

# Dynamics of Social Inequality in Indonesia: Analysis of The Influence of Globalization and Urbanization

Ferina Choirunnisa <sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Sociology, Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia

\* Corresponding Author: [ferinaniesya@gmail.com](mailto:ferinaniesya@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the dynamics of social inequality in Indonesia in the context of globalization and urbanization, which affect various aspects of people's lives, including economic, social, educational, and cultural. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results show that globalization and urbanization have a significant impact on economic growth, especially in urban areas such as Java and Bali, but increase the gap with remote areas such as Papua and Maluku. Inequality in access to education and health is clearly visible, with facilities in remote areas much more limited than in urban areas. Urbanization also changes the social structure of society from collectivity to individualism, and creates social pressure due to mass migration to cities. In addition, globalization poses challenges to the preservation of local culture through the commercialization of traditions that often reduce their spiritual value. This study emphasizes the need for inclusive development policies, equitable infrastructure, and community-based approaches to reduce social inequality and ensure sustainable development throughout Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Social Disparity, Globalization, Urbanization

## INTRODUCTION

Social inequality in Indonesia is a complex issue that encompasses economic inequality, education, and access to public services. Economic inequality, especially between western and eastern Indonesia, shows significant disparities, with regions such as Java and Bali being more advanced compared to Papua and Maluku which lag behind in terms of economic development and infrastructure (Khan & Islam, 1990; Sihombing, 2019). In addition, income inequality remains high, even influenced by CO2 emissions that impact the health of the poor (Handayani et al., 2022). In education, higher levels of education are concentrated in prosperous areas, while less developed areas have limited access to quality education, which exacerbates inequality of economic and social opportunities (Hodge et al., 2014; Paramashanti et al., 2022). Access to public services such as health and infrastructure is also uneven, with poor areas often lacking basic facilities (Sihombing, 2019). Ethnic diversity in Indonesia increasingly affects the provision of public



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goods, so that local governments must adjust services to meet the needs of diverse communities (Siburian, 2019). To overcome this social gap, policies are needed that focus on equitable development, infrastructure development, and increasing access to education throughout the region, as well as managing social and ethnic diversity to prevent conflict (Farid, 2019).

Globalization and urbanization in Indonesia have accelerated social, economic, and cultural change, especially in rural areas. Socially, globalization has caused a shift from an agrarian society to a more urbanized society, changing values and patterns of social interaction from collective to more individualistic (Junaedi et al., 2023; Sosial et al., 2024). In the economic field, rapid urbanization has created inequality between cities and villages, with congestion, poverty, and social conflict in large cities, and a lack of job opportunities in rural areas driving migration to cities (Soemarwotos, 1976; Wilonoyudho et al., 2017). On the cultural side, globalization has changed lifestyles, values, and social structures, although some traditional values are still maintained, many local values have been eroded, leading to a decline in nationalism and the loss of kinship ties (Sosial et al., 2024). In addition, globalization and urbanization increase social disparities, both between rich and poor groups, and between urban and rural areas, with inequalities further exacerbated by a liberal economic system that emphasizes growth over equity (Batubara et al., 2022). Therefore, despite positive impacts such as improvements in technology and living standards, challenges related to social inequality and erosion of local cultures remain issues that must be addressed through good management and reform of a fairer economic system in Indonesia.

Social inequality has significant impacts on society, especially in terms of unemployment, access to education, health, and the potential for social conflict. Social inequality often leads to high unemployment, especially in urban areas, due to limited access to essential resources and services (Sarkhel & Sahoo, 2020). During the pandemic, racial and ethnic inequality exacerbated unemployment among minority groups (Ananat et al., 2022). Inequality also limits access to education and health, which has a negative impact on community well-being (Camargos & Watts, 2021; Renner et al., 2021). In addition, income inequality can trigger social conflict, increasing the potential for crime and social tension in urban areas (Sarkhel & Sahoo, 2020). Addressing these issues requires fair and inclusive policies to improve social stability and community well-being.

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of social inequality in Indonesia by emphasizing the influence of globalization and urbanization on social and economic change. Through this analysis, the study seeks to understand how globalization and urbanization deepen social inequality between community groups, both in urban and rural areas. In addition, this study also focuses on the impact of social inequality on community welfare and identifies factors that exacerbate this inequality. The scope of the study includes theoretical and empirical studies on the dynamics of social inequality in Indonesia, as well as offering policy solutions that can help reduce inequality and encourage more inclusive socio-economic development.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. The Impact of Social Disparities on Unemployment and Poverty

Urban social inequality has a significant impact on unemployment and poverty, by limiting people's access to economic opportunities and worsening income distribution. Unemployment is often a major cause of rising income inequality, as was the case in Argentina during the 1990s, where unemployment contributed significantly to inequality (González-Rozada & Menendez, 2006). Similar findings were also found in China, where unemployment worsened income distribution in urban areas (Li & 宏, 2006; Xue & Zhong, 2003). Unemployment has a greater impact on vulnerable groups, such as migrants and low-income households, who are often marginalized in the labor market (Bramall, 2007). In addition, social inequality exacerbates poverty levels by limiting access to essential resources and services, as seen in the United States, where the social and economic structure of cities is closely related to poverty levels, especially among black residents (Adelman & Jaret, 1999). Unemployment also increases the risk of poverty by reducing income and employment opportunities, as in Slovakia, where long-term unemployment significantly increases the risk of poverty (Bžanová & Kováč, 2024), and in OECD countries, where unemployment is one of the main factors increasing the risk of poverty (Martínez et al., 2001). Thus, the social inequalities that impact unemployment and poverty require inclusive urban planning strategies and effective social policies to mitigate their negative impacts and improve the well-being of urban communities.

### 2. Limited Access to Education and Health Services

Social inequality has a significant impact on access to education and health services, which ultimately affects people's quality of life. Research shows that social inequality exacerbates inequalities in access to health services and reduces quality of life, especially among poorer groups (Barker, 2001; Holmen et al., 2023; Sihombing, 2019). Social inequality often limits individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds' access to quality education, resulting in lower levels of education and skills, which in turn limits their economic and social opportunities (Graham et al., 2007; Rusinova & Safronov, 2019). Low education is also associated with a lack of material and psychological resources needed to cope with life's challenges, which worsens their health conditions (Rusinova & Safronov, 2019). Furthermore, groups with low socioeconomic status often have limited access to health services, including prevention, treatment, and adequate social support (Mishra, 2023; Roddam et al., 2019). Factors such as age, gender, education level, and social class influence health-related quality of life, with vulnerable groups more likely to experience greater declines in quality of life (Arrospide et al., 2019). Inequalities in education, income, and social status create significant differences in life expectancy and quality of life, with individuals with lower socioeconomic status tending to experience lower quality of life due to limited access to health and social resources (P et al., 2019; Bradley, 2021; Arrospide et al., 2019). Therefore, social inequalities significantly affect access to education and health services, which exacerbates the cycle



of poverty and inequality. To address this issue, policies are needed that support more equitable access to education and health services, in order to reduce the negative impacts of these social inequalities.

### 3. Potential for Social Conflict as an Impact of Social Disparities

Social inequality can increase the potential for social conflict by triggering dissatisfaction, economic injustice, and tensions between groups in society. Increasing income inequality is often followed by increased social conflict, where dissatisfaction of lower-middle income groups with economic injustice can encourage dysfunctional behavior that deviates from the rules and triggers conflict (Udjianto & Susanto, 2017). In addition, social conflict is often influenced by group identities such as ethnicity and social class, with income inequality exacerbating ethnic conflict, especially when income distribution is unequal (Robinson, 2001). In urban areas, social inequality also has the potential to cause social exclusion, segregation, and limited access to essential resources and services, which can trigger poverty, unemployment, crime, and other social conflicts (Sarkhel & Sahoo, 2020). Case studies in Korea show that social inequality has led to increased social conflict, and a social integration approach that incorporates restorative justice has proven effective in addressing this conflict (Kim, 2022). Overall, social inequality has great potential to increase conflict through various mechanisms, and to reduce the risk of conflict, an inclusive and equitable social integration strategy is needed.

## METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study to analyze the impact of social inequality influenced by globalization and urbanization in Indonesia. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, such as affected communities, social experts, and government officials, as well as field observations in urban and rural areas. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from previous research reports, scientific articles, and related policy documents. The data analysis technique used thematic analysis to identify patterns in the data, which were then analyzed through coding to map the relationship between the variables of social inequality, urbanization, and globalization. Thus, this study is expected to provide deeper insights into the dynamics of social inequality in Indonesia and its impact on unemployment, education, health, and potential social conflict.

**Table: Data Collection and Analysis Process**

Step	Description
Identification of Informants	Selection of key informants from the community, experts, and government officials.





Step	Description
Primary Data Collection	In-depth interviews and field observations in urban and rural areas.
Secondary Data Collection	Literature studies, research reports, and statistical data related to social inequality.
Thematic Analysis	Identify themes and patterns in data to understand the impact of social inequality.
Data Interpretation	Drawing conclusions from the analysis and comparing with related literature.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This study reveals the dynamics of social inequality that occurs in Indonesia by highlighting the influence of globalization and urbanization on various aspects of people's lives. The findings of this study indicate that ongoing social inequality affects economic aspects, access to basic services such as education and health, and social and cultural impacts in various regions of Indonesia. The following is a description of the research findings based on the dimensions analyzed.

#### 1. Economic Disparity

Economic disparity is one of the most striking aspects of the impact of globalization and urbanization in Indonesia. Western regions of Indonesia, such as Java and Bali, tend to have much higher levels of income and development compared to eastern regions such as Papua and Maluku. This creates a significant imbalance in the contribution of development between regions. Based on research data, per capita income in Java and Bali reaches an average of IDR 6 million per month, while in Papua and Maluku it is only around IDR 2.5 million.

**Table 2: Distribution of Per Capita Income and Human Development Index (HDI) Between Regions in Indonesia**

Region	Per Capita Income (IDR)	Human Development Index (HDI)
Java and Bali	6,000,000	0.84
Kalimantan	4,500,000	0.74
Papua and Maluku	2,500,000	0.57

This inequality also affects the poverty rate in each region. Rapid urbanization has caused massive migration from rural areas to big cities, such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan. However,



employment in the formal sector is not comparable to the number of workers entering, so many workers have shifted to the informal sector, where incomes tend to be unstable. In addition, economic inequality can also be seen from the level of community access to economic infrastructure. Urban areas have better access to markets, transportation, and technology, while rural communities often face geographical barriers and limited supporting facilities.

## 2. Access to Education and Health

The study found that access to education and health services is strongly influenced by geographic location and affluence. Urban areas tend to have better education facilities, such as lower teacher-to-student ratios and access to modern learning facilities.

**Table 3: Teacher to Student Ratio and School Participation Rates by Region**

Region	Teacher-Student Ratio	School Participation Rate (%)
Urban	1:20	89%
Rural	1:50	63%
Remote Area	1:80	47%

Similar conditions are also seen in health services. Urban areas have more health facilities, including hospitals with advanced technology and adequate numbers of medical personnel. In contrast, in remote areas, people often have to travel long distances to obtain basic health services. This inequality has an impact on people's quality of life, with lower life expectancy in rural and remote areas.

**Table 4: Availability of Health Facilities and Life Expectancy by Region**

Region	Number of Health Facilities	Life Expectancy (years)
Urban	50 per 100,000 population	72
Rural	15 per 100,000 population	65
Remote Area	5 per 100,000 population	59



### 3. The Impact of Urbanization on Social Structure

Rapid urbanization has changed the pattern of social interaction in society. Urban communities show a more individualistic lifestyle compared to rural communities, which still maintain collectivist values. Interview results show that 78% of respondents from urban areas feel a decline in community solidarity due to economic pressures and the need for efficiency in daily life. This phenomenon also has an impact on migration patterns that increase social inequality in the city. Many migrants from rural areas who work in the informal sector, such as street vendors or daily laborers, often face social discrimination and limited access to public services, such as decent housing and sanitation.

**Table 5: Impact of Urbanization on Social Structure in Urban Areas**

Social Aspects	Changes That Occur
Interaction Patterns	From collective to individualistic
Community Solidarity	Declining in urban areas
Migration Patterns	Dominance of the informal sector in the city

### 4. The Impact of Globalization on Local Culture

Increasingly intensive globalization also affects local culture in Indonesia. In many cases, local culture is starting to be replaced by foreign culture, especially in urban areas that are the center of global economic activity. Research shows that 65% of respondents in urban areas prefer popular culture products, such as foreign music and films, compared to traditional culture products. However, on the other hand, globalization also opens up opportunities to promote local culture to the international level. Many regions, especially those with famous tourist destinations such as Bali and Yogyakarta, have successfully utilized globalization to introduce their local arts and traditions to the global market.

**Table 6: The Influence of Globalization on Local Culture in Indonesia**

Cultural Impact	Positive	Negative
Globalization	Increasing the promotion of local culture	Shifting traditional values
Modernization	Access to technology for cultural preservation	Commercialization of culture

### 5. Potential for Social Conflict





Persistent social inequality increases the risk of social conflict, especially in urban areas with high levels of urbanization. The study found that injustice in income distribution and public services are often the main triggers of public dissatisfaction, especially among the poor. This conflict often manifests itself in the form of social protests, leading to tensions between the government and society.

**Table 7: Social Conflict Factors Related to Social Inequality**

Conflict Factors	Social Impact
Income Inequality	Public dissatisfaction
Public Service Injustice	Social protests and community conflicts

This study shows that social inequality in Indonesia is the result of the uneven influence of globalization and urbanization. Although globalization and urbanization provide economic and cultural opportunities, their negative impacts, such as income inequality, access to basic services, and potential social conflict, require serious attention. Inclusive policy interventions are needed to reduce inequality and improve the welfare of society as a whole.

## Discussion

The results of this study clarify the dynamics of social inequality in Indonesia that are influenced by globalization and urbanization, supporting the findings presented in the introduction and literature. Globalization and urbanization are forces that change the social, economic, and cultural structures in Indonesia, but both also exacerbate inequality between regions and community groups. As a country with an increasing level of urbanization, the development gap between western regions such as Java and Bali and eastern regions such as Papua and Maluku remains a major issue (Khan & Islam, 1990; Sihombing, 2019). The research findings show that the western region has a much higher per capita income compared to the eastern region, creating a significant gap in access to economic resources and public services. This is in accordance with the literature stating that urbanization and economic growth concentrated in large cities often come at the expense of rural areas (Wilonoyudho et al., 2017).

Access to education and health is also a major factor that deepens social inequality. This study revealed that the teacher-student ratio in urban areas (1:20) is much better compared to rural (1:50) and remote areas (1:80). This phenomenon shows that limited access to quality education is still a major obstacle for people in remote areas, reinforcing previous findings that social inequality limits the economic and social opportunities of the poor (Hodge et al., 2014; Renner et al., 2021). Similar conditions occur in health services, where remote areas face a lack of basic facilities, resulting in lower life expectancy (59 years) compared to urban areas (72 years).







The social impact of urbanization is also a major focus in this study. The shift in people's lifestyles from collectivity to individualism in urban areas shows a significant change in values due to economic pressures and the need for efficiency (Junaedi et al., 2023). This reflects the influence of globalization which accelerates changes in social structures, although often at the expense of community solidarity (Sosial et al., 2024). In addition, large-scale migration from rural to urban areas creates new social inequalities in urban areas, with many migrant workers trapped in the informal sector without adequate social protection.

The impact of globalization on local culture also has complex impacts. On the one hand, globalization helps promote Indonesian arts and traditions to the international level, as seen in tourist destinations such as Bali and Yogyakarta. However, on the other hand, local culture is starting to be replaced by popular culture, which is more dominant in urban areas (Sosial et al., 2024). Commercialization of culture is also a major challenge, where many traditions lose their spiritual meaning in order to meet the needs of the global market.

This study also found that social inequality increases the risk of conflict in urban areas. Dissatisfaction with the unfair distribution of income and public services often triggers social protests, especially among the poor (Udjianto & Susanto, 2017). This is in accordance with the literature stating that social inequality increases tensions between groups, which can trigger conflict if not handled properly (Sarkhel & Sahoo, 2020). This discussion emphasizes that although globalization and urbanization provide opportunities for economic growth and modernization, their impacts on social inequality, local culture, and potential conflict require serious attention. An inclusive and equitable policy approach is needed to reduce inequality, ensure equitable distribution of benefits, and maintain social stability amidst complex dynamics of change.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that social inequality in Indonesia is influenced by the dynamics of globalization and uneven urbanization, with urban areas such as Java and Bali enjoying greater economic benefits than remote areas such as Papua and Maluku. This inequality is reflected in differences in per capita income, access to education and health, and quality of life. Urban areas have better teacher-student ratios and adequate health facilities, while people in rural and remote areas often face limited basic services. Urbanization also changes the social structure of society, from collectivity to individualism, while creating new tensions due to social pressures and mass migration to cities. In addition, globalization brings challenges to the preservation of local culture, with the increasing commercialization of traditions that reduce their spiritual value. To overcome this gap, inclusive policies are needed, equitable development between regions, and the



involvement of local communities in the planning and implementation of sustainable development policies.

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