

## Indonesian Diaspora's Preferences for Dual Citizenship: Opportunities and Challenges for National Resilience

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** diaspora, dual citizenship, national resilience.

The Indonesian diaspora, which is spread across various parts of the world, has great potential to support national development through remittances, investment, technology transfer, and strengthening nation branding. However, Indonesia's single citizenship policy creates a dilemma for the diaspora, forcing them to choose between Indonesian citizenship or the country of residence. This study aims to identify diaspora preferences for dual citizenship policies, analyze emerging opportunities and challenges, and develop recommendations for implementation strategies for this policy. The results of the study show that the dual citizenship policy can increase diaspora involvement in national development, strengthen economic stability, and support Indonesia's public diplomacy. However, the implementation of this policy requires mitigating risks such as double loyalty and legal conflicts through comprehensive regulatory design. With the right policies, the diaspora can become a strategic asset to support national resilience and the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045.



### Introduction

The diaspora is generally defined as a community of individuals who have left their home country to live in another country, either temporarily or permanently, but still maintain emotional, cultural, and social ties to their homeland (Asscher & Shiff, 2020). Initially, the term diaspora was often associated with traumatic experiences of deportation or forced migration, such as the Jewish diaspora. As migration studies have evolved, the concept of diaspora has expanded to include voluntary migration due to economic, educational, or career opportunities. The modern diaspora reflects a complex identity, where individuals have a dual connection between their country of origin and their country of residence.

In the era of globalization, the role of the diaspora has become increasingly significant. Globalization has increased international mobility and expanded cross-border connections, allowing the diaspora to play a greater role in global social, economic, and political dynamics. For example, diaspora communities often serve as bridges between their home and residential countries, facilitating the flow of investment, trade, and technology transfer. In addition, they also have an important role in introducing and promoting the culture of their home country in the international arena, known as cultural diplomacy or soft power (Adamson & Han, 2024). The diaspora also contributes through

remittances, namely remittances to the country of origin, which is one of the main sources of foreign exchange for many developing countries, including Indonesia.

However, the diaspora also faces challenges, especially related to citizenship policies. Many diasporas feel trapped in a dilemma between retaining the citizenship of their home country and adopting the citizenship of the country of residence. This dilemma, especially in the context of Indonesia, which adheres to a single citizenship policy, often reduces the potential contribution of the diaspora to national development.

Based on data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the number of Indonesian diaspora is estimated to reach around 8 million people spread across various parts of the world, with the largest concentration in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North America, and Western Europe. They come from a variety of backgrounds, including migrant workers, academics, professionals, entrepreneurs, and international students (Jazuli, 2017). The diaspora is not only a cultural asset but also a significant economic and social asset for the country.

The contribution of the diaspora to the national economy is very real through remittances, namely remittances to Indonesia. In 2019, remittances from the Indonesian diaspora were recorded at US\$11.7 billion, making it one of the main sources of foreign exchange for Indonesia (BPS, 2020). In addition to financial contributions, the diaspora also has a role in transferring knowledge, technology, and social capital necessary for national development. They often act as economic bridges, opening up investment opportunities and strengthening trade relations between Indonesia and their countries of residence.

In the aspect of national resilience, the role of the diaspora is not only limited to the economic aspect. The Diaspora also functions as a soft power agent that promotes Indonesian culture in the global arena, improving Indonesia's image and national branding. They facilitate public diplomacy and contribute to building an international network that can support Indonesia's political and social goals in the global arena.

However, the Indonesian diaspora faces significant challenges due to the single citizenship policy regulated by Law Number 12 of 2006. This policy often forces the diaspora to choose between retaining Indonesian citizenship or adopting the citizenship of the country of residence. This choice creates a dilemma known as "brain drain," where Indonesia loses valuable human resources due to existing policy limitations (Salim et al., 2022). Case examples such as Archandra Tahar, who lost her position as Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources due to her dual citizenship, highlight the potential for huge losses facing Indonesia.

The Indonesian diaspora as a global community spread across various countries has strategic potential in supporting national development and resilience through economic, social, and political contributions. However, the single citizenship policy in force in Indonesia creates a diaspora dilemma, forcing them to choose between retaining Indonesian citizenship or adopting citizenship of the country of residence. This condition risks weakening the diaspora's relationship with the homeland, limiting remittances, investment, and technology transfer that they can contribute.

Dual citizenship emerged as a strategic alternative to address this dilemma, offering legal flexibility that would allow the diaspora to maintain its attachment to Indonesia without losing its rights in other countries. In terms of national resilience, the diaspora involved in this policy can strengthen economic stability through remittances and investment, enrich public diplomacy by expanding soft power, and strengthen social cohesion through the preservation of cultural identity. However, its implementation requires risk management, including potential double loyalty and legal challenges, which must be addressed with a comprehensive and gradual policy approach.

This study aims to identify the preferences of the Indonesian diaspora towards the dual citizenship policy and the factors that influence it. In addition, the study analyzes opportunities such as increased remittances, investment, and strengthening soft power, as well as examining emerging challenges, including double loyalty and legal complexity. The results of this analysis will be used to develop recommendations for the implementation of dual citizenship policies that are to the needs of the diaspora and support Indonesia's national interests. With this goal, the dual citizenship policy is expected to be a strategic solution in utilizing the potential of the diaspora to strengthen national resilience.

## **Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze primary and secondary data relevant to the preference of the Indonesian diaspora towards dual citizenship policy. Primary data were obtained through surveys designed to measure diaspora preferences regarding these policies, as well as in-depth interviews with the diaspora and policymakers to explore a more comprehensive perspective. Secondary data were collected through a literature review, including an analysis of citizenship policies in Indonesia and comparisons with similar policies in other countries. The analysis process is carried out using thematic methods to identify patterns, relationships, and key issues from the collected data.

The analysis technique used in this study is thematic analysis. This approach was carried out by identifying the key themes of the data collected, such as the diaspora's preference for dual citizenship, the factors influencing their decisions, and their impact on national resilience. This analysis aims to explore relevant patterns and relationships so that it can provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues being studied.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Diaspora Preference for Dual Citizenship**

The Indonesian diaspora's preference for dual citizenship reflects their need to maintain strong ties with the homeland without losing the rights and opportunities offered by their country of residence. The diaspora faces the dilemma of a single citizenship policy in Indonesia, which requires them to choose between Indonesian citizenship or

citizenship of another country. This often limits their potential contribution to national development.

According to data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the Indonesian diaspora population is estimated to reach around 8 million people spread across various countries with various professions, such as entrepreneurs, researchers, students, professional workers, art workers, and so on (Wulansari et al., 2021). Remittances from the Indonesian diaspora are also one of the significant sources of foreign exchange for the national economy. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), remittances sent by Indonesian migrant workers reached US\$9.71 billion in 2022, an increase of 6.01% compared to the previous year (Bisnis.com, 2023). This number shows the significant contribution of the diaspora to the Indonesian economy. In addition, discussions about dual citizenship continue among governments and the public. The Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, recently discussed that the government should provide dual citizenship for talented diasporas, which is considered a breath of fresh air for dual citizenship aspirations.

The results of the study show that the Indonesian diaspora generally supports policies that allow them to maintain dual citizenship. This support reflects the diaspora's need to stay connected to their homeland, emotionally, culturally, and legally, without having to lose the rights and opportunities they have in their home countries. The dual citizenship policy is considered a strategic solution that can answer the dilemmas that the diaspora has been facing, especially caused by the single citizenship policy that applies in Indonesia.

One of the main reasons for support for the dual citizenship policy is the desire of the diaspora to continue to contribute to Indonesia's national development. The diaspora realizes that more flexible policies will make it easier for them to flow remittances, invest in Indonesia, and establish cross-border trade and business relationships. With dual citizenship, the potential for this financial contribution can increase because the diaspora will feel more legally secure and more tied to their homeland.

However, the diaspora's preference for dual citizenship is not only driven by economic reasons but also by strong emotional ties with Indonesia. Many diasporas want to maintain legal relations with their home country as a form of loyalty and love for the homeland. This bond is the main motivation for them to support policies that recognize their dual identity as global citizens as well as part of the Indonesian community.

While support for dual citizenship is strong, several challenges need to be addressed. Some of them are concerns about double loyalty, potential legal conflicts, and national security risks. However, the diaspora argues that these challenges can be managed through clear policy design and effective governance implementation. Countries such as India and the Philippines have successfully implemented similar policies by providing certain rights to the diaspora without compromising the basic principles of state sovereignty.

### **Dual Citizenship Policy Opportunities**

The dual citizenship policy can have a significant positive impact on the Indonesian economy, especially through increasing remittances, investment, and technology transfer from the Indonesian diaspora. Remittances, for example, have become one of the largest sources of foreign exchange for Indonesia. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), remittances sent by Indonesian migrant workers reached US\$9.71 billion in 2022, an increase of 6.01% compared to the previous year (Bisnis.com, 2023). With the dual citizenship policy, the diaspora will have stronger legal and emotional ties with the homeland, so they are more encouraged to increase this financial contribution through more stable and targeted remittances.

In terms of investment, the Indonesian diaspora has great potential to support national development. They can play a crucial role in increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) flows, especially in strategic sectors such as infrastructure, technology, and energy. This step is in line with efforts to strengthen the diaspora network for sustainable trade and investment. The dual citizenship policy provides administrative convenience for the diaspora to be involved in investment in the country without facing bureaucratic obstacles that are often obstacles.

In addition to financial contributions, the Indonesian diaspora also has an important role in technology transfer. Diaspora working in the technology and innovation sector abroad have knowledge and expertise that can be utilized to improve the competitiveness of the national industry. They can contribute through cross-border collaboration, training, or the establishment of technology-based businesses in Indonesia. This is in line with the government's expectation to make the diaspora a bridge in transferring technology and knowledge to support digital transformation and increase productivity. The Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, Hadi Tjahjanto, emphasized the importance of the role of the diaspora in encouraging innovation and increasing productivity in various fields (Valid News, 2024). In addition, former Vice President Ma'ruf Amin appealed to Indonesians abroad to deepen their knowledge for the advancement of Indonesia, especially in digital technology transformation. The dual citizenship policy will facilitate the involvement of the diaspora in this technology transfer by providing the sense of appreciation and flexibility needed to stay connected to the homeland.

The Indonesian diaspora plays a strategic role in strengthening Indonesia's national branding in the international arena. As individuals living abroad, they interact directly with the global community, becoming a representation of Indonesian culture, values, and identity. This role is increasingly recognized in various forums, such as the Congress of Indonesian Diaspora 7 (CID-7) which was held on August 12, 2023, with the theme "Empowering Indonesian Diaspora in the Strategy for Nation Branding towards Indonesia 2045" (SWA Magazine, 2023).

Through daily interactions, the diaspora introduces and promotes Indonesian culture, through culinary, art, language, and other traditions. Initiatives such as gastro diplomacy carried out by the diaspora in the United States, for example, have succeeded

in popularizing Indonesian specialties such as tempeh, which not only increases appreciation for Indonesian cuisine but also opens up trade and investment opportunities in the sector.

In addition, the diaspora also plays a role in promoting government programs such as "Wonderful Indonesia" and "Spice Up the World" carried out by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. They become informal ambassadors who disseminate positive information about Indonesia, attracting tourists, investors, and potential trading partners. For example, the Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN) Global is actively holding various activities aimed at improving Indonesia's image in the eyes of the world, including promoting Indonesian as an international language (SWA Magazine, 2023).

The Government of Indonesia recognizes the importance of the role of the diaspora in nation branding and encourages their active participation in various national development programs. By leveraging the diaspora's network and influence, Indonesia can strengthen its position on the global stage, achieving the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 as a sovereign, advanced, fair, and prosperous country (Zhuojun & Hualing, 2014).

### **Challenges and Risks**

The implementation of dual citizenship in Indonesia faces significant challenges related to dual loyalty and legal complexity. Dual loyalty raises concerns that individuals with dual citizenship may have divided allegiances between the two countries, which could affect their commitment to Indonesia's national interests. These concerns are rooted in the doctrine of "perpetual allegiance" which requires citizens to have a singular loyalty to their country (Oktavinanda, 2018).

Legal complexity arises from the differences in legal systems between Indonesia and other countries. Individuals with dual citizenship must comply with the laws of both countries, which can lead to conflicts of law, especially when it comes to obligations such as taxes and military service (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2020). For example, some countries impose global taxes on all of their citizens, including those living abroad, which can create a double tax burden for individuals with dual citizenship.

This complexity also includes political rights, where individuals with dual citizenship face restrictions on political participation in one or both countries. Some countries do not allow dual citizens to participate in elections or hold public office, which can limit a person's political rights and participation in government (Ramdhani & Novian, 2023).

The implementation of dual citizenship policies in Indonesia also faces challenges related to potential identity conflicts that can have an impact on national resilience. Individuals with dual citizenship often experience identity dilemmas, where their allegiance and attachment are divided between two countries. This situation can affect their sense of nationalism and commitment to Indonesia, which in turn has the potential to weaken social cohesion and national integration.

According to (Wardoyo & Meliala, 2024), ethnic and identity-based conflicts can threaten national integration, especially in a multiethnic society like Indonesia. This kind of conflict can trigger disintegration and weaken national resilience. In addition, the

phenomenon of identity politics that prioritizes ethnic or religious differences in political contestation can cause social polarization, which hurts political stability and national unity.

The national identity crisis, especially among the younger generation, is also a challenge in the era of globalization. The entry of foreign cultures and global information flows can cause the younger generation to lose their national identity and values, which are essential for national resilience (Manurung et al., 2022).

### **Implications for National Resilience**

To strengthen national resilience, especially in terms of political and economic stability, the Indonesian government has implemented various risk mitigation strategies designed to face increasingly complex global challenges. In the economic sector, Bank Indonesia (BI) plays a key role by optimizing the policy mix to maintain macroeconomic and financial system stability. These measures include controlling inflation through measurable monetary policy, stabilizing the rupiah exchange rate, and strengthening coordination with the government and other fiscal authorities. This step has proven effective, as seen in the decline in Indonesia's inflation in December 2023 recorded at 2.61% (year-on-year), down significantly from 5.51% in December 2022 (BI, 2024).

In addition, the government prioritizes strengthening the domestic market to reduce dependence on volatile global markets. Through the "Bangga Made-in-Indonesia" program and increasing the consumption of local products, people's purchasing power is maintained to remain stable. This strategy not only supports domestic economic growth but also strengthens the national economic structure by reducing the trade balance deficit. In the investment sector, the implementation of the Job Creation Law is the main foundation to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and accelerate economic transformation. In 2023, foreign investment reached more than Rp500 trillion, an increase of 15% compared to the previous year, showing investors' confidence in Indonesia's economic prospects (Bisnis.com, 2023).

The government also focuses on the food and energy sectors to strengthen national strategic resilience. Food security is improved through intensification and extensification of agriculture integrated with modern technology. In addition to meeting domestic needs, this step aims to make Indonesia an important player in the global food supply chain. In the energy sector, risk mitigation strategies include accelerating the green energy transition through the construction of large-scale solar power plant (PLTS) projects, while still utilizing fossil energy as a temporary support. This commitment is in line with the Net Zero Emission 2060 target and maintaining the stability of the national energy supply.

In the political field, stability is maintained through strengthening democratic institutions, holding transparent elections, and mitigating the risk of social conflicts. The government also anticipates the potential for social fragmentation by prioritizing a dialogue approach and involving all elements of society. Initiatives such as increasing digital literacy are important to fight disinformation and minimize the potential for polarization that can damage social cohesion. At the international level, Indonesia

strengthens strategic diplomacy through the G20 and ASEAN forums to secure favorable geopolitical positions.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that dual citizenship policy is a strategic solution that can overcome the dilemma of the diaspora in maintaining relations with the homeland while taking advantage of opportunities in the country where they live. The diaspora has great potential to contribute to various aspects of national development, including remittances, investment, technology transfer, and strengthening Indonesia's national branding. This policy can also strengthen national resilience through increasing economic stability, support for soft power, and preserving cultural identity.

The implementation of this policy is inseparable from challenges, such as the potential for double loyalty, legal conflicts, and the risk of identity conflicts. To manage these challenges, a comprehensive policy approach is needed, including clear regulatory design, transparent governance, and cross-sectoral coordination to ensure that these policies support the national interest. With the right policies, the diaspora can be a strategic asset in supporting Indonesia's vision as a sovereign, advanced, and globally competitive country. This research emphasizes the importance of the role of the diaspora in national development and the need for policy flexibility to maximize their contribution.



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