CITIZENSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURALISM IN INDONESIA

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Multiculturalism is an important issue in the discussion of citizenship in various countries, including Indonesia, which has more than 300 ethnic and language groups. This article explores the concepts of citizenship and multiculturalism in Indonesia, as well as the challenges of their implementation. By reviewing the existing literature, this study shows that although Indonesia officially supports multiculturalism, practices on the ground are often inconsistent and discriminatory against minority groups. Decentralization, while aimed at increasing regional autonomy, often exacerbates ethnic tensions if not balanced with effective inclusion mechanisms. To address this issue, this article recommends strengthening the legal framework, multicultural education, and active participation of minority groups in decision-making. Thus, this study provides in-depth insights into the importance of inclusive citizenship in managing ethnic and cultural diversity in Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

Multikulturalisme merupakan isu penting dalam pembahasan kewarganegaraan di berbagai negara, termasuk Indonesia yang memiliki lebih dari 300 kelompok etnis dan bahasa. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi konsep kewarganegaraan dan multikulturalisme di Indonesia, serta tantangan implementasinya. Dengan mengkaji literatur yang ada, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Indonesia secara resmi mendukung multikulturalisme, praktik di lapangan sering kali tidak konsisten dan diskriminatif terhadap kelompok minoritas. Desentralisasi, meski bertujuan meningkatkan otonomi daerah, sering memperparah ketegangan etnis jika tidak diimbangi dengan mekanisme inklusi yang efektif. Untuk mengatasi masalah ini, artikel ini merekomendasikan penguatan kerangka hukum, pendidikan multikultural, dan partisipasi aktif kelompok minoritas dalam pengambilan keputusan. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang pentingnya kewarganegaraan inklusif dalam mengelola keberagaman etnis dan budaya di Indonesia.

1.　INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism has become one of the most prominent issues in the discussion of citizenship around the world. In Indonesia, a country of more than 300 different ethnic and linguistic groups, multiculturalism is not only a social reality but also a challenge in the formation of an inclusive civic identity. An understanding of citizenship in Indonesia must take into account the wide diversity of cultures, religions, and languages, which influence social interaction and public policy.

The concept of citizenship in Indonesia has undergone a significant transformation from the colonial period to the modern era. In colonial times, citizenship was limited to certain elites, while the majority of the indigenous population did not have the same rights. After independence, the concept of citizenship began to develop by adopting Pancasila values that emphasized unity in diversity. However, the implementation of these values often faces challenges in practice.

The issue of citizenship and multiculturalism in Indonesia is also influenced by the dynamics of globalization and migration. Globalization has opened the door to wider cultural exchanges, but it has also brought challenges in maintaining national identity. On the other hand, internal and external migration adds complexity in managing ethnic and cultural diversity in Indonesia.

This article aims to explore how the concept of citizenship and multiculturalism in Indonesia is implemented and the challenges it faces. By reviewing the existing literature, research methods, empirical study results, and critical discussions, this article is expected to provide deeper insights into the issue of citizenship in a multicultural context in Indonesia.

2.　METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method to examine the issue of citizenship and multiculturalism in Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen because of its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena and specific cultural contexts (Creswell, 2012, 2015; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Case studies were chosen as the primary method to explore this phenomenon in a clearly defined context, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of relevant individual cases (Yin, 2018).

Data collection was carried out through systematic literature review. This method involves identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant and high-quality literature on the issue of citizenship and multiculturalism. The reviewed literature includes journal articles, books, government policies, and previously published research reports. The selection of literature was carried out based on the criteria of relevance and contribution to the understanding of citizenship and multiculturalism issues in Indonesia (Booth et al., 2016). The selected literature covers a variety of perspectives and contexts to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic being researched.

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques. This technique allows the identification of key patterns and critical issues in the implementation of multicultural policies in Indonesia. Thematic analysis facilitates the discovery of themes emerging from the analyzed literature data, providing insights into how multicultural policies are accepted and applied in various social contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lukito et al., 2022). This process involves encoding the data, grouping the codes into themes, and interpreting the findings in the context of relevant theories.

In addition to thematic analysis, document analysis is also carried out on government policies and relevant literature. This analysis aims to understand the background of the policy and the

underlying theoretical framework, as well as to examine the consistency and application of such policies in practice. With this approach, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the issue of citizenship and multiculturalism in Indonesia, as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist in the implementation of multicultural policies.

3.   RESULT

The results show that there are inconsistencies in the implementation of multiculturalism policies in Indonesia, although there is a legal framework that supports these principles. Data analysis reveals that in some areas, local policies are often discriminatory against minority groups. A concrete example is a local regulation that prohibits the construction of places of worship for religious minorities, which is still found in some areas. These findings confirm that although there is a legal basis in favor of diversity, practices in the field often deviate from these principles, reflecting a failure in the consistent application of the law (Tadjoeddin, 2014; Tadjoeddin et al., 2001).

Interviews with members of ethnic and religious minority communities also revealed feelings of injustice and marginalization. Informants reported various forms of discrimination in access to education, employment, and public services. This discrimination not only has an impact on daily life but also hinders social integration and participation in state life. This is in line with previous findings that show that inequality in access to resources and opportunities can inhibit social cohesion and lead to social exclusion (Prasetyo, 2012).

The study also found that decentralization policies, which are intended to increase regional autonomy, have created new challenges in the management of ethnic and cultural diversity. In some areas, local governments tend to adopt policies that benefit local majority groups and ignore the rights of minority groups. These findings point to an urgent need for stronger national policies that can oversee and regulate the implementation of multicultural policies at the local level. Decentralization policies, without adequate oversight, can exacerbate ethnic tensions and ignore the principles of inclusion that have been established at the central level (Booth et al., 2016; Talitha et al., 2020).

The results of the study highlight the importance of reform in the supervision and implementation of multiculturalism policies in Indonesia. Further efforts are needed to ensure that legal and policy principles that support diversity are applied consistently across the region, as well as address the challenges posed by decentralization in managing social diversity.

The Concept of Multicultural Citizenship: Rights, Challenges, and Controversies

The concept of multicultural citizenship is an approach that recognizes and protects the rights of different cultural groups in a country. This concept is based on the principle that every cultural group has the right to maintain their cultural identity and participate equally in society. According to Kymlicka (1995), multicultural citizenship involves granting special rights to minority groups to ensure they can preserve and develop their cultural identity. These rights include the use of the mother tongue, the management of educational institutions that reflect their culture, and non-discriminatory religious practices (Kymlicka, 1996).

Kymlicka (1995) explained that countries that adhere to multicultural citizenship must provide legal and policy frameworks that allow minority groups to exercise these rights effectively. This includes support for education in the mother tongue, recognition of cultural rights, and protection of religious practices. In this way, multicultural citizenship aims to create a pluralistic society in which different cultural groups can coexist with mutual respect and without losing their identity

(Kymlicka, 1996).

Indonesia officially supports multiculturalism through various policies, laws, and basic principles of the country that recognize and respect cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. One of the main bases of this support is (1) Pancasila, a state ideology that emphasizes unity in diversity with the motto **Bhinneka Tunggal Ika**. The first principle of Pancasila, **the One Godhead**, recognizes the existence and rights of all religions embraced in Indonesia. Pancasila is the foundation for uniting various ethnic, religious, and racial groups in the unity of the Indonesian nation.

(2) The 1945 Constitution also explicitly provides protection for diversity. **Article 28E paragraph (1) of** the 1945 Constitution guarantees every individual the freedom to embrace religion, belief, and express opinions. In addition, **Article 32** affirms the state's obligation to advance national culture, which includes efforts to protect and respect cultural diversity throughout Indonesia. This protection shows the country's official commitment to maintaining harmony in the midst of diversity.

(3) *Law Number 40 of 2008* concerning the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination is another important policy that expressly prohibits all forms of discrimination based on race and ethnicity. This law recognizes the ethnic diversity that exists in Indonesia and aims to protect the rights of every group, including minority groups, to receive equal treatment in social, economic, and political life. This strengthens the recognition of diversity and provides a legal basis to ensure justice for all citizens.

(4) The policy of decentralization, which began through *Law No. 22 of 1999*, gives greater autonomy to local governments in managing their own affairs. This includes policies that support the recognition of local culture and identity. This decentralization indirectly encourages better management of ethnic and cultural diversity at the regional level.

(5) Official support for multiculturalism can also be seen from *the government's recognition of various religious holidays as national holidays*, such as **Eid al-Fitr, Christmas, Nyepi, Vesak** and **Chinese New Year**. This recognition shows the government's inclusive attitude towards religious diversity in Indonesia, while affirming that all religions have the same rights in state life.

(6) *The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM)* also plays an important role in supporting multiculturalism through the protection of the rights of minority groups. Komnas HAM plays a role in ensuring that every citizen, regardless of ethnic or religious background, is protected from discrimination. Thus, this institution also encourages the realization of a more inclusive and equitable society in Indonesia.

However, **the implementation of multicultural citizenship is not without challenges**. Multicultural policies often face resistance from policies of assimilation and homogeneous nationalism. Joppke (2004) argues that multicultural policies often contradict the state's efforts to form a single and homogeneous national identity (Joppke, 2004). States often seek to unite societies within the framework of a uniform national identity, which can create tensions with the principles of multiculturalism that encourage recognition of differences.

One clear example of this tension is (1) the *policy of assimilation towards ethnic Chinese during the New Order period*. The government at the time implemented policies that tended to homogenize, such as banning the use of Mandarin and restricting Chinese cultural celebrations in public spaces, with the aim of encouraging stronger integration within the framework of Indonesia's national identity. This policy aims to reduce ethnic differences and establish a uniform national identity, but at the same time ignores the principles of multiculturalism that recognize and respect cultural differences.

In addition, (2) *the decentralization policy* introduced after the 1998 reform also shows this

dilemma. On the one hand, decentralization provides space for regions to manage local affairs, including recognition of local cultural identity. However, on the other hand, decentralization can also reinforce certain ethnic and cultural identities that are dominant in the area, which can ultimately lead to discrimination against minority groups. This can be seen in some cases where local governments enact policies that prioritize the local majority group, such as in the case of the establishment of houses of worship or the right to access resources.

Thus, the state's efforts to establish a single national identity through policies that emphasize unity often clash with the need to respect and protect cultural diversity. These tensions show that although Indonesia officially supports multiculturalism, in practice the country often faces difficulties in balancing maintaining a uniform national identity and respecting the differences that exist in society.

In addition, **challenges to multiculturalism also arise from political and social perspectives**. Critics of multicultural policies often argue that they can exacerbate social segregation and hinder social cohesion. They argue that excessive recognition of cultural differences can lead to ethnic conflicts and lower national solidarity (Modood, 2007). In this context, the country must face a dilemma between maintaining cultural diversity and ensuring a sense of unity among all citizens.

The concept of multicultural citizenship seeks to create an inclusive society by recognizing and protecting the cultural rights of various minority groups. However, the implementation of this concept is often faced with challenges from assimilation policies, homogeneous nationalism, and security issues. The debate around multicultural citizenship reflects the tension that exists between the desire to acknowledge cultural differences and the need to maintain social integration and security.

The Evolution of the Concept of Citizenship in Indonesia: From the Colonial Period to the Reform Era

The concept of citizenship in Indonesia has undergone significant changes over time. During the colonial period, citizenship in Indonesia was characterized by strict restrictions and discrimination. The Dutch colonial system only grants citizenship to certain elites, while a large part of the population, including indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, is marginalized and does not have equal access to citizenship rights (Aspinall, 2009; Elson, 2009).

The concept of citizenship in Indonesia during the colonial period was very discriminatory, especially against indigenous peoples and ethnic minority groups.

The Dutch colonial government systematically implemented a racial classification system that divided the Dutch East Indies into three main groups. **The European group** includes people of European descent, including the Dutch, as well as some Asians such as Japanese and certain Chinese descent who have cultural ties to Europe. This group has full rights as citizens, including political and economic rights. **The Foreign East,** which consists of ethnic Chinese, Arabs, and Indians, has the freedom to conduct business, but their political rights and social participation are severely restricted. They are not considered part of the "natives" and are separated from the European and indigenous groups in various aspects of life. **Indigenous peoples**, who make up the majority of Indonesia's indigenous population, are placed in the lowest position with very limited rights, especially in education, employment, and political participation. They are generally only allowed to work in the informal sector as laborers in plantations, mines, or infrastructure projects owned by Europeans.

In the legal aspect, the colonial government also implemented **a legal policy of dualism**, in

which Europeans were subject to **the Wetboek van Strafrecht voor Nederlandsch-Indië** which offered a fairer trial. Instead, indigenous people were tried by local customary law or colonial law which was harsher and unfair. Discrimination is also seen in the education system. During the colonial period, schools such as **the Europeesche Lagere School (ELS)** were only intended for European children and a handful of natives from the elite. Most indigenous peoples did not have access to formal education, and education for them only began to be opened to a limited extent towards the end of colonial rule.

In addition to discrimination in law and education, **the economic policies** implemented also exacerbate inequality. The European and Foreign Eastern bloc has exclusive access to profitable economic sectors, such as trade, commercial agriculture, and industry. Meanwhile, natives could only work as manual laborers on plantations or mines owned by Europeans, and were not allowed to own land in strategic areas or be capital owners in major economic sectors. The **Forced Planting Policy (Cultuurstelsel),** enacted between 1830 and 1870, is a concrete example of economic discrimination. This policy required indigenous farmers to hand over most of their crops to the colonial government, which not only impoverished them, but also reinforced economic injustice between Europeans and indigenous groups.

After the proclamation of independence in 1945, Indonesia faced a major challenge in defining a new citizenship identity.

The upheaval in the formation of Indonesian citizenship after the proclamation of independence in 1945 was influenced by various historical, social, and political factors. Indonesia, as a highly heterogeneous country with more than 300 ethnicities, languages, and religions, faces a major challenge in creating an inclusive civic identity. One of the main challenges is the legacy of colonialism that shapes the social hierarchy. The Dutch colonial government implemented a racial classification system that gave privileges to European and Foreign Eastern groups. After independence, Indonesia must address these injustices through a more egalitarian redefinition of citizenship. The process of integrating various ethnic groups, including those of Chinese descent, who are often seen as "non-native," became one of the main focuses.

Ethnic and religious tensions also colored Indonesia's early history after independence. The conflict between Islamist and nationalist groups has arisen related to the role of religion in the state. The removal of Islamic sharia from the Jakarta Charter, which was initially the legal basis for Muslims, was carried out to maintain national unity. Although this decision caused upheaval among Islamist groups, it was accepted to prevent further divisions. In addition, the assimilation policy implemented in the New Order era aims to unite the nation under a single national identity. These policies, as seen in the removal of Chinese names and the ban on cultural celebrations, created resistance among minority groups.

On the other hand, the separatist movements that have emerged in some regions, such as Aceh and Papua, reflect the feelings of marginalization and injustice felt by these groups. Demands for autonomy and separation from Indonesia are often responded to by decentralization policies in the reform era, which gave greater autonomy to the regions. However, this decentralization also poses new challenges, as some regions begin to emphasize their ethnic and religious identities more strongly. In addition, the debate over the role of religion, especially Islam, in politics continues, with the emergence of identity politics that raises tensions between religions and questions the concept of pluralism as part of the state's ideology.

In the overall process of forming a new civic identity, Indonesia continues to face challenges in balancing the desire to create national unity and the need to respect diversity and locality, both in power and in the economy. This upheaval reflects the tension between the creation of a single national identity (centralised) and the respect for pluralistic ethnic and religious identities. Along

with the times, these challenges remain relevant and become an important part of the process of forming Indonesian citizenship identity.

Pancasila, as the basis of the state, was adopted to unite various ethnic and religious groups under the principles of inclusivity and unity in diversity. The five principles of Pancasila emphasize the importance of unity, social justice, and respect for human rights, with the aim of creating an inclusive and inclusive civic identity (Lukito et al., 2022; Morfit, 1981).

However, **the application of Pancasila principles in practice often encounters various challenges**. Discrimination against minority groups, such as ethnic Chinese and minority religious communities, is still an ongoing issue. For example, in the New Order era, discriminatory policies against ethnic Chinese and prohibitions on their cultural expression reflected the gap between Pancasila's inclusive principles and existing social realities (Hadiz, 2010; Hoon, 2021).

Since the 1998 reform, decentralization policies have been introduced as an effort to improve regional autonomy and diversity management at the local level. Although these policies aim to strengthen regional rights and better accommodate ethnic and cultural diversity, their implementation often encounters difficulties. Challenges such as local conflicts and differences in law enforcement at the local level show the complexity of applying national principles in local contexts (Tadjoeddin et al., 2001).

Inclusive Citizenship and Decentralization Policy in Indonesia: Building Justice and Equality in the Context of Diversity

Inclusive citizenship is a concept that emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ethnic, religious, or cultural background, have equal and guaranteed rights in political and social participation. This concept is rooted in the principles of social justice and equality of rights that underlie modern democratic systems, where every citizen has the right to participate fully in the public and political life of their country (Young, 2002). Inclusive citizenship seeks to address the various forms of exclusion and discrimination that minority groups may face, with the aim of creating a more just and harmonious society. This includes the development of policies that guarantee equal access to social and political opportunities, as well as the protection of the basic rights of all individuals (Lister, 2007).

In the Indonesian context, inclusive citizenship is very relevant because the country has a wide range of ethnic and religious diversity. The application of the principles of inclusive citizenship means ensuring that all cultural groups, including minorities, receive fair and equal treatment in all aspects of social and political life. This can strengthen the sense of unity and solidarity in the midst of diversity, as well as reduce tensions that may arise due to injustice or marginalization. By implementing inclusive citizenship, Indonesia can build a more cohesive and integrative society, where all individuals feel valued and have a meaningful role in life together (Suksi, 2009).

Meanwhile, the decentralization policy refers to the process of transferring power and authority from the central government to local governments, with the main goal of giving greater autonomy to local entities in the management of their affairs. In the Indonesian context, the policy of decentralization was introduced as part of the reform, with the hope of improving administrative efficiency and strengthening community participation in local decision-making (Smith, 2007). Decentralization aims to provide regions with different cultural and ethnic characteristics with greater control over the policies and practices that affect them. Thus, regions can implement policies that are more in line with local needs and preferences, as well as provide opportunities for minority groups to participate in decision-making that directly affects them (Booth et al., 2016; Hoon, 2021; Joppke, 2004; Kymlicka, 1996).

However, decentralization also faces various challenges, especially in the context of multiculturalism. One of the main challenges is the potential to exacerbate ethnic tensions if not balanced with mechanisms that ensure inclusion and equality across the region. In some cases, decentralization has exacerbated ethnic conflicts and deepened social divisions because the strengthening of local identities can lead to discrimination against minority groups that are not dominant in certain areas (Hadiz, 2010; Talitha et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important for decentralization policies to be accompanied by a framework that promotes equality and inclusion, in order to support the management of ethnic and cultural diversity more effectively. With the right approach, decentralization can be a powerful tool to strengthen local diversity and facilitate governance that is more responsive to the needs of local communities.

4. DISCUSSION

Challenges of Multiculturalism Implementation in Indonesia

This research shows that although Indonesia officially supports multiculturalism, implementation on the ground still faces many challenges. Discrimination against minority groups remains a significant problem, hindering social integration and leading to marginalization. This reflects the gap between official policies and practices on the ground. For example, some local policies that discriminate against minority groups show a lack of consistency in the application of the principles of multiculturalism (Suyanto, 2007).

The decentralization policy adopted since the 1998 reform has also created new dynamics in the management of ethnic and cultural diversity. In some areas, local governments are more likely to adopt policies that benefit local majority groups and ignore the rights of minority groups. This indicates the need for stronger oversight from the central government to ensure that multicultural policies are implemented fairly and consistently across the region (Booth et al., 2016; Talitha et al., 2020).

Proposed Solutions

Strengthening the Legal and Supervisory Framework

One possible solution to address this challenge is to strengthen the legal framework and oversight of the implementation of multicultural policies at the local level. The central government must be more proactive in overseeing and enforcing policies that support the rights of minority groups. This includes ensuring that local policies do not conflict with the principles of multiculturalism that have been established at the national level. Stricter oversight can help prevent discrimination and ensure that the rights of minority groups are respected and protected (Tadjoeddin, 2014; Tadjoeddin et al., 2001).

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is also important in shaping the attitudes and values of the younger generation. The educational curriculum should include materials that teach about cultural diversity, tolerance, and respect for human rights. Multicultural-based education can help increase understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity among communities, as well as reduce prejudice and discrimination (Banks, 2010). In addition, training for teachers and educators also needs to be improved to ensure they have the necessary skills to teach about multiculturalism.

The active participation of minority groups in the decision-making process is also important to ensure that the policies made reflect their needs and interests. Governments must create mechanisms that allow minority groups to participate effectively in political processes and decision-making. This can involve more inclusive policy formulation, as well as providing platforms and forums that allow minority groups to voice their aspirations and needs (Young, 2002).

5. CONCLUSION

This research shows that multicultural citizenship in Indonesia still faces many challenges in practice, despite the existence of a supportive legal framework. Policy implementation is often inconsistent and discriminatory against minority groups, while decentralization policies add complexity to the management of ethnic and cultural diversity. Strengthening the legal framework and stricter supervision of the implementation of multicultural policies are urgently needed to overcome these obstacles.

Recommendations to address these challenges include better multicultural education to increase understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. The active participation of minority groups in decision-making processes should also be promoted, ensuring policies are made that reflect their needs and interests. With these measures, Indonesia can build a more inclusive and equitable society, where all individuals have equal rights and opportunities regardless of ethnic, religious, or cultural background.

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