




Transformation of Identity and Social Interaction in Multicultural Society in IKN Nusantara

Harmanto¹^a, Siti Maizul Habibah¹^b, Beti Indah Sari¹^c, Rooselyna Ekawati¹,
Fida Rachmadiarti¹, Sarmini¹, Nadi Suprpto¹, Yuni Sri Rahayu¹, Irena Yolanita Maureen¹,
Ali Shodikin¹, Rudianto Artiono¹, Muhamad Arif Mahdiannur¹, Indah Prabawati¹
and Dila Lintang Harmanto Putri²

¹Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia

²Universitas Diponegoro, Central Java, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study explores the transformation of social identity and social interaction of ASN in a multicultural society in IKN Nusantara. Using a qualitative approach through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with ASN leaders, this study found that ASN in IKN Nusantara developed an inclusive collective identity and valued cultural diversity. Interaction between groups was intensive and constructive, with multiculturalism seen as a core value that strengthens social cohesion. The results of this study differ from findings in other big cities in Indonesia, where social segregation is more common. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of design policies and environments that support multiculturalism in new cities to build strong social cohesion. Limitations of the study include the limited sample of ASN leaders and the context of new cities, with suggestions to expand the study to various levels of ASN and other regions for more comprehensive results.


1 INTRODUCTION


Indonesia is a country with high cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, making it a real example of a multicultural society. The identities of people in various regions of Indonesia are greatly influenced by different ethnic backgrounds, customs, and local values. The development of the Indonesian Capital City (IKN) in East Kalimantan creates new opportunities for interaction between diverse groups, but also challenges the existing concepts of identity and social cohesion. In this context, the transformation of identity and social interaction in a multicultural society is a very relevant issue to be studied further. The problem raised in this study is how changes in identity and social interaction in the IKN Nusantara community occur in the midst of a dynamic social transformation process (Wijaya, 2020). Based on several previous studies, interactions

between diverse groups often give rise to challenges in the form of identity conflicts, marginalization, and discrimination (Permana & Setiawan, n.d.). However, previous studies often focus on long-established urban communities such as Jakarta, Bandung, or Surabaya, without paying special attention to new cities that are developing. Different from previous studies, this study will explore aspects of identity transformation in the IKN Nusantara environment which is still under development, so it is expected to provide a new perspective in the study of multicultural society in Indonesia.

The purpose of this study is to identify the process of identity transformation and social interaction patterns in the IKN Nusantara society which is multicultural, and to examine the factors that influence social cohesion in the area. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions, especially in developing an inclusive and effective

^a <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6149-3942>

^b <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7454-417X>

^c <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0259-0230>

policy approach for the development of new cities that are socio-culturally diverse.

The benefits of this study can be divided into several aspects. First, from an academic perspective, this study is expected to add to the literature on identity change in the context of developing new multicultural cities. Second, in practice, the results of this study can help policy makers and stakeholders in designing social programs that support social integration without eliminating the cultural richness of the existing community (Balbo & Marconi, 2006; Birdie, 2021). Finally, this study can be a reference for local and central governments in developing strategies to minimize the potential for social conflict in the IKN Nusantara.

Currently, it shows that the development of the IKN Nusantara is accompanied by the movement of people from various regions with different cultures and social backgrounds. This condition has the potential to create complex social dynamics (Bauböck, 2001; Hoon, 2017)s. In addition, the assimilation process expected from the development of the Indonesian capital will create its own challenges in maintaining harmony between groups, especially related to issues of identity and social roles that may differ between groups that have long settled and groups of immigrants. This condition shows the urgent need for a deeper understanding of social interaction in the midst of the ongoing transformation process.

This research is important because it presents a study that can be a reference in the development of new cities with multicultural characteristics in the future, not only in Indonesia but also in various countries that are building multicultural urban areas. The novelty of this research lies in the context and approach used. Through this research, the theoretical approach to identity transformation will be tested in the context of new city development with distinctive social dynamics, so that it is expected to provide new contributions to the study of identity transformation in multicultural societies. The uniqueness of this research is its focus on the initial process of forming social cohesion in an environment that is still in the planning stage, which is expected to provide different insights compared to previous studies that were more focused on established large cities.

Thus, this research has originality in the context of the study of the development of the Indonesian IKN based on multiculturalism, while also providing new knowledge about how the city development process can play a role in forming collective identity and social interaction patterns in diverse societies.

2 METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method to identify the transformation of identity and social interaction in a multicultural society in IKN Nusantara. The FGD was conducted with the leaders of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) who have a strategic role in managing the work environment in IKN. By involving ASN leaders, this study aims to gain in-depth insights into the views, strategies, and challenges in building social cohesion amidst cultural diversity. The FGD was carried out face-to-face involving 78 ASN leaders selected through purposive sampling. The meeting took place in IKN Nusantara in two main sessions, each lasting two hours. In each session, ASN leaders were encouraged to share their views on how cultural diversity affects social interaction and collective identity in their work environment. Data Analysis: The results of the FGD were analyzed using thematic analysis methods to identify the main themes that emerged in the discussion. This process includes transcription, coding, and grouping data based on categories such as social identity, intergroup interaction, and multiculturalism. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, a triangulation process was carried out by comparing data from various FGD sessions and additional interviews with several ASN leaders. In addition, the findings were discussed again with the respondents to ensure accurate interpretation. This FGD method provides an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of identity and social interaction in the IKN Nusantara, and opens up space for ASN leaders to express their unique perspectives. This approach allows the study to dig deeper into the perceptions and strategies of leadership in building social integration in a newly formed multicultural society.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Social Identity Transformation: From Regional Identity to Collective Identity

The results of the discussion showed that ASN leaders in IKN Nusantara actively strive to build an inclusive social identity and prioritize a sense of unity amidst cultural diversity. One ASN leader said, "Our identity in IKN is more than just cultural differences. We are trying to form a new identity as 'IKN

employees' who respect differences."

This finding shows that ASN in IKN are starting to develop a more open collective identity and respect cultural diversity. This is different from previous research, which showed that social identities in multicultural environments in big cities are often more exclusive and focused on certain ethnic or religious groups (Rahmawati, 2021). This inclusive identity transformation process supports social identity theory, which states that collective identity can develop and change according to the social environment (Janoski, 2012).

The results of the study show that ASN in IKN Nusantara, especially leaders, adopt a more inclusive collective identity as "IKN employees." In the FGD discussion, ASN leaders acknowledged that this identity transformation occurred through an adaptation process triggered by a new environment that required them to interact with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. This process is relevant to Tajfel & Turner's (1979) social identity theory, which states that individual identities in social groups can develop according to the existing social context (Joppke, 2002; Roche, 2002).

In IKN, the formation of this collective identity is supported by several specific factors. First, the government explicitly designed IKN Nusantara as a multicultural city with policies that emphasize cultural integration. ASN leaders in IKN have the responsibility to translate this policy into daily practice, encouraging them to prioritize unity and togetherness above ethnic or cultural differences. One ASN leader said, "We work for one goal as part of the 'IKN community'. This is not just about work, but about how to build a city together from the beginning by respecting all existing differences."

In contrast to previous studies that found a tendency for individuals to maintain a strong regional identity in big cities, such as Jakarta and Surabaya (Habibah & Setyowati, 2022; Rahmawati, 2021), where local identity often causes social segregation, in IKN the collective identity as part of the "IKN community" tends to be more prominent. These results support the idea that new conditions in IKN allow social identity to be more dynamic and more inclusive of the various cultures involved. Intergroup Interaction: Strengthening Social Cohesion Amidst Diversity

Social interaction between ASN groups in IKN is recognized as quite high, with systematic efforts to encourage integration between employees from different cultural backgrounds. For example, a respondent said, "We routinely hold cross-unit meetings involving employees from various regions.

This allows them to get to know each other and work together better." This result is supported by the finding that 85% of ASN leaders felt an increase in constructive social interaction in the work environment.

This study found that more intensive interaction in IKN differs from previous findings in Jakarta and Surabaya, where cross-cultural interaction was often hampered by rigid cultural boundaries (Habibah et al., 2020; Litoloy, 2020). In IKN, the new work environment and development orientation that prioritizes inclusivity allow ASN from various backgrounds to interact more easily. This finding supports contact theory, which states that ongoing interaction between different groups can reduce prejudice and strengthen social ties (Li et al., 2017).

The research findings show that interactions between groups in the IKN Nusantara are more intense and constructive than in other big cities in Indonesia. In particular, ASN leaders in the IKN actively encourage cross-cultural activities involving employees from various backgrounds. This finding supports the contact theory proposed, which states that direct and ongoing interaction between different social groups can reduce prejudice and encourage social cohesion (Gezer, 2019; Reichert, 2011).

The new IKN environment allows ASN from various regions to interact without cultural boundaries or established prejudices. One respondent said, "We can't work by just maintaining the interaction patterns from our respective home areas. Everyone here is new and we have to adapt to each other." This indicates that the IKN as a new city provides an opportunity for each individual to start social relationships in a more open way. Unlike previous studies that showed social fragmentation in big cities, social interactions in the IKN are more fluid because there is no social hierarchy based on long-standing cultural groups (Habibah & Sapriyah, 2022; Ibrahim, 2010).

In addition, intense interaction in IKN Nusantara is also strengthened by the existence of social structures and work activities designed to integrate employees from various cultural backgrounds. For example, the implementation of cross-departmental programs encourages ASN from various cultures to work together and communicate, which in turn strengthens their social ties. This study provides empirical evidence that with a supportive and open environment, interaction between groups can strengthen social cohesion, relevant to Berry's (2001) view on the importance of integration in the acculturation process in a multicultural society.

3.2 Intergroup Interaction: Strengthening Social Cohesion amidst Diversity

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The main difference of this study compared to previous studies lies in the context and social

processes that occur in IKN Nusantara as a new city. In other big cities, such as Jakarta or Surabaya, social identity is often formed from a strong regional or ethnic identity, thus creating social boundaries in interactions between groups (Erningtyas & Widiyanto, 2021). In contrast, in IKN Nusantara, the process of social identity transformation is more flexible and inclusive. This new city provides an opportunity for ASN to develop a collective identity that focuses on common goals as "IKN citizens."

In addition, social interactions in IKN tend to be more open and inclusive, supported by government policies and an environment that does not yet have a rigid social structure like in big cities. This study confirms that the formation of a new city with a multicultural vision allows for more effective social integration compared to established big cities, where social segregation is often more difficult to overcome.

This study makes an important contribution to strengthening the theory of social identity and social contact in the context of a new multicultural city. IKN Nusantara becomes a social laboratory where ASN from various backgrounds can form a new collective social identity, while cross-cultural social interactions occur intensively. This finding emphasizes the importance of creating conditions that support positive social interactions in a multicultural society, which is relevant to Allport's contact theory and Berry's study of acculturation. Practically, the results of this study have implications for government policy in designing multicultural policies in new cities or other urban areas. The integration of multiculturalism values in the work environment in IKN shows that cultural diversity can be managed positively to create social cohesion and work productivity. This study also has novelty in the context of the formation of a new multicultural city, such as IKN, which can be an example for the development of other cities in Indonesia.

4 CONCLUSION

This study aims to understand the transformation of identity and social interaction in a multicultural society in IKN Nusantara, especially among ASN. The results of the study indicate that ASN in IKN Nusantara developed a new collective identity as "IKN employees" who are more inclusive and respect cultural cultures. Social interactions between groups also take place intensively and constructively, indicating that a new city environment such as IKN allows for effective social integration. ASN in IKN perceive multiculturalism as a core value that

enriches social interaction and collaboration, in contrast to findings in other big cities in Indonesia that often show social segregation. The implications of this study suggest that a new city with a multicultural vision, such as IKN Nusantara, can be a model for the development of other cities in Indonesia. The government and policy makers can consider IKN as an example in building an inclusive and cohesive society, especially by designing an environment that encourages cross-cultural interaction and promotes a collective identity that values differences. This is relevant to the implementation of multicultural policies and social integration strategies, both in new cities and in other urban areas. Further research is recommended to involve various levels of ASN and other social groups in the IKN to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics in this new city. In addition, similar research can be conducted in other major cities in Indonesia to explore the differences and similarities in the process of identity transformation and social interaction in various regions. Quantitative or mixed methods approaches can also be considered to increase the validity of the results and allow for broader generalization.

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