



Political Negotiations in the Formulation of Indonesian Citizenship Regulations: A Historical Analysis Leading to Law No. 12 of 2006

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Jul 23, 2026

Revised Aug 29, 2026

Accepted Sep 20, 2026

Online First Sep 27, 2026

Keywords:

Citizenship
Deliberative Democracy
Negotiation
Politic
Regulation

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study examines the political negotiations involved in the formulation of Indonesian citizenship regulations and analyzes how deliberative processes shaped the construction and transformation of citizenship from the Old Order to the Reform Era.

Methodology: This study employed a qualitative approach using a historical-empirical method to examine political negotiations surrounding Indonesian citizenship regulations across historical periods. Data were collected through interviews and document analysis. The data were analyzed through data condensation, focusing on political arguments, actors, aspirations, and negotiations underlying changes in citizenship regulation.

Main Findings: The findings demonstrate that the formulation of Indonesian citizenship regulations involved deliberative processes characterized by the exchange of ideas, articulation of political aspirations, and negotiation among political actors. The meaning and regulation of citizenship changed significantly from the Old Order to the Reform Era, particularly through greater recognition of Indonesia's social diversity while maintaining principles of nationalism and national unity.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study offers a deliberative perspective on citizenship formation by demonstrating that citizenship regulations are not merely legal grants but products of political negotiation and historical processes. In the Indonesian context, citizenship is shaped through the interaction of competing political aspirations, national identity, diversity, nationalism, and the principle of unity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Citizenship is a core component defining the bond between a society and its state; it encompasses rights, obligations, and the recognition of an individual's political identity within a nation [1]-[3]. This underscores the unique position each citizen holds within the state—a position that becomes increasingly compelling in the global era, as hundreds of thousands of people move between nation-states [4], [5]. This reality sparks political negotiations—both among citizens and between citizens and the state—aimed at redefining the boundaries of citizenship beyond mere territoriality and affirming that citizenship is no longer necessarily singular [6]-[8].

This tendency to remain tethered to conventional mindsets (mediocrity) is clearly evident in the political struggle surrounding the legalization of dual citizenship in Indonesia [9]. The emerging dynamics reveal a conflict between a nationalistic view emphasizing absolute loyalty to the state and a cosmopolitan perspective that views citizenship as something that can be held in two places within an increasingly interconnected global community

[10], [11]. Consequently, the legislative political process has become the primary arena where various stakeholders—including the government, political parties, individuals in mixed marriages, and the diaspora—negotiate and compete to influence Indonesia's citizenship policy.

From a theoretical standpoint, political negotiation can be approached through two models: instrumental negotiation and deliberative negotiation [12], [13]. The first model is grounded in power-oriented exchanges and compromises, whereas the second—as proposed by Gutmann and Thompson [14]—views negotiation as an aspect of deliberative democracy that prioritizes procedural justice and equal representation for all parties. In the deliberative model, negotiation constitutes an effort of mutual validation and respect aimed at achieving a consensus—an agreement that is morally and rationally acceptable to all parties involved.

Within the framework of deliberative democracy [15]–[17], this ideal form of negotiation rests on two fundamental principles: inclusion and power equality. Inclusivity entails that all parties affected by a policy—including minority groups typically marginalized from formal political debates—can participate meaningfully in the negotiation process. Meanwhile, power equality demands a balancing of influence among negotiators to ensure that the resulting decision does not merely reflect the dominance of one party over another, but rather constitutes a compromise that is both ethically and politically legitimate [18]–[20]. This principle implies that the formulation of policy by the Indonesian legislature should involve the participation of parliamentarians, ruling parties, mixed-marriage communities, diaspora groups, and indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, deliberative negotiation theory conceptualizes the political paralysis that frequently plagues legislative bodies as a form of democratic regression [21]–[23]. Consequently, when parliament fails to reach an agreement because conflicts of interest are not brought to light through deliberation, the representative function and collective action capacity of democratic institutions are weakened [24], [25]. This is often evident in discussions regarding demands for legal recognition of dual citizenship in Indonesia, where the tension between national identity and international pressure frequently leads to legislative gridlock. Yet, within the deliberative democracy framework, negotiation should serve to transform conflict into consensus rather than deepen existing divisions.

Empirically, structural challenges distance Indonesia's legislative institutions from the practice of deliberative negotiation—ranging from the dominance of major political parties and unequal access to information regarding debated issues (alongside information and knowledge asymmetries) to a relatively weak culture of compromise [26], [27]. Nevertheless, certain dynamics suggest greater deliberative potential, particularly when the legislative process incorporates public consultation and academic input from experts, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. Interestingly, the drafting of Law Number 12 of 2006 concerning Citizenship involved deliberative interaction among the government, the House of Representatives (DPR), and various interest groups; yet, the final outcome left gaps regarding the representation of views on the legal recognition of dual citizenship in Indonesia.

Consequently, significant work remains to realize the legal recognition of dual citizenship and fulfill those deliberative ideals. Nevertheless, the ongoing negotiation process signals a gradual transition toward more deliberative democratic practices. Political negotiations within the legislature regarding the push for dual citizenship recognition serve as a forum for deliberative negotiation—aligning ideas of inclusion, equality, and collective action [28]–[31]. This demonstrates that deliberative negotiation is not merely a means to reach an agreement but an institution for political learning within a democracy; it is a process where differences are debated rationally and compromise is viewed not as something reprehensible, but as a positive, collaborative effort to achieve a mutually agreed-upon consensus.

Previous studies on Indonesian citizenship have mainly focused on legal, constitutional, migration, and diaspora perspectives, including single citizenship, mixed marriages, and dual citizenship. However, limited attention has been given to how citizenship regulations are shaped through political negotiations across historical periods, particularly from a deliberative democracy perspective. This gap highlights the need to examine citizenship regulation as a political process involving competing aspirations, arguments, and negotiations among state and non-state actors.

The novelty of this study lies in applying a deliberative perspective to the historical analysis of political negotiations leading to Law No. 12 of 2006. This approach is important amid increasing mobility, mixed marriages, diaspora engagement, and demands for dual citizenship, which challenge conventional understandings of citizenship while raising questions about nationalism, diversity, and national unity. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the political negotiations involved in the formulation of Indonesian citizenship regulations and analyze how deliberative processes shaped their development leading to Law No. 12 of 2006.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a socio-legal (juridico-empirical) method to examine prevailing legal provisions alongside actual practices within society [32]. The juridical-empirical approach was selected to analyze citizenship regulations not merely as legal norms, but also as products of political negotiation

and historical processes. Consequently, the research focuses on the interactions, political aspirations, and arguments of the actors involved in formulating the Indonesian citizenship regulations that culminated in Law Number 12 of 2006.

The researcher's presence is crucial to this study, as the researcher acts as the primary instrument. Data were collected through interviews and document analysis; informants were selected purposively based on their involvement, institutional positions, or knowledge regarding the formulation of citizenship regulations. Documentary sources included legislation, parliamentary documents, books, journals, institutional reports, and relevant media coverage.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing [33], [34]. Interview data and documents were summarized, coded, and categorized into themes related to political negotiation, deliberation, nationalism, national unity, diversity, and citizenship regulations. Information from interviews was cross-referenced with documentary sources to identify patterns and discrepancies across historical periods, and the findings were interpreted using citizenship theory and a deliberative democratic perspective. The study also acknowledges potential limitations regarding the possible incompleteness of documents; therefore, interview accounts were cross-verified with legislative sources and available documents to strengthen the credibility of the findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The politics of citizenship in Indonesia has a long and complex history, constantly caught in a tug-of-war between national values, social composition, and the influence of globalization [35], [36]. Since the dawn of independence, the issue of citizenship has been more than a mere administrative matter; it has been integral to a large-scale national political project—specifically regarding political recognition as part of the Indonesian nation versus exclusion from that citizenship status. This implies that the politics of citizenship in Indonesia—spanning from the colonial era to the “Reformasi” (Reform) era—should be viewed as an ongoing process of deliberative political negotiation, wherein state actors and social groups negotiate to reach agreements that reflect aspirations, justice, and identity.

The Dutch East Indies era implemented a citizenship system based on race and social status. Colonialism categorized the population in a top-down manner (Europeans, Foreign Orientals, and Natives), directly impacting their political and legal rights [37]. This social inequality helped shape a national consciousness that demanded equality in citizenship status [38]. From the perspective of deliberative democracy, this phenomenon illustrates how the colonial political system stifled inclusivity—not only due to the lack of deliberative space for affected groups (particularly the indigenous population) to voice their interests, but also because the established citizenship policies were unilateral and undemocratic.

Following the 1945 Proclamation, the nation's founders recognized the importance of citizenship as a fundamental element of the state. An early, ideologically charged space for political negotiation emerged during the drafting of Law Number 3 of 1946 concerning Indonesian Citizens and Residents. This process sparked a debate between proponents of the *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis* principles. Nationalist organizations generally supported *ius soli* as a means to build an open and inclusive national identity, whereas certain conservative factions preferred *ius sanguinis* to preserve ethnic identity and national unity [39]. This reflects a process of deliberative negotiation in which policymakers not only negotiated interests but also advanced arguments rooted in moral principles, colonial history, and visions for the nation's future.

From Honneth and Fraser [40] perspective, political processes that overlook the dimension of recognition can lead to distorted forms of justice, even if they appear formally egalitarian. Social justice must be understood as a combination of the fair distribution of resources and the recognition of the identities and dignity of marginalized social groups. During the initial formulation of citizenship policies, minority groups—such as ethnic Chinese—experienced dual marginalization. Economically, they were often associated with colonial and capitalist forces, while socially, they were not fully acknowledged as part of the Indonesian national identity [41]. This situation illustrates “symbolic subordination”—a form of injustice stemming not only from material inequality but also from the symbolic rejection of specific group identities. Honneth and Fraser [40] argues that political negotiations failing to acknowledge diverse identities do not fully uphold the principle of equal participation within the deliberative sphere.

Consequently, the 1946 Citizenship Law can be said to have emphasized the determination of who qualified as a citizen while failing to address the dimension of recognizing identity diversity. This resulted in a policy that created a form of conditional inclusion, wherein citizens were recognized only insofar as they met a singular standard of nationalism, rather than being acknowledged on the basis of equal rights and dignity.

Isin and Turner [42] add an important dimension to understanding these political negotiations. They argue that citizenship is not merely a legal status but also a social and political practice that is performative in nature. This implies that citizens are not just passive recipients of rights but active agents striving for a version of citizenship negotiated through political action. This example illustrates how, upon the founding of the Republic of

Indonesia, the Citizenship Law established boundaries for political membership, while social groups employed political negotiation to expand those boundaries beyond the initial definition. This suggests that the legislature serves as a space where various groups seek recognition, protection, and equal treatment.

Interestingly, Isin and Turner [42] argue that citizenship practices in postcolonial states tend to reflect what they term "disciplinary citizenship," wherein the state determines who is deemed worthy of recognition as a citizen based on nationalist ideology. In Indonesia, this was evident in the rejection of dual citizenship and the intense pressure for assimilation exerted on ethnic Chinese groups and *Peranakan* communities during the early years of independence; this effectively turned citizenship in post-independence Indonesia into an instrument of social control. This situation stands in stark contrast to the concept of "active citizenship" proposed by Isin and Turner [42], which views citizenship as a means of empowerment that enables and expands citizens' political participation.

Within the framework of deliberative democratic theory, Gutmann and Thompson [14] argue that the process of drafting citizenship legislation should serve as an inclusive space for public discourse, allowing all parties to present rational arguments free from the domination of power. Theoretically, the legislature serves as an arena for public argumentation—shaped by egalitarian communication—aimed at generating political legitimacy. However, in the actual post-colonial context, weak deliberative frameworks, prolonged political instability, and the legacy of coloniality remain obstacles to fostering meaningful discussion. Legislative negotiations often become the domain of elites and elitism, where considerations of justice and recognition fail to secure adequate space. This indicates that discussions regarding citizenship are frequently directed toward maintaining political stability rather than critically examining the meaning of civic justice for all societal groups.

Mansbridge [43] emphasize that deliberative negotiations possess legitimacy only when the stronger argument prevails, rather than when outcomes are shaped merely by power dynamics or simple compromise. In the Indonesian context, what occurs is a distorted form of deliberation; political decisions are shaped not by public rationality, but by the dominance of majoritarian logic and exclusionary nationalist sentiments. A significant shift occurred following the 1949 Round Table Conference (KMB), when an agreement between Indonesia and the Netherlands brought the issue of dual citizenship to the fore, particularly concerning the ethnic Chinese community. This situation placed Indonesia in a political identity dilemma, as the state sought to uphold national sovereignty without discriminating against citizens holding dual affiliations.

Within the framework of deliberative negotiation theory proposed by Mansbridge [43], this situation reflects a process of partial integrative compromise, wherein the state attempts to balance national interests with individual rights. The establishment of the 1955 Dual Citizenship Agreement between Indonesia and the People's Republic of China—and its subsequent implementation through Law No 2 of 1958 demonstrates a deliberative effort to manage diverse identities while maintaining national unity. Although its implementation was subsequently dominated by assimilationist policies, the agreement itself was the product of political negotiations involving diplomacy, the legislature, and ethnic-based interest groups.

Empirically, the dual citizenship agreement between Indonesia and the People's Republic of China proved short-lived. Political dynamics from the 1950s through the 1960s revealed an ideological polarization among nationalist, communist, and Islamist groups, transforming negotiations into a power struggle. Within the framework of deliberative democratic theory [43], this phase reflects a shift from deliberative to distributive negotiation, where policymaking became increasingly driven by political calculations and the marginalization of minority groups. When principles of inclusivity and power equality were disregarded, political negotiations lost their normative legitimacy. The dissolution of BAPERKI after 1965 serves as a clear example of the collapse of deliberative space in citizenship politics, as the issue of citizenship became highly politicized and increasingly linked to subversive ideologies.

With the advent of the New Order era, citizenship policy underwent strong centralization based on a paradigm of national identity homogenization. The state placed heavy emphasis on the principle of "single citizenship" and strictly prohibited dual citizenship [44]. In the context of the deliberative negotiation theory proposed by Mansbridge [43], this policy reflects a form of deliberative inertia—specifically, the failure of political institutions to accommodate diverse citizen aspirations and negotiate inclusive alternatives. This indicates that when legislative bodies lose their capacity to act collectively and equitably, the political process becomes less democratic and tends to produce exclusionary policies that suppress the plurality of identities.

Significant change only occurred following the 1998 (Reform Era), when the citizenship paradigm shifted toward broader recognition of human rights and public participation [45]. Law Number 12 of 2006 concerning Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia serves as a new legitimizing framework that demonstrates the revitalization of the deliberative space within the legislative body [46], [47]. The drafting of Law No. 12 of 2006 involved public consultations and dialogue conducted by diaspora organizations, academics, and civil society groups. Although, from the perspective of the Indonesian diaspora, the final outcome still limits Indonesian dual citizenship to children of mixed marriages, the process exhibited deliberative elements—namely, the involvement of non-state actors and the use of moral arguments regarding justice and inclusion.

Theoretical analysis of deliberative negotiation, as proposed by Gutmann and Thompson [14], indicates that the historical evolution of Indonesian citizenship reflects a shift from the dominance of power toward public rationality. From the colonial era through the New Order, political processes tended to be coercive and exclusive, with power dictating the terms of justice; however, in the post-reform era, negotiations regarding citizenship began to exhibit deliberative characteristics. This is reflected in greater openness to diverse arguments, broader consideration of universal values, and ongoing efforts to seek integrative solutions amidst a plurality of interests.

4. CONCLUSION

The history of Indonesian citizenship demonstrates that its formulation has been shaped by political negotiations among actors with different interests and aspirations. The findings show a gradual shift from domination-oriented negotiation toward processes involving dialogue, exchange of ideas, and recognition of social diversity. However, the formulation of Law No. 12 of 2006 did not fully realize the principles of inclusion and equality, particularly regarding demands for dual citizenship. These findings indicate the need for the DPR and government to strengthen public participation, representation, and deliberative dialogue in future citizenship policy. Such efforts are important to balance nationalism and national unity with recognition of Indonesia's social diversity and the realities of global mobility. Future research should examine contemporary political negotiations concerning dual citizenship, diaspora participation, and mixed marriages, including comparative studies of deliberative citizenship policies in other countries.

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