REFORMULATING PUBLIC POLICY THROUGH A LOCAL WISDOM APPROACH TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL INTOLERANCE

[1]Gede Wirata, [2] I Wayan Astawa, [3]Sri Sulandari

[1,2,3] Universitas Ngurah Rai.

Email: gedewirata17@gmail.com, astawa261@gmail.com, srisulandari@unr.ac.id

Abstract: This research addresses the challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia, focusing on the potential of integrating local wisdom into public policy as a solution. Despite the existing public policies aimed at managing social diversity, they have often been ineffective due to their one-size-fits-all approach, overlooking the specific cultural contexts of local communities. The study aims to explore how local wisdom can be incorporated into public policy to promote social harmony and resolve conflicts within a multicultural society. Using a library research method, the study analyzes primary data from literature on multiculturalism, local wisdom, and public policy, alongside secondary data from relevant academic works and case studies. The research finds that local wisdom offers valuable insights for resolving social tensions but faces barriers such as resistance from policymakers, legal conflicts, and insufficient resources. It concludes that integrating local wisdom into public policy requires collaboration between government and local communities, strong leadership, and sustained efforts. Such an approach could lead to more inclusive, culturally sensitive policies, fostering a more cohesive and resilient society.

Keywords (English): Public Policy Reformulation, Local Wisdom Approach, Multiculturalism and Social Intolerance.
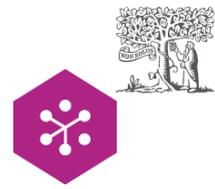
INTRODUCTION:

In the era of globalization, Indonesia faces significant challenges regarding its social diversity. The country is home to a multitude of ethnicities, religions, and cultures, all coexisting in a single nation. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable rise in social tensions that stem from intolerance and differing worldviews. This situation has been exacerbated by the widespread dissemination of information via social media platforms, which, instead of fostering understanding, often inflame divisions between groups. Intolerant actions are increasingly threatening social harmony, and the existing public policies have been inadequate in addressing these issues effectively. This reality highlights a critical need for a more nuanced and culturally rooted approach to public policy, one that is more responsive to the challenges posed by social diversity and intolerance. The challenge lies not only in managing diversity but in ensuring that public policies foster unity and peaceful coexistence among diverse groups within the society[1].

Various theories and frameworks within the realm of public policy have been developed to address the challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance. However, despite the substantial body of literature, many of these approaches focus primarily on institutional or structural solutions, often overlooking the local cultural contexts that influence social behavior. One commonly referenced theory is pluralism, which emphasizes the recognition of diversity and the coexistence of various groups within society. While pluralism encourages tolerance, in practice, it often falls short of alleviating social tensions, especially at the grassroots level. Previous studies have suggested that policies rooted in local culture and values are more likely to resonate with the community and address the specific issues arising from intolerance and ethnic division. However, such approaches are rarely applied in current public policy frameworks, which tend to rely on more abstract, top-down models that fail to account for local cultural dynamics. As a result, despite the availability of numerous theoretical models, there remains a gap in policy implementation that effectively addresses the unique challenges of social intolerance and multiculturalism in Indonesia[2].

This study aims to re-examine public policy formulation through the lens of local wisdom, exploring how this approach can be leveraged to address the ongoing challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia. The central focus of this research is to investigate how local wisdom, deeply embedded in Indonesia's diverse cultural traditions, can serve as a foundation for creating public policies that not only accommodate diversity but also foster social cohesion. This research will explore how integrating local cultural values into public policy can contribute to more holistic and contextually relevant solutions for managing social conflicts and ensuring peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society. The goal is to provide a theoretical and practical framework for policymakers to design more inclusive, culturally sensitive policies that reflect the specific needs and values of local communities[3].

The importance of this research stems from the fact that, despite the existence of various public policies aimed at managing social diversity, there has yet to be a comprehensive solution to address intolerance effectively. This research hypothesizes that a policy approach rooted in local wisdom can provide a more sustainable and culturally appropriate solution, one that is better accepted by diverse social groups. The core argument of this research is that, by incorporating local values and traditions, policymakers can foster greater community involvement and trust, thereby mitigating social tensions and enhancing the overall effectiveness of public policies. Moreover, this research will contribute to the development of policy theory by suggesting that the integration of local cultural elements into policy formulation can lead to more meaningful and lasting solutions. Therefore, the findings from this study will not only be crucial for informing the design of public policies that are more responsive to the challenges of multiculturalism and intolerance, but they will also offer valuable insights into the role of cultural wisdom in shaping effective governance. The ultimate aim is to promote policies that encourage social harmony and foster a resilient, united society in the face of increasing cultural and religious diversity[4].

METHODOLOGY:
Research Object

This study focuses on the real-world issue of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia, particularly examining how public policies have addressed, or failed to address, the challenges of fostering social harmony in a society marked by significant ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. The core issue addressed in this research is the rise of intolerance, discrimination, and social conflicts, often fueled by ethnic, religious, and cultural differences. These tensions have escalated in recent years, exacerbated by the rapid dissemination of information through digital platforms, which sometimes aggravate societal divisions. Existing public policies aimed at promoting social unity and addressing these tensions have been ineffective in many respects, with many still relying on top-down, one-size-fits-all approaches that overlook the contextual and culturally specific dynamics at play within local communities. This research aims to investigate the phenomenon of multicultural challenges and intolerance, and the role of public policy in addressing these issues. It further explores the potential for local wisdom to be integrated into policy frameworks to offer a more effective, community-driven approach to these problems[1].

Type of Research and Data Sources

The research is categorized as library research, which is a qualitative research method that involves reviewing and analyzing written documents and literature related to the research topic. This type of research relies heavily on existing sources to gain insights into the issues at hand. In this study, the primary data consist of relevant literature, such as academic books, journal articles, policy reports, research studies, and other scholarly works that discuss the themes of multiculturalism, social intolerance, and the formulation of public policies in Indonesia. These primary sources provide a broad understanding of how various policies have been applied to manage diversity and intolerance, and whether they have succeeded or failed in addressing the root causes. Additionally, secondary data will be gathered from related literature that discusses the concept of local wisdom—a key focus of the study—its role in public policy, and its potential to improve social cohesion and reduce intolerance. Secondary data will come from articles, government reports, and case studies that highlight successful applications of local wisdom in governance and social policy[5].

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the integration of multiculturalism theory and local wisdom theory. The study uses Will Kymlicka's Theory of Multiculturalism, which was first presented in his 1995 work *Multicultural Citizenship*. Kymlicka's theory advocates for the accommodation of cultural diversity within liberal democracies, emphasizing the recognition of minority cultures and the need for policies that support integration without forcing assimilation. According to Kymlicka, liberal democracies should ensure the protection of cultural rights for ethnic minorities, including the right to maintain their culture while also contributing to the broader
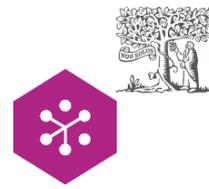
national identity. This theory will guide the research in understanding how existing policies either promote or hinder the integration of diverse cultures and how this impacts social intolerance. Furthermore, the Local Wisdom Theory, rooted in the idea that indigenous knowledge and traditional cultural practices can be used as a basis for governance, will be a core part of this research. The Local Wisdom Theory posits that local values, traditions, and practices that have been developed over generations can offer valuable insights into solving contemporary social problems. This theory will be employed to argue that incorporating local wisdom into public policy can lead to more contextually relevant and sustainable solutions to the issues of multiculturalism and social intolerance[6].

Research Process and Data Collection Techniques

The research process consists of a systematic review of available literature and scholarly works related to the study's focus on public policy, multiculturalism, and local wisdom. The data collection technique involves an extensive literature review, which is the process of collecting, reading, and analyzing books, articles, research papers, government reports, policy documents, and other related publications. This method allows the researcher to gather a broad range of perspectives on how social intolerance and multiculturalism are currently being addressed through public policies. Furthermore, this technique enables the identification of gaps in the literature regarding the integration of local wisdom into policymaking. The researcher will focus on a variety of sources to ensure the comprehensiveness of the data collection, including previous studies that have explored multicultural challenges in Indonesia, as well as international cases where local wisdom has been effectively integrated into public policy. The literature review will also focus on identifying key themes, best practices, and areas of contention related to public policy in the context of multiculturalism and social intolerance[7].

Data Analysis Technique

For data analysis, this study will employ content analysis as the primary technique. Content analysis involves systematically categorizing, interpreting, and analyzing the content of the literature to identify themes, patterns, and relationships within the data. This method allows the researcher to sift through large volumes of textual information to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the role of local wisdom in the reformulation of public policy. The analysis will focus on identifying how public policies have been shaped by multicultural and social intolerance issues, and how these policies may have been influenced by local cultural values and wisdom. Through content analysis, the researcher will also look for recurring patterns in the literature that suggest successful integration of local wisdom into policy and analyze whether these policies have contributed to resolving issues of social intolerance. The final analysis will provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between multiculturalism, local wisdom, and public policy, and offer insights into how public policies can be reshaped to address the challenges of a diverse society effectively. This technique will also help to identify the limitations of current policies and explore how the integration of local wisdom can offer practical solutions to improve social harmony and reduce intolerance[8].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The research findings reveal several important insights into the role of local wisdom in addressing the challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia. One of the primary findings is the ineffectiveness of existing public policies in addressing the root causes of social intolerance and conflict. Despite the government's efforts to promote social harmony and inclusivity, the existing policies have often failed to engage with the cultural and social realities that shape the experiences of diverse groups in Indonesia. National policies tend to focus on general, top-down solutions that do not adequately address the specific issues faced by local communities, especially in the context of Indonesia's complex ethnic, religious, and cultural landscape. This disconnect between national policies and local realities has resulted in a gap in policy effectiveness, where the policies do not fully resonate with or address the cultural dynamics at the grassroots level. Consequently, the research suggests that these policies are inadequate in mitigating social tensions or addressing the underlying causes of intolerance in the society[9].

Furthermore, the study highlights that local wisdom—which encompasses indigenous knowledge systems, traditional customs, community-based conflict resolution methods, and culturally specific governance practices—has proven to be an underutilized resource in addressing social issues in Indonesia. In many regions, traditional practices such as adat (customary law) and local rituals have been successful in resolving conflicts, promoting social cohesion, and fostering understanding between different ethnic and religious groups. These practices are deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of communities and are often seen as more legitimate and trustworthy than state-imposed solutions. The research shows that these culturally rooted practices offer an effective alternative to the often alienating and distant policies created at the national level. However, despite their success in community conflict resolution, local wisdom is often overlooked in formal policymaking processes, which prefer more formal and modern approaches. This oversight represents a missed opportunity to utilize a valuable tool for social harmony[10].

The study also uncovers significant barriers to the integration of local wisdom into public policy, particularly the lack of awareness and understanding among policymakers regarding the potential benefits of local wisdom. Many policymakers, particularly those at the national level, often view local wisdom as outdated or irrelevant to modern governance. This perception stems from a historical preference for legal frameworks and policies based on modern state-centric approaches that are often disconnected from the traditional knowledge systems of local communities. Additionally, there is often a lack of understanding of how local wisdom can contribute to fostering social cohesion and resolving conflicts. The research indicates that this lack of awareness is a major barrier to incorporating local wisdom into public policies, as many policymakers are not familiar with the positive outcomes that have been achieved through traditional practices in resolving community disputes and promoting peace.

Another critical barrier identified by the research is the disconnect between local communities and government institutions. Local leaders, such as traditional elders and community figures, often play a central role in managing social relations and resolving conflicts at the grassroots level. However, these leaders are not typically included in the policy formulation process, leading to a lack of integration between traditional knowledge and formal policymaking. This gap prevents the government from tapping into the potential of local wisdom to address social issues effectively. The research suggests that creating platforms for dialogue and collaboration between traditional leaders and government representatives would help bridge this divide and facilitate the inclusion of local wisdom in policymaking. By fostering communication and mutual understanding between these two groups, the government could better incorporate local knowledge into public policies, ensuring that they are more culturally relevant and effective.

Moreover, the research underscores the need for educational initiatives to raise awareness about the value of local wisdom in addressing social issues. The findings suggest that education plays a critical role in bridging the gap between traditional practices and modern governance. By educating policymakers, community leaders, and the general public about the value of local wisdom and its potential to resolve conflicts and promote social cohesion, the research believes that the acceptance of local wisdom in policy formulation can be improved. Educational programs should highlight successful case studies where local wisdom has been effectively used to address social intolerance, such as community-based conflict resolution and the promotion of inclusive practices. These programs could help shift the mindset of both policymakers and the public, leading to greater recognition of the importance of cultural traditions in policymaking.

In addition to education, the study also highlights the importance of community empowerment in the process of policy reformulation. Local communities must be empowered to advocate for their cultural practices and knowledge to be integrated into public policies. The research shows that when communities are given a voice in the policymaking process, they are more likely to support and actively engage with the policies that are designed to address their needs. This process of empowerment would also increase the likelihood that local wisdom is viewed as a legitimate and valuable source of knowledge. Empowering local communities can also strengthen the relationship between the government and the people, fostering trust and cooperation, which are crucial for the success of any policy.

The study also found that the decentralization of decision-making could significantly enhance the integration of local wisdom into public policy. By decentralizing policy decisions and allowing local governments more autonomy in addressing the needs of their communities, policies can be tailored to the specific cultural contexts of different regions. This would enable local communities to draw on their traditional knowledge systems and cultural values to shape policies that are more effective in promoting social harmony and addressing intolerance. The research indicates that decentralization can empower local leaders and communities to actively participate in policymaking, ensuring that the policies reflect the unique needs and cultural values of their populations. This, in turn, can lead to more effective, locally relevant policies that foster greater social cohesion.

The research further emphasizes that integrating local wisdom into public policy could also contribute to community resilience. Local wisdom, by fostering stronger social bonds and a sense of belonging, can help communities better cope with social challenges, including conflicts and tensions. The study found that communities that practice local conflict resolution methods and uphold traditional values often display a higher degree of resilience in times of crisis. This resilience is critical in mitigating the effects of social intolerance, as it strengthens community networks and fosters mutual respect among different social and ethnic groups. By incorporating these elements into public policy, the government can create policies that not only address immediate issues but also contribute to long-term social stability and cohesion.

Finally, the research suggests that integrating local wisdom into public policy could lead to a more inclusive and harmonious society. By acknowledging and incorporating the cultural diversity of Indonesia into public policies, the government can create an environment where all groups, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or cultural background, feel valued and included. The study argues that public policies that reflect the values and traditions of local communities are more likely to be accepted by those communities, leading to greater social cohesion and reduced intolerance. Ultimately, the research concludes that the inclusion of local wisdom in public policy is a critical step toward fostering a more inclusive, stable, and resilient society, capable of addressing the challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia.

Discussion
Implications of Findings for Public Policy

The findings of this research have profound implications for the formulation of public policy in Indonesia, particularly with regard to how policymakers approach diversity and multiculturalism. One of the most significant implications is the necessity of shifting the focus from policies that promote assimilation to those that embrace and celebrate the diverse cultural landscape of Indonesia. Historically, many Indonesian policies have emphasized the integration of minority groups into the mainstream culture, often with the underlying assumption that this would lead to greater unity and social harmony. However, the research indicates that such assimilationist approaches have often failed to address the root causes of social intolerance. Instead of attempting to mold diverse communities into a singular national identity, policies should be reoriented to respect and nurture the diverse cultural identities within the country. This would involve recognizing the value of local wisdom—the indigenous knowledge and practices that have long been part of Indonesia's cultural fabric—as a resource for resolving conflicts and building social cohesion.

The research also highlights that current policies, while well-intentioned, often overlook the importance of integrating local wisdom into the policy-making process. Local wisdom, which includes traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, adat law (customary law), and indigenous cultural practices, offers valuable tools for fostering peace and cooperation among diverse communities. By incorporating these traditional practices into public policy, the government can create more contextually relevant and culturally sensitive policies that resonate with local

communities. The integration of local wisdom can help bridge the gap between the government's top-down policies and the grassroots realities of local populations. When policies align with the values and norms of local communities, they are more likely to be accepted and supported, leading to more effective implementation and long-term social harmony. Therefore, the research suggests that a more inclusive and culturally aware policy framework is needed—one that draws on the strengths of local traditions to enhance the broader goal of social cohesion.

Another key implication of the research is the need for a fundamental change in mindset among policymakers. The current approach to governance in Indonesia often prioritizes efficiency and uniformity, which can marginalize diverse cultural practices and identities. Policymakers need to adopt a more open-minded approach that values diversity as an asset rather than a challenge. Emphasizing community-based approaches to governance would allow for greater local involvement in decision-making processes. Local communities are best positioned to understand their own challenges and strengths, and their involvement in policy formulation would lead to more effective and sustainable solutions. This shift requires policymakers to move away from a one-size-fits-all model and to adopt a more flexible and inclusive approach that recognizes the complexity of Indonesia's multicultural society. Such an approach would not only foster social harmony but also promote the development of policies that are better suited to the specific needs of different communities.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that public policies should be designed to encourage the celebration of cultural diversity, rather than the uniform integration of all groups into a dominant culture. Policies that encourage the recognition and preservation of diverse cultural identities can create a more inclusive and cohesive society. This can be achieved by supporting cultural initiatives, promoting multilingualism, and ensuring that indigenous cultural practices are integrated into the national discourse. By making cultural diversity a source of national pride, Indonesia can move away from divisive practices and instead foster a sense of unity in diversity. The research emphasizes that celebrating cultural differences, rather than attempting to erase them, can significantly reduce social intolerance and foster mutual respect among different ethnic and religious groups. A policy shift towards cultural celebration would promote not only social harmony but also national identity, based on the recognition of diverse cultural contributions.

Finally, the research emphasizes the long-term benefits of such a policy shift. Embracing diversity and incorporating local wisdom into public policy will contribute to the long-term stability and resilience of Indonesian society. Policies that foster inclusivity and cultural celebration can mitigate the risks of social fragmentation and intolerance, ensuring that all communities feel valued and heard. Moreover, the focus on local wisdom can strengthen community ties and promote grassroots efforts to resolve conflicts. As communities become more involved in policy discussions and solutions, the trust between local populations and the government will deepen, contributing to a more resilient and unified society. By embracing these inclusive, community-driven approaches, Indonesia can move towards a future where multiculturalism is not just tolerated but celebrated, ensuring that social intolerance is addressed and overcome through policies that are culturally sensitive and locally relevant.
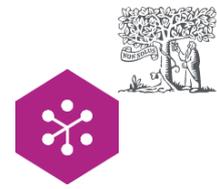
Table 3 Key Policy Implications for Diversity and Multiculturalism in Indonesia

Policy Implication	Current Approach & Limitations	Recommended Shift & Benefits
Embrace Diversity over Assimilation	Promotes integration into mainstream culture; fails to address intolerance roots.	Celebrate cultural identities; fosters unity in diversity, reduces social fragmentation.
Integrate Local Wisdom	Overlooks traditional practices (e.g., adat law, conflict resolution).	Incorporate indigenous knowledge into policies; enhances cultural sensitivity and acceptance.
Change Policymaker Mindset	Prioritizes uniformity/efficiency; marginalizes local practices.	Adopt inclusive, community-based governance; builds trust and sustainable solutions.
Celebrate Cultural Diversity	Uniform integration into dominant culture.	Support initiatives, multilingualism, preservation; promotes mutual respect and national pride.
Long-term Societal Benefits	Top-down, one-size-fits-all models.	Inclusive policies ensure resilience, harmony, and grassroots conflict resolution.

The Role of Local Wisdom in Bridging Gaps

Local wisdom has been an integral part of Indonesian culture for centuries, reflecting the country's rich diversity of ethnic groups, languages, traditions, and belief systems. Each community has developed its own forms of local knowledge, based on long-standing traditions and practices that have been passed down through generations. These local customs, which include adat (customary law), communal decision-making, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, are deeply embedded in the social fabric of Indonesia. Despite their importance and effectiveness in maintaining social cohesion, local wisdom has often been overlooked or sidelined in favor of more formal, centralized, and national-level policies that do not always align with the specific cultural and social dynamics of local communities. This neglect of local wisdom in policy-making has led to a disconnect between the national government and the people, resulting in policies that are sometimes seen as distant, irrelevant, or unsuitable for the needs of local populations.

The research emphasizes that local wisdom offers a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between national policies and the specific needs of local communities. By integrating local knowledge into public policy, the government can create policies that are more grounded in the cultural values, traditions, and social structures of the people they are meant to serve. This integration is not only about recognizing the value of indigenous knowledge but also about empowering communities to participate more actively in the policymaking process. When local wisdom is included in policy decisions, communities are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the policies that affect them, leading to a higher degree of acceptance and compliance. This approach ensures that public policies are not merely imposed from the top down but are instead co-created with the input and collaboration of the local communities they are meant to support.

Additionally, integrating local wisdom into public policy can help mitigate conflicts and promote social harmony in Indonesia, particularly in regions with diverse ethnic and religious groups. Local wisdom often includes traditional conflict resolution methods that emphasize dialogue, reconciliation, and compromise, which can be particularly effective in addressing tensions between different groups. These methods, which have been honed over centuries, are deeply rooted in the cultural values of respect, cooperation, and unity. By incorporating these approaches into public policy, the government can create a more inclusive and respectful society, where conflicts are resolved peacefully and without violence. Furthermore, local wisdom encourages mutual understanding and tolerance among different groups by highlighting common values and fostering empathy. This cultural grounding in conflict resolution is essential in a multicultural society like Indonesia, where tensions arising from differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture are common.

Another significant benefit of integrating local wisdom into public policy is the potential to strengthen community resilience, particularly in times of social or political unrest. Traditional practices of community organization and governance are often designed to promote unity and collective action in the face of adversity. During times of crisis—whether political, economic, or social—communities with strong local wisdom-based systems are often better equipped to handle challenges and recover more quickly. Local wisdom provides a sense of stability and continuity, as it is rooted in the everyday lives of the people. In many cases, these systems of local governance have proven to be more adaptable and flexible than top-down national policies, especially when it comes to resolving disputes, managing resources, or coordinating relief efforts. By incorporating these traditional methods into public policy, the government can enhance the resilience of local communities, enabling them to face challenges with greater solidarity and strength.

The integration of local wisdom into public policy has the potential to transform governance in Indonesia. By aligning national policies with the cultural values and practices of local communities, the government can create policies that are not only more relevant and accepted but also more effective in promoting social harmony and community resilience. This approach recognizes the importance of preserving and utilizing indigenous knowledge as a key resource in addressing the challenges of multiculturalism, social intolerance, and community development. As the research suggests, local wisdom is not just a cultural asset but a powerful tool that can strengthen the fabric of Indonesian society, fostering unity, peace, and resilience in an increasingly complex and diverse world. Therefore, the government should actively work to incorporate local wisdom into the policymaking process, ensuring that public policies are more inclusive, sustainable, and reflective of the country's rich cultural heritage.

Image 1, the process of integrating local wisdom into public policy

The diagram illustrates the process of integrating local wisdom into public policy and its impact on fostering social harmony, community resilience, and multicultural understanding in Indonesia.

1. Local Wisdom: The core of the diagram begins with local wisdom, representing traditional knowledge, customs, and indigenous practices such as adat (customary law) and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms. This knowledge, rooted in the cultural values and social structures of local communities, has been historically passed down through generations.

2. Policy Frameworks: The diagram shows how local wisdom can be integrated into national policies, ensuring that public policies are more contextually relevant and culturally sensitive. This process helps create policies that resonate with local communities, empowering them to actively participate in the policymaking process.

3. Social Cohesion: By incorporating local wisdom into policy, social cohesion is enhanced. The diagram emphasizes that traditional conflict resolution methods, such as dialogue and reconciliation, are highly effective in mitigating tensions between different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. This fosters greater mutual understanding and tolerance among communities.

4. Community Resilience: The diagram also highlights the role of local wisdom in strengthening community resilience, especially during times of crisis or political unrest. Communities that practice traditional methods of organization and governance are often more adaptable and better equipped to face challenges and recover more quickly.

5. Cultural Integration in Governance: The final stage of the diagram showcases how integrating local wisdom into governance reforms can transform the effectiveness of public policy, making it more inclusive, sustainable, and reflective of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage. This approach contributes to a more resilient and peaceful society, ultimately enhancing national unity and stability.

Moving Beyond Top-Down Approaches

The research highlights the necessity of a fundamental shift in policy formulation to effectively address the persistent challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia. Over the years, Indonesia's public policies have predominantly followed top-down approaches, where decisions are made at the central level and implemented across the nation without much local involvement. This method often fails to acknowledge the complexity and deep-rooted cultural dynamics that shape social divisions. Multicultural challenges, such as intolerance between ethnic and religious groups, require nuanced approaches that go beyond simple administrative measures. These challenges are rooted in local cultures, values, and social practices, which are frequently overlooked by national policies. Therefore, a shift towards more inclusive policymaking is essential to address the real issues that affect the communities on the ground.

The traditional top-down approach to policymaking tends to impose solutions that do not resonate with or effectively address the local context. Such policies are often designed with a one-size-fits-all mindset, which fails to consider the rich diversity of cultures, traditions, and social norms that exist across Indonesia's provinces. This disconnect between national policies and local needs has led to a lack of community engagement and has often resulted in policies that are either ineffective or rejected by the very people they are meant to serve. For instance, policies that aim to integrate different cultural groups or reduce social intolerance may be met with resistance when they do not align with the local values or traditional ways of life. This highlights the need for a more participatory and culturally sensitive approach to policymaking.

To ensure that policies are both effective and widely accepted, the research suggests adopting a more participatory approach that actively involves local communities in the policymaking process. By including the voices of local leaders, community members, and traditional figures, policymakers can ensure that the cultural knowledge and values of local populations are incorporated into policy decisions. This participatory process would enable policies to be more reflective of the needs and aspirations of the communities they aim to serve. Additionally, involving local communities in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and agency, making it more likely that these communities will support and adhere to the policies that affect them. The study emphasizes that community-based solutions are often more sustainable and effective because they are grounded in the lived experiences and traditions of the people who will implement and benefit from them.

Moreover, the research points to the importance of decentralization in governance as a critical component of effective policy reform. Decentralization allows for greater local autonomy and empowers communities to have more control over the policies that directly impact their lives. By delegating decision-making powers to regional governments and local authorities, the state can ensure that policies are tailored to the specific needs of diverse communities. Decentralization also enables more efficient resource allocation, as local governments have a better understanding of the unique challenges faced by their populations. With greater authority, local governments can
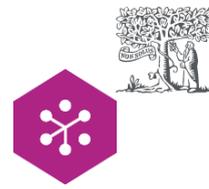
implement policies that respect the cultural diversity of their regions and are better suited to address the complexities of multiculturalism and social intolerance. In this way, decentralization fosters a governance structure that is more responsive, inclusive, and adaptable to the needs of the people.

The study concludes that by embracing a more inclusive and decentralized approach to policymaking, Indonesia can create a more harmonious and cohesive society. Policies that are designed with local input and respect for cultural diversity are more likely to address the root causes of intolerance and foster long-term social stability. Local wisdom, traditions, and cultural practices can provide valuable insights into creating policies that are both culturally sensitive and effective in promoting social integration. As such, the future of Indonesia's public policy should focus not only on economic development but also on cultural inclusivity and social harmony, ensuring that every community, regardless of their background, feels valued and empowered in the policymaking process.

Policy Recommendations for Greater Inclusivity

Based on the findings of this study, several policy recommendations are proposed to address the challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia. One of the most critical recommendations is for policymakers to create mechanisms for dialogue between traditional leaders and government officials. The study found that local wisdom, which includes indigenous knowledge and culturally specific practices, plays a crucial role in promoting social harmony and resolving conflicts at the community level. However, the integration of this wisdom into public policy has been limited due to a lack of communication between traditional leaders and the government. To bridge this gap, policymakers should establish formal and informal platforms that facilitate continuous dialogue between these two groups. These platforms could allow for the exchange of ideas, promote mutual understanding, and ensure that public policies reflect the values and needs of local communities. By creating such dialogue mechanisms, policymakers can better incorporate culturally relevant solutions into national policies, making them more effective and widely accepted.

Another essential recommendation is to develop education programs aimed at raising awareness about the value of local wisdom and its potential role in fostering social cohesion and reducing intolerance. The research revealed that a significant barrier to integrating local wisdom into public policy is the lack of awareness among both policymakers and the general public about its potential benefits. These educational programs should focus on illustrating the positive impact of local wisdom on social harmony and conflict resolution, using real-world examples and successful case studies from local communities. The programs should target not only government officials but also citizens at large, as increasing the public's understanding of their own cultural heritage can help build pride and strengthen community ties. These programs could be delivered through various platforms, including workshops, seminars, and community outreach initiatives, and should highlight the ways in which local wisdom can contribute to long-term peace and unity.

A third recommendation is for the government to prioritize the decentralization of decision-making processes. Currently, decision-making in Indonesia tends to be highly centralized, with significant power vested in national and regional authorities. This structure often limits the ability of local communities to influence policies that directly affect their lives. The study suggests that decentralization would allow local governments and communities to have a more significant say in the policies that are implemented in their regions, enabling policies that are more tailored to the cultural and social needs of these communities. Empowering local communities through decentralized decision-making can also increase the sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of these policies. Furthermore, local communities are better equipped to address their unique challenges, including issues related to multiculturalism and social intolerance, by drawing on their cultural practices and knowledge systems.

In addition to decentralization, the research recommends that the government provide incentives for local communities to preserve and share their cultural traditions. Local wisdom is often passed down through generations, but with the pressures of modernization, many traditional practices are at risk of being lost. The government should create policies that encourage the preservation and sharing of these cultural practices, whether through financial incentives, recognition programs, or community-driven initiatives. For example, local traditions and indigenous knowledge can be supported through cultural heritage grants or the establishment of cultural preservation programs. Encouraging communities to maintain and celebrate their cultural traditions will not only help preserve Indonesia's rich cultural diversity but also strengthen the social fabric, as it fosters a sense of pride and belonging among community members. Additionally, the preservation of cultural traditions will enable local communities to draw upon their cultural resources when dealing with issues such as social intolerance, thereby contributing to a more inclusive society.

Finally, the research suggests that the government should integrate these recommendations into a broader national strategy for multiculturalism and social harmony. While each of the recommendations is valuable on its own, their combined implementation could significantly contribute to building a more inclusive, harmonious society. This national strategy should be developed collaboratively, with input from both government representatives and local communities, ensuring that it reflects the diverse needs of the population. The government could also work with academic institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners to monitor the progress of these initiatives and assess their effectiveness in reducing social intolerance. By adopting a holistic and integrated approach to policy reform, the government can create a framework that promotes inclusivity, embraces cultural diversity, and strengthens social cohesion at all levels of society. This comprehensive strategy will be essential in addressing the ongoing challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance in Indonesia.

Challenges in Implementing Local Wisdom-Based Policies

While the integration of local wisdom into public policy offers numerous benefits, such as fostering social cohesion and providing contextually relevant solutions to community problems, the research
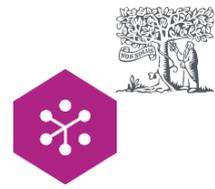
also highlights several significant challenges that may arise during the implementation of such policies. One of the main challenges is the resistance to change among policymakers, particularly those entrenched in existing, conventional policy frameworks. Policymakers often favor established models and may be reluctant to adopt new approaches that challenge the status quo, particularly if these approaches deviate from the norms of modern governance or may require rethinking established legal and institutional structures. This resistance may stem from a variety of factors, including concerns about the feasibility of integrating traditional practices into modern systems, fears of political backlash, or simply a lack of understanding of how local wisdom can be applied effectively within the contemporary policy landscape.

Another significant challenge is the potential conflict between local cultural practices and national laws and regulations. Local wisdom, which often involves indigenous knowledge and traditional practices, may not always align with national legal frameworks, which are typically based on more formal, standardized principles. This misalignment can create tensions, particularly in areas where local customs and norms contradict modern legal requirements or national policies. For example, some traditional practices may involve community-based decision-making processes that conflict with top-down governance structures or national laws regarding individual rights and responsibilities. In such cases, policymakers may face the difficult task of balancing respect for local traditions with the need to ensure compliance with national legal standards. This challenge calls for nuanced policy frameworks that can accommodate the complexities of both local wisdom and national law without undermining either.

In addition to the resistance to change and the legal conflicts, the successful implementation of local wisdom-based policies may also be hindered by insufficient resources and a lack of political will. Implementing policies that integrate local wisdom requires significant investment in both human and financial resources, including training for local leaders, development of educational programs to raise awareness of traditional practices, and the creation of mechanisms for dialogue between traditional and governmental authorities. However, many governments, particularly in developing regions, may lack the necessary resources to support such initiatives. Additionally, the lack of political will can be a major barrier to the implementation of these policies. If policymakers and political leaders do not fully commit to integrating local wisdom into policy, efforts to bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern governance will be limited, and the policies may fail to gain traction or be adequately enforced.

Moreover, overcoming these challenges will require a concerted effort from both the government and local communities to find common ground. For policies that incorporate local wisdom to be successful, there must be collaboration between policymakers, traditional leaders, and local communities. This process involves building trust and fostering understanding between various stakeholders, including those who may be resistant to change and those who advocate for the preservation of cultural traditions. By establishing platforms for open dialogue and creating opportunities for joint decision-making, both traditional leaders and government officials can work together to develop policies that respect and reflect the values and practices of local communities

while also addressing the broader goals of social cohesion and national development. Successful policy implementation will require the active participation of local communities in every stage of the process, from design to execution.

Finally, the successful integration of local wisdom into public policy will depend on strong leadership and sustained efforts from all stakeholders involved. This includes government officials, local leaders, civil society organizations, and the public. Effective leadership is needed to navigate the complex political, cultural, and legal challenges that arise when attempting to bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern governance. Additionally, sustained efforts are crucial to ensure that these policies are not merely symbolic but have real, lasting impacts. This will require continuous investment, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that local wisdom is effectively integrated into public policy and that it continues to serve the needs of diverse communities. Only through a coordinated, long-term commitment to fostering inclusivity and respect for cultural diversity can the integration of local wisdom into public policy truly succeed in addressing the challenges of multiculturalism and social intolerance.

CONCLUSIONS

While integrating local wisdom into public policy presents significant benefits, such as fostering social cohesion and providing contextually relevant solutions to multicultural challenges, the research highlights several challenges that must be addressed for successful implementation. These include resistance to change among policymakers, conflicts between local practices and national laws, limited resources, and a lack of political will. Overcoming these challenges requires collaboration between government officials and local communities, as well as strong leadership and sustained efforts to ensure that local wisdom is effectively incorporated into policymaking. By bridging the gap between traditional knowledge and modern governance, policies can be developed that respect both cultural traditions and legal requirements, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive, resilient, and harmonious society.

References:

[1] N. N. Annisa and N. Tabassum, "Challenges of multiculturalism: Integration of religion in state policy," *Relig. Policy J.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 8–15, 2023.

[2] O. Darmawan *et al.*, "Revitalization of Local Wisdom in Preventing Intolerance and Radicalism in Indonesia," in *2nd International Conference on Law and Human Rights 2021 (ICLHR 2021)*, Atlantis Press, 2021, pp. 492–497.

[3] M. A. Nugroho, "Religious Tolerance Model in Salatiga: Analysis of the Implementation of Religious Moderation Concept in a Multicultural City," *Int. J. Adv. Sci. Educ. Relig.*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 27–43, 2024.

[4] Nurwanto and C. M. Cusack, "Addressing multicultural societies: lessons from religious education curriculum policy in Indonesia and England," *J. Relig. Educ.*, vol. 64, no. 3, pp.

Scopus

157–178, 2017.

[5]   D. M. Ali, M. I. Islamy, B. Supriyono, and M. R. K. Muluk, "Bringing local wisdom-based local government into practice: a quadrant strategy analysis," *Public Policy Adm. Res. IISTE*, vol. 3, no. 5, pp. 21–34, 2013.

[6]   Arafah, R., & Anggoro, P. W. (2025). Formulation of responsive criminal law policies to the values of the Madura Carok tradition in the framework of restorative justice and legal pluralism. Jurnal Greenation Sosial, 3(2), 129-142. https://greenationpublisher.org/index.php/JGSP/article/download/426/304

[7]   Rahmadonna, S., & Setyosari, P. (2025). Strategies for strengthening diversity tolerance in multicultural communities. Journal of Social and Educational Research, 7(3), 114-125. https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/kjss/article/view/279132

[8]   Islamy, M. R., & Budiyanti, N. (2024). The integration of traditional knowledge and local wisdom in mitigating and adapting climate change: Perspectives from Java and Bali. Traditional knowledge and climate change, 4, 134-146. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-99-8830-3_4

[9]   Setyosari, P., & Rahmadonna, S. (2025). Multiculturalism, social intolerance, and the role of local wisdom in building community resilience. Jurnal Pendidikan Multikultural, 5(4), 123-134. https://twistjournal.net/twist/article/download/885/542

[10]   Wardi, M., Fithriyyah, M. U., Hidayat, T., & Ismail, I. (2025). Strengthening the role of local wisdom in promoting resilience and sustainable communities. Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial, 6(3), 22-36. http://103.55.33.27/index.php/jpi/article/download/27952/10193.