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## Criticism of Mixed Marriage and Child Citizenship Rights: Family Law Reform in Indonesia

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## Abstract

Mixed marriage and children's citizenship rights in Indonesia are increasingly becoming relevant topics in the midst of globalization and high social mobility. This study aims to analyze criticism of existing regulations and explore the need for more inclusive and responsive family law reform. The methodology used in this study includes a qualitative analysis of laws and regulations. The data collection techniques applied include a thorough literature study of various sources, including books, journal articles, and relevant legal documents. The results of the study show that the current laws, especially Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage and Law No. 12 of 2006 on Citizenship, are still inadequate in accommodating the rights of children from mixed marriages. Legal uncertainties regarding child citizenship as well as complex registration procedures lead to discrimination and hinder children's access to basic services. Therefore, comprehensive reforms are needed to ensure the protection of the rights of children and women, as well as to harmonize national laws with international standards. This research contributes to a broader discussion on the importance of family law reform to realize justice and welfare for all family members in Indonesia.

Keywords: Mixed Marriage, Children's Citizenship Rights, Family Law, Legal Reform

## Introduction

Mixed marriages between Indonesian citizens and foreign nationals have been increasing in recent decades (Novita et al., 2023). Based on data from the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil), around 4% of the total marriages recorded in Indonesia in 2023 are mixed marriages (Masyitha, 2021). This phenomenon raises various problems, especially related to the citizenship status of the child from the marriage. In the same year, nearly 25% of children from mixed marriages faced citizenship problems, due to Indonesia's still rigid legal system in regulating dual citizenship (Arsika, 2023).

Children from mixed marriages are often in a vulnerable position due to uncertainty about their citizenship status (A. Darmawan et al., 2023). Data shows that 40% of children from mixed marriages in Indonesia have only one citizenship, even though many of them are entitled to dual citizenship (Safitri, 2023). This has an impact on limited access to basic rights such as education, health, and public services (Ika Anisatul Fatma Fitria et al., 2023). This condition also creates structural injustice that results in discrimination against these children in society (Ramadhan & Faozi, 2023). Therefore, it is important to review the existing legal framework to ensure the protection of their rights.

The issue of mixed marriage and children's citizenship rights in Indonesia raises various complexities that have not been fully overcome by national law (Sihombing, et al., 2022). Provisions regarding the citizenship status of children born from mixed marriages are often not in line with social developments and international law (Nahdhah et al., 2022). In this context, many children from mixed marriages face legal uncertainties, including in terms of their right to dual citizenship, which often has implications for other civil rights (Mirabel, 2024). This problem also has psychological and social impacts for children who are trapped in the duality of citizenship and cultural identity (Apanecatl-ibarra, et al., 2024).

This study identifies a specific legal problem, namely the lack of clarity in the regulations regarding the citizenship status of children from mixed marriages, which causes them to lose certain rights in their parents' home countries (Vista, 2022). In some cases, this citizenship status has even become a tool of discrimination that has the potential to fundamentally violate children's rights (Frost, 2024). This study will also examine the approach to family law in Indonesia and various existing policies to address the citizenship issue, as well as evaluate its effectiveness in protecting children's rights in the context of mixed marriage.

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyze the legal implications of mixed marriage on children's citizenship rights in Indonesia. This study aims to understand how existing regulations affect children's citizenship status and examine current policies. Through an analytical approach, this research not only wants to explore relevant legal aspects but also includes social perspectives that encompass children's rights. Thus, this study is expected to provide significant recommendations for improving policies that are more inclusive and equitable for children resulting from mixed marriages.

An analysis of the existing literature shows that there is a lack of research that specifically examines the impact of mixed marriage law on children's citizenship rights in Indonesia. A number of studies such as, Nevena Rudinac, (Rudinac, 2024) Zen Yie Ko, (Ko, 2022) Ketut Oka Setiawan, (Oka Setiawan, 2023) and Özdemir, Arş. Gör. Elif, (Özdemir, 2023) which focuses on the issue of mixed marriage in general, few have examined the legal consequences that directly affect the citizenship status of children resulting from the marriage. This research seeks to fill this gap by providing deeper insights into how current regulations work, as well as how this impacts the protection of children's rights, especially in the context of legal pluralism in Indonesia.

The research uses a qualitative approach, which allows for the extraction of richer information and nuances from the experiences of the individuals and communities involved (Lahiri, 2023). The data collection techniques applied include a thorough literature study of various sources, including books, journal articles, and relevant legal documents (Luscombe et al., 2022). In addition, an analysis of the documents will be carried out to identify regulations and policies that affect the rights of children from mixed marriages. The data obtained will be analyzed thematically, grouping information based on the main themes that appear in the literature review. This process is expected to provide comprehensive insight into the legal and social dynamics surrounding this issue, as well as the challenges faced by children from mixed marriages in obtaining citizenship.

This study not only offers an in-depth analysis of legal issues related to mixed marriage and children's citizenship rights, but also makes a significant contribution to the development of family law studies in Indonesia. A new aspect raised in this study is the interaction between national law and customary law, as well as how this affects the fulfillment of children's rights. This research is expected to provide recommendations for policymakers to create a more inclusive and responsive legal framework to the needs of a multicultural society in Indonesia.

## An Overview of Mixed Marriage in the World

Mixed marriage, which involves couples from different cultural, ethnic, or national backgrounds, has become an increasingly common phenomenon around the world (Lewis Kipng'etich, 2024). Data from the United Nations (UN) shows that almost 3% of the total marriages that occur each year are intermarriages, with this number continuing to increase as globalization changes the pattern of social interaction (Machette & Cionea, 2023) Mixed marriage not only reflects the dynamics of relationships between individuals, but also shows a shift in social norms and societal acceptance of diversity (Валериевна, 2023). Countries with high ethnic diversity, such as the United States and Australia, recorded significant mixed marriage rates, suggesting that cross-cultural marriage is increasingly seen as normal (Sowa-behtane, 2020).

However, while mixed marriage provides many benefits, such as enriching cultural experiences and expanding social networks, couples in mixed marriages often face unique challenges (Trojanowski, 2024). Differences in traditions, languages, and cultural values can lead to conflict in relationships, which requires good communication skills and a deep understanding between couples (Jason, 2023). This suggests that couples from different cultural backgrounds may have to negotiate about religious practices, family norms, and social expectations that could potentially cause strain in their relationship (Hong, 2023). Therefore, it is important for couples to develop effective and open conflict resolution strategies in dealing with these differences.

One of the key aspects of mixed marriage is its impact on the children born from the marriage. These children are often the bridge between two cultures and can experience dual identities, which can affect their social and emotional development (Hu, 2023). Children from mixed marriages often face challenges in navigating their identities, especially if there is pressure from both sides of the family to conform to certain cultural norms (Guo, 2023). Therefore, it is important to provide adequate support for these children, so that they can develop a healthy and balanced identity.

One of the challenges faced by children from mixed marriages is the issue of citizenship and their legal rights (Arsika, 2023). In many cases, these children may struggle to obtain clear citizenship status, especially if their parents are from countries with different laws regarding dual citizenship (Koball et al., 2022). Children from mixed marriages are often caught up in complex and sometimes discriminatory citizenship policies, which can result in legal uncertainty and difficulties in accessing basic services such as education and health (L. Murphy et al., 2020). This highlights the need for more inclusive and responsive policy reforms to the unique situation of children from mixed marriage.

Furthermore, education plays an important role in shaping the identity of children from mixed marriages (Ober, R., et al., 2022). An inclusive educational environment can help them feel welcome and valued, regardless of their cultural background (Bonjour & Hart, 2021). The existence of schools that apply a multicultural approach and diversity-based education can provide space for children to celebrate their dual identities, as well as encourage positive intercultural interactions (Smith, 2024). Therefore, it is important for educators and policymakers to create a curriculum that reflects cultural diversity and encourages cross-cultural understanding among students (Frost, 2024).

On the other hand, support from the community is also very important in helping children from mixed marriages overcome identity challenges (Kate & Kate, 2024). Community involvement in creating safe spaces where children can share their experiences can contribute to the development of a positive sense of identity (Africa et al., 2024). Support programs, such as discussion groups or community-based activities, can provide a platform for children to explore and express their identities freely (Mukhlis, 2023). The presence of strong social support from peers and the community can reduce the negative impact of identity stress and improve children's emotional well-being (Froehlich et al., 2023).

Overall, it is important to understand that children from mixed marriages have unique and complex needs. To help them thrive, a holistic approach is needed that involves policy reforms, an inclusive educational environment, and community support. With these measures, we can create a more equitable and supportive society, where children from different cultural backgrounds can grow and develop with a strong sense of confidence and identity.

## Regulations related to Mixed Marriage and Children's Citizenship Rights

Regulations concerning mixed marriages and children's citizenship rights in Indonesia have become complex issues requiring serious attention (Prihatin & Faozan, 2022). Mixed marriages, involving couples from different national backgrounds, not only bring social and cultural dynamics but also pose significant legal challenges. Laws governing mixed marriages, such as Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage and Law No. 12 of 2006 on Citizenship, often fail to consider the cultural and legal contexts of the countries of origin of each spouse (Husain et al., 2024). This situation can lead to various problems, such as uncertainty regarding the citizenship status of children, administrative discrimination, and difficulties in accessing basic rights like education and healthcare. According to Prihatin and Faozan (2022), these issues are further exacerbated by the lack of harmonization between national laws and international standards, which should provide better protection for the rights of Criticism of Mixed Marriage and Child Citizenship Rights: Family Law Reform in Indonesia

children from mixed marriages. Furthermore, Husain et al. (2024) emphasize the need for more inclusive and adaptive regulations that not only address legal aspects but also respect the cultural differences and values brought by crossnational couples. Therefore, comprehensive reforms in the regulation of mixed marriages and children's citizenship are urgently needed to ensure justice and welfare for all parties involved.

No	Regulation	Description	Year Enacted
1	Law No. 1 of 1974	Governs marriage in Indonesia, emphasizing that all marriages must adhere to applicable Indonesian laws.	1974
2	Law No. 12 of 2006	Governs Indonesian citizenship, granting citizenship rights to children born from mixed marriages.	2006
3	Government Regulation No. 2 of 2007	Outlines procedures and requirements for children born from mixed marriages to obtain Indonesian citizenship.	2007
4	Minister of Law and Human Rights Regulation	Regulates citizenship registration procedures for children born from mixed marriages between Indonesian and foreign nationals.	Various regulations since 2007
5	Constitutional Court Decision No. 82/PUU-XI/2013	Approved judicial review related to children's citizenship rights, providing legal certainty for children from mixed marriages.	2013
6	Law No. 16 of 2019	Updates provisions regarding citizenship, including regulations for children from mixed marriages and dual citizenship for children.	2019
7	International Convention on the Rights of the Child	Serves as an international legal basis for the protection of children's rights, including children from mixed marriages.	1989 (adopted by Indonesia in 1990)

# Table 1: Regulations Related to Mixed Marriage and Children's CitizenshipRights in Indonesia

From the table above, it can be explained that marriage law in Indonesia is governed by Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, which requires all marriages to

be conducted in accordance with the laws applicable in Indonesia (A. Darmawan et al., 2023). However, these laws often do not explicitly address the rights of children from mixed marriages, leading to ambiguity in terms of the citizenship and legal status of the children (Wulandari, 2023).

Meanwhile, citizenship is regulated in Law Number 12 of 2006 concerning Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia, which grants citizenship rights to children born from marriages between Indonesian citizens and foreign citizens (Agustin & Felicia, 2023). Although this law provides a legal basis for children to obtain citizenship, the procedures and conditions set are often considered complicated and unclear (Putra, 2023). For example, children born to parents of different nationalities can have difficulty determining which nationality to take, and the convoluted registration process often results in legal uncertainty (Agustin & Felicia, 2023).

Obstacles in the implementation of Law Number 12 of 2006 concerning Citizenship can also be seen from the different treatment of children based on the marital status of their parents. Children born to legal marriages between Indonesian citizens and foreign nationals are generally easier to obtain citizenship, while children from unregistered mixed marriages or serial marriages can be trapped in the legal bind. This situation can result in uncertainty in their citizenship status, potentially leading to discrimination in access to public services, education, and other social rights. Many children in this category have difficulty accessing health and education services due to the absence of clear citizenship documents.

Furthermore, the challenges in mixed marriage regulations are also related to public perception of children born from such marriages. Social stigma is often attached to children of mixed marriage, which can result in marginalization and exclusion within their communities (Nasrullah, 2024). In many cases, these children are subjected to prejudice and discrimination, which negatively impacts their psychological and emotional development (Baaren, 2024). Children with these backgrounds often feel alienated from both cultures of their parents, resulting in deep identity confusion and significant psychological distress (Abbas et al., 2023).

In this context, it is important to strengthen legal and social protections for children from mixed marriages (Sharma & Bhambri, 2024). More inclusive and proactive policies are needed to ensure that all children, regardless of parental background, can enjoy their rights to the fullest (Fitriani et al., 2023). For example, reforms in the citizenship registration process can facilitate access for these children to obtain a clear legal identity (Rosidah et al., 2023). By

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providing better support to blended families, we can help reduce stigma and improve the well-being of these children.

Finally, it is important to increase public awareness and understanding of the rights of children from mixed marriage. Effective public education can help overcome existing stigmas and prejudices, as well as promote acceptance of diversity (J. Murphy & Russell, 2022). The involvement of various stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, academics, and governments, is essential to create positive and sustainable change (Eiroa-orosa & Tosas-fern, 2021). By doing so, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for children from mixed marriages, as well as ensure that they have equal opportunities to grow and develop without fear of discrimination.

## Criticism of the Indonesian Law on Dual Citizenship

Indonesia's Law on Dual Citizenship has been an important subject of discussion amid increasing global mobility and the complexity of citizenship identities. Although the law aims to regulate citizenship status unequivocally, criticism has emerged regarding its limitations in accommodating cross-border family dynamics, protection of children's rights, and legal certainty for individuals with dual citizenship status. The study aims to identify weaknesses and challenges in the regulation, as well as provide an overview of how existing regulations can be aligned with the needs of modern society and international standards. This description begins with the presentation of a table containing criticism of the Indonesian Law on Dual Citizenship to provide a systematic understanding to the reader.

Aspect of Criticism	Description	Potential Impact
Conflict of Obligations Between States	Dual citizenship raises concerns about conflicting obligations, such as military service or taxes.	Individuals may face double obligations or conflicts in fulfilling duties to different countries.
Confusion of National Identity and Loyalty	Holding more than one citizenship can create confusion in national identity and loyalty.	Social integration may be hindered as individuals might not feel fully attached to one country.

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Challenges in Law Enforcement	Different legal systems across countries make it difficult to enforce rights and duties, especially regarding public services and legal protection.	Individuals may face discrimination or differential treatment when accessing basic rights and services.
Abuse of Citizenship Status	Dual citizenship may be abused for specific purposes, such as tax evasion or legal manipulation.	Individuals might exploit dual citizenship to avoid legal or tax responsibilities.

The table above can be understood that, criticism of the Dual Citizenship Law in Indonesia includes several aspects that affect the rights of individuals, especially children from mixed marriages. First, the complicated procedure for obtaining dual citizenship often makes it difficult for children born into mixed marriages (Aji, 2024). Although Law Number 12 of 2006 grants citizenship rights to these children, the convoluted administrative process makes it difficult for them to access these rights efficiently (Vista, 2022). Many parents report confusion regarding the required documents, and often have to face long queues and high fees for their child's citizenship registration (Edwinarta & Dwijayanti, 2024).

Furthermore, this Law is considered less flexible in accommodating different situations from each mixed couple (Fresnoza-Flot, 2021). In practice, differences in legal and cultural backgrounds between parents can lead to significant ambiguity regarding a child's citizenship status (Anuar, 2022). Some legal experts suggest that there needs to be a revision to integrate a more inclusive approach that takes into account the social and cultural context of the couple, so that children are not trapped in unclear legal positions (Apanecatl-ibarra et al., 2022).

Another aspect that is often debated is the ambiguity regarding the recognition of dual citizenship for children born into mixed marriages (Syamsu, 2022). Although there is a clause in the law that grants citizenship rights, the reality is that often these children are faced with a difficult choice between their parents' citizenship (Gilli, 2022). This causes an identity dilemma for these children, which can negatively affect their psychological and social development (Centro et al., 2023). A number of studies show that children who are trapped in this situation often feel alienated from one of the cultures or even both cultures they belong to.

Criticism is also directed at the need for better socialization of the rights of children from mixed marriages (Rachman et al., 2021). Although there are laws that guarantee citizenship rights, many parents are unaware of the procedures that need to be passed or even the rights available to their children (Silva, 2023). This lack of information can result in many children losing their right to dual citizenship that they should have.

On the other hand, there is also a view that dual citizenship can raise issues of security and loyalty to the state (Arizona, 2023). Some argue that children with dual citizenship may not be fully committed to the Indonesian state, which could pose risks related to social integration and nationalism. Although this argument is more often debated in the context of immigration policy, the implications for citizenship law remain a concern (F. D. Darmawan, 2023).

However, it is important to highlight that the negative impact of these policies often outweighs the benefits (Guofu, 2023). Children born to mixed marriages should have the right to enjoy dual identity and dual citizenship without having to face complicated administrative hurdles (Dicks, 2023). As such, criticism of the dual citizenship law also includes calls for clearer rights and better accessibility for these children.

Amid all this criticism, a number of legal reformers have begun calling for revisions to the existing law to respond to the challenges faced by mixed families in Indonesia (Maria, 2023). Some academics and lawyers hope that policy changes can create a more responsive and inclusive legal framework, so that children from mixed marriages can get their rights fairly and equally (Ober et al., 2022).

Overall, criticism of the Dual Citizenship Law in Indonesia shows an urgent need to update and reform existing laws. Taking into account the challenges faced by children from mixed marriages, it is important to formulate policies that not only meet the legal aspects, but also take into account the broader social and cultural context. This can be done by involving various stakeholders in the decision-making process, as well as aligning regulations with the real needs of the community.

### Family Law Reconstruction in Indonesia

The reconstruction of Family Law in Indonesia is an urgent need in the face of social changes and global dynamics (Ika Anisatul Fatma Fitria et al., 2023). The legal system that currently exists, especially in the field of family law, still faces many challenges in its implementation. Cases of marriage,

divorce, and children's rights often show the disparity between existing regulations and realities on the ground (Najichah, 2024). Therefore, the reconstruction of family law aims not only to update existing regulations, but also to ensure that they are able to accommodate social changes that occur in society (Yuningsih & Suciati, 2023).

Aspect	Current Situation	Reconstruction Needs	Expected Impact
Mixed Marriages	Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage does not clearly accommodate the citizenship rights of children from mixed marriages.	Regulatory updates that clarify the citizenship status of children from mixed marriages.	Legal certainty regarding the citizenship status of children and stronger legal protection for mixed families.
Divorce	Divorce procedures are complex and unfavorable to women, particularly in terms of asset division and child custody.	Legal revision to facilitate better access to justice for women and children.	Fairer treatment for women in the division of assets and child custody after divorce.
Child Rights	Children's rights are not fully guaranteed, especially in the context of divorce and mixed marriages.	Drafting regulations focused on the protection of children's rights, both in divorce and mixed marriages.	Stronger legal protection for children's rights in various family situations.
Forced and Child Marriages	Forced and child marriages still occur in some regions, despite being legally prohibited.	Stronger law enforcement and more effective preventive measures.	Elimination of forced and child marriages, and better protection for women and children.
National and International Law	Indonesian family law is not fully aligned with	Harmonization of national law with adopted	Improved image of Indonesia in respecting

## Table 3: Reconstruction of Family Law in Indonesia

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Harmonization	international norms related to women's and children's rights.	international treaties.	human rights, particularly women's and children's rights.
Impact of Technology	There are no specific rules related to the use of technology in family matters, such as cyber- bullying or child exploitation.	Drafting family law regulations that respond to technological advancements.	Better legal protection for families against the negative impacts of digital technology, including for children.

From the table above, it can be explained that social change and globalization have brought new challenges that affect family life in Indonesia (Mirza et al., 2023). The emergence of mixed marriage, international migration, and the increasingly globally recognized rights of women and children are driving the importance of family law adjustment (Miqat, 2023). Laws regulating marriage and citizenship, for example, need to be revised to be more responsive to evolving situations. In addition, the issue of the citizenship status of children born from mixed marriages often raises ambiguity, so legal adjustments are urgently needed to ensure legal certainty for these children (Friday, 2024).

On the other hand, challenges in the field of divorce are also one of the main reasons for the importance of family law reconstruction. Divorce law in Indonesia, regulated in Marriage Law Number 1 of 1974, still faces criticism, especially regarding convoluted procedures and often does not provide adequate protection for women and children (Huda et al., 2022). In divorce cases, women are often at a disadvantage, both in terms of the division of joint property and child custody. Therefore, legal reconstruction needs to consider aspects of gender justice and provide stronger protection for vulnerable parties (Syifa & Izzuddin, 2024).

In addition, the importance of legal protection for children in the context of divorce and mixed marriage must also be a major concern. Current family law often does not provide certainty regarding children's rights, especially related to custody and custody after divorce (Pujiningsih, 2023). In many cases, children fall victim to disputes between parents, and the law is often insufficient to protect the child's best interests (Putri & Ganindha, n.d.). Therefore, the reconstruction of family law in Indonesia needs to give a greater focus on children's rights, including protection against domestic exploitation and violence (Sukamto & Aida, 2023).

The process of family law reconstruction must also involve the participation of the wider community, including legal experts, women's and children's rights activists, and indigenous peoples who have their own norms in regulating family life (Zakiyya, 2024). This broad participation is important so that legal reconstruction is not only a top-down process, but also takes into account the needs and realities faced by society at various levels. By involving various parties, it is hoped that the reconstruction of family law can produce regulations that are more inclusive and relevant to existing social conditions (Kusmardani, 2023).

The reconstruction of family law in Indonesia must also pay attention to the harmonization between national law and international norms that have been adopted by Indonesia (Ananda & Hakim, 2023). As a member of various international treaties related to human rights, Indonesia must ensure that the new family law is in line with these international principles, especially related to the protection of women's and children's rights. This harmonization will not only strengthen the domestic legal system, but will also improve Indonesia's image in the eyes of the international world as a country that respects human rights (Suryana et al., 2024).

Regarding the legal aspects of marriage, the revision of the existing law needs to include greater protection for women in cases of forced marriage or underage marriage. These practices, although banned, are still prevalent in various regions in Indonesia. Legal reconstruction should include more effective preventive measures as well as stricter enforcement of the law against perpetrators of forced marriage and child marriage.

Finally, the reconstruction of family law in Indonesia must pay attention to technological developments, such as the use of social media and the internet, which can affect family life. New issues such as cyber-bullying, exploitation of children through digital media, and the use of technology in domestic disputes are new challenges for the family legal system in Indonesia.

### Conclusion

Criticism of mixed marriage and children's citizenship rights in Indonesia reflects the need for fundamental reforms in family law. Mixed marriages often face a number of challenges, especially when it comes to the recognition of the rights of children, born to couples of different nationalities. Currently, Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage and Law No. 12 of 2006 on Criticism of Mixed Marriage and Child Citizenship Rights: Family Law Reform in Indonesia

Citizenship have not adequately accommodated the complexities that arise due to globalization and increasing social mobility. Children from mixed marriages are often caught up in legal uncertainty regarding their citizenship status, which can impact their access to education, health services, and legal protection. In addition, complicated and inconsistent procedures in citizenship registration can lead to injustice and confusion for families. It is important to revise the Law that not only guarantees the rights of children but also takes into account the social and cultural context in Indonesia. Family law reform should include harmonization between national law and international norms, so as to provide stronger protection for children and women. In addition, with the increasing role of technology in daily life, regulations that are responsive to new challenges are needed, including the potential for child exploitation in the digital world. As such, comprehensive legal reforms will help create a fairer and safer environment for families in Indonesia, as well as ensure that individual rights are respected and protected.

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