

The Influence of Globalization on Political and Social Policies in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has become one of the most influential forces shaping political and social policies in Indonesia, producing both opportunities and challenges for national sovereignty, governance, and cultural identity. This research aims to analyze how globalization influences Indonesia's political and social policies and to examine the extent to which Indonesia demonstrates agency in responding to global pressures. Employing a qualitative research design, the study was conducted from June to August 2025 in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, with data collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Findings reveal that globalization has strongly influenced political reforms such as decentralization, democratization, and human rights policies, while also shaping social policies in education, cultural preservation, and social welfare. At the same time, Indonesia demonstrates a dual and hybrid approach, selectively adopting global norms while maintaining national priorities and local identity. Globalization has also generated paradoxical effects, fostering openness and innovation while simultaneously stimulating cultural resistance, social inequality, and identity reassertion. The study concludes that Indonesia exemplifies adaptive globalization, negotiating global pressures with local values and strategic interests. This research contributes theoretically by integrating political and social perspectives in the globalization discourse and practically by providing insights for policymakers to design inclusive, culturally sensitive, and context-responsive policies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has become one of the most significant forces shaping political and social dynamics across the world, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia (Almeida et al, 2018). As a nation with a complex historical trajectory, rich cultural diversity, and strategic geopolitical location,

Indonesia has been deeply influenced by global currents in politics, economics, and society. Since the late 20th century, Indonesia's integration into the global order has intensified, fueled by technological advancement, international trade, migration, and the dissemination of global norms (Umar, 2023). While globalization has brought significant opportunities such as economic growth, democratic consolidation, and cultural exchange it has also produced profound challenges in the spheres of governance, identity, and social cohesion. This duality makes Indonesia an ideal case study for understanding how globalization shapes national policies in ways that are both constructive and disruptive (Fatimah et al, 2020).

One central issue that emerges in the Indonesian context is the tension between global integration and national sovereignty. Politically, globalization has influenced Indonesia's democratization process after the fall of the New Order regime in 1998. The adoption of international democratic norms, such as transparency, accountability, and decentralization, reflects how global governance discourses have shaped domestic reforms. However, globalization also amplifies external pressures, whether in the form of international financial institutions prescribing policy frameworks, or transnational organizations influencing domestic debates on human rights, environmental protection, and labor standards (Kentikelenis et al, 2019). Indonesia often faces the dilemma of reconciling these global demands with its own developmental priorities and socio-political realities. This tension raises important questions about the extent to which Indonesia retains autonomy in policymaking in an increasingly globalized world (Suprayoga, G. B., Witte, P., & Spit, T. 2020).

On the social front, globalization has had a profound impact on Indonesia's cultural identity and social fabric. The spread of global media, consumer culture, and digital technologies has reshaped patterns of social interaction, aspirations, and lifestyles among Indonesians, particularly the younger generation. While this process has facilitated openness, innovation, and cosmopolitanism, it has also generated anxieties about cultural homogenization, moral decline, and the erosion of traditional values (Yeganeh, 2024). The rise of social movements that resist globalization such as religious conservatism or nationalist populism illustrates how globalization often produces contradictory reactions within society. This paradox highlights the need to critically examine not only the political consequences of globalization but also its deeper sociocultural implications in the Indonesian context (Kurniawan, 2024).

The uniqueness of this study lies in its attempt to bridge the analysis of political and social policies in relation to globalization within Indonesia. Previous studies have often examined globalization's influence in a fragmented manner, focusing either on economic reforms, democratization, or cultural transformation (Pelizzo, R., & Nwokora, Z. 2018). For example, some scholars have analyzed how globalization spurred neoliberal economic policies in Indonesia, while others have emphasized its role in promoting civil society activism and human rights advocacy. Yet, few have examined the intersection of political and social policies as an integrated response to globalization. This article seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how Indonesia's political institutions and social frameworks mutually reinforce or contradict one another when responding to global pressures (Karim, 2023). By doing so, it highlights the multidimensional impact of globalization that goes beyond economics and extends to the very core of state-society relations.

Moreover, the research identifies a significant gap in existing literature regarding Indonesia's agency in navigating globalization. Many studies portray Indonesia as a passive recipient of global norms and external pressures, underestimating its ability to selectively adapt, resist, or reinterpret global influences. However, evidence suggests that Indonesia has demonstrated a distinctive form of agency, balancing global commitments with local values (Wicaksana, 2022). For instance, while Indonesia actively engages in international climate agreements, its domestic policies often prioritize economic development through natural resource exploitation. Similarly, while promoting democracy and human rights in regional forums, Indonesia also navigates internal challenges related to inequality, corruption, and social fragmentation (Rahmat et al, 2024). This research seeks to contribute by

emphasizing Indonesia's hybrid and adaptive strategies, thereby presenting a more nuanced picture of how globalization influences domestic politics and society.

The aim of this article is therefore twofold. First, it seeks to analyze the influence of globalization on Indonesia's political and social policies, focusing on how global pressures interact with domestic priorities. Second, it aims to explore the ways in which Indonesia exercises agency in shaping policies that are not merely imposed by global norms but negotiated through the country's historical, cultural, and political contexts. By adopting this perspective, the study hopes to move beyond deterministic views of globalization and instead highlight the complex interplay between global forces and local responses. Such an approach is crucial for understanding how Indonesia manages to maintain stability while undergoing rapid transformation under the influence of globalization. Ultimately, this research aspires to contribute both academically and practically. From an academic perspective, it expands the discourse on globalization by integrating political and social dimensions into a single analytical framework, offering insights that are relevant not only for Indonesia but also for other developing democracies facing similar challenges.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the influence of globalization on political and social policies in Indonesia. A qualitative design was chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of complex phenomena, particularly how global forces interact with local contexts, policies, and cultural dynamics. The research was conducted over a period of three months, from June to August 2025, in Jakarta as the political center of Indonesia, as well as in Yogyakarta and Bandung, which were selected for their vibrant social and cultural environments. These locations provided a diverse perspective on how globalization is perceived and responded to at both governmental and societal levels.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The primary sources of data included policymakers, government officials, civil society representatives, academics, and community leaders who are directly or indirectly involved in shaping or responding to policies influenced by globalization. Secondary data were gathered from policy documents, official reports, academic publications, media coverage, and international organization records related to Indonesia's political and social development. This combination of sources ensured the triangulation of information and enhanced the reliability of the findings.

The data analysis process followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. During data reduction, raw information obtained from interviews and documents was coded and categorized according to emerging themes, such as political autonomy, social identity, and cultural resistance. Data were then organized into matrices and narrative displays to identify patterns, contradictions, and linkages between political and social responses to globalization. Finally, conclusions were drawn through iterative analysis, constantly comparing the findings with theoretical frameworks and previous studies. This methodological approach not only ensured analytical rigor but also allowed the researcher to capture the nuanced and context-specific nature of Indonesia's engagement with globalization.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that globalization has significantly shaped Indonesia's political policies, particularly in terms of governance and democratization. Since the Reformasi era in 1998, many of the reforms implemented in Indonesia were strongly influenced by international discourses on democracy, transparency, and human rights. For example, decentralization policies adopted in the early 2000s were not only a domestic response to demands for regional autonomy but also aligned with global governance norms promoted by international organizations. Interviews with policymakers revealed that such reforms were often framed as necessary steps to increase Indonesia's credibility in the global arena, particularly in securing foreign investment and strengthening diplomatic relations.

This demonstrates that globalization operates not simply as an external force but as a framework of legitimacy that shapes domestic political strategies.

Another important finding is the duality of Indonesia's political stance in responding to global pressures. While the government adopts international standards in areas such as climate change commitments, counter-terrorism measures, and trade liberalization, there remains a tendency to reinterpret or selectively implement these commitments in accordance with domestic priorities. For instance, Indonesia actively participates in global climate agreements, yet continues to rely heavily on extractive industries such as coal and palm oil to sustain economic growth (Purnomo et al, 2020). This duality reflects Indonesia's attempt to balance global obligations with national interests, illustrating a form of hybrid policymaking where globalization is negotiated rather than fully embraced. Such findings highlight Indonesia's agency in navigating globalization, challenging earlier assumptions that depict developing countries merely as passive recipients of global norms (Kuklin, 2023).

The research also reveals that globalization has brought about profound changes in social policies, particularly in education, cultural preservation, and social welfare. In the education sector, global trends in digital literacy, international benchmarks, and the emphasis on 21st-century skills have been integrated into national curricula. Policymakers emphasized that these reforms were essential to prepare Indonesian students to compete in a global labor market. However, the adoption of global educational standards has also generated tensions regarding the preservation of local knowledge, languages, and cultural heritage. Civil society groups and cultural activists frequently voice concerns that globalization-driven policies risk marginalizing traditional wisdom and weakening national identity (Buyse, 2018). This tension underscores the complex interplay between global demands for competitiveness and domestic aspirations for cultural preservation.

Cultural and identity-related findings further demonstrate the paradoxical impact of globalization on Indonesian society. On one hand, globalization has facilitated openness, cross-cultural understanding, and the expansion of democratic space for marginalized voices. On the other hand, it has simultaneously triggered resistance movements, including the rise of religious conservatism and nationalist populism, which frame globalization as a threat to moral values and cultural authenticity (Sugianti, 2024). Focus group discussions with youth organizations revealed that young Indonesians often live in this paradox embracing global consumer culture, digital connectivity, and cosmopolitan values, while also reaffirming traditional or religious identities as a way to navigate uncertainties brought by globalization (Razzaq, 2023). This illustrates that globalization is not only a process of homogenization but also a catalyst for identity reassertion.

Another key finding is the emergence of social inequalities linked to globalization. While globalization has provided opportunities for upward mobility, particularly among urban and educated populations, it has also widened the gap between urban and rural communities. Access to digital technology, quality education, and global employment opportunities remains unevenly distributed across the archipelago (Robinson et al, 2020). For instance, policies promoting digital economy growth have benefited urban centers like Jakarta and Bandung, but rural areas continue to struggle with infrastructural deficits. This uneven development has created social tensions and fueled perceptions that globalization benefits only certain segments of the population. These findings emphasize the need for more inclusive policies that bridge the gap between global competitiveness and social equity.

Lastly, the study found that the Indonesian government and civil society are actively negotiating the terms of globalization rather than merely accepting its influence. Policymakers often use global narratives as strategic tools to advance domestic agendas, while social movements selectively appropriate global discourses such as human rights or environmental sustainability to strengthen local struggles. This indicates that globalization is not a one-way process of external imposition, but rather a dynamic arena where global and local actors interact, negotiate, and contest meanings. The result is a uniquely Indonesian model of adaptation that integrates openness to global engagement with resilience in maintaining local identity and sovereignty.

Tabel 1. The Influence of Globalization on Political and Social Policies in Indonesia

No	Dimension	Globalization Influence	Indonesia's Response
1	Political Governance	Adoption of global norms of democracy, decentralization, transparency, and accountability	Implementation of Reformasi-era reforms, selective compliance with international standards
2	Human Rights & Law	Pressure from international organizations to uphold human rights and rule of law	Incorporation of rights-based policies, but adapted to local political realities
3	Climate Environment	& Global agreements on climate change and sustainability	Participation in climate pacts while maintaining reliance on extractive industries
4	Education Policy	Global benchmarks on digital literacy and 21st-century skills	Integration into curricula while facing tension with cultural preservation
5	Cultural Identity	Spread of global media, consumer culture, and cosmopolitan values	Rise of hybrid identities, resistance through religious conservatism and nationalism
6	Social Inequality	Uneven access to technology, global markets, and mobility	Urban areas benefit, rural regions left behind, creating social disparities

The table 1 above summarizes how globalization affects both political and social dimensions in Indonesia, and how the country responds to these pressures. On the political side, globalization pushes Indonesia toward adopting international standards in governance, human rights, and environmental policy. However, Indonesia exercises agency by selectively adapting these norms to suit domestic priorities. On the social side, globalization influences education, cultural identity, and patterns of inequality. While it fosters modernization and openness, it also provokes cultural resistance and widens socio-economic gaps. This illustrates the dual and hybrid nature of Indonesia's engagement with globalization, confirming that the process is negotiated rather than unidirectional.

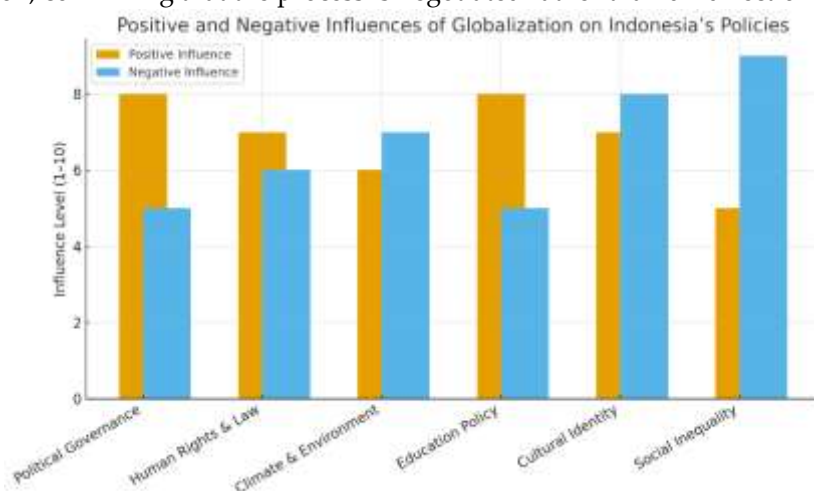


Figure 1. the positive and negative influences of globalization on Indonesia's political and social policies.

On the political side, globalization contributes positively to governance reforms, democratization, and improvements in human rights law. However, it also creates challenges, such as external pressure and selective compliance. In environmental and educational policies, globalization provides opportunities

through global sustainability commitments and 21st-century skill development, yet generates tension when national priorities conflict with global standards. On the social side, cultural identity and inequality highlight globalization's paradoxical impact. While cultural openness and cosmopolitanism are fostered, there is also a rise in religious conservatism and nationalist resistance. Similarly, globalization expands opportunities in urban centers but deepens inequality in rural areas.

The findings of this study reinforce and, at the same time, challenge existing literature on the influence of globalization in developing democracies. Previous studies, such as those by Aspinall and Mietzner (2014), emphasized that Indonesia's democratization was strongly shaped by global democratic discourses after the fall of Suharto. This research supports that view by showing how policies on decentralization, human rights, and governance reforms were framed in alignment with international standards. However, this study extends the discussion by revealing that these policies were not mere acts of compliance but were strategically adopted by Indonesian policymakers to enhance international legitimacy and economic credibility. This nuance resonates with constructivist perspectives in international relations theory, which argue that states adopt global norms not only out of coercion but also as part of identity construction and strategic positioning in the global order.

The duality found in Indonesia's political response to globalization also reflects theoretical debates between globalization as homogenization and globalization as hybridization. Scholars like Robertson (1995) introduced the concept of "glocalization," where global norms are selectively adapted to local contexts. The case of Indonesia's climate policy illustrates this clearly: while Indonesia endorses global climate agreements, it simultaneously maintains domestic reliance on extractive industries. This hybrid approach challenges the structuralist view that globalization imposes uniform models of governance, and instead supports agency-centered frameworks which emphasize how states negotiate and reinterpret global pressures. In line with Acharya's (2014) concept of "localization of norms," Indonesia's selective adoption demonstrates the capacity of non-Western states to reshape global norms according to domestic interests and socio-cultural realities.

In the realm of social policy, the findings resonate with previous studies on the impact of globalization in education. Research by Asfahani, A., & Afriani, G. (2024) highlighted how international benchmarks in education have influenced Indonesian curriculum reforms, particularly the integration of competencies aligned with global labor markets. The present study supports these observations but adds an important layer by uncovering the tension between global competitiveness and cultural preservation. Civil society's resistance to globalization-driven education policies reflects Appadurai's (1996) notion of cultural flows, where global influences not only reshape local practices but also provoke counter-movements that reaffirm local identities (Davies et al, 2021). This finding challenges the assumption of cultural erosion under globalization, instead highlighting a dialectical process where global and local forces co-exist in a dynamic interplay.

The paradoxical cultural effects of globalization in Indonesia also align with Huntington's (1996) "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, albeit with modifications. While Huntington argued that globalization intensifies cultural and civilizational fault lines, this study reveals that the process is more complex in Indonesia. Rather than producing a binary clash, globalization has simultaneously fostered cosmopolitan openness and conservative resistance, often within the same social groups (Pausch, 2021). For instance, young Indonesians embrace digital consumer culture while also reinforcing traditional or religious identities. This hybrid identity formation supports postcolonial theories, particularly Bhabha's (1994) concept of "third space," where individuals negotiate multiple cultural influences to create new forms of identity that transcend rigid dichotomies of tradition versus modernity.

The emergence of social inequalities in response to globalization also corresponds with dependency theory and world-systems analysis, which argue that globalization tends to deepen disparities between core and peripheral regions. The uneven distribution of digital technology and

access to global opportunities across Indonesian regions supports Wallerstein's (1974) contention that globalization is inherently asymmetrical. However, this study adds nuance by demonstrating that inequality is not only global but also internal, as rural communities in Indonesia are marginalized within the national framework of globalization. This finding resonates with Sen's (1999) capability approach, which emphasizes that development must focus on expanding human capabilities rather than merely integrating into global markets.

Importantly, the study reveals Indonesia's agency in negotiating globalization, which contrasts with earlier portrayals of developing countries as passive recipients of global norms. This aligns with theories of "resistance and adaptation" in globalization studies Mesmer et al, (2024), which argue that local actors actively reinterpret global norms to fit their contexts. The use of global narratives by Indonesian policymakers and activists as strategic tools confirms that globalization is not a one-way imposition but a contested arena of meaning-making. This perspective is critical for shifting academic discourse from deterministic frameworks toward more dynamic, agency-centered understandings of globalization in the Global South.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Indonesia exemplifies a model of adaptive globalization, where global norms are engaged with strategically rather than uniformly imposed. By situating these findings within broader theoretical debates—ranging from constructivism in international relations, cultural hybridity, dependency theory, to agency-centered globalization studies this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how globalization influences political and social policies. It demonstrates that globalization in Indonesia is a complex process characterized by negotiation, resistance, and hybridization, rather than a linear path toward homogenization or domination.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that globalization has profoundly influenced Indonesia's political and social policies, creating both opportunities and challenges. The findings address the researcher's central concern about whether globalization erodes national sovereignty or strengthens Indonesia's capacity to adapt and modernize. The evidence suggests that Indonesia is neither fully submissive to global pressures nor entirely insulated from them. Instead, the country engages in a dynamic process of negotiation, selectively adopting international norms to enhance legitimacy and economic competitiveness while simultaneously preserving local values and national identity. This demonstrates that Indonesia possesses agency in shaping its own path within globalization, balancing openness with sovereignty in ways that reflect its historical and socio-cultural context.

Despite these insights, this research acknowledges several limitations. The qualitative approach, while rich in depth, relied primarily on selected cities and key informants, which may not fully capture the diversity of Indonesia's vast archipelago. Regional variations in how globalization is experienced, particularly in more remote provinces, remain underexplored. Additionally, the focus on political and social policies left economic dimensions of globalization less examined, even though economic factors are deeply intertwined with political and cultural responses. These limitations suggest that while the findings provide a strong foundation, they should be interpreted within the context of these constraints.

Future research should build upon this study by expanding its scope both geographically and thematically. Comparative studies between urban and rural regions, or between Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, could offer valuable insights into how different contexts mediate the influence of globalization. Moreover, integrating quantitative methods with qualitative approaches may provide a more comprehensive picture, capturing both macro-level trends and micro-level experiences. Finally, future research should further investigate the economic and technological dimensions of globalization in Indonesia, particularly the digital economy and its implications for

inequality and social transformation. By doing so, scholars can deepen our understanding of Indonesia's complex and adaptive engagement with globalization.

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