Learning the Social Impact of Corruption: A Study of Legal Policy and Corruption Prevention in Indonesia and Malaysia

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Abstract

This research focuses on the legal basis for anti-corruption measures in Indonesia and Malaysia and touches upon aspects of enforcement. These two neighboring countries have different legal systems and, of course, their own unique characteristics. That said, these two countries also have many similarities in terms of culture, religion, geography, and social history, and both governments have implemented anti-corruption policies and made corruption a criminal offence. The impact on preventing and combating corruption in both countries has been different, however. In terms of international ratings, Indonesia is at a very high level of corruption, while Malaysia is at a moderate level. This study therefore aims to identify an effective legal basis for anti-corruption and law enforcement strategies that can prevent corruption. The study's methodology employed legal content analysis using a historical, jurisprudence, and comparative approach, with interviews and analytical methods also being critical. The study found that the legal basis for preventing corruption plays a strategic role in enforcing anti-corruption legislation. Thus, the implementation of prevention and the enforcement of anti-corruption laws have different effects. Two approaches for preventing and combating corruption were identified, namely the legal and non-legal approaches. The legal approach focuses on developing and enforcing criminal law with the support of the criminal justice system, and the two countries apply a similar approach here. The non-legal approach, meanwhile, introduces preventive enforcement policies, such as by establishing law enforcement agencies and special courts for corruption and improving public service facilities.

Keywords: Legal policy, criminal law, corruption, prevention, enforcement.

Introduction

Corruption in various countries is a complicated social phenomenon that has its roots in ancient history. Corruption spreads through government administrative bodies and non-governmental organizations, much like how a chronic disease like cancer can spread through the body (Haris & Al-Fatih, 2020). It has become a serious problem in many Asian countries, especially in emerging economies (i.e., developing countries) like Indonesia and Malaysia (Pertiwi & Susan Ainsworth, 2020). Since the 1960s, both these countries have endeavored to prevent and eradicate corruption, but success has so far been limited. For some researchers of economic development in Africa, the corruption in Asia is called "developmental corruption," meaning that corruption acts as a lubricant to development (Waluyo, 2014).

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The battle against corruption waxes and wanes like the flame of a candle, being stronger at some times than others (Kristiana, 2016). When corruption increases unabated, it can lead to dire consequences for people who already may have quite hard lives. Corruption is like a fire that never goes out or a germ that persists latently in the body waiting to reemerge as a new infection.

Corruption is a global phenomenon (Bakhri, 2010), meaning that poor and underdeveloped countries do not have a monopoly on it—it also exists in developed countries. However, it tends to be more noticeable in the poorer countries of the developing world (Susanto, 2018). Referring to the work of Soedarso and Syed Hussein Alatas, the history of corruption began with the emergence of human life in societies, when complex social organizations became more prevalent (Hamzah, 2020). From the Roman Empire and Ancient China to the modern societies of the 21st century, societies have been tainted by corruption for thousands of years, so corruption is almost as old as the hills (Nurdyansyah, 2015). Nevertheless, each country needs to address the issue of corruption through various policies and legislation.

In politics, corruption has always been an important issue of discussion in the constitutional political process and a target of government intervention in different countries (Ahmad, 2020; Tolba, 2018). Whether changes take place in a democratic system, a revolutionary country, or a constitutional monarchy, corruption is generally a prominent topic, such as in elections for members of parliament, presidents, prime ministers, and other government posts (Al-Fatih, 2018). Almost every political activity of government power has effects in various parts of the world, both through democratic political means and undemocratic processes like revolutions and coups. Corruption is often one of the basic political tools for weakening or even destroying a political opponent (Muqorobin & Arief, 2020; Yigit & Tatch, 2017).

Some academics have even argued that corruption in developing countries has become part of governments' bureaucratic culture, because over history, it has been found in countries with all sorts of regimes (Mufida, 2020). Law enforcement procedures and very convoluted court cases have also failed to stem corruption. Examples of significant corruption, especially in Indonesia, exist in the form of Akbar Tanjung, Case BLBI (Bank Indonesia Liquidity Assistance), and the like. In Malaysia, there was the case of Anwar Ibrahim in 1998 and that of Datuk Harun in 1976, among others. People worry about the political wrangling and its seriousness in implementing laws to tackle corruption. This has led to sarcastic expressions in Indonesia like "Indonesia is a country with a very high level of corruption, but corruption does not exist without corruptors."

In Malaysia, Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (2005) said, "Symptoms of corruption have reached serious levels, so much so that this situation may not be reversed now that corruption has become a culture of Malaysia. Even those who previously did not dare to act openly corrupt no longer feel the need to be hidden."

The corruption perception indexes for ASEAN countries refer to their achievements in battling corruption, and these are shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1. Corruption ratings for ASEAN countries

From the figure, it appears that the fight against corruption in the ASEAN region is far from complete. Indeed, it gives the impression that the problem of corruption is faced by almost every country in the world. Thus, a fundamental question arises: How can a society rid itself of corruption? Can criminal law be used to reduce or prevent corruption? If so, what is the point where the law should come into effect? What threats of punishments and sanctions should be developed by legislatives bodies to enable the criminal justice system to enforce laws about corruption? Such questions are often asked of legal experts, and this motivated the researchers to conduct this study.

When reforms took place in Indonesia in 1998, some attempts were made to prevent and fight corruption through amendments and the drafting of an act relating to corruption. The state started developing the People's Consultative Assembly Decree No. XI/MPR/1998 for ridding the country of corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN). This was followed by the House of Representatives

voting to enforce Act No. 28/1999 for making the state clean and free from corruption. The following assembly in 1999 also made amendments to the anti-corruption act through Act No. 3 of 1971 on the Corruption Act to Act No. 31 of 1999 on Corruption Eradication. It was further revised in 2001 with the enactment of Law Act 20 of 2001 on the Amendment Law Act No. 31 of 1999. Efforts to reform anti-corruption law also passed in 2002 through Act No. 30 of 2002 for establishing the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK).

In addition, various police powers were also added to practice law by the legislative committee and other governments (Nur & Susanto, 2020). However, despite the legal reforms for the prevention of corruption, corruption has not decreased—it has actually increased. Investigators from the police and the attorney general's office have reported many cases that occurred after the law was reformed to fight corruption. For example, there was corruption in the 2004 elections by the Election Commission (KPU), and in 2005, there was the case of Nurdin Halid, who was later released. There was also the BNI46 bank bribery case, the case at the Ummah Ministry of Religious Endowment, and a variety of other corruption cases within provinces and urban districts.

Various international publications have been encouraging, however, and they have pointed to Indonesia as a country that has struggled to combat corruption. In 2002, the Kompas newspaper referred to the publication of a study by researchers based in Hong Kong. The Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, Ltd. (PERC) followed Indonesia over the past seven years: On April 9, 1996, Indonesia was the third-most corrupt country among 12 Asian countries behind China and Vietnam. In a later publication on August 5, 1997; Indonesia was described as a country with the law enforcement agencies—including police agencies, courts, a monetary authority, the legislature, and a capital market regulator—but it still had the third-worst rating after China and South Korea. On September 23, 1998, Indonesia moved down to become the sixth-most corrupt country after Cameroon, Paraguay, Honduras, Tanzania, and Nigeria. Next, on October 16, 1999, Transparency International rated Indonesia as the third-most corrupt country after Nigeria and Cameroon. Then, on June 11, 2000, Indonesia was reported as having one of the worst legal systems, along with China and Vietnam. Subsequently, on December 10, 2000, the report of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) referred to "corrupt bureaucrats threatening the economic recovery," while in the report of Transparency International on March 18, 2001, Indonesia was the country with the worst corruption. According to Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, Ltd. (PERC), even the results of borrowing money also manifest in the Corruption and Governance

Index. In a report dated 10 March 2002, Indonesia was referred to as the most corrupt country in Asia, with a score of 9.92. According to them, this figure is the worst result that PERC had observed since 1995.

The development of legislative reforms in the anti-corruption reform era has happened very fast, indicating that the political will is there to truly tackle corruption. Yet corruption has not receded or decreased significantly, even with the legal basis of the new government (Abidin, Suryanto & Utami, 2020). In contrast, the phenomenon of corruption appears to be worsening, causing concerns and worry. This situation puts the law and its objectives at a dead end, so it raises the question of whether the role of law, especially criminal law and the criminal justice system in the community, is having an effect.

In such circumstances, researchers should conduct studies into the basis of criminal law in the criminal justice system and its role in preventing corruption (Ina et al., 2018). This field has not received serious attention, however, especially in Indonesia. Indeed, the development of legal reforms, especially with regards to the legal basis of crime, has not been continuous, and in-depth studies are lacking, especially for aspects related to preventing and combating corruption.

What is more, other factors acted as the rationale for this study. Indonesia has one of the highest levels of corruption in Asia, but Malaysia is in a better position. This does not mean that Malaysia is entirely free from corruption, but maybe it has executed some encouraging policies that we can learn from. This forms the background of this comparative study.

Research Questions

In the context of this study, several key issues were reviewed concerning the legal basis for preventing corruption in Indonesia and Malaysia. Therefore, two research questions were sought to answer:

1) What approach was adopted to prevent corruption in Indonesia and Malaysia?

2) What was the legal basis for institutions to enforce anti-corruption efforts in Indonesia and Malaysia?

Methods

Research Design

This research is a content analysis that applied qualitative approach (Cresswell, 2014). It examines factors related to law enforcement for corruption, such as the legal basis for drafting criminal acts

for corruption, their enforcement by government agencies, and courts' discretion to handle corruption cases, as well as procedures for settling corruption cases, both in Indonesia and Malaysia. Qualitative approach was used to analyze data, relying upon corpus analysis.

Data and Data Sources

This qualitative study used primary data as its main form of data (Wati & Puspitasari, 2018). This was divided over two kinds of primary data. Primary authoritative legal materials included the following: 1) Decree No. XI/MPR/ 1998 regarding the State Being Clean and Free from Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism (KKN), followed by the House of Representatives Act No. 28/1999 on the State's Implementation of Clean and Free from Corruption; 2) Law No. 3 of 1971 on Corruption Act to Act No. 31 of 1999 on Corruption Eradication; 3) Law No. 20 of 2001 on the Amendment Law Act No. 31 of 1999; 4) Act No. 30 of 2002 on the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPTPK); and 5) the Prevention of Corruption Act 1961 to the Prevention of Corruption Act 1997 of Malaysia;

Secondary legal materials in the form of legal opinions, doctrines, theories, scientific articles, and related websites were collected from: 1) corruption report documents by Political and Economic Risk Consultancy. Ltd. (PERC); 2) the annual global corruption index reports issued by Transparency International (TI); 3) manuals for the procurement of goods and services by the Ministry of Finance, which are public documents of the Information Management and Documentation Officer (PPID) of the Government Procurement Service Policy Institute of the Republic of Indonesia (LKPP-RI); 4) the report by the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA), the National Integrity Plan (PIN), the Malaysian Institute of Integrity (IIM), and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on corruption in Malaysia; 5) the *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*'s (KPK) report on corruption in Indonesia; and 6) other documents relating to corruption in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Data Collection

In this study, data collection focused on document analysis. In the data collection process, themes were related to: 1) procurement, 2) regulations to fight corruption in Indonesia and Malaysia, and 3) annual reports on corruption cases and indexes for Indonesia and Malaysia. The documents are

collected in collaboration with Malaysian legal office and Indonesian legal office through a collaborated research of our universities.

Data Analysis

A qualitative study looks at people in their environments and interacts with them, thus trying to understand their language and their interpretations of the surrounding world (Najib & Hartono, 2020). Qualitative research aims to study questions related to "how well," "how much," "how accurate," and so on (Yunus & Rezki, 2020). Thus, this qualitative study aimed to investigate what is happening in terms of the legal basis for the drafting of anti-corruption legislation and its implications for its legal enforcement efforts and the effective settlement of corruption cases in Indonesia and Malaysia as a holistic system. This way, the study aimed to clearly describe the wider picture for the legal basis of corruption and its effectiveness in both countries. Corpus analysis that emphasizes document analysis follows Cresswell (2014) analysis. First, documents consisting of numeric and narrative themes are converted into narrative texts in the database. Second, the narrative texts in the database are identified their themes that are appropriate to the research questions of the study. Third, each theme in the narrative text is coded into number of data completed with example. Fourth, after being verified, final data are displayed.

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Findings and Discussion

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Approach to Prevent Corruption

Indonesia and Malaysia are neighboring countries, but they also share a history and culture as parts of the Malay world. However, European colonialism led to these countries diverging in many respects. For example, these two countries have different legal systems: Indonesia has a civil law system, while the common law system is practiced in Malaysia. In Indonesia, the law is interpreted as the law without exception. Laws are intended to act as rules regulating human behavior in society in order to achieve a peaceful and orderly society (Van Alstyne, 1975). As Austin put it, a law is "an order issued by an authorized body for the common man and enforced by punishment." The civil law system practiced in Indonesia mirrors that used in continental European countries, and it was the Dutch that brought this legal system to Indonesia. It is based on the principle of concordance, which means that Dutch law is applied equally in Indonesia (Leasa, 2020).

The law in Indonesia is used to supply written law and unwritten legal resources (Juanda, 2017). Sources of written law include legislation that is proposed and passed by the state legislature, which has the power to make such laws. According to the provisions of Article Seven of Law No. 10 of 2004 on the Legal Regulation Drafting Procedure, there is a legal hierarchy in Indonesia. From top to bottom, this includes the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia (Amendment) Act/Statute and the Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (PERPU), Government Regulation (PP), Presidential Regulation (PERPRES), District-Level Regulation, Provincial Regulation (Perda Tk.I), *Kabupaten Kota* (Regency and City) Local Regulation (Perda Tk.II), and rural village ordinances.

In Malaysia, the law is also interpreted as the law (Kapeli & Mohamed, 2019). Referring to the dictionary of Black, "The law is handed down, ordered or otherwise. A rule or method for which the phenomena or actions are mutually joined to each other; to be complied with or followed by the people subject to punishment or consequences." Laws are therefore rules set by a legislature, and they are imposed on the population of a country or region and enforced by certain regulatory bodies. Any failure to comply with such laws may lead to penalties, such as fine or incarceration. In another sense, laws can be thought of as rules that are recognized and adopted by a country's justice system in order to regulate the behavior and habits of people in the community (Azmi & Zainudin, 2020; Yusoff et al., 2019).

The law in Malaysia is divided over written and unwritten laws (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2020). Written laws are those approved by the Parliament of Malaysia, while the unwritten law is actually written, but it has not been passed by Parliament, being instead contained in:

1). The principles of English law, which are adapted to local conditions;

2). Decisions of the Supreme Court of Justice of Malaysia, which comprises the Federal Court, the Court of Appeal, and the High Court;

3). Islamic law; and

4). Traditional customs that have been accepted by the court as having legal standing, such as the customs of the Malay people, the natives of Sabah and Sarawak, and Chinese and Hindu populations.

The common law system comes from the Anglo–Saxon countries that colonized Malaysia, and they implemented it in Malaysia. English law made its debut in Malaysia when the British acquired Penang in 1786 and introduced the Charters of Justice in 1807, 1826, and 1855. The law comprises

English common law, rules of equity, and statutes of general use. English law is therefore an unwritten source of law in Malaysia.

Because of the differing legal systems in Indonesia and Malaysia, laws to prevent corruption differ between the two countries. Following the reform movements in 1997 and 1998, corruption became a very poignant issue in Malaysia and Indonesia, especially after an economic downturn that began in 1997. This economic downturn caused a collapse in the stock market, unstable currencies, and record bankruptcies. The downturn led to rescue measures by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Joseph, Gunawan, & Sawani, 2016). This unmasked the dark misuse of power and corruption among the Suharto government in Indonesia and led to its fall and the reform movement.

At the same time as the economic downturn, Malaysia passed amendments to the Prevention of Corruption Act 1961 to get the Prevention of Corruption Act 1997. Around the same time, Indonesia amended the Corruption Act No. 3/1971 with Act No. 31/1999. This demonstrated that the problem of corruption was an important issue for the future. However, it is essential to understand the legal basis for amending legislation for the prevention of corruption in both countries (Quah, 2020).

The impact of enforcing the anti-corruption acts in both countries can be discerned through Transparency International's corruption perception index at the end of the year. From 2000 to 2006, Malaysia ranked in the 35–40 least corrupt countries with a score of around 4.5. This was significantly better than Indonesia, which remained in the top 100–115 countries with a score of 2.7, indicating a significant level of corruption in the country. This implies that it may be idea to perform a comparative study of the basic anti-corruption legislation and its enforcement in both countries as seen in See Fig. 2.
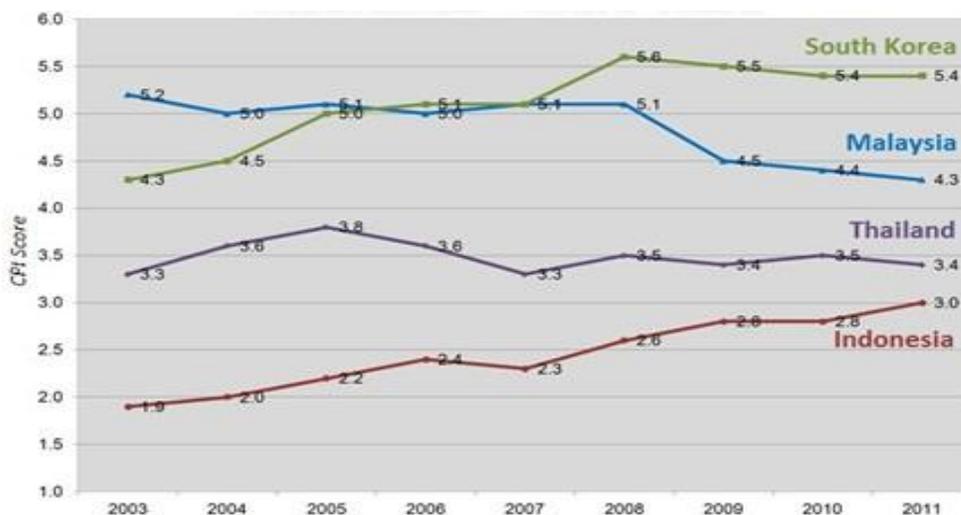
Fig. 2. CPI ratings for Malaysia and Indonesia

Another observation is that in Indonesia Law No. 31/1999 to 20/2001, there were four fundamental reforms introducing elements that were not found in the previous Prevention of Corruption Act No. 3/1971: First, corruption is classified as a formal crime, so even if the losses incurred by the country are repaid, criminals can still be prosecuted in court and potentially punished. Second, a system of strict liability is applied. Third, bribery and graft are classed as forms of corruption. Fourth, there is no statute of limitations for seizing the assets of criminal corruption. Other than this, the new law covers corporate corruption and the possible application of sanctions up to the death penalty.

The Development of Anti-Corruption Legislation in Malaysia

Legislation and enforcement policies to prevent corruption in Malaysia can be briefly described as taking a preventive approach (Yusof & Arshad, 2020). The anti-corruption policy was designated as a national standard of ethics, with it laying out strategic measures to improve government administration. The Fixing Vision 2020 acts as a guide for developing policies and administering work is summarized in Figure 3.

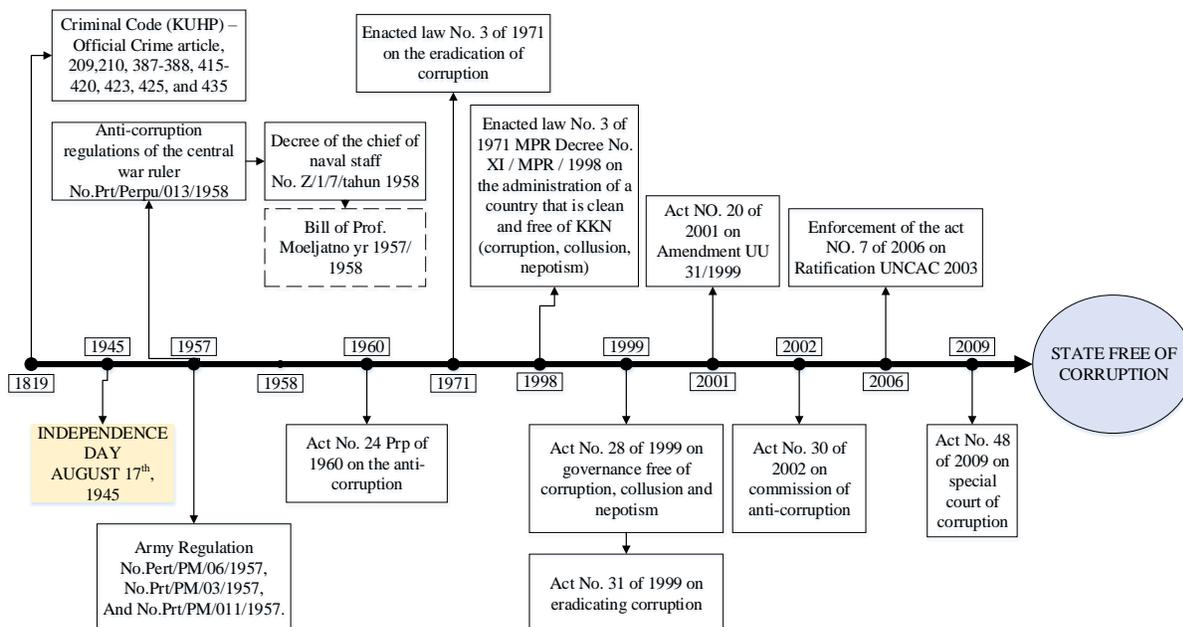*The Development of Anti-Corruption Legislation in Indonesia*

Fig. 3. An overview of the development of anti-corruption legislation in Indonesia

Several important aspects from the figure can be explained. Prior to independence in 1957, Malaysia introduced legislation, or an ordinance, for the prevention of corruption and the establishment of special law enforcement agencies to enforce it (1959). Later in 1967, it established the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA), which has jurisdiction for investigating cases of corruption, thus reinforcing anti-corruption policy and creating guidelines for the administration and development of the country. Among the significant implications of the policy was the establishment of the National Integrity Plan (PIN) and the Malaysian Institute of Integrity (IIM). In 2009, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) was established, and it was an improvement on the BPR. The MACC has also established the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy. Anti-corruption law enforcement agencies have been established in every state, and recently, the number of employees in these has exceeded 3,000. The Malaysian government has also recently formed a special corruption court (Yusof & Arshad, 2020). See Fig.4.
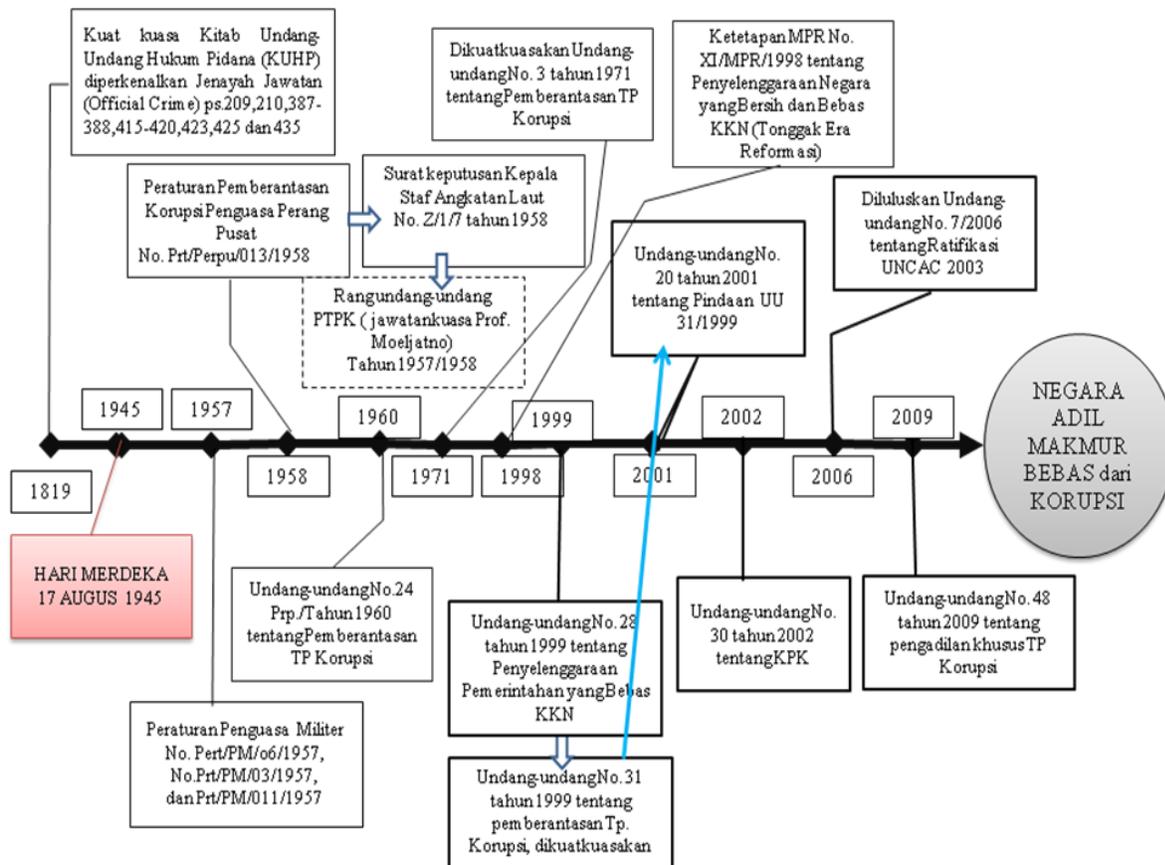

Fig. 4. An overview of the development of anti-corruption legislation in Indonesia

During the course of this study, it became apparent that efforts to eradicate corruption in Indonesia started with the Old Order, although it did not establish any special agency to fight corruption, particularly during the time of martial law. However, these efforts were enhanced with effective anti-corruption laws in 1960. Then, with the shift to the New Order regime in 1971, another special law was enacted to fight corruption. However, no special anti-corruption agency was established until the Reform Era in 1998. In 1999, the new Anti-Corruption Law came into force, and in 2002, the KPK was established for the first time in Indonesia. The new law and the new agency marked a new phase in fighting corruption in Indonesia, because before this era, Indonesia had no special bodies with jurisdiction for investigating corruption. The new commission therefore differed from other enforcement agencies. Special corruption courts were also established with the mission of making judgments in corruption cases (Agustiwi & Nurviana, 2020).

However, unlike in Malaysia, Indonesia does not have a specific program or national integrity plan to enhance the fight against corruption and create the spirit to free the state administration from corruption, collusion, and nepotism. In 2002, the House of Representatives and the President passed Law No. 15/2002 as amended, Law No. 8/2010 on Money Laundering, and Law No. 46 of 2009 on the Corruption Court.

Conclusion

When looking at the development of basic anti-corruption legislation in both countries, it is clear that the legal approach plays an important role. Malaysia adopted a legal approach focused on prevention, including the launch of a national integrity plan and the establishment of an academy for integrity and anti-corruption. The country's legislative changes therefore related more to preventing corruption than punishing it. In contrast, in Indonesia, the legislative developments suggest that efforts to prevent and eliminate corruption are more focused on punishment. This is evident from the passing of legislation that created a wide range of corruption offenses, the establishment of a law enforcement agency, and the establishment of specialized courts. Aspects related to preventing corruption have yet to be given sufficient attention. Various legal and policy bases for the legislation indicate that the anti-corruption strategy in Indonesia during this reform is still more focused on just legal reform. However, it is known that the problem of corruption is a complex and complicated one, so preventive strategies should be pursued with an 'integrated

approach,' one not just based on legislative reform but also economic, social, cultural, political, moral, and administrative reforms.

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