

## **REDEFINING CITIZENSHIP IN DEMOCRATIC STATES: TOWARD A PUBLIC-CENTERED GOVERNANCE PARADIGM IN INDONESIA**

**Kristian Widya Wicaksono<sup>1)\*</sup>, Komang Monday Sari<sup>2)</sup>**

**<sup>1</sup>Department of Public Administration, Universitas Katolik Parahyangan,  
Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia**  
*kristian.widya@unpar.ac.id*

**<sup>2</sup>Department of Public Administration, Universitas Pasundan  
Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia**  
*mondaysarikomang@unpas.ac.id*

### **ABSTRACT**

This article advances a comprehensive reconceptualization of citizenship as a linchpin of democratic governance in contemporary Indonesia. Moving beyond the conventional legalistic paradigm, it posits citizenship as a multidimensional construct encompassing fiscal responsibility, electoral accountability, digital engagement, and social justice advocacy. Drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks—including social contract theory, lived citizenship, and collaborative governance—the study argues that democratic resilience in plural societies necessitates institutional reforms, inclusive political culture, and active civic agency. Empirical insights from Indonesian policy practices and comparative scholarship demonstrate that elite domination, bureaucratic inertia, and technocratic governance undermine democratic legitimacy. The article proposes a public-centered governance model anchored in participatory mechanisms, transparency, and civic co-production. It concludes that institutionalizing such practices is imperative for sustaining Indonesia's democratic trajectory amid socio-political complexity and fiscal constraints.

**Keywords:** Citizenship, Democracy, Public Governance, Indonesia, Accountability, Civic Participation, Collaborative Networks

### **ABSTRAK**

*Artikel ini mengemukakan rekonseptualisasi komprehensif tentang kewarganegaraan sebagai pilar utama tata kelola demokrasi di Indonesia kontemporer. Melampaui paradigma legalistik konvensional, artikel ini mengemukakan kewarganegaraan sebagai konstruksi multidimensi yang mencakup tanggung jawab fiskal, akuntabilitas elektoral, keterlibatan digital, dan advokasi keadilan sosial. Dengan menggunakan kerangka kerja interdisipliner—termasuk teori kontrak sosial, kewarganegaraan yang dihayati, dan tata kelola kolaboratif—studi ini berpendapat bahwa ketahanan demokrasi dalam masyarakat plural membutuhkan reformasi kelembagaan, budaya politik inklusif, dan peran aktif warga negara. Wawasan empiris dari praktik kebijakan Indonesia dan kajian komparatif menunjukkan bahwa dominasi elit, inersia birokrasi, dan tata kelola teknokratis melemahkan legitimasi demokrasi. Artikel ini mengusulkan model tata kelola yang berpusat pada publik yang berlandaskan mekanisme partisipatif, transparansi, dan produksi bersama warga negara. Kesimpulannya, pelembagaan praktik-praktik tersebut sangat penting untuk mempertahankan lintasan demokrasi Indonesia di tengah kompleksitas sosial-politik dan kendala fiskal.*

**Kata Kunci:** Kewarganegaraan, Demokrasi, Tata Kelola Publik, Indonesia, Akuntabilitas, Partisipasi Warga Negara, Jaringan Kolaboratif

## **INTRODUCTION**

Political turbulence is an inherent and often inevitable characteristic of democratic systems, particularly in highly pluralistic societies such as Indonesia. The coexistence of divergent beliefs, languages, ethnic identities, and socio-cultural practices demands more than procedural democracy; it requires a tolerant civic environment and a resilient public culture capable of upholding democratic norms and institutions. In such contexts, democratic consolidation cannot be solely measured through elections or institutional arrangements—it also hinges on the vitality of civic participation and the capacity of citizens to influence public decision-making. As Indonesia continues to navigate its post-authoritarian democratic trajectory, questions surrounding the quality and depth of its democratic practices remain pressing. Within this framework, the concept of citizenship becomes central to evaluating and enhancing democratic consolidation. Traditional interpretations of citizenship as mere legal membership or electoral participation are insufficient to capture the full spectrum of democratic engagement in pluralistic societies.

This paper proposes a reconceptualization of citizenship that extends beyond formal legal status to include active participation in both fiscal governance and political representation. Specifically, it highlights the dual roles of citizens as taxpayers and voters, arguing that these roles are not only indicators of legal belonging but also mechanisms of accountability that can deepen democratic legitimacy. In this expanded view, citizenship is inherently tied to both contribution and voice—serving as a bridge between the governed and governing bodies.

This reconceptualization becomes particularly urgent in the face of recent political and legislative developments in Indonesia that point toward a growing erosion of democratic accountability. As Safa'at (2020) has noted, the expedited and opaque processes surrounding the enactment of the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, the amendments to the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Law, and the revisions to the Military (TNI) Law signify a broader trend toward oligarchic governance. These legislative changes have not only limited institutional checks and balances but have also systematically marginalized public participation in the policymaking process. The lack of transparency and meaningful deliberation raises normative concerns about the democratic legitimacy of public policy and calls into question the substantive inclusion of citizens in state affairs.

Despite a growing body of literature on democratic backsliding, decentralization, and political participation in Indonesia, there remains a significant gap in exploring how citizenship can be redefined as a democratic strategy in response to these governance challenges. Most existing analyses tend to focus on institutional or electoral deficiencies, with limited attention to how active fiscal and political engagement—particularly through the roles of taxpayers and voters—can counterbalance elite domination and foster more accountable governance. This paper addresses this gap by examining the potential of public-centered citizenship to revitalize democratic legitimacy and inclusiveness in Indonesia. Accordingly, the central research question guiding this study is: How can the redefinition of citizenship as active engagement in public finance and political representation strengthen democratic consolidation in pluralistic and politically turbulent contexts such as Indonesia?

Modern democratic theory insists that democratic legitimacy cannot be confined to periodic elections or to the procedural formalities of representative institutions. Instead, it must incorporate inclusive and participatory frameworks that enable citizens to influence the formulation, deliberation, and implementation of public policies. The absence of such engagement jeopardizes the very foundations of democracy, reducing legal and institutional outputs to instruments of symbolic violence that obscure elite domination beneath a veneer of technocratic neutrality (Bourdieu, 1987).



Therefore, reconceptualizing citizenship entails both the empowerment of individual civic agency and the institutionalization of democratic safeguards designed to counterbalance concentrations of power and ensure that governance remains aligned with the collective interests and constitutional rights of the populace. Democracy constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of governance in Indonesia, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. As a democratic country, Indonesia strives to ensure the fulfillment of citizens' political rights, the protection of civil liberties, and the effective functioning of democratic institutions. To assess the quality of democracy, the Indonesian government has developed a measurement instrument known as the Indonesian Democracy Index (IDI).

The Indonesian Democracy Index (IDI) is a composite indicator compiled by Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas). The IDI is designed to describe the development of democracy at both the national and provincial levels. It measures democracy through three main aspects, namely civil liberties, political rights, and democratic institutions, which are further elaborated into a number of measurable variables and indicators (BPS, 2023).

The existence of the IDI is important not only as a tool for evaluating democratic performance but also as a basis for formulating public policies aimed at strengthening democracy in Indonesia. Fluctuations in IDI scores across regions and over time indicate that the quality of democracy in Indonesia still faces various challenges, such as restrictions on freedom of expression, low levels of political participation, and the suboptimal role of democratic institutions (BPS, 2022). Based on these conditions, research on the Indonesian Democracy Index is highly relevant in order to analyze its development, the factors influencing it, and its implications for the quality of governance and democratic life in Indonesia.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Theoretical Framework: From Subjecthood to Active Citizenship

The transformation of governance in modern democratic states necessitates a parallel theoretical evolution in the understanding of citizenship. Classical social contract theorists such as Locke and Rousseau emphasized the legitimacy of governmental authority as being derived from the consent of the governed, highlighting the reciprocal obligations between the state and its citizens (Held, 2006). Within this framework, citizenship entails both rights and duties, including participation in public life. In democratic contexts, this participation is symbolically represented through taxation and voting. Taxation is not to be perceived as a tribute to sovereign power, but rather as a manifestation of civic engagement and shared responsibility for the collective welfare. Similarly, voting extends beyond procedural formalism; it embodies the active expression of popular sovereignty (Dahl, 1989).

To develop a more comprehensive and contemporary theoretical framework, it is essential to engage with sociological and pedagogical perspectives that expand citizenship beyond legal and institutional parameters. Turner (1990) conceptualizes citizenship as a multidimensional institution encompassing civil, political, and social rights, embedded in historical struggles for inclusion and access to public goods. This approach broadens the analytical lens to include both the symbolic and material dimensions of citizenship, aligning with the imperative of deepening democratic participation in diverse societies.

Kukovetz, Sprung, and Wlasak (2025) introduce the notion of "lived citizenship," which captures the experiential, performative, and spatial dimensions of civic engagement, particularly among marginalized groups such as migrant women. Lived citizenship challenges the static, legalistic notion of membership by foregrounding everyday practices and affective connections to the public realm. It entails acts of citizenship that are not confined to formal political arenas but are expressed through cultural, social, and ethical engagements in urban spaces. These acts—often overlooked—are sites of civic learning and political subjectification, wherein individuals become active agents in shaping their environments and contesting exclusionary structures (Isin, 2008; Lister, 2007).

Integrating these perspectives with Gert Biesta's (2019) notion of civic learning as "subjectification"—where individuals learn to see themselves as responsible actors within a democratic society—enriches our understanding of citizenship as both a pedagogical and political process. In this view, active citizenship is not merely a set of duties or opportunities granted by the state but a dynamic process of becoming, informed by one's situatedness within social hierarchies and spatial configurations. Biesta's theory underscores the significance of informal learning and public pedagogy, suggesting that democratic agency is cultivated not only through institutional instruction but through embodied participation in collective life.

In urban contexts, the emergence of "active urban citizenship" (Schilliger, 2018) exemplifies how localized, grassroots initiatives articulate claims to space, rights, and belonging. As shown in Kukovetz et al.'s (2025) study in Graz, Austria, civic engagement among migrant women—through artistic expression and participatory workshops—enabled the articulation of political subjectivity in spaces traditionally dominated by elite discourse. These practices illustrate how affective, spatial, and intersubjective experiences coalesce into transformative civic learning, reshaping both the actors and their socio-political environments.

This expanded theoretical framework underscores the necessity of conceptualizing citizenship as both a legal status and a lived, participatory process. It offers critical tools for analyzing the limitations of formal democratic inclusion and foregrounds the pedagogical potential of civic engagement in fostering democratic subjectivities. In the context of Indonesia, where oligarchic tendencies and bureaucratic inertia persist, embracing such a multidimensional understanding of citizenship is vital for building inclusive, participatory, and resilient democratic institutions.

In this regard, citizenship must be reframed not only as a legal status or institutional entitlement, but as an ongoing negotiation between individuals and the structures of power that shape their everyday lives. This negotiation often unfolds in informal, hybrid spaces where the boundaries between public and private, political and personal, become blurred. In such spaces, individuals exercise agency through practices that may not be conventionally recognized as political but nonetheless carry transformative potential. These practices—rooted in care, solidarity, and collective memory—challenge dominant narratives about who counts as a citizen and what forms of participation are deemed legitimate within a democratic society.

Furthermore, this broadened understanding of citizenship offers a lens through which to interrogate the limitations of formal democratic inclusion in contexts marked by inequality and exclusion. Legal recognition alone does not guarantee equitable access to participation or protection under the law. Structural barriers—such as economic precarity, gender norms, ethnic discrimination, and spatial marginalization—continue to shape differential experiences of citizenship. By foregrounding the lived and affective dimensions of civic life, this framework allows for a more grounded analysis of how democratic subjectivities are formed, constrained, and contested within specific socio-political contexts.

In the Indonesian context, this approach invites a rethinking of state-citizen relations beyond administrative compliance and procedural democracy. As the state grapples with pressures of centralization, bureaucratic reform, and social fragmentation, fostering a more inclusive and participatory conception of citizenship becomes imperative. This involves recognizing diverse forms of civic expression, investing in participatory infrastructures, and cultivating public cultures that value dialogue, mutual recognition, and collective learning. Only through such a multidimensional lens can the promise of democracy be meaningfully realized—where citizenship is not merely granted, but actively constructed and reimagined in the everyday lives of its people.

### **Citizenship as Taxpayer: Reimagining the Role of Government**

Viewing citizens as taxpayers implies a significant reconfiguration of the normative foundations of the state, requiring a shift in governmental self-understanding—from sovereign dominator to fiduciary steward. The traditional command-and-control bureaucratic model, deeply embedded in Indonesia's post-colonial administrative architecture, continues to reproduce hierarchical, extractive, and opaque institutional practices (Dwiyanto, 2011). This model construes the citizen as a passive subject of regulation rather than an active partner in public governance.

The stewardship paradigm in public administration, as advanced by Denhardt and Denhardt (2000), positions the government as a trustee of public resources and values. Within this framework, taxation is not merely a revenue-generating mechanism but a civic ritual that binds the citizen and the state in a contract of mutual responsibility and trust. The ethical implications of this view are profound: the state must demonstrate fiscal transparency, operational efficiency, and deliberative responsiveness to the public it serves.

Recent empirical scholarship reinforces this civic reimagining of tax-based citizenship. Organ (2024), in a comprehensive analysis of U.S. citizens renouncing their nationality, shows that growing numbers of expatriates are not motivated by tax liability *per se*, but rather by the escalating compliance costs and administrative burdens associated with maintaining tax citizenship. His findings underscore a broader theoretical insight: when tax systems fail to recognize citizens as co-participants in governance, and instead function primarily as instruments of control, they erode the affective legitimacy of the state. Tax compliance, in such cases, becomes a source of alienation rather than civic solidarity.

In contexts such as Indonesia, where tax compliance rates remain low and perceptions of corruption persist, reimagining taxpayers as active democratic agents is essential. This requires the institutionalization of participatory budgeting, fiscal transparency portals, and citizen audit mechanisms, all of which have shown promise in enhancing tax morale and state legitimacy in decentralized governance regimes (Fjeldstad & Heggstad, 2012). Furthermore, the integration of civic education on public finance into school curricula and community forums could cultivate a culture of critical engagement with taxation as a democratic practice.

Ultimately, redefining citizenship through the lens of the taxpayer demands a dual transformation: institutional—by redesigning fiscal governance structures to be more participatory and accountable—and cultural—by fostering a civic ethos in which taxation is recognized not as extraction but as contribution. Only then can the fiscal relationship between state and citizen become a site of democratic co-production rather than technocratic subordination.



This reconceptualization also invites a broader inquiry into the symbolic dimensions of fiscal citizenship. Taxation, when framed as a shared civic endeavor, becomes a powerful narrative of belonging and collective purpose. It signifies more than a transactional relationship; it is an expression of commitment to the common good and a recognition of mutual interdependence within a political community. However, this symbolic potential can only be realized if the fiscal state is perceived as legitimate, fair, and responsive. Where regressive taxation, rent-seeking behavior, or elite capture dominate public perception, the civic meaning of taxation collapses, replaced by cynicism and disengagement.

In such settings, restoring the legitimacy of tax systems demands more than administrative reform—it requires rebuilding the affective and normative ties between citizens and the state. This entails creating spaces where citizens can meaningfully deliberate on fiscal priorities, monitor public spending, and hold institutions accountable for the stewardship of collective resources. Participatory mechanisms must be institutionalized not as token gestures, but as integral features of fiscal governance. When citizens witness the tangible impact of their contributions—such as improved public services, infrastructure, or social protection—their sense of ownership and civic identity is strengthened.

Furthermore, the redefinition of citizenship through the lens of taxation must account for the socio-economic stratifications that shape the capacity to contribute and to be heard. A democratic fiscal contract cannot be built on the assumption of uniform ability or equal access to institutional voice. Hence, progressive tax policies must be coupled with redistributive frameworks that address structural inequalities, ensuring that the burdens and benefits of fiscal governance are equitably shared. In doing so, the state affirms its role not as a neutral collector of revenue, but as an active agent in promoting social justice and inclusive development—thus reinforcing the normative foundations of democratic citizenship.

### **Citizenship as Voter: Ensuring Democratic Accountability**

Elections in democratic systems should serve not merely as procedural rituals but as substantive mechanisms of accountability and responsiveness. In principle, electoral processes enable citizens to sanction or reward political leaders, thereby aligning governmental behavior with public preferences. However, in Indonesia, this normative ideal is frequently undermined by entrenched patterns of political patronage, elite capture, and the persistence of oligarchic power structures (Hadiz & Robison, 2013). These dynamics compromise the extent to which elected officials remain accountable to their constituents and weaken the integrity of representative democracy.

The theoretical promise of electoral accountability depends critically on the institutional configuration of the electoral system. As Schumpeter (1942) posits, democracy is not merely a system of elite competition, but one that presupposes responsiveness to the popular will. This assumption is empirically tested by Breunig, Grossman, and Hänni (2020), whose experimental research on Germany's mixed-member proportional system demonstrates that electoral incentives significantly shape political responsiveness. Their findings reveal that Members of Parliament (MPs) elected through majoritarian (district-based) tiers are nearly twice as likely to respond to voter inquiries than those elected via proportional representation (party lists). The implication is clear: direct electoral accountability fosters more attentive and individualized representation.

This insight has profound implications for Indonesia's multiparty system, where closed-list proportional representation often insulates political elites from public scrutiny. In such systems, legislators are more beholden to party leadership than to their constituents, thereby weakening horizontal and vertical accountability. The challenge is exacerbated by limited transparency in legislative behavior and opaque decision-making processes. As a result, voters are left with minimal capacity to monitor, influence, or even understand the policy choices made in their name.

Breunig et al. (2020) advocate the concept of "service responsiveness," defined as legislators' non-legislative engagement with individual constituents through acts such as responding to correspondence or facilitating access to public services. This form of accountability, though less visible in formal institutional metrics, plays a crucial role in shaping public trust and democratic legitimacy. Where institutionalized responsiveness is lacking, democratic representation risks devolving into symbolic performativity detached from public concerns. To enhance the quality of electoral accountability in Indonesia, reforms should include the institutionalization of transparency tools such as open legislative tracking systems, public consultation platforms, and mandatory constituency service reporting. Moreover, civic education must emphasize the role of citizens not only as voters but as ongoing monitors of power. Democracy must be conceived not as an episodic act of voting, but as a continuous process of engagement, deliberation, and contestation.

In sum, reconceptualizing voters as active co-producers of democratic accountability requires both institutional innovation and civic transformation. Electoral processes alone are insufficient unless embedded within a broader political culture that values responsiveness, transparency, and citizen agency. Only through such systemic recalibration can the ideal of accountable governance be meaningfully realized in Indonesia and comparable democratic settings.

A further obstacle to electoral accountability in Indonesia lies in the commodification of political participation. The prevalence of vote-buying, clientelistic exchanges, and campaign financing practices rooted in personalistic networks undermines the principle of programmatic competition. When elections become arenas for transactional politics rather than ideological contestation, public preferences are subordinated to material inducements, and political loyalty is decoupled from policy performance. This phenomenon erodes not only the integrity of the electoral process but also the public's capacity to make informed, consequential choices—thereby distorting the feedback loop essential for democratic accountability.

Moreover, the institutional disjuncture between national and local governance structures further complicates accountability dynamics. While decentralization has ostensibly brought government closer to the people, it has also created fragmented loci of power that often escape effective oversight. Local executives, though directly elected, frequently operate with limited legislative scrutiny and weak civil society presence, enabling the reproduction of patron-client relations at the subnational level. In such an environment, elections may serve more as instruments of elite legitimization than as mechanisms for policy responsiveness. Bridging this gap requires not only electoral reform but also the strengthening of intermediary institutions—such as independent media, watchdog organizations, and community-based advocacy networks—that can amplify citizen voices and sustain public pressure between election cycles.

Ultimately, building a culture of electoral accountability entails reimagining the relationship between citizens and their representatives. Rather than perceiving voters as passive consumers of political promises, a robust democracy must cultivate citizens as critical interlocutors in the governance process. This involves fostering spaces for participatory deliberation, equipping citizens with the tools to interrogate policy outcomes, and embedding accountability norms within both institutional design and political behavior. Only by aligning electoral mechanisms with participatory practices can democratic systems fulfill their promise of responsive and responsible governance.

### **Collaborative Networks: Sustaining Democracy Amid Fiscal Constraints**

Indonesia's vast geography and demographic complexity challenge the efficacy of a centralized, state-centric governance model. With limited fiscal and institutional capacity, collaborative governance has emerged not only as a viable alternative, but as a normative imperative for sustaining inclusive and effective democratic governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This model emphasizes the active involvement of nonstate actors—such as civil society organizations, private enterprises, academic institutions, and community-based groups—in co-producing public goods and services.

Collaborative governance, as conceptualized by Lima (2021), refers to structured processes of consensus-oriented decision-making that transcend the public-private divide, involving governmental and non-governmental actors in collective forums of deliberation. The approach has gained prominence as governments around the world face declining public trust, increased complexity of public issues, and growing citizen demands for accountability, transparency, and participation. Collaborative arrangements thus seek to replace adversarial or top-down models with more integrative and deliberative governance systems.

This form of governance resonates with the principles of deliberative democracy, especially when nonstate stakeholders are not merely consulted, but empowered as co-decision-makers. Lima (2021) highlights that collaborative governance is most effective when it institutionalizes clear protocols of inclusion, transparency, and shared authority. It is not merely about policy coordination but about reconfiguring the locus of political agency to include those traditionally excluded from formal state structures. In this sense, collaborative governance offers an opportunity to re-democratize decision-making through inclusive institutional design and equitable power-sharing mechanisms.

However, the success of such networks depends on key enabling conditions. Lima outlines several critical factors: (1) starting conditions such as historical patterns of trust or conflict among actors; (2) institutional design that ensures meaningful and equitable inclusion; and (3) facilitative leadership that can manage power asymmetries and foster consensus. Without careful attention to these variables, collaborative spaces risk being dominated by powerful elites or degenerating into symbolic participation.

In Indonesia, adopting collaborative governance frameworks is especially pertinent for addressing public service delivery gaps in remote and underserved regions. Mechanisms such as participatory budgeting, multi-stakeholder forums, and digital open data platforms (aligned with SDG 16) can provide infrastructure for localized co-production and enhance democratic legitimacy. E-government tools and civic technologies, when implemented with safeguards for transparency and equity, have shown potential to enable broader stakeholder engagement, as evidenced in international best practices documented by Lima (2021).



Moreover, collaborative governance is not merely a management tool; it is a form of civic learning and democratic innovation. When designed inclusively, these processes foster civic trust, redistribute decision-making authority, and reinforce the legitimacy of state institutions. Thus, collaborative networks should be seen as integral to democratic resilience, particularly in contexts of fiscal austerity, administrative fragmentation, and political contestation.

To realize the democratic potential of collaborative governance, it is essential to move beyond performative inclusion toward substantive power-sharing. This entails ensuring that marginalized groups—such as indigenous communities, women, informal workers, and rural populations—are not merely present in deliberative spaces but are empowered to shape outcomes. Institutional mechanisms such as quotas, rotating leadership, community facilitation, and capacity-building initiatives can help mitigate structural inequalities that otherwise risk reproducing exclusion within participatory processes. Genuine collaboration must be rooted in mutual recognition, epistemic pluralism, and an ethics of care that values local knowledge and lived experiences alongside technical expertise.

In practice, sustaining collaborative governance also requires a cultural shift within public institutions. Bureaucratic actors must be willing to embrace uncertainty, relinquish unilateral control, and engage in iterative, dialogic policymaking. This shift challenges the ingrained habits of hierarchical decision-making that have long characterized Indonesia's administrative tradition. Encouragingly, pilot initiatives at the subnational level—such as co-managed health programs, education reform councils, and disaster preparedness alliances—have demonstrated that when trust is cultivated and institutional incentives are aligned, collaborative arrangements can yield innovative and context-sensitive solutions to complex public problems.

Finally, the future of collaborative governance in Indonesia depends on its institutionalization within the broader democratic architecture. Temporary or project-based collaborations, while useful, are insufficient for sustaining long-term transformation. Embedding collaborative principles into regulatory frameworks, budgeting cycles, and public administration curricula will be necessary to mainstream participatory ethos across governance systems. As Indonesia continues to grapple with democratic backsliding and public sector inertia, collaborative governance offers not only a strategic modality for policy delivery but also a normative pathway to reinvigorate democratic life through inclusive, dialogical, and power-conscious public engagement.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This article has argued that the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia necessitates a substantive redefinition of citizenship—one that transcends legal formalism and embraces the multidimensional roles of citizens as taxpayers, voters, and co-creators of public governance. Against the backdrop of elite domination, bureaucratic inertia, and a growing democratic deficit in legislative and policy-making processes, a transformative shift in the state–citizen relationship is required.

The theoretical discussion established that active citizenship must be situated within both contractual and lived dimensions: as a legal status grounded in reciprocal obligations (Locke, Rousseau), a socio-symbolic identity shaped by inclusion and struggle (Turner, 1990), and as an experiential practice of civic engagement and subjectification (Biesta, 2019; Kukovetz et al., 2025). This conceptual reorientation affirms that citizenship is not static but performative, embedded in everyday practices that shape democratic life.

Operationally, the paper outlined three critical domains of active citizenship. First, redefining taxpayers as co-stewards of public finance demands a shift from extractive governance to transparent, participatory, and accountable fiscal management. Second, reclaiming the voter as a democratic agent entails reforming institutional incentives and electoral systems to enhance political responsiveness and service-oriented representation. Third, the adoption of collaborative governance networks offers an institutional pathway to democratize policy processes, particularly amid fiscal constraints and administrative fragmentation.

Collaborative governance, when inclusively and equitably institutionalized, can enhance the state's legitimacy by fostering civic trust and redistributing decision-making power. Through multi-stakeholder forums, digital tools, and participatory mechanisms aligned with the SDGs, such networks can reinvigorate democratic accountability and co-produce sustainable public outcomes.

In sum, redefining citizenship in Indonesia is both an analytical and normative imperative for democratic deepening. It requires reconceptualizing the citizen as an agent of fiscal responsibility, political accountability, and collaborative governance. By institutionalizing inclusive practices and strengthening civic capacity, Indonesia can move toward a governance paradigm that is more responsive, equitable, and resilient—one that aligns state power with the public will in a plural and participatory democracy.

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