



# Ada' Mappurondo, Indigenous Religion Resurgence and State Accommodation in Indonesia

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## Abstract

This article examines the resurgence of indigenous religions in Indonesia, driven by state recognition policies, particularly the Constitutional Court Decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016. Focusing on the Ada' Mappurondo community in Mamasa Regency, West Sulawesi Province, the study highlights how adherents, once marginalised by the state and local society, now experience significant changes due to state recognition. However, challenges persist, as their sacred traditions and spiritual practices are frequently undermined by neighbouring communities. Using a qualitative approach and literature review, this article analyses the state's accommodation efforts and their impact on citizen relations following the Constitutional Court's decision. The Ada' Mappurondo community exemplifies both informal and formal citizenship models. Informally, they recognise their limited capacity to influence government decision-making and thus do not actively pursue citizenship rights, despite benefiting from the Court's ruling. Formally, they continue to advocate for the preservation of their ancestral teachings. When local residents disrupt their spiritual practices, the Ada' Mappurondo community responds by asserting their rights. The study concludes that government-facilitated dialogue is essential to foster sustainable relationships between the Ada' Mappurondo community and local residents. Such efforts should not only address practical concerns but also ensure that the aspirations of the Ada' Mappurondo community are heard and respected, thereby strengthening intercommunity relations in the post-recognition era.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Religion Resurgence, State Accommodation, Ada' Mappurondo, Citizenship Politics, Constitutional Court Decision 2017



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## Introduction

The discourse on the resurgence of indigenous religions has recently gained traction across academic and cross-sector forums. At the academic level, ancestral religions were initially incorporated into university curricula under labels such as 'traditional religion' or 'primal religion'. However, these terms were later replaced with 'indigenous religion' to avoid connotations of primitivism. This shift in terminology and paradigm serves two key purposes: (1) to redefine religion as an open and fluid concept rather than a static or rigid framework, and (2) to examine the implications of religisation on the marginalisation of citizenship rights experienced by Indigenous Peoples (Abbas, 2021). In cross-sector forums, the issue of ancestral religions is closely tied to efforts to build collective movements focused on inclusive and equitable citizenship. These efforts include policy advocacy, mentoring, research, and knowledge dissemination (*Tentang Kami* – ICIR Rumah Bersama, n.d.).

The term 'resurgence' is particularly fitting in this context, given the long history of denial and marginalisation faced by indigenous religions. According to the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) Foundation (2015), Southeast Asia is home to an estimated 93 to 124 million of the world's 370 million Indigenous People (Tessier, 2015, p. 3). The AIPP identifies five common challenges faced by indigenous communities in the region: (1) lack of legal recognition, (2) violations of land, territory, and resource rights, (3) vulnerability to climate change, (4) violations of women's and children's rights, and (5) limited access to social services (Tessier, 2015, pp. 44–53). In the Indonesian context, Samsul Maarif, a lecturer at the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University, explains that ancestral religions have endured various phases of marginalisation. These include colonial-era accusations of communism, the categorisation of their beliefs as mere 'culture', and the forced affiliation of adherents with state-recognised religions during the New Order regime (Maarif, 2017, p. 73).

These national and global dynamics are reflected in the experiences of the Ada' Mappurondo community in Mamasa Regency, West Sulawesi Province. Ada' Mappurondo is a faith grounded in the philosophy of *Pemali appa' Randanna* (four basic rules), where *Pemali* means norm or rule, *Appa'* means four, and *Randanna* refers to core principles. The four rules include *Pa'bannetauan* (marriage ceremonies), *Pa'bisan* (celebrations or worship ceremonies dedicated to celestial deities and ancestral spirits), *Pa'tomatean* (death ceremonies), and *Patotibojongam* (prohibitions and rituals related to agriculture). The term *Mappurondo* translates to 'oral, unwritten teachings', reflecting the community's reliance on oral traditions (Hidayat, 2023, p. 247).

American anthropologist Kenneth M. George, referred to locally as Tuan Ken, conducted an extensive 30-month ethnographic study of the Ada' Mappurondo community in Bambang Village. George argued that the Ada' Mappurondo adherents were marginalised by surrounding religions, particularly Christianity and Islam. Their commitment to ancestral ritual traditions led to their portrayal as 'backward' and 'foreign'. George further notes

that, over the past 50 years, the Ada' Mappurondo have been excluded from the ethnic map of South Sulawesi, which was shaped by colonial and national interests in identifying governable peoples and cultures. This map includes only four ethnic groups—Bugis, Makassarese, Mandarese, and Toraja—each recognised for their distinct language, culture, and territory (George, 1996, p. 27).

George also highlights that, since the 1970s, the Ada' Mappurondo community in Bambang has experienced significant erosion due to the New Order regime's refusal to recognise their practices as a religion. This stems from a narrow interpretation of Pancasila, which categorised Ada' Mappurondo as adat (custom) or animism rather than a legitimate religion. As a result, practitioners were stigmatised as pro-communist or anti-development, and efforts were made to pressure Ada' Mappurondo youth to convert to Christianity or Islam. These pressures led to a rise in conversions to Christianity, particularly among the younger generation, relegating Ada' Mappurondo to a marginalised ritual tradition practised primarily by the elderly (George, 1996, p. 40).

Despite this history of mistreatment by the state and surrounding communities, George illustrates that the Ada' Mappurondo community does not hesitate to critique other ideologies and social groups that appropriate their local traditions. In this regard, Ada' Mappurondo rejects the notion that its sacred traditions should be reduced to mere 'culture' or 'art', and it opposes actions that demean or undermine its practices (George, 1996, p. 9).

Indigenous religions in Indonesia gained momentum during the Reformation era, enabling adherents to voice their demands for recognition and equal treatment alongside state-recognised religions. The inclusion of the term 'belief' alongside 'religion' in several laws enacted during this period, particularly in the amended 1945 Constitution, helped frame the existence and rights of ancestral religions within the context of human rights. According to Maarif, this legal accommodation facilitated the 'revitalisation of the ancestral religion discourse.' A significant milestone was the formation of the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, or AMAN), which emerged as a collective movement advocating for the political, economic, and cultural rights of indigenous communities, including the recognition of ancestral religions that had long been marginalised by the state (Maarif, 2017, pp. 73–75).

Gradually, indigenous religions began to gain state recognition through various legal instruments. In the realm of population administration, the enactment of Law No. 23/2006 on Civil Registration, Government Regulation No. 37/2007, and Presidential Regulation No. 25/2008 provided a legal framework allowing adherents of indigenous religions to leave the religion column blank on their identity cards. Previously, they were required to borrow the names of state-recognised religions to complete this section (Maarif, 2017, pp. 80–87).

The legal standing of indigenous religious adherents was further reinforced by the issuance of the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Culture and Tourism No. 42/40 of 2009 on Guidelines for Cultural Preservation, and No. 43/41 of 2009 on Guidelines for Services to Adherents of Beliefs in God Almighty. These regula-

tions are notable for affirming the definition of *aliran kepercayaan* (belief systems) and stipulating that the state must uphold the rights of citizens who adhere to indigenous religions. The first regulation explicitly includes belief in God Almighty within the scope of cultural preservation, while the second mandates that regional governments—governors, regents, and other local authorities—provide services to believers, including the administration of religious organisations, funeral arrangements, and access to facilities for gatherings or other designated purposes (Maarif, 2017, pp. 87–89).

A few years later, Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 27/2016 on Education Services for Beliefs in God Almighty was enacted on 1 August 2016. This regulation marked a significant step in recognising and fulfilling the rights of indigenous religious adherents, allowing their children to receive education aligned with their beliefs. Students were no longer required to select subjects from one of the state-recognised religions, as had previously been the case (Maarif, 2017, pp. 89–90).

The peak of recognition for indigenous religions occurred on 7 November 2017, when the Constitutional Court issued Decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016 (Abridged 2017 Constitutional Court Decision), granting all petitions for judicial review of Law No. 23/2006 on Population Administration, as amended by Law No. 24/2013. This ruling significantly expanded indigenous faiths' access to civil rights, as it mandated the state to ensure that adherents of indigenous faiths could fill in the religion column on their Identity Cards and Family Cards (mkri.id, 2017). Following this decision, 114 laws have incorporated the term *penghayat kepercayaan* as a means of equalising it with the term religion. Among these are Law No. 5 of 2017 on the Promotion of Culture, promulgated on 29 May 2017; the explanation of Article 28(4)(g) of Law No. 17 of 2023 on Health, which obliges the state to protect vulnerable communities, including individuals who face social exclusion due to their religion or belief; and the explanation of Article 29(4) of Law No. 6 of 2023 on the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law No. 2 of 2022 on Job Creation, which clarifies that public order must align with the principles of religion or belief, among several other regulations (Wijayanti, 2024, pp. 120–132).

These legal developments have also had a tangible impact on Ada' Mappurondo adherents in Mamasa. George's 1996 study has since been revised in light of subsequent events, including the election of the late Mr Jenang to the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD Kabupaten Mamasa) for the 2009–2014 term and the acceptance of three civil servants (*Pegawai Negeri Sipil*, PNS) from among the Ada' Mappurondo community.

The increasing recognition of Ada' Mappurondo adherents in public office and civil service reflects broader legal and social transformations in Indonesia. Initially, only three Ada' Mappurondo adherents had been appointed as civil servants before the recruitment of Category 2 (K-2) civil servant candidates (CPNS) in 2013. However, this number grew by nine following the K-2 CPNS recruitment process, with all nine individuals inaugurated through an Ada' Mappurondo induction ceremony. Political participation has also expanded, particularly at the village level. Prior to the 2016–2021 simultaneous village head elections (*Pemilihan Kepala Desa, Pilkades*), two Ada' Mappurondo adherents had been

elected as village heads (*kepala desa*), alongside three as village secretaries (Sekretaris Desa, Sekdes). During the 2016–2021 Pilkades, the number increased to four village heads and four village secretaries, though in the 2022 elections, this was slightly reduced to three in each category. Moreover, Ada' Mappurondo adherents have gained leadership positions in the education sector, with two serving as primary school (*Sekolah Dasar*) principals, two as junior secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*, SMP) principals, and one as a vocational secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*, SMK) principal. Further integration into governmental structures is evident in the appointment of an Ada' Mappurondo adherent as a head of division at the Mamasa Regency Public Works (*Dinas Pekerjaan Umum*, PU) Office. This growing presence in both civil and political spheres is further highlighted by the participation of three Ada' Mappurondo legislative candidates (Calon Legislatif, Caleg) in the 2024 simultaneous general elections (*Pemilu Serentak*). These developments indicate a gradual but significant shift towards the recognition and inclusion of indigenous religious adherents in formal state institutions (Hidayat, 2024).

The significance of state recognition for Ada' Mappurondo believers has been evident even before the 2017 Constitutional Court decision. According to Buntu, a prominent figure among Ada' Mappurondo adherents, the Indonesian government's facilitation of the *Kongres Penghayat Kepercayaan* across Indonesia in Surabaya in 2012—mediated by the Ministry of Education and Culture—played a crucial role in strengthening the internal consolidation of the Ada' Mappurondo community (Hidayat, 2024, p. 74). Similarly, Cakdi Muliadi, chairman of the *Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan Indonesia* (MLKI) in West Sulawesi, noted in a 2017 Setara Institute report that in addition to overcoming challenges related to civil registration, Ada' Mappurondo adherents have increasingly participated in political affairs, secured employment opportunities in Mamasa, and gained access to religious education aligned with their beliefs. Cakdi further stated that the Mamasa Regency government has treated them fairly, as reflected in official data, which records 5,353 Indigenous People in the civil registry, the majority of whom are Ada' Mappurondo adherents in Mamasa Regency (Sudarto, 2017, p. 66).

The shifting dynamics of Ada' Mappurondo demonstrate how state discrimination has evolved, largely due to improved access to fundamental rights such as employment, education, and civil registration. This transformation has been significantly influenced by state recognition, which has gradually dismantled the structural marginalisation that persisted for decades. During the colonial period and the New Order era, indigenous religions were compelled to align with one of the six 'official' religions. As the state re-evaluated its stance, *penghayat kepercayaan* were granted access to fundamental rights, marking a turning point in their struggle for recognition. However, despite formal state recognition, Ada' Mappurondo adherents continue to face social challenges in their interactions with other communities in Mamasa. Although access to fundamental rights has improved, it has not resolved broader citizenship issues related to customary identity and the sacredness of their rituals.

In the Setara Institute report, Cakdi highlighted a contemporary challenge facing Ada'

Mappurondo: the exploitation of their teachings by external individuals and groups who study their belief system but interpret it freely. He noted that this phenomenon disrupts and weakens their ritual practices, leading to a loss of sacredness (Sudarto, 2017, p. 67). The challenges faced by Ada' Mappurondo believers align with what George describes as the 'takeover of local traditions by other ideologies and groups.' One such example is the appropriation of the Ada' Mappurondo ritual dance by external groups who perform it identically, stripping it of its original meaning (Mekora.id, 2023). Reing, an Ada' Mappurondo adherent, explained through the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS) at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) that in Ada' Mappurondo spirituality, dance is not merely a profane art form but a sacred act of communication with God through bodily movement. As a result, this ritual dance cannot be performed in the presence of outsiders, nor can it be documented (ICRS UGM, 2020).

From the perspective of citizenship relations, it is necessary to reconsider an effective framework by critically evaluating the nature of state accommodation. This does not imply that state recognition should be abolished, as such accommodation has had a positive impact on adherents of indigenous religions and should therefore be acknowledged. However, greater attention from the state should be directed towards fostering interfaith relations on a personal level. This includes not only dialogue on practical daily matters but also shared interfaith experiences which, if not influenced by identity politics, could serve as a strong foundation for the formation of a contextual religious identity (Wijaya, 2022, p. 131).

At this juncture, the discussion highlights how the revival of indigenous religions in Indonesia has largely been shaped by state recognition. The term 'resurgence' is particularly relevant in this context, as it aptly describes the renewed visibility of ancestral religions that were marginalised during the colonial and New Order periods. For instance, *Penghayat Ada' Mappurondo* has significantly benefited from state accommodation. Previously subjected to state discrimination, they are now recognised, granting them access to fundamental rights such as employment, civil administration, political participation, and religious education. However, a contemporary challenge faced by Ada' Mappurondo adherents concerns their relationship with surrounding communities. Spiritual traditions they regard as sacred—such as ritual dance—are frequently appropriated and performed indiscriminately by local residents, undermining their spiritual significance.

## **State Recognition, Civic Politics, and Indigenous Religious Communities: A Review of Previous Studies**

Qisthi Rosyidah, in her study on the efforts of the *Kelompok Kerohanian* (Spiritualist Group) in Malang City to obtain their rights as citizens, applied Kristian Stokke's four dimensions of citizenship: citizenship as legal status, as rights, as membership, and as participation. Rosyidah found that the personal and institutional struggles to secure rights for the *Penghayat Kerohanian* group encompassed several aspects: the struggle for membership rights, which involved leaving the religion column blank or borrowing a recognised reli-

gion on identity cards before the Constitutional Court ruling; the struggle for legal status as an organisation or community, which required formal registration with the National Unity and Political Agency; the struggle for civil, social, and political rights, which included support for the Constitutional Court ruling; and the struggle for participation, which involved engagement in public governance. She noted that *Kelompok Kerohanian* actively responded to their needs and interests without relying on government initiatives or grants, addressing both administrative and social dimensions of their struggle (Qisthi Rosyidah, 2023, pp. 58–70). However, her research does not specify which model of citizenship could strengthen the relationship between adherents of ancestral religions and the wider community.

In contrast to Rosyidah, Ertanto and Marlana argue that informal citizenship serves as the foundation for driving changes in formal citizenship among Marapu believers in Sumba. By examining the advocacy efforts of Yayasan Satunama, Yayasan Wali Ati (Yasalti), and the Badan Pengurus Marapu Sumba Timur since 2014, they highlight how these institutions have collectively built alliances within the Peduli Programme. Their research concludes that grassroots advocacy efforts contributed to the issuance of the 2017 Constitutional Court Decision, as Marapu adherents were directly involved in submitting their case to the court. Additionally, the study demonstrates that Yayasan Satunama and Yayasan Yasalti identified and engaged key actors in promoting change, including government institutions, mass media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and religious leaders. One significant initiative stemming from this identification process was encouraging openness towards diverse identities by engaging religious leaders. This was achieved through outreach efforts that promoted Law No. 24 of 2013 on Population Administration among Christian and Catholic leaders, seeking their support for greater religious inclusivity. This advocacy is seen as a key indicator that the 2017 Constitutional Court decision was a product of grassroots struggles and informal citizenship (Ertanto et al., n.d.).

Both Rosyidah and Ertanto and Marlana emphasise the importance of state–citizen relations in shaping civic politics. However, they differ in their interpretations of citizenship models. Rosyidah views the struggle of *Penghayat Kerohanian* in Malang City as a fight for their own rights through formal citizenship mechanisms. Conversely, Ertanto and Marlana argue that *Penghayat Kepercayaan* Marapu in Sumba secured their rights through an advocacy-driven process from below, illustrating the role of informal citizenship in effecting legal and political change.

The differentiation between formal and informal approaches is further elaborated by Husni Mubarok, who examines civic politics by emphasising the need for a nuanced perspective on the diverse practices of citizen–state relations in a vast country like Indonesia. He argues that the concept of inclusive democracy acknowledges the significance of formal legal frameworks while simultaneously recognising the importance of everyday (informal) political processes as essential to shaping the relationship between citizens and the state. This concept is grounded in the premise that no democratic state is entirely equal or just, as all democracies experience varying degrees of inequality in different ways.

In alignment with Ertanto and Marlana, Mubarok identifies several key actors targeted for social inclusion initiatives by Yayasan Wali Ati (Yasalti) and the Donders Social Foundation. These efforts aim to internalise the principles of social inclusion among those involved in advocacy. The initiatives extend not only to actors of exclusion (excluders)—which include Christian and Catholic religious leaders and local communities who have historically marginalised Marapu adherents—but also to governmental authorities, advocacy NGOs, field assistants, and Marapu believers themselves, who have been the excluded party. The inclusion efforts directed at excluders, such as local residents, are particularly significant, as they often perceive Marapu believers as infidels and backward. However, rather than treating excluders as adversaries, Yasalti and the Donders Social Foundation position them as potential partners, operating on the assumption that increased interaction with Marapu believers may gradually change their perspectives.

Regarding the inclusion of Marapu believers, Mubarok identifies two key advocacy agendas: eliminating exclusionary attitudes towards themselves and towards other groups. Within Marapu communities, it has long been accepted that many of their relatives must convert to mainstream religions for socio-economic mobility, and at times, Marapu adherents themselves may engage in exclusionary practices within ritual contexts. However, Mubarok does not provide further details on the specific strategies employed by Yasalti and the Donders Social Foundation to achieve these objectives (Mubarok, 2020, pp. 1–31).

The findings above serve as a framework for understanding the civic politics approach and its impact on indigenous faith communities. Ertanto and Marlana (informal citizenship) and Mubarok (inclusive democracy) highlight efforts to strengthen the relationship between local residents and indigenous faith groups. In line with Mubarok's approach, which emphasises the contextualisation of civic politics based on the needs of vulnerable groups, the unique challenges faced by Ada' Mappurondo require a distinct analytical perspective. Consequently, examining the dynamics of interaction between local residents and Ada' Mappurondo adherents represents a new contribution to the discourse on the civic politics of indigenous religions amidst their resurgence. Furthermore, existing scholarship predominantly focuses on the period preceding the 2017 Constitutional Court Decision, leaving a gap in understanding the evolving relationship between indigenous religious communities and local residents post-2017. This study seeks to address that gap by providing an updated analysis of these interactions in light of recent legal and social developments.

## Problem Formulation and Research Methods

The study traces the political trajectory of state accommodation for indigenous belief systems and examines how civic politics—both formal and informal—are practised within the Ada' Mappurondo community. Through these two focal areas, the article aims to analyse and formulate an approach that the state can adopt to build sustainable citizen relations following the recognition of ancestral religions (religious resurgence) through the 2017 Constitutional Court Decision. The case study of *Penghayat Kepercayaan Ada' Mappurondo*

do is chosen due to its relevance to the author's daily experience.

This study is guided by Samsul Maarif's definition of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* as a category within Indigenous Religions. *Penghayat Kepercayaan* refers to the religious traditions of specific groups and individuals registered with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. These communities have long struggled for state recognition of their beliefs as religions since Indonesia's independence. Their efforts culminated in success in 2017 when the Constitutional Court (Decision No. 97/PUU-VII/2016) granted their petition for religious recognition (Maarif, 2023, pp. 1–2).

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive review, relying on literature study, including books, project reports, research findings, academic journals, and online news sources. Descriptive research seeks to systematically describe and interpret various elements, such as prevailing conditions, existing relationships, evolving perspectives, and consequential effects (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021, pp. 49–50).

The research process involves collecting relevant literature sources, which are then classified according to the research framework. Subsequently, data processing and reference quotations are organised to be presented as research findings, abstracted to obtain comprehensive insights, and interpreted to develop a theoretical understanding leading to conclusions. Literature study serves as a foundational framework for further research, particularly field studies (Darmalaksana, 2020, pp. 2–4).

As outlined earlier, the examination of the relationship between local residents and Ada' Mappurondo adherents following the 2017 Constitutional Court Decision represents a novel area of study. Therefore, as an initial step, a literature-based approach is employed. However, this study ensures that the literature review is conducted using relevant, up-to-date, and substantive sources, which will subsequently be integrated with theoretical frameworks and conceptual analyses to construct a robust analytical foundation.

## **The Long Journey of Ancestral Religion Accommodation Politics**

In the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Dictionary), accommodation is defined as something provided to fulfil a need. Long-standing believers of ancestral religions seek state recognition as a means of accommodation, fostering mutual complementarity between the state and religion while also mitigating potential conflicts.

Lutfi Assyaukanie, in his analysis of accommodationist politics, classifies accommodationist attitudes as the view that politics should be independent of strict religious oversight. He argues that Muslims should acknowledge the legitimate interests of other groups and be willing to engage in ongoing cooperation with them (Assyaukanie, 2011, p. 7). Using the example of Islamic political development in Indonesia since independence—particularly during the constitutional drafting process—Assyaukanie explains that Islam has historically pursued two major objectives in relation to the state: resisting secularism and securing a role in governance. At one point, the idea of establishing an Islamic state emerged as a pro-

posed solution to these interests. Conversely, the state itself has had two primary concerns: obtaining legitimacy from Islam and accommodating the interests of other religious groups in Indonesia. As a result, a compromise was necessary to establish a state model that could balance these competing interests. In this context, Pancasila emerged as a framework that accommodates Islamic interests by rejecting secularism through its principle of *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Belief in One Almighty God) while also legitimising the state's authority through Islam and ensuring inclusivity for other religious traditions (Assyaukanie, 2011, pp. 125–180).

During the drafting of Indonesia's constitution, ancestral religions were largely invisible and, in fact, became victims of the politics of religion—a political strategy whereby religious groups leverage religion to legitimise power and control over others. Within this framework, religion is defined exclusively from the perspective of the dominant religious tradition, determining which groups are categorised as 'religious' and which are deemed 'non-religious.' The roots of this political dynamic can be traced to Dutch colonial policies that stratified and polarised indigenous communities, as well as to internal social contestations. These conditions fostered two sectarian political tensions: Islam versus adat (customary traditions) and the divide between *santri* (orthodox Muslims) and *abangan* (syncretic or nominal Muslims). Within this contestation, adherents of ancestral religions were often associated with the *abangan* category (Maarif, 2017, p. 11).

The *santri–abangan* divide also underpinned the broader conflict between proponents of an Islamic state and advocates of a secular state. This ideological confrontation was addressed by Sukarno in his speech on 1 June 1945, where he proposed a compromise: Indonesia would be neither an Islamic state nor a secular state, but a Pancasila state. Both factions within the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia, PPKI) reached a consensus by incorporating the terms 'religion' and 'belief' into Article 29(2) of the 1945 Constitution, allowing each side to claim legitimacy. Although the *santri* group ultimately failed to establish the Jakarta Charter as the foundation for an Islamic state, they succeeded in ensuring that 'religion' was enshrined in the constitution. At this stage, religious politics began to permeate the state apparatus, mandating that the government provide special services to those classified as religious adherents.

Meanwhile, the *abangan* group, having failed to curb these religious demands, recognised that the term 'religion' would be instrumentalised to exert control over them, including followers of ancestral religions. Originally advocating for a separation between religion and politics, they were compelled to propose the inclusion of *kepercayaan* (belief) as a constitutional category. Although left undefined, this term implicitly referred to religious practices distinct from those of the officially recognised religions (Maarif, 2017, pp. 15–21).

The issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 followed a similar pattern to previous political accommodations, eliciting both support and opposition from religious organisations. The Indonesian Ulema Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*

*sia, MUI*), for instance, presented five responses to the 2017 Constitutional Court ruling: (1) Article 29(2) of the 1945 Constitution pertains solely to religion and does not regulate *aliran kepercayaan*, as indicated by the title of Chapter XI on Religion; (2) Religion and *aliran kepercayaan* are distinct and should not be equated, as reflected in Article 28E of the 1945 Constitution, which separately regulates the right to embrace a religion (paragraph 1) and the right to follow a belief (paragraph 2), acknowledging the social reality that some Indonesians adhere to indigenous beliefs rather than recognised religions; (3) MUI respects religious, spiritual, and faith-based differences as human rights protected by the Constitution; (4) MUI urges the government to implement the 2017 Constitutional Court ruling with caution to prevent public unrest and to consider the input of religious leaders in formulating implementation guidelines; and (5) MUI calls on the House of Representatives to propose amendments to Law No. 24 of 2014, which revised Law No. 23 of 2006 on Population Administration, to align with current needs (JPPN, 2017).

Based on these considerations, MUI proposed three solutions: (1) the government should record the identity of *penghayat kepercayaan* (believers in God Almighty) only in the Family Card (Kartu Keluarga, KK) rather than on the Identity Card; (2) *penghayat kepercayaan* should remain under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Culture regarding civil rights, as has been the practice thus far; and (3) the government should issue a special identity card that lists only the column for belief in God Almighty, tailored to the number of indigenous believers requiring it (MUI, 2017).

In contrast to MUI, the Fellowship of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia, PGI), represented by its chairman for the 2019–2024 period, Gomar Gultom, urged the government to promptly implement the 2017 Constitutional Court ruling. According to Gultom, the government must immediately establish technical provisions and implementation guidelines for including the status of *penghayat kepercayaan* in the electronic Identity Card (e-KTP), as this directly affects civil rights, including marriage registration (Kompas, 2018). He also emphasised the need for continued advocacy in national legislation and called for internal campaigns within religious communities to encourage a substantive practice of religion—one rooted in love and humanity.

Similarly, Nahdlatul Ulama (Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, PBNU) Executive Board member Robikin Emhas stated that the 2017 Constitutional Court ruling must be respected. He stressed that the Indonesian Constitution guarantees equal rights and equal standing before the law and government. Therefore, according to Emhas, *penghayat kepercayaan* should not face discrimination, especially as the Constitutional Court's ruling is final and binding, leaving no option but to respect and comply with the decision (Republika, 2017).

Apart from the ongoing debates surrounding the issue, the accommodating stance of the Ministry of Home Affairs has been evident in its adherence to Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016, which is final and binding (Kompas). The Ministry, through the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Direktorat Jenderal Kependudukan dan Catatan Sipil, Dirjen Dukcapil), committed to studying and adjusting

the Constitutional Court's ruling to ensure its harmonisation with existing regulations. Zudan Arif Fakhrulloh, who was serving as Dirjen Dukcapil at the time, affirmed that the Ministry would implement the ruling by issuing identity cards to individuals adhering to belief systems other than the officially recognised religions. Zudan's commitment to inclusivity continued during his tenure as Acting Governor of West Sulawesi (Pelaksana Jabatan Gubernur Sulawesi Barat), where he actively encouraged the involvement of Ada' Mappurondo adherents in regional development, recognising their legal status as granted by the government. He emphasised that believers of Ada' Mappurondo must have equal access to government services and programmes, including higher education and other public services (Dukcapil Kemendagri, 2019; Kompas, 2017; Tirto.id, 2019). Zudan also underscored the responsibility of the West Sulawesi National Education Office to ensure that all Ada' Mappurondo students could continue their education, thereby helping to prevent early marriage within the community (Antara News, 2023).

The 2017 Constitutional Court ruling, followed by actions taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs and other relevant stakeholders, has significantly advanced religious and belief freedoms in Indonesia. Believers are no longer required to leave the religion column blank on their identity cards or falsely claim adherence to a recognised religion. Religious anthropologist Robert W. Hefner described the ruling as a significant milestone in the recognition of inclusive citizenship, viewing it as a major advancement for democracy in Indonesia (Hefner, 2019).

Constitutionally, the state's role in accommodating religious diversity represents a formal recognition of pluralism, ensuring that various groups are acknowledged without imposing restrictive or discriminatory measures on others. As Mahfud MD (in Haryono, 2018) noted, Indonesia is neither a theocratic state, which enforces a single official religion, nor a secular state that disregards religious traditions. Instead, Indonesia is a religious nation-state, one that respects and fosters all religions practised by its people, provided they uphold humanitarian and civilisational values (Haryono, 2018, pp. 30–37).

The core objective of accommodation politics is to foster agreement and social harmony through negotiation and compromise, facilitating consensus among different social and religious groups. The politics of accommodation, therefore, addresses the diverse interests of groups distinguished by cultural, religious, or ethnic differences. In the Indonesian context, these accommodation efforts manifest through negotiation and compromise to establish a governing framework that, in Mahfud MD's terminology, embodies the concept of a religious nation-state.

## **Differentiation of Formal and Informal Citizenship Politics and Practices in the Ada' Mappurondo Community**

Hiariej et al. emphasise that citizenship is a multifaceted concept with diverse and often contradictory definitions. Nonetheless, citizenship is invariably linked to fundamental rights and social processes within political contestation. As such, it should always be un-

derstood within the framework of civic politics. The term politics in this context indicates that citizenship is not solely a product of legal status but is also “fought for by individuals or groups who are excluded, deprived of their rights, and denied access to the public sphere” (Hiariej et al., 2016, pp. 1–3).

The development of civic politics in Indonesia is rooted in the emergence of citizenship issues in the Global South, which coincided with the spread of democracy—at least in its formal sense—across Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The expansion of democracy fostered a new awareness of citizenship rights, a growing desire for public engagement, and increasing demands for social inclusion. Hiariej conceptualises civic politics in Indonesia as an ongoing struggle for membership, rights, and participation. These dimensions manifest in movements related to nationalism and identity politics, the pursuit of justice and equitable welfare distribution, and pro-democracy activism—all of which constitute forms of resistance against injustice. He terms this the public sphere, as it serves as the primary arena for civic politics in most Global South countries, including Indonesia, in contrast to the private sphere that has historically dominated European political discourse. This trajectory can be traced through nationalist projects that have underpinned modern state formation and nation-building efforts, uniting cultural diversity and aligning identity politics actors within the same socio-political class. The evolution of civic politics in Indonesia dates back to the early 20th century with the rise of the independence movement, which conceptualised Indonesia as a unifying identity encompassing all ethnicities, religions, and islands. The seeds of citizenship politics were sown in this early movement, later evolving into a formalised system of membership, rights, and obligations (Hiariej et al., 2016, pp. 4–7).

Hiariej et al.’s model of citizenship aligns with the establishment of AMAN (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*) during its first congress in Jakarta in 1999, marking a pivotal moment for the resurgence of indigenous religions in Indonesia. AMAN’s declaration—“We do not recognise the state if the state does not recognise us”—embodied the struggle for ancestral religion recognition (Maarif, 2017, p. 74). This formal citizenship model is also evident in the legal battle for state recognition, culminating in the 2017 Constitutional Court decision. Several civil society organisations (CSOs), including the Satunama Foundation, Yasalti, and the Donders Social Foundation, played a crucial role in advocating for indigenous faith adherents across regions such as East Sumba, West Sumba, Brebes, Kulon Progo, Banyumas, Medan, and Deli Serdang. These efforts led to the formation of the Koalisi Pembela Kewarganegaraan (Coalition of Citizenship Defenders), which focused on challenging Law No. 24 of 2013 on Population Administration, deemed a source of discrimination against indigenous religion adherents. The coalition also supported petitioners from various ancestral religions in their judicial review at the Constitutional Court, including Nggay Mehang Tana (Marapu, East Sumba), Pagar Demanra Sirait (Parmalim, Medan), Arnold Purba (Agamo Bangso Batak, Medan), and Carlism (Sapto Darma, Brebes) (Ertanto et al., n.d.; Qisthi Rosyidah, 2023, p. 65).

The Indonesian model of citizenship, however, is not solely explained by Hiariej et al. Klinken and Berenschot, for instance, argue that the diverse perspectives on citizenship in

Indonesia must be recognised. According to them, citizenship in Indonesia no longer relies solely on formal legal frameworks and legislation; instead, informal relationships among citizens have significantly influenced its practice. This is due to the weakness of state institutions, which remain socially embedded but often lack effective authority. As a result, citizens rely more on personal relationships to secure their rights and manipulate regulations to their advantage. This dependence on personal networks suppresses the discourse on rights, as individuals continually negotiate their relationships with powerful elites. Rather than being legalistic, these relationships are interpersonal and, at times, politically antagonistic. Mediated citizenship, therefore, is highly stratified, with stark class differences between those who can and cannot easily access state services in their daily lives. Furthermore, the citizenship regime outlined in the first section emerges from Indonesia's specific political economy and history of state formation. Economically, Indonesia developed from the predominantly rural and small-town demographics of the colonial era. Politically, its citizenship model was shaped by historical political struggles that reached defining moments at critical junctures (Klinken & Berenschot, 2018, pp. 151–162).

Hefner, who also bridges formal and informal citizenship models, considers the 2017 Constitutional Court Decision to be the result of a synergy between the state and society, including interfaith groups. He views this synergy as a counter-critique to both foreign and domestic observers of Indonesia, who often question the quality of its democracy. While he acknowledges the findings of Gerry van Klinken and Ward Berenschot—who describe Indonesia as a patronage democracy—he argues that such an analysis, though significant, must be contextualised. Hefner warns against reducing civic reality to clientelism alone, as this perspective implies that democratising countries inevitably function within patronage networks, rendering civic ethics irrelevant to political engagement. He contends that such a conclusion is overly reductive and must be challenged to allow for a more nuanced understanding of citizenship, nationhood, and democratic development in Indonesia and beyond (Hefner, 2019).

Hefner appears unwilling to oversimplify these complexities, much like Husni Mubarok, who seeks to transcend the formal-informal dichotomy in citizenship studies by avoiding a reductionist approach to citizen-state relations in a country as vast as Indonesia. The phenomenon of religious resurgence in Southeast Asia, for example, is not merely a consequence of the limitations of secular theory but also a response to the weakening of the state in the face of neoliberalism, a form of civil society resistance against state authority, and a result of the destabilisation of secular nationalism introduced during Western colonialism. Secular theory, according to Hefner, often overlooks grassroots dynamics, particularly the ways in which religious communities seek security, self-determination, and dignity amidst sweeping social changes. He argues that religious engagement in public life does not solely stem from structural analysis or deliberate resistance; rather, religious communities actively transform their circumstances by focusing on what is within their control, starting with themselves (Hefner, 2010, pp. 1032–1035).

The complexity of Indonesia's citizenship model is also evident in the citizenship prac-

ties of the Ada' Mappurondo community. In their relationship with the government, Ada' Mappurondo believers recognise two distinct leadership structures: religious leaders responsible for worship and governmental leaders, such as village heads, sub-district heads, regents, governors, and the president. They perceive both types of leadership as extensions of divine authority, requiring respect and obedience. According to the teachings of Ada' Mappurondo, adherents are discouraged from making excessive demands, reinforcing their deference to these leadership structures (Hidayat, 2024, p. 72).

According to Buntu, the participation of Ada' Mappurondo believers in government decision-making has not been a primary concern for the community. While they express a desire to contribute to the development of Mamasa Regency, they also acknowledge their limited capacity in governmental administration. Consequently, they expect the government to be proactive in involving them, particularly in the performance of rituals aimed at restoring social harmony following disasters or other calamities in Mamasa Regency (Hidayat, 2024, p. 73).

“Yesterday, we requested and invited the government to conduct a ritual to ward off the earthquake disaster in Mamasa in 2019 and COVID-19 in 2020. The Ada' Mappurondo adherents took the initiative by proposing to the government that the ritual be extended to all members of the community, encouraging collective participation in a special ceremony to prevent disasters. In line with our capacity, we aim to restore social order through customary practices. The primary objective is to ensure that the people of Mamasa can continue the traditions of their ancestors.” (Hidayat, 2024, p. 78)

The simplicity of Ada' Mappurondo has been a key factor in their survival to this day. As Ryan Yumin Chua et al. observe, despite facing various challenges, indigenous communities in Southeast Asia have demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Chua identifies four factors that have contributed to the survival of these communities: (1) a strong connection to the land and environment, (2) adherence to cultural norms and traditions, (3) the transmission and preservation of indigenous knowledge across generations, and (4) an emphasis on social and community cohesion (Chua et al., 2019, pp. 3–5). This aligns with the practices of the Ada' Mappurondo, who, through oral tradition, continue to honour and preserve ancestral customs.

With regard to the second and fourth factors, Chua explains that the acceptance of cultural norms and traditions enables indigenous communities to navigate difficult circumstances. These norms and traditions persist across generations, fostering peace and harmony. Additionally, indigenous knowledge provides a foundation for overcoming challenges, while strong social cohesion instils confidence within these communities, allowing them to engage meaningfully with others. Their willingness to collaborate with diverse groups enhances their adaptability to pressing situations and helps them avoid conflict (Chua et al., 2019, pp. 16–18).

In the Ada' Mappurondo context, formal and informal citizenship operate in distinct and mutually exclusive ways. The community recognises its limited capacity for direct participation in government decision-making and does not actively seek political involve-

ment. Ada' Mappurondo adherents believe that those in government positions serve as extensions of divine authority and should be respected accordingly. However, they remain steadfast in following the teachings of their ancestors. They actively advocate for the implementation of traditional rituals to address disasters and calamities by submitting proposals to the Mamasa Regency government. This advocacy stems from their deep reverence for ancestral teachings and religious rites. Consequently, it is unsurprising that Ada' Mappurondo adherents reprimand local residents who misuse or appropriate their sacred traditions without proper understanding or respect.

## **Dialogue: Efforts to Build Sustainable Relationships Between Citizens**

According to Bagir and Dwipayana, the management of diversity must be grounded in two fundamental principles: pluralism and citizenship. Pluralism refers to the recognition and acceptance of societal diversity, while citizenship entails the elimination of discriminatory attitudes and the provision of equal opportunities for all citizens to participate in the public sphere in a civilised manner. Civic pluralism necessitates the role of the state in ensuring equitable access to public spaces, fostering a civic culture characterised by dialogue, deliberation, and collective community action. This principle is supported by democratic developments in various countries, which demonstrate that civic life in plural societies can only thrive when backed by a constitution that guarantees people's rights and a cultural framework that reflects those rights in everyday life (Bagir & Dwipayana, 2011, pp. 38–42).

Dialogue serves as a platform for community engagement and collective citizen action, facilitating social consensus in problem-solving. It is a key indicator of civic politics and the state's role in promoting dialogue among different groups, particularly through its efforts to maintain public space as a medium for community participation. State involvement is crucial to preventing the domination of particular groups or interests, ensuring that dialogue takes place under the principles of equality and justice. In this context, the case of Ada' Mappurondo and the appropriation of their traditions by local residents necessitates interfaith and intercultural engagement. Such encounters provide opportunities for individuals to share authentic experiences, fostering mutual understanding and recognition of different traditions. This, in turn, helps eliminate biases and stereotypes that discredit other religious and belief systems.

The advocacy for Marapu social inclusion, as discussed by Ertanto, Marliana, and Mubarok, offers a relevant model for implementation. Social inclusion is defined as the process of fostering social relationships and respect for individuals and groups, enabling them to fully participate in decision-making, economic, social, political, and cultural activities, while also ensuring equal access to resources for the fulfilment of basic rights and a decent standard of living. Social inclusion advocacy operates across three domains: social acceptance, services, and policies. Focusing on social acceptance, advocacy efforts directed

at believers and local residents in the targeted areas (e.g., Sumba, Medan) have sought to create spaces for meetings and interactions through dialogue, centred on social, cultural, and economic themes. Such dialogue programmes serve as essential precedents for fostering an inclusive social environment where believers and adherents of other religions can engage in a mutually contributive manner (Maarif et al., 2019, p. 25). Encouraging practical dialogue—through social, cultural, political, and economic activities—should therefore be a priority for local governments.

However, the impact of political accommodation on the relationship between Ada' Mappurondo adherents and local residents remains limited. The fluidity of social interactions between these communities following state recognition continues to be a challenge for the government and other stakeholders. While the Mamasa Regency Government claims to have taken proactive steps in accommodating Ada' Mappurondo believers, this claim remains contested. According to Yesaya Albert, former Head of the Mamasa Regency Office of National Unity and Politics, the local government has consistently involved key stakeholders, such as the Mamasa Regency Customary Institution and the Mamasa Regency Religious Harmony Forum, in decision-making processes that include representatives from Ada' Mappurondo (Hidayat, 2024, pp. 81–82). However, Buntu, a representative of Ada' Mappurondo within the Customary Institution, argues that these efforts 'have not been felt,' as the voices and aspirations of Ada' Mappurondo adherents have yet to be adequately heard (Hidayat, 2024, p. 79).

Although more progressive efforts are needed beyond participation in the Mamasa Regency Customary Institution and the Mamasa Regency Religious Harmony Forum, these dialogue forums provide Ada' Mappurondo with an opportunity to engage with other traditions. Such encounters are essential for them to highlight and articulate the challenges they face, particularly the frequent exploitation of their traditions by other groups or citizens.

In these dialogues, the principles of equality and justice must be upheld by Ada' Mappurondo, the government, and representatives of other groups to ensure fair and constructive discussions. The domination of any particular group or party must be prevented to foster a consensus that effectively addresses the core issue: the exploitation of Ada' Mappurondo's sacred traditions.

## Conclusion

Although *penghayat kepercayaan* have gained formal recognition from the state, the historical challenges they face remain deeply complex. Their struggles are not limited to issues of population administration but extend across all aspects of civic life. The ongoing resurgence of indigenous religions presents a crucial opportunity to reflect on the historically strained relationships between local communities and indigenous believers. In the case of Ada' Mappurondo, despite their ability to access basic rights, they continue to face significant challenges, particularly the exploitation of their sacred traditions by local residents.

Dialogue, as a means of fostering sustainable relationships between citizens, should serve as a foundational step in addressing the concerns of Ada' Mappurondo believers. However, such dialogue must be firmly rooted in the principles of equality and justice, ensuring that they are not merely included for ceremonial purposes but that their voices are genuinely heard and acted upon. Beyond the role of the state in preventing the domination of certain groups, civil society organisations—similar to those advocating for Marapu believers in East Sumba—must also be responsive to the challenges faced by Ada' Mappurondo. In other words, meaningful collaboration between the state and civil society in accommodating the Ada' Mappurondo community will enhance the effectiveness of dialogue efforts and contribute to a more inclusive and just civic landscape.

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