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Siauw Giok Tjhan and Abdurrahman Wahid: History of Chinese Citizenship in Indonesia

ASYRUL FIKRI[1]
ANJU NOFAROF HASUDUNGAN[2]

Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of Siauw Giok Tjhan and Abdurrahman Wahid in mainstreaming the discourse of ethnic Chinese citizenship into an integral part of the Indonesian nation. This study uses historical research methods. The results showed that Siauw Giok Tjhan through Baperki (Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body) an organization founded in 1954 had helped ethnic Chinese from discriminatory policies in order to obtain Indonesian citizen status (WNI). Siauw Giok Tjhan suggested that the ethnic Chinese should carry out a proper integration into the Indonesian nation-society. Through the concept of fair integration, Siauw Giok Tjhan tries to instill awareness in the ethnic Chinese about their Indonesian identity and nation building. However, the political changes after the G30S 1965 have become a setback for the ethnic Chinese to integrate. When Abdurrahman Wahid was president, various policies were carried out to assist ethnic Chinese in the integration process and eliminate discriminatory policies. The strengthening of identity politics today is also due to the absence of these two national figures.

Keywords: Siauw Giok Tjhan, Abdurrahman Wahid, Citizenship, Ethnic Chinese-Indonesian

[1]History Lecturer at University of Riau, Indonesia asyrul.fikri@lecturer.unri.ac.id
[2]History Teacher at SMAN 1 Rupat, Province of Riau, Indonesia anjuhasudungan81@guru.sma.belajar.id
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1. Introduction

Identity politics that is happening in Indonesia today has also brought back the discourse of ethnic Chinese citizenship. Many doubt the ethnic Chinese nationalism and citizenship. Especially if ethnic Chinese are actively involved in politics. Historically, the issue of ethnic Chinese citizenship has also been part of the dynamics of the history of the Indonesian nation. Especially national identity. After Indonesia's independence, entering the era of guided democracy and its peak in the New Order era, discussions and policies regarding ethnic Chinese citizenship experienced ups and downs. Even the Dutch Colonial carried out discriminatory policies against ethnic Chinese (Kurniawan, 2020). The discriminatory policy towards ethnic Chinese regarding citizenship did not end after Indonesia achieved its independence. Being an independent nation, the Indonesian nation is heterogeneous and has agreed to become a nation based on equality of fate, it should not have the same treatment and policies as the Dutch colonial practice.

Discourse on Citizenship and the issue of the Indonesian ethnicity of the Chinese have accompanied the nation's journey and its relation to the life of the nation, state and society. In fact, certain moments can be used as a measure of the maturity of democratic life in Indonesia. Until now, there are still parties who dispute Indonesian citizenship and ethnic Chinese citizenship, especially during the period of identity politics. It reached its peak when Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (better known as Ahok) ran as a Candidate for Governor of DKI Jakarta in 2017 and was involved in a blasphemy case who was jailed for two years and released on Thursday, January 24, 2019 (Chen, 2022).

In fact, if examined, the individual or ethnic Chinese group in question, administratively already has an Identity Card (KTP). At least this is the legal basis that they have become Indonesian citizens. In 1954 as an effort by the ethnic Chinese leaders in particular, Siauw Giok Tjhan to form Baperki (Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body, *Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia* in Indonesia) (Tanasaldy, 2012). The reason Baperki was formed was to resolve the issue of ethnic Chinese citizenship in Indonesia. The

governments of Soekarno, Suharto, Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Soekarnoputri to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono passed down policies regarding Chinese citizenship. At the end of the reign of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a policy was made to change the term *'China'* to *'Tionghoa'* (Maharani & Ramadhani, 2014).

However, this research will focus on government policies under President Abdurrahman Wahid in 1999-2001, related to the issue of ethnic Chinese citizenship. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research that examines how Chinese-Indonesian figures as well as figures outside the ethnic Chinese in mainstreaming the discourse of Chinese citizenship to become an integral part of the Indonesian nation. In the context of this research, the figures are Siauw Giok Tjhan and Abdurrahman Wahid. Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe the role of the two figures, namely, Siauw Giok Tjhan and Abdurrahman Wahid who have different ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds but have the same concern about multicultural Indonesia.

The two figures share the same vision, namely, to help Indonesian Chinese in fighting for citizenship status and to become an integral part of the Indonesian nation. It is hoped that this research can be used as a historical consideration, that the issue of ethnic Chinese citizenship is more of a practical political nature at this time, compared to the principles of citizenship which have actually been completed for a long time. In fact, there are already ethnic Chinese who have been appointed as Indonesian National Heroes.

2. Research methods

This study uses historical research methods, consisting of four stages, namely, heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The first stage of heuristics, namely, data collection is done by tracing written sources that can be found in archives, newspapers, laws, books, and articles; about the role of Siauw Giok Tjhan and Abdurrahman Wahid in helping ethnic Chinese Indonesians gain Indonesian citizen status and stop the discriminatory politics that have been experienced by ethnic Chinese. The second stage is source criticism, a step or activity to critically examine sources, information,

historical traces. Criticism includes external and internal criticism. In this study, the written sources are corroborated by the results of tracking archives, newspapers, laws, books, and articles. Garaghan (in Tabroni et al., 2020) states that there are six questions that must be answered in conducting source criticism: time, location, authorship, analysis, integrity, and credibility. The third stage, namely, interpretation with the aim of building meaning and linkages between historical facts obtained through source criticism that has been done previously. Wolf (2018) explains that although historians cannot "create" facts when there is no evidence from the past, they must "extrapolate" by guessing from the alleged context of existing survivors, to mask the silence of the non-existent (to cover the silence of the nonexistent). The last stage is historiography, namely the writing of history itself. In connection with this research, it aims to describe the role of Siauw Giok Tjhan and Abdurrahman Wahid in defending the rights of citizens of Chinese ethnicity and canceling discriminatory policies and replacing them with accommodative policies. In addition, this writing is also an effort to straighten out controversial matters related to ethnic Chinese during the Suharto-New Order era, such as disloyalty to Pancasila and Indonesia. Adam (2018) explains that politically, history is neutral towards rulers and is far from being a social critic. However, at the same time there were also historians who made history engineering for the benefit of the ruling regime. History is a tool of legitimacy for the rulers as well as a tool of repression against opposing groups.

3. Results and discussion

Citizenship and Nationality

Citizenship and nationality are two concepts that are closely related but not quite the same. In general, being a citizen means being a member of a country. Nationality is acquired through birth or adoption, marriage, or descent (the specifications differ from country to country). In Indonesia, being an Indonesian citizen is marked by possession of an Identity Card (KTP). Indonesian citizenship is

regulated in Law Number 12 of 2006 concerning Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia. A person's citizenship in Indonesia is often disputed against people who are called non-natives such as Arab descent, and more severely against Chinese descent.

Law Number 12 of 2006 clearly and in detail explains what is meant by an Indonesian citizen (WNI), namely; 1) every person based on the laws and regulations and/or based on an agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia with other countries before this Law comes into effect has become an Indonesian citizen. 2) children born from a legal marriage of a father and mother are Indonesian citizens. 3) a child born from a legal marriage of an Indonesian citizen father and a foreign mother. 4) a child born from a legal marriage to a foreign father and an Indonesian mother. 5) a child born from a legal marriage to an Indonesian citizen mother, but the father does not have citizenship or the law of the country of origin of the father does not grant citizenship to the child. 6) a child born within a period of 300 (three hundred) days after his father died from a legal marriage and his father is an Indonesian citizen. 7) children born out of legal marriage to an Indonesian citizen mother. 8) a child born out of legal marriage to a foreign mother who is recognized by an Indonesian citizen father as his child and the acknowledgment is made before the child is 18 (eighteen) years old or unmarried. 9) children born in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia who at the time of birth the citizenship status of the father and mother was not clear. 10) a newborn child found in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia as long as the father and mother are unknown. 11) children born in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia if the father and mother do not have citizenship or their whereabouts are not known. 12) a child born outside the territory of the Republic of Indonesia from a father and mother who are Indonesian citizens who due to the provisions of the country where the child was born give citizenship to the child concerned; 13) the child of a father or mother whose citizenship application has been granted, then the father or mother dies before taking the oath or swearing allegiance (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2006 Tentang Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia, 2006).

Substantially and conceptually, this law reflects the serious efforts of the Indonesian state to protect and guarantee the equal rights and obligations of every citizen (Suryatni, 2020). In addition, the law regulates clearly and in detail the criteria for being an Indonesian citizen. Therefore, polemics about one's nationality, whether involving ethnic Chinese or non-Chinese, should not need to happen.

Having citizenship is essential for full recognition under international law. Indeed, Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to a nationality” and "No one shall arbitrarily lose his nationality or the right to change his nationality". The Economist (2017) explains that citizenship is a narrower concept: it is a special legal relationship between a state and a person. It gives the person certain rights and responsibilities and does not necessarily accompany nationality. One's nationality is one's place of birth; basically, it is a concept of ethnicity and race whereas citizenship: The position or status of being a citizen of a particular country. Citizenship is granted to a person by the state government if he fulfills his legal formalities, so this is like a judicial concept (indiatoday, 2018). Safran (1997) reveals that citizenship is an individual's identity insofar as that identity is related to the role they play in the political community. He added that the definition of membership in a political community and the conditions of entry into it vary from country to country and from age to age.

These variations are rooted in different historical experiences and, more specifically, the different circumstances surrounding the building of political communities. Tom George (in Juškevičienė, 2014) distinguishes between citizenship and nationality and marks, that nationality is a broader understanding of citizenship. That is, citizenship is a characteristic of all political members of a country or for those who serve the country; However, not all citizens have citizenship. Nationality cannot be changed while citizenship can, citizenship can also be annulled, while nationality cannot. The conclusion is citizenship is a person's membership in the control of a particular political unit in this case is the state, which carries the right to participate in political activities. Someone with membership were called citizens.

Siauw Giok Tjhan and Baperki

In fact, the policy of discrimination was not only carried out by the Dutch colonial against the so-called 'pribumi'. Quoting Victor Purcell and Lea Williams, Ong Hok Ham said that it was the Dutch East Indies government that had great sentiments towards the Chinese people. Ong Hok Ham writes that anti-Chinese sentiment peaked in the era of the Ethical Politics (1900) when the Dutch felt the need to protect the indigenous *(pribumi)* population against Chinese "slickness" (Matanasi, 2020). After Indonesia's independence, discriminatory politics continued to be preserved and influenced by the political situation and conditions at that time. For example, in the Suharto era, after the 1965 G30S incident, the New Order government carried out a repressive and discriminatory policy through the Presidential Instruction of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 1967 concerning Religion, Belief and Chinese Customs. The contents are "We, the Acting President of the Republic of Indonesia, that the religion, beliefs and customs of the Chinese in Indonesia are centered on their ancestral country, which in its manifestations can cause an unnatural psychological, mental and moral influence on Indonesian citizens so that it becomes an obstacle to the assimilation process, need to be regulated and their functions placed in reasonable proportions" (Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 1967, 1967).

This means that there are doubts and concerns of the New Order regime regarding the Indonesianness of the Chinese ethnic. In addition, through the contents of the instruction, it can be concluded that the government considers ethnic Chinese to practice nationalism and dual loyalty, between the origins of the ethnic Chinese ancestors who are in China and Indonesia as the current domicile country. The implementation of other discriminatory policies of the New Order, namely assimilation; forcing ethnic Chinese who still use their original Chinese names to replace them with Indonesian names. This was supported by various networks of the New Order, such as *Lembaga Pembina Kesatuan Bangsa (LPKB)*.

In the 1950s, ethnic Chinese in Indonesia were faced with two problems, namely, citizenship status and discriminatory policies. Through Baperki *(Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan*

Indonesia), Siauw Giok Tjhan in 1954 who became general chairman fought for the rights of ethnic Chinese in political, economic, social aspects, and demanded equality as Indonesian citizens (Siddik, 2010). He was born in Surabaya in 1914, Siauw Giok Tjhan grew up in a multicultural world. His father is from a Hokkien family and his mother is from a Hakka family. Although they are familiar with Confucianism and Chinese traditions, they also show an interest in local culture and live in the style of many peranakan Chinese. They speak Malay, dress like locals and adapt to Javanese customs, like to eat Indonesian food, and enjoy *gamelan* music and *wayang* performances (Liem & Taga-Tan, 2017).



Figure 1. Siauw Giok Tjhan (Tjwan, 1982)

Siauw Giok Tjhan is active in helping ethnic Chinese who want to elect Indonesian citizens, providing schools and universities to accommodate Chinese children who need education, defending the rights of ethnic Chinese in the economic aspect by protecting business interests of ethnic Chinese. After his struggle at Baperki stopped, Siauw Giok Tjhan actively struggled by expressing his thoughts through the books he wrote. In order to be accepted as an Indonesian citizen, Siauw Giok Tjhan advised the Chinese to carry out a proper integration into the body of the Indonesian nation.

Through the concept of fair integration that he advocates, Siauw Giok Tjhan instills awareness in the Chinese about their Indonesian identity (Yuliani, 2019).

Siauw Giok Tjhan has succeeded in answering and meeting the challenges and needs of the Chinese by defending the interests and solving problems faced by the Chinese. Baperki considers that the issue of citizenship is a national problem because it must be resolved by an organization with a national perspective. However, Baperki presented itself as a supporter of Soekarno, who at that time was intensively promoting Nasakom (Pratama, 2016). Chinese people in parliament can't always pay attention to Chinese issues. In fact, at that time their situation was complicated. And many Chinese people are starting to worry about their fate. Partly because of the uncertainty of citizenship. They have been blackmailed, sometimes threatened, beaten, etc. In 1954, conditions and situations were getting worse for the Chinese. Therefore, all Chinese leaders from various organizations gathered in Jakarta to form a new unifying organization. The birth of Baperki as an organization was primarily intended to address the issue of citizenship which was very hot at the time. Baperki is also known as an organization among the Chinese with sides with Indonesia (Afriyan & Ibrahim, 2017).

Baperki also prioritizes the participation of the Chinese community in nation building (Leksana, 2018). But, also to find some kind of solution for this minority. Many people from various walks of life have entered Baperki. Baperki considers that the issue of citizenship is a national problem because it must be resolved by an organization with a national perspective. However, Baperki presented itself as a supporter of Soekarno, who at that time was intensively promoting Nasakom (Pratama, 2016).

Siauw Giok Tjhan was elected as Baperki leader. This is interesting, because if we remember since the colonial era, the Chinese community, like a minority around the world, is always looking for a leader who is able to match the existing powers. During the colonial period, the strong Chinese rulers were the ones who were close to the Dutch. In the 1950s, why was Pak Siauw chosen? Because he knew Bung Karno well. He was also a close friend of Sartono, the *Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI)* figure who ruled parliament at the time.

During the parliamentary period (1949–1958) which was based on democracy, assimilation policies were difficult—and even impossible—to implement because assimilation was against the general principles of democracy (Suryadinata, 2014). Nevertheless, the Guided Democracy regime (1959–1965) which was semi-authoritarian in nature maintained a number of pluralistic characteristics on the one hand, and began to practice

integration that approached assimilation efforts on the other. This was reflected in the government's policy of limiting enrollment in Chinese secondary schools, as well as the number and management of Chinese newspapers. Indonesian children were barred from attending Chinese schools and a large number of foreign newspapers were closed. These things cannot be categorized in black-and-white and assimilation in nature, considering that the three pillars of Chinese culture, namely the Chinese-language press, Chinese high schools, and ethnic Chinese organizations still exist (Suryadinata, 2014).

A comprehensive assimilation policy was implemented only during the authoritarian Suharto government (1966–1998). Suharto himself stated clearly that Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent must immediately integrate and assimilate with the indigenous Indonesian people *(pribumi)*. Among them is the policy of closing Chinese-language schools. The peak of racism in the Suharto regime was the issuance of Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 on the prohibition of Chinese religion, belief, and customs. Since then, Chinese New Year celebrations are not allowed in public. The prohibition also concerns the use of Chinese characters. Chinese songs have also disappeared from radio broadcasts (Mustajab, 2015; Firdausi, 2020).

Although there are several intermediary organizations such as the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Communications Agency (Bakom), some of whose members are ethnic Chinese, these organizations are not Chinese organizations in the true sense (Suryadinata, 2014). In addition, another ethnic Chinese figure, namely Yap Thiam Hien was imprisoned because he was the founder and leader of Baperki. In the early days of independence, Yap was a lawyer for Chinese citizens in Jakarta. Baperki in the new order was disbanded because it was accused of conspiring with Communists. This then exacerbated the emergence of anti-Chinese sentiment. Yep had to languish behind bars for 12 years without trial. However, he was successfully released after filing an appeal to the Supreme Court in the same year (Wijaya et al., 2014).

The assimilation policy for Chinese Indonesians in the past has become an important policy and needs to be considered considering the issue of ethnic Chinese citizenship is back in the discourse, especially in the political and economic fields. However, this policy is also considered to have no respect for Indonesian citizens of Chinese ethnic descent in maintaining their Chinese cultural identity.

The strengthening of identity politics and populism today, which tends to divide with racism narratives, has an impact on the occurrence of polarization in society. So that educated people who are enlightened need to respond and fight black campaigns and fake news with historical-based

scientific evidence. Is the issue of ethnic Chinese citizenship still unresolved so that it is still being debated? Every person of Chinese descent who has declared himself a citizen is part of Indonesian society (Mahfud in Kurniawan, 2020).

Abdurrahman Wahid and the title Father of Indonesian Chinese

Abdurrahman Wahid's background in life and education is quite rich. Born on September 7, 1940, but interestingly on the Web site of the Indonesian President-Presidents Library Version 6.0.1 it is stated that he was born on August 4, 1940 in the village of Denanyar, Jombang, East Java (Kepustakaan Presiden RI, 2009). There is a difference in the birth of Abdurrahman Wahid as explained by his son Alissa Wahid via Twitter: that September 7 is the real birthday. Meanwhile, August 4th is a legal birthday. Abdurrahman Wahid's former subordinate, Mahfud MD who currently serves as the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs of Indonesia revealed that Abdurrahman Wahid himself allowed his two birthdays (Alawi, 2020).

Since childhood Abdurrahman was familiar with pesantren life, and studied religion from his two grandfathers, but he also had a good general education. This shows clearly how Abdurrahman Wahid had a good religious education and general education since he was a child. No wonder Abdurrahman Wahid's knowledge is very rich, which is reflected in his writings. Abdurrahman Wahid is able to write and analyze in a straightforward manner political, social, economic, moral issues, and even sports, especially football, the most popular sport. Therefore, according to Ahmad Wahib's diary that, "Gus Dur (a popular name for Abdurrahman Wahid) is not a sociologist, not a politician, not a politician, not an artist, not a humanist, not a religious person, not a feminist, nor a thinker, but Abdurrahman Wahid is a everything.

In fact, after the reformation era, the Chinese Indonesians under Abdurrahman Wahid's government have gained strong legitimacy both legally and politically. This can be seen from the policies and decisions of the Abdurrahman Wahid government such as the issuance of Presidential Instruction no. 6/2000 which contains the revocation of Presidential Instruction no. 14/1967 on the existence of a ban on ethnic Chinese to respect Confucian customs, culture and religion.

Among them are cancelling the ban on Chinese language, script and culture (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009). People of Chinese descent in Indonesia have the freedom to celebrate Chinese New Year in 2000 through Presidential Decree (Keppres) No. 6 of 2000.

Then, Abdurrahman Wahid issued Presidential Decree no 19 of 2001 dated April 9, 2001 which made Chinese New Year an optional holiday (only valid for those who celebrate it) (Mustajab, 2015). At least, this is part of the vision of Indonesia that President Abdurrahman Wahid imaged to the outside world. That Indonesia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. The Vatican praised Abdurrahman as "a man who pushed for ethnic-religious harmony and democracy to be a blessing to his country" (Smith, 2000). Budiman (2001) said Wahid was praised for his commitment to democracy and pluralism.



Figure 2. Abdurrahman Wahid was sworn in as president of Indonesia on October 20, 1999 (Alliance/dpa/Oka .Budhi, 2019)

So far he has proven himself consistent in following these ideals. His political opponents can criticize him openly, his approach to solving problems has always been through political dialogue (as in dealing with the independence movements in West Papua and Aceh), he seeks to protect the Christian and Chinese minorities, and he continues to seek to lift the ban on communism. Honored in 1993 with the Magsaysay Award, Wahid was elected the following year to chair the World Council for Religion and Peace (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

Gus Dur (the popular name of Abdurrahman Wahid) not only gave birth to many thoughts and policies that respect the Chinese community, but the former President of the Republic of Indonesia also equated them with all groups in Indonesia from different religions, ethnicities, and customs. Gus Dur is a religious figure who always attaches himself to discriminatory actions against ethnic Chinese and other non-Muslim groups, both those carried out by Islamic groups themselves and the New Order regime led by President Suharto in 1967-1998 (Suwarsono, 2018). Gus Dur was a defender for various marginalized groups. At the practical and policy level, according to him, Gusdur's defense of Chinese ethnic groups and groups has been clearly proven. Gus Dur's concern and defense of the Chinese group was enormous. Because of this, several Chinese religious leaders in Semarang then ordained Gus Dur as the Father of Chinese on March 10, 2004 ago at the Tay Kak Sie Temple (Syakur, 2019).

Abdilla et al. (2019) explained that Abdurrahman Wahid's human values consist of three dimensions; self-awareness, self-transformation and knowledge, and egalitarianism. Self-awareness consists of the values of love and compassion, empathy, solidarity, and tolerance values. Self-transformation and knowledge consist of altruistic, critical, and rational values. Egalitarianism consists of equality, plurality, justice, and democratic values. These values are then built as the basis for an authentic approach to interfaith dialogue. This approach can build integrated social capital and inter-religious cooperation between parties who have been involved in conflict, so that religion is not seen as a dividing difference, but a difference that can unite in dealing with humanitarian problems.

The reforms that were also followed by the anti-Chinese violence in May 1998 have prompted efforts to abolish the 'pri-nonpri' (original and non-indigenous) dichotomy and to reposition Chinese Indonesians as 'an integral part of the Indonesian nationality' (rather than the 'latent threat ') to a new level as political correctness, which, according to some, even appears euphoric (Tjhin, 2012; Sarwono, 2015). The perception that the Indonesian Chinese are not natives *(pribumi)* continues to be produced by parties who are not only racist but also historically illiterate.

Abdurrahman Wahid himself stated that Indonesia actually consisted of not only two races, but three, namely: the Malay, Austro-Melanesian and Chinese races. These three races make up our nation. He also himself stated that he was partly Chinese and partly Arab, and said that there were no indigenous descendants (Suryadinata, 2014). Tjhin (2012) added that the government's efforts to dismantle several discriminatory policies and allow greater participation of Chinese Indonesians in various fields. Political participation then broadened and diversified as Chinese Indonesians embarked on non-business activities—through a growing number of Chinese Indonesian associations, mainstream political parties, and non-governmental organizations. Some have even founded ethnic-based political parties. By taking a proactive part in the nation-building and policy process, the stereotypes of Chinese Indonesians and societal hostility based on the 'China threat' or 'threat triangle' are slowly, though not completely eroded. The appreciation and respect of the Chinese community for Gus Dur (the popular name of Abdurrahman Wahid) is also always shown on various occasions. There was reciprocity, mutual respect, and mutual respect between Gus Dur and the Chinese community. Not because of power or worldly motives, but because they both love Indonesia and humanity.

However, when the election for governor of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta in 2017 where the incumbent is an ethnic Chinese, indigenous and non-indigenous issues, and religion becomes a campaign tool to gain vote support, this is what is called identity politics. Unfortunately, there has been a void of figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid, who is known as a defender of minorities, especially Chinese-Indonesians and Siauw Giok Tjhan whose life is not to become a successful businessman like other Chinese figures, but rather cares about the rights of Chinese citizens and fights discrimination policies.

CONCLUSIONS

The strengthening of identity politics today has also brought back the discourse on ethnic Chinese-Indonesian citizenship. This was motivated by the ongoing democracy in the 2017 DKI Jakarta

Governor Election. Historically, the discourse on ethnic Chinese-Indonesian citizenship and discriminatory policies has been going on even before Indonesia's independence. Various kinds of policies in each regime while continuing the discriminatory and repressive policies of the Dutch colonial era, especially during the New Order era. Such conditions do not mean without the struggle and resistance of those who struggle against injustice. Siauw Giok Tjhan and Baperki attempted to address the issue of citizenship and encouraged the Chinese to carry out a proper integration into the Indonesian nation. Siauw Giok Tjhan helps ethnic Chinese who want to choose to become Indonesian citizens by providing schools and universities, defending rights in the economic aspect by protecting the business interests of ethnic Chinese. The events of the September 30th Movement of 1965 have damaged the integration process. After his struggle at Baperki was stopped by the new order regime, Siauw Giok Tjhan actively struggled by expressing his thoughts through the books he wrote. It even has an impact on the deteriorating perception of the Chinese-Indonesian ethnicity. After the New Order regime came to power, President Suharto implemented a policy of total assimilation which in practice tends to be discriminatory and repressive, such as having to change Chinese names, banning Chinese characters and culture and so on. The end of the New Order regime which began with the reform movement was also followed by acts of violence, looting and rape against ethnic Chinese. Abdurrahman Wahid, who replaced Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie as president of the Republic of Indonesia, realized that the New Order government had implemented a policy of discrimination against ethnic Chinese. Therefore, under his government he carried out various policies that broke many things, such as recognizing the Confucian religion, making Imblek Day a national holiday and others. Siauw Giok Tjhan and Abdurrahman Wahid are two national figures who have a humanistic spirit and different backgrounds, but have great concern for ethnic Chinese citizenship, as well as human rights issues.

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