Awal’s sentiments, affirming, “I share Mr. Awal’s views. This discussion dates back to our first head of the Central Sebatik Sub-district, Mr. Harman, who is also an alumnus of Unhas. He possesses insightful ideas regarding the development of border regions. Expanding on the earlier point made by Mr. Awal about Sebatik, we have a remarkable opportunity, sir. One aspect is the distinct nature of Malaysian society, particularly in terms of culinary tourism. When we visit Tawau, we encounter numerous food stalls lining the streets, presenting an excellent chance for us. So, why don’t we establish Indonesian culinary tourism in Sebatik, sir? This way, when Malaysians seek a tour, they can simply come here. Additionally, Malaysians are attracted to tourism and entertainment, sir. By harnessing Sebatik’s full potential, we can attract Malaysian visitors. It would be advantageous for them to come here, sir. If necessary, we can create a special policy in Sebatik, allowing Malaysians to freely purchase products from our community. When it comes to fashion design or clothing models, the Malay society lags behind, sir. Why don’t we relocate the market from Jakarta to Sebatik? I am confident they will come, especially with the implementation of a special policy. Sebatik, I believe, will advance and become an esteemed border region. In fact, Sebatik could serve as a pioneering pilot project for other border areas.”

If Mr. Awal and Mr. Wahyuddin are in agreement and share the same idea of fostering greater cooperation with Malaysia, a contrasting viewpoint was expressed by Mr. Andi Amir, who has resided in Malaysia (Tawau) for approximately 25 years. When
discussing Malaysia, it is rather difficult to categorize them definitively as either friends or enemies, as we are indirectly still influenced by Malaysian colonization. This influence is evident in the fact that Malaysian currency is used in shops, and prices are often quoted in Malaysian Ringgit (RM) rather than in Indonesian Rupiah. Consequently, we are left with a situation where we may consider them both as friends and as potential adversaries. This dilemma may also be attributed to our government’s actions. I recall that back in 2003, the Minister of Village, if my memory serves me right, expressed intentions to bridge the gap between our nations, so we are not left behind. Regrettably, the results of these efforts remain unseen until this day, Sir.

Indeed, in Sebatik, Sir, the mindset of people in Sulawesi may perceive Tawau as being left behind, but that is not the case. The reality is that we are still dependent on Tawau, and this is something that needs to be addressed. For instance, our products are exported there, and there is no influx of investments coming from Indonesia. This is just the beginning; we have a factory, but I am unsure about its current state. Additionally, our sea, landline, and labor resources are all interconnected with Tawau. Therefore, equalizing with Tawau is not an easy task for the government. Although I am aware that it is a challenging endeavor, I appreciate the seriousness of our government’s efforts, which should not be taken lightly. I distinctly remember, if my memory serves me correctly, that since 2003 or 2004, there has been monitoring to some extent. However, it has been nearly 14 years, Sir, and it seems that our efforts to match Tawau have not yielded tangible results. We only receive occasional visits, which are truly remarkable, Sir. I even addressed this matter to the House of Representatives, emphasizing that when they visit Sebatik, they should not merely pursue their own interests. Instead, they should inquire about the government’s plans and needs for development, rather than focusing solely on a particular aspect like Stake 3. It is disheartening that everyone who visits Sebatik, including ministers, only goes to Stake 3, while the potential of Batu Moallampu is being overlooked. It could be an iconic site for Sebatik. That concludes my remarks for now, Sir.

Mr. Hasrul emphasized the significant relationship between Indonesia and Sebatik Island, which closely aligns with Mr. Andi Amir’s perspective. However, there are certain challenges hindering our local sales and product distribution. In our region, we cultivate various commodities such as palm trees, Tadu palm, cocoa, cows, and bananas. Unfortunately, our plantation products primarily rely on the Malaysian market,
and we lack alternative markets. This situation can be seen as a form of colonization, as Mr. Amir pointed out. The pricing of our agricultural produce is subject to the control of Malaysian entrepreneurs, which presents a pressing issue. It is our responsibility to address this matter and ensure that the recent invasion of Sebatik does not adversely affect our economy and society. To accomplish this, we must strive to establish alternative markets beyond Malaysia. This will prevent us from being manipulated and allow us to export our products from Sebatik Island to places like Makassar and Surabaya, where ships frequently transport goods. Regrettably, attracting investors to explore these opportunities has been a challenge thus far.

Mr. Syawaluddin made a statement regarding the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia: There is another aspect that hasn’t been mentioned, sir. As government officials and representatives of the youth, we are deeply concerned about our borders. This pertains to Indonesian migrant workers (Tenaga Kerja Indonesia or TKI), which can be categorized into two types: official and unofficial TKI. Unofficial TKI often return home carrying items, such as shelves, that are only used for approximately three months before being discarded. Consequently, we unintentionally become a dumping ground for garbage. On the other hand, when we purchase goods like sugar or rice, we face restrictions, such as a 10 kg limit. Conversely, waste materials like shelves or barrels are readily accepted. This means their waste is brought into Indonesia and used for only a few months.

Mr. Awal emphasized the importance of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with Malaysia:

There are various types of friendships, including what we call “friend bombe-bombe” (sometimes friends, sometimes enemies). This applies to the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia. While we may have occasional disputes, we must consider that on the other side (Malaysia), I have relatives, including cousins and an in-law, living right next door. Therefore, we should approach this situation with understanding and realism. We need to explore the potential and develop it, as these bombe-bombe relationships can manifest in various dimensions, ranging from personal to bilateral relationships. For instance, the current boycott of Qatar by Arab countries demonstrates that relations between nations can be harmonious or discordant at different times. Ultimately, they remain friends, but when conflicting interests arise, that’s when the “bombe” occurs. In the case of Indonesia and Malaysia, we still rely on each other,
despite occasional tensions. It is essential to maintain harmony among ourselves, rather than resorting to measuring friendship by stealing standards.

4.5 ECONOMICS

The economic field is intertwined with various interconnected factors. It encompasses not only the geographical area of a state but also its natural resources, human resources, societal ideology, power accumulation, and wisdom utilized in production and distribution activities. Additionally, socio-cultural values, defense, and security play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth functioning of a nation’s economy.

During the FGD, Mrs. Mardiana expressed her thoughts on the economy, specifically highlighting the potential opportunities for Sebatik through the presence of Tawau. These opportunities include addressing border issues and boosting economic affairs, ultimately improving the income of its citizens. Mrs. Mardiana emphasized the importance of building and empowering all available resources, starting from the central government.

Mr. Awal proceeded to provide a comprehensive overview of the economic situation in Sebatik Island. He acknowledged the existing challenges in the fisheries and agriculture sectors. Specifically, he pointed out the issue of selling products like papaya to Surabaya, even though the market there already has an abundance of papaya. Similarly, when they venture to South Sulawesi, they encounter rice and banana cultivation, making it impractical to sell these products there. Mr. Awal emphasized the need for a realistic approach and highlighted the importance of enhancing professionalism in various aspects, including capturing, planting, managing, and selling. He stressed that the current focus has primarily been on catching or planting and selling alone, without adequate emphasis on managing the entire process. To illustrate the potential for diversification, Mr. Awal mentioned the presence of durian in the area, particularly in the form of packaged products like “epok or dodol durian” during the durian season. He cautioned against visitors expecting to find items such as cumin or almond coffee, as the local offerings are centered around Milo and durian. Mr. Awal emphasized the need for a holistic approach to economic activities in Sebatik Island, encompassing improved professionalism and diversification beyond traditional products.

Mr. Hasrul also holds an intriguing viewpoint regarding the economic situation
on Sebatik Island in Indonesia. In order to elevate Sebatik’s status and bring it on par with Tawau, there is a key aspect to consider. To illustrate my point, let’s look at Sabah, a neighboring province. During my research, I discovered that Sabah boasts three international ports, with Tawau being one of them. The proximity between Tawau and Keke is not considerable. Now, turning to the issue in North Kalimantan, we currently only have one international port in Tarakan. This raises the question: why don’t we plan for an international port on Sebatik in the future? The advantageous geographical position of Sebatik cannot be overlooked. In the north, we have the Philippines and Brunei, while Tawau serves as the most promising market. However, the problem arises when the state imposes import-export regulations that mandate the use of an international port. Sebatik gets bypassed as we are required to go through Tarakan first. Yet, right before our eyes, there is a vast and open market waiting for us. This is precisely why we believe Sebatik should have its own international port.

Mr. Sunardi shared his perspective on the economy of Sebatik Island, highlighting a specific issue, “Additionally, we need to address the economic challenges faced by the community here, such as the production of banana chips that can be manufactured on Sebatik.”

Meanwhile, Mr. Ebit expressed concerns regarding the distribution of community products from Sebatik Island. He emphasized the economic aspect, stating, “When it comes to agricultural and plantation products, we face limited options for distribution. Unfortunately, only viable option is selling them to Malaysia due to geographical constraints. If we attempt to transport these goods to Tarakan, the costs become prohibitively high. As the head of the sub-district previously mentioned, we hope that the implementation of the sea toll can provide some assistance.”

It is widely known that individuals from the border regions, including Sebatik, cross over to neighboring countries like Malaysia due to economic difficulties. Mrs. Mardiana shared her personal experience, shedding light on the matter, “My older brother has been residing in Tawau as an expatriate ever since I was in elementary school. Despite his commitment to nationalism, he takes care of essential administrative matters, such as maintaining valid ID cards and obtaining birth certificates for his children, even though he only visits home once a year for a week. Nevertheless, he is compelled to go to Malaysia due to economic reasons.”
4.6 SOCIO-CULTURAL

The social culture in the Astragatra model is a result of the interaction of various tribal cultures, each with its own regional identity. These regional cultures have been accepted and embraced as common values, forming a collective identity for the nation of Indonesia.

According to Mr. Andi Amir, an expert on the social culture of Sebatik Island in Indonesia, there are three essential aspects that need to be emphasized in our current situation. These aspects are nationalism, human characteristics, and human morality. One significant symbol of nationalism is the Youth Pledge, which holds great importance and must be upheld. The reason behind this importance is evident when we observe our surroundings in Sebatik. There are certain occurrences that bring embarrassment to our community, such as the association of Sebatik with marijuana, as depicted on television. This negative portrayal has led to our region being known for this particular issue. This is not just limited to Sebatik; even in Nunukan, similar cases regarding marijuana dominate the news.

To enhance the social culture of our region and combat such negative stereotypes, we must focus on the development of nationalism, nurturing positive human characteristics, and fostering a strong moral compass within the community. This will help to redefine the perception of our region and highlight the diverse aspects that make Sebatik unique, apart from the unfortunate associations it has gained in recent times.

Mr. Hasrul emphasized the significance of socio-cultural development in shaping the self-esteem of Sebatik Island. Consequently, our aspiration is to transform this island into a dignified border territory that symbolizes the pride of the Indonesian nation (NKRI). We firmly believe that by achieving this objective, we can foster a genuine sense of nationalism. Now, the crucial question arises: How can we materialize the vision of Sebatik Island as a dignified border? There are several measures that need to be taken in order to accomplish this goal. One such measure is to establish Sebatik Island as an autonomous region. When we compare Sebatik Island to other border regions in Indonesia, we can observe its remarkable progressiveness.

4.7 SECURITY DEFENSE

Ensuring the defense and security of a country is a crucial component, particularly in light of potential military threats from other nations. However,
safeguarding security is not solely reliant on the military; it also requires active participation from the community. Nonetheless, the community’s efforts must be complemented and reinforced by the central government or the nation as a whole. As aptly stated by Mr. Syawaluddin:

It is line with others who emphasize the importance of protecting our border territories. By engaging all ethnic groups, community leaders, and youth in securing these areas, we can effectively achieve this objective. Regrettably, our central government is not providing the necessary support despite our commitment. This lack of support renders our efforts futile, Sir. Furthermore, when considering security concerns, it is crucial to highlight a significant development. Here, Sir, the local leaders have reached an agreement to collectively safeguard Sebatik. Unlike other conflict-ridden regions, we have remained unaffected, Sir. Our West Sebatik area, comprising diverse ethnic and religious groups, stands united for the sake of nationalism and the preservation of the Sebatik island.

Mr. Hasrul offers an interesting perspective on defense and security issues, particularly regarding the approach to the frontier in our country. He suggests that some adjustments may be necessary, as the current approach heavily relies on military strategies. While acknowledging the significance of this approach, Mr. Hasrul believes we should also recognize the importance of socio-cultural and welfare considerations for the people living in border areas. On Sebatik island alone, there are 18 border stakes, ranging from north to east (stakes 1 to 16). However, only Indonesia has a military presence there, raising the question of the whereabouts of the Malaysian army. This observation leads us to conclude that Malaysia does not prioritize a military approach as much as we do. While the military approach holds importance, it should be balanced with a focus on community welfare in the border regions.

Supporting this perspective, Mr. Indra adds that the realization of hope largely depends on the policymakers. In his opinion, the expectations in Sebatik have been steadily increasing. It becomes evident that meeting these expectations relies on the policies implemented by the regional and central authorities. Although numerous visits have been made by officials at various levels, many expectations remain unfulfilled thus far.

In order to achieve a safe and peaceful border, it is crucial for the central government to prioritize the well-being of its people, as emphasized by Mr. Ebit. One of
President Jokowi’s initiatives, the Presidential Nawacita, aims to address the substantive and comprehensive needs of the frontier area more effectively. On a smaller scale, for Sebatik, the solution is actually simple, Sir. We need basic infrastructure such as reliable electricity, clean water, well-constructed roads, and appropriate regulations. As recently pointed out by Mr. Hasrul, there should be a dedicated set of regulations specifically tailored for the border areas that belong to Indonesia as a whole.

Additionally, Sunardi emphasized the importance of clean water, Sir. In my area, there are no natural springs, so we rely on rainwater. Rainwater, Sir. Furthermore, Ebit mentioned, “Speaking of hope, sir, our aspirations are high, Sir. There is a local saying in Sebatik, Sir, that suggests the only thing missing is an angel.” Thus, to gauge the level of nationalism among the people on Sebatik Island, we can refer to the table 2 below.

### Table 2. Calculation Score of Questionnaire Result

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<th>Total Value</th>
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<td>230</td>
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Based on the provided frequency table, we can draw the following conclusions:
Among the research respondents, a total of 21 individuals, accounting for 34%, exhibit low levels of nationalism. Conversely, 41 respondents, representing 66%, display high levels of nationalism.

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Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)

The perception of Sebatik Island residents regarding NKRI and nationalism is influenced by the *astagatra* model. Furthermore, when discussing infrastructure development on Sebatik Island, it is crucial for the central government to allocate special attention to the territory. Despite significant development on Sebatik Island, the constructed infrastructure has not been able to compete with neighboring countries, leading to a dependency on them. Consequently, it is imperative to enhance both the development and maintenance of infrastructure to overcome this reliance. Therefore, the researcher concludes that improvements in infrastructure development and maintenance are necessary.

This factor can be divided into several points. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of tribes inhabiting Sebatik Island. Secondly, we must recognize the crucial role of youth in nurturing, preserving, and igniting nationalism. Thirdly, education is of utmost importance for the youth of Sebatik Island in building and upholding the unity of NKRI (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*, meaning the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia). Therefore, there are several crucial aspects related to education that deserve our focus, especially the development of higher education in Sebatik Island, with special priority given to Sebatik youth who intend to pursue their education at public universities in Indonesia.

Fourthly, we must address the character of the Indonesian population on Sebatik Island. The residents’ character should be enhanced, particularly in terms of discipline and honesty. However, it is important to note that the citizens of Sebatik Island possess positive values, such as a strong work ethic and independence.
Fifthly, we must improve the quality of public administration services. At times, our government tends to prioritize foreign citizens over our own, whereas the Kingdom of Malaysia places great value on and prioritizes its own citizens.

Lastly, we need to focus on healthcare. This includes enhancing the quality of healthcare services and ensuring the completion of the hospital construction project.

Sebatik Island possesses abundant natural resources, which can be classified into two main categories: plantation and rice fields, and marine fisheries. However, there are significant challenges hindering the development of these resources, primarily related to processing and regulatory issues. Currently, the majority of Sebatik Island’s natural resources, both from land and sea, are sold in their raw form to Malaysia, with minimal processing or value-added activities. This limits the economic benefits that could be derived from these resources.

In addition to processing challenges, the regulatory framework surrounding resource utilization poses another obstacle. Sometimes, the government imposes rules and regulations without offering clear guidance or viable solutions for the local community. For instance, certain fishing technologies may be prohibited without the provision of alternative or replacement technologies. As a result, citizens are left without suitable options or direction. It is crucial for the government to not only regulate resource utilization but also support the community by offering alternative technologies or guiding them towards sustainable practices. This will enable the people of Sebatik Island to fully harness and benefit from their natural resources, fostering economic growth and sustainable development.

The ideology factor in the border area holds an important point, which is the use of the Indonesian rupiah currency. The preference for using the rupiah is closely linked to the ideological beliefs of the people residing in the border area of Sebatik Island. The majority of the informants cited economic factors as the primary reason for the prevalence of the Malaysian ringgit over the Indonesian rupiah.

Politics plays a significant role in shaping the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia. There are varying perspectives on the desired nature of this relationship, with some proponents advocating for a symbiotic mutualism between the two nations. They argue that Malaysia and Indonesia need each other, as there are benefits to be gained from the movement of citizens between the countries. Consequently, they believe that Indonesians should exploit the potential advantages of Malaysians coming to the island
of Sebatik. However, there are opposing viewpoints that discourage closer cooperation between Malaysia and Indonesia. Critics point out that Malaysia has been exploiting Indonesian citizens residing on Sebatik Island. For instance, Malaysian entrepreneurs frequently purchase crops from the island without providing fair prices, leaving the Indonesian citizens in a vulnerable position. These critics also highlight instances where Malaysia’s actions have harmed the relationship between the two countries. One such example is Malaysia’s regulations on returning Indonesian migrant workers (TKIs), restricting their luggage weight to a mere 10 kg. However, it is worth noting that Malaysia allows the transportation of potential waste or junk without any prohibitions.

Economically, this factor refers to the utilization of existing resources, enhancing their processing capabilities, and effectively marketing the resulting products. To improve the economy of Sebatik Island, it is crucial for the government to establish an international port, which would facilitate broader market access. Additionally, the implementation of sea toll roads is necessary to enable efficient distribution and reduce transportation costs for the residents of Sebatik. Currently, the economic challenges faced by the people of Sebatik result in a heavy reliance on Malaysia (Tawau) for their livelihood.

In terms of social and cultural factors, there are several key aspects to consider. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the distinct characteristics of Indonesian citizens within the context of Sebatik Island. Furthermore, it is imperative for the central government to promptly recognize Sebatik Island as a new autonomous region (DOB), thereby granting it the necessary authority and autonomy to govern its own affairs.

The concept of security defense encompasses two key factors that can serve as tools for non-military defense. While military defense plays a vital role in safeguarding security, it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of cultural diversity as a force in maintaining security defenses. Additionally, the field of community welfare plays a pivotal role. According to reliable sources, if the central government prioritizes the welfare of the people residing in border regions, it will greatly enhance the defense and security of the Sebatik region.

The management of border areas in Sebatik Island presents several strategic challenges. Despite the abundant natural resources and the socio-economic conditions of the people in Sebatik Island, the border areas, particularly in Indonesia, continue to face a paradoxical situation. The wealth of natural resources, both on land and at sea, should serve as a foundation for the development of this border area. However, the potential of
these resources remains underutilized, failing to contribute fairly, optimally and sustainably to improve the welfare of the community in Sebatik Island.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the overall quality of human resources in border communities remains relatively low. Moreover, border communities, particularly those in land border areas, face a “cultural cleavage” phenomenon, where political boundaries have divided indigenous communities (Prasiasa et al., 2023). In terms of infrastructure, most border areas still lack sufficient facilities and infrastructure, leading to regional isolation, limited economic activity, and a potential threat to the unity of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Another aspect to consider is the policy orientation towards regional development, which tends to prioritize an “inward-looking” approach. Consequently, border areas are often regarded as secondary to the country’s overall development, resulting in a lack of emphasis from both central and local governments. This is evident in the inadequate allocation of development funds for border areas and their subsequent social, economic, and infrastructural underdevelopment. As a result, the progress of the country’s border areas significantly lags behind other regions. This discrepancy is particularly striking in Kalimantan, where there exists a stark contrast between the development conditions in Sabah and Sarawak, leading to a socio-cultural and economic orientation more aligned with neighboring countries.

Henceforth, border area development policies need to transcend their previous focus on defense and security, recognizing the necessity to consider the unique characteristics of the community and the untapped potential of the local area. Merely adhering to traditional approaches is inadequate; a more comprehensive strategy is imperative to ensure holistic progress and prosperity in these regions.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Sebatik Island community generally exhibited a positive response towards the concept of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), also known as nationalism. Among the 62 respondents, the majority demonstrated a high level of nationalism, despite a few individuals remaining hesitant due to perceived "dependence" on neighboring Malaysia.

The findings from the focus group discussions (FGDs) revealed several factors influencing nationalism among the people of Sebatik Island. These factors included
inadequate infrastructure development and maintenance, such as damaged roads, limited electricity coverage, and insufficient clean water supply. The presence of diverse ethnic groups on the island, the need to maximize the role of youth in fostering nationalism, and unsatisfactory fulfillment of basic needs were also identified. Additionally, there was a necessity for improved human resources, inadequate pro-poor healthcare services, suboptimal utilization of natural resources, insufficient government policies addressing the development of border areas, and a lack of attention from the central government towards the welfare of the people residing on Sebatik Island.

To ensure effective development of the border area with Malaysia within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), a welfare-focused approach should be prioritized. Enhancing the welfare of the people on Sebatik Island will naturally foster a sense of love and pride for NKRI, ultimately strengthening the region's defense and security capabilities. Addressing the aforementioned factors and prioritizing welfare improvements will play a crucial role in fostering a stronger sense of nationalism among the Sebatik Island community, thereby bolstering the security and defense of the border region within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Suggestions for the government include prioritizing the welfare of citizens on Sebatik Island by allocating more resources and attention to their needs and development. Additionally, there should be a focus on enhancing infrastructure development in the border areas, matching the level of development seen in neighboring countries. The government and universities should also emphasize human resource development, providing opportunities for the youth of Sebatik to receive high-quality education and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the island's future development.
REFERENCES


