



RAKYAT : Designing a 'Rencana Kebijakan yang Nyata' To Strengthen Public Involvement in the Legislative Process (integrative governance)

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

e-democracy
legislative participation
sustainable policies
deliberative innovation
policy co-creation

This study develops an innovative model called RAKYAT (Rencana Kebijakan yang Nyata) to address the democratic deficit in Indonesia's legislative process, particularly the lack of meaningful public participation. Although public involvement is a constitutional mandate, existing mechanisms remain largely symbolic and procedural, failing to bridge the gap between citizens and policymakers. Using a Research and Development (R&D) method, this study adopts a multi-stage design approach involving conceptual modeling, literature synthesis, stakeholder analysis, and prototyping. The proposed system integrates three normative pillars visibility, accessibility, and permeability adapted from parliamentary studies and deliberative democracy frameworks. Findings indicate that embedding participatory mechanisms within the legislative cycle can enhance transparency, improve feedback responsiveness, and institutionalize citizens' influence on policymaking. RAKYAT is designed as a digital co-legislation platform that includes legislative dashboards, e-consultation features, and deliberative public forums. Comparative insights from Norway and Finland support the feasibility and scalability of the system, while local political realities underscore the urgency of inclusive reform. This research contributes a hybrid policy-design framework that merges normative theory with system architecture to restore legislative legitimacy and democratic accountability. The model has potential to transform public engagement from episodic protest to structured deliberation, thereby strengthening democratic resilience in developing political system.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although contemporary representative democracy faces various challenges, parliament remains an essential institution that bridges a country's political system with its citizens. However, the relationship between parliament and citizens is often overlooked in institutional studies, as most research focuses on legislative-executive relations. In Indonesia, this is ironic, given that many strategic policies are actually formulated through the legislature. Within a democratic state, the people, as holders of supreme sovereignty, should have equal rights to demand and correct legislative policies that do not represent the public interest. In this context, citizen lawsuits serve not only as a form of control but also as a participatory tool capable of correcting legislative outcomes, strengthening the position of minority groups, and moderating extreme tendencies in policy formulation, thus producing more representative compromises regarding diverse social preferences (Gandhi et al., 2020).

Public communication strategies play a crucial role in bridging public expectations with the direction of state policy. Unfortunately, street demonstrations remain the primary channel for the public to express dissatisfaction with policies deemed detrimental. The discrepancy between the government's narrative and public perception of the policy's

substance creates political dissonance that erodes public (Alon-Barkat, 2020). and some even say that only 55.9% was reported on the Kompas 2024 page, this shows the institution's shortcomings (Irfan, 2024). This gap highlights the importance of closer engagement between policymakers and their beneficiaries. policy success is largely determined by the ability of policymakers to establish equal two-way communication with citizens.

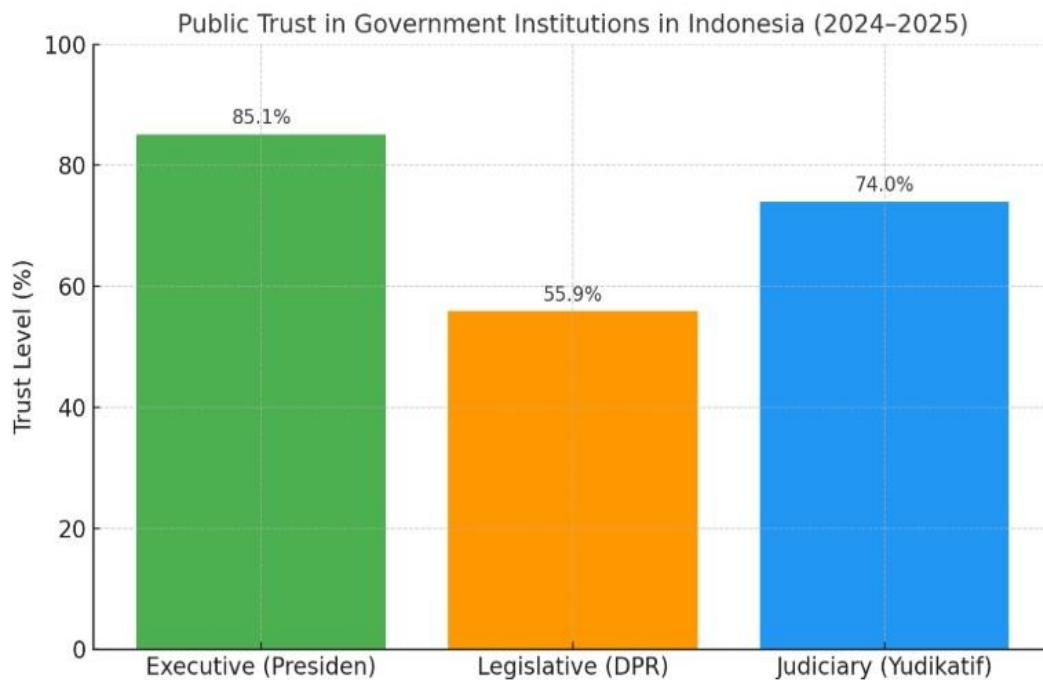


Figure 1. Public trust levels toward executive, legislative, and judicial institutions in Indonesia (2024–2025). (Source: Indikator Politik Indonesia, 2024; Indonesia Sentinel, 2025.)

The latest data from the Indonesian Political Indicator (2024) and Indonesia Sentinel (2025) show that public trust in Indonesia's legislative institutions is at its lowest level compared to the executive and judicial branches, at only 55.9%, far below the president's 85.1% and the judiciary's 74%. This disparity indicates a crisis of representation within parliament, where political legitimacy, which should be a key pillar of the legislative institution, is weakening in the public eye. This low level of trust not only reflects negative public perceptions but also serves as an objective indicator of a lack of accountability, transparency, and substantive participation in the legislative process. Within a democratic state, the legislature, as representatives of the people, should be at the forefront of bridging public interests and state policy. Therefore, these findings serve as a strong argument for the urgency of legislative institutional reform, not only in ethical and procedural aspects, but also in establishing a concrete, deliberative, and structurally digitalized system of public engagement.

In the context of legislation in Indonesia, the relationship between the people and parliament is still dominated by a top-down approach that tends to ignore public aspirations substantively.

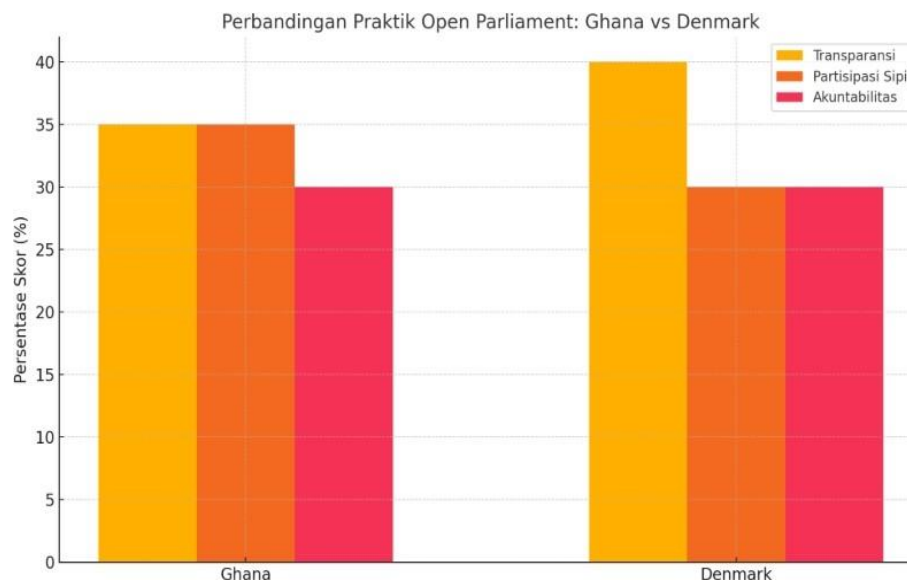


Figure 2. Comparison of Best Open Parliament practices between Ghana and Denmark based on three key indicators: transparency, civic participation, and public accountability. (Source: Adapted from Mensah (2022) and Kalampokis et al. (2019).)

The global push toward open government has triggered a transformation in public participation practices, shifting from one focused on access to information to one focused on active engagement in the legislative process. emphasize that in practice, this model still tends to emphasize technocratic transparency rather than building a truly deliberative and representative space. In Indonesia, the launch of various digital platforms such as e-Musrenbang, LAPOR!, and e-petition demonstrates a commitment to openness, but the participation generated remains procedural, symbolic, and has minimal influence on policy decisions.

This situation reveals a serious gap in our legislative system namely, the promised participation is not directly proportional to the influence it gives the people. If not addressed immediately If addressed, this situation could deepen the crisis of public trust in parliament. Therefore, this study recommends an institutional innovation in the form of a system called RAKYAT (Real Policy Plan). This system is designed as an integrated digital legislation platform on the official parliamentary website that allows the public to actively participate in assessing and providing input on draft policies currently being processed. Public assessments recorded in the RAKYAT system will serve as an indicator of the public's legitimacy of a policy whether it is worthy of being passed or requires revision as a form of strengthening the principle of substantive democracy, where the people are not only voices but also equal partners in the legislative process.

The Impact of Populism on Policy Direction. Populism, both left-wing and right-wing, has become a major factor destabilizing democracy and changing the direction of public policy in various countries. Within the framework of representative democracy, populism often emerges not to substantively strengthen popular participation, but rather to exploit public dissatisfaction with political parties deemed to have failed to represent their aspirations. Cole and Schofer (2023) show that populist leaders frequently undermine key pillars of democracy such as electoral integrity, legislative independence, and press freedom. Populist agendas, which claim to represent the "will of the people," often become a tool for sacrificing liberal and procedural democratic values.

In an institutional context, Berman (2021) highlights that populism creates tension between societal demands and the weak responses of the party system. When mainstream parties fail to address public concerns particularly on issues of economics, identity, and inequality Populism has gained room to grow, even dominating the political landscape. This situation not only weakens the state's institutional structures but also widens the representation gap between political elites and the people. While populists claim that only they represent the "true people," they simultaneously tend to exclude minority groups and ignore the principle of pluralism that underpins democratic ethics (Cole & Schofer, 2023; Berman, 2021).

A further consequence of populism is the creation of profound social polarization due to exclusive identity politics. Populism abuses the principle of majoritarianism by concentrating power in a single leader who claims to be the sole representative of the majority, while systematically weakening the opposition and the rights of minority group. In this climate, the struggle between populism and anti-populism creates a destructive political dynamic, mutually negating each other and eroding deliberative space in democracy (da Silva et al., 2022). As Berman (2021) emphasizes, populism is rooted in an "us versus them" rhetoric that not only divides society but also destroys trust between social groups.

Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that populism has significant potential to damage the direction of state policy. It weakens democratic institutions, disregards minority rights, and triggers the degradation of democratic values through social polarization and the monopoly of representation. Populism grows from the failure of mainstream parties to respond to popular unrest, then exploits this sentiment to construct an exclusive narrative about who has a voice in the political system. Thus, policy directions formed under the pressure of populism often deviate from the principles of collective justice and deliberative rationality that should be at the heart of a healthy democracy.

In the context of modern democracy, the dynamics of conflict between political groups are a crucial factor influencing the quality and direction of public policy. When ideological differences and factional loyalties dominate the legislative space, the policymaking process tends to be hampered by internal and intra-party conflict. Tensions between political groups are not simply a manifestation of a competition of ideas, but rather a reflection of symbolic struggles over identity, values, and the legitimacy of power. A study by (Thürk, 2022) found that internal party conflict and ideological distance between parties slow the legislative process, not because of substantive debates regarding the public

interest, but because each group is more focused on advancing its own political agenda and identity values.

The consequence of this fragmentation is an increasing tendency for legislators to show loyalty to particular factions rather than upholding a collective national vision. Compromise becomes increasingly difficult to achieve, and the resulting policies tend to be partisan and exclusive. Within this framework, (Orian Harel et al., 2020) show that political ideology in intergroup conflict functions as a narrative framing tool where one's own group's values are constructed as superior, while the opposing group's are systematically discredited. Rather than seeking common ground, political parties are more active in defending their group identities and internal values.

These findings are reinforced by Van Zomeren et al. (2023) through the Intergroup Value Protection Model (IVPM), which explains that when a group perceives its values to be violated by an opposing party, the resulting response is emotional-moral, such as anger, delegitimization, and even collective action. Polarization is a direct consequence of this situation, which ultimately not only hinders the legislative process but also weakens policy ethics and erodes the space for inclusive public deliberation. Policies born from such conditions are fragmented and carry a high risk of creating social discontent, as they are not built on consensus and the public interest, but rather the result of narrow compromises between opposing political forces.

When political conflict is driven by strategic calculations and the protection of narrow group agendas, public policy loses its representative power and responsiveness to the complex needs of the broader community. The legislative process becomes slow, full of trade-offs, and lacking common ground. In such situations, the resulting policies tend to be unsustainable and vulnerable to rejection by segments of society who feel marginalized. The political polarization that is continually reproduced by intergroup conflict ultimately not only creates a deadlock in the state's response to strategic issues but also undermines the legitimacy of democracy itself in the eyes of the people.

Democracy that does not function functionally has real and profound impacts on people's lives. When democratic principles are violated or weakened from within, the consequences include declining government performance, economic crises, income stagnation, and a collapse of public trust in state institutions, even in the most advanced democracies (Gerring et al., 2025). In the context of younger democracies like Indonesia, disappointment with the performance of democracy often leads to waves of protests in response to policies perceived as non-inclusive. nor does it side with the interests of the people. One of the main causes of the poor performance of democracy is the widespread practice of corruption, which not only limits the state's effectiveness in enforcing the law but also allows certain business groups to influence policy direction for short-term interests, while neglecting long-term strategic agendas such as social welfare and environmental sustainability (Matsusaka et al., 2022).

The phenomenon of democratic decline often manifests itself not in military coups or other dramatic events, but rather through a more subtle process: the seizure of power by democratically elected executive actors. In these situations, crucial institutions such as the legislature and judiciary are gradually weakened, while checks and balances are curtailed in the name of stability or efficiency. As a result, society loses control over the authoritarian behavior of those in power, who increasingly deviate from public

accountability (Pelke & Croissant, 2021). In such situations, public involvement becomes not only crucial but also essential to ensuring the sustainability and resilience of democracy itself (Gerring et al., 2025; Pelke & Croissant, 2021).

Active public engagement, through channels such as press freedom, civil society participation, and free and fair elections, is a pillar that ensures that the people's aspirations are represented in the direction of state policy. A healthy democracy demands that the collective preferences of the people be effectively incorporated into the legislative system, not only for the sake of political legitimacy, but also to ensure that laws and policies reflect the real needs and long-term interests of the people, not simply the whims of elite groups or dominant economic actors (Matusaka et al., 2022). Therefore, public participation in the legislative process not only strengthens policy legitimacy but also serves as a shield against corruption, abuse of power, and the degradation of democratic values.

In the Indonesian context, the spirit of democracy has been ingrained since independence. The principle of "of the people, by the people, for the people" is not only a normative slogan but also an ideological reflection inherent in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. This principle affirms that the people are the holders of supreme sovereignty, active actors in state governance, and the primary beneficiaries of every government policy. However, in practice, this noble principle has begun to be distorted. Many policies are enacted abruptly without adequate public dialogue, and often even spark controversy within society. When formal communication channels are unable to bridge the will of the people with political authority, street demonstrations become the only available space for expression. This is an indicator of a communication crisis between the people and the state. In response to this crisis, this study proposes an innovative official participatory system called RAKYAT (Real Policy Plan) an integrated digital legislative system that provides a concrete space for citizens to access, assess, and influence policy drafts being processed by parliament. This system is designed as a concrete manifestation of substantive democracy, where communication between the state and the people is no longer one-way, but rather dialogic, transparent, and oriented towards the long-term public interest.

E-Democracy as Effective Communication between Parliament and the Indonesian People. In modern democratic systems, e-democracy emerges as a political communication innovation that promises a more open, equal, and responsive relationship between the state and its citizens. In Indonesia, the potential of e-democracy can be maximized through integrated systems such as RAKYAT, a digital legislation platform that allows citizens to voice criticism, provide input, and evaluate draft policies directly without having to take to the streets. This system not only provides a new channel for participatory democracy but also a means to divert the energy of protest into productive deliberative participation. In line with this, (Hasan & Linger, 2020) demonstrate that open information systems can transform communication patterns from one-way relationships to inclusive two-way interactions between citizens and the government. However, e-democracy also challenges legacy bureaucratic structures that tend to maintain closed systems for the sake of efficiency and administrative control.

More than just the digitalization of services, e-democracy is a strategic instrument for optimizing public involvement in the policy-making process directly and

substantively. Concepts such as e-consultation, e-voting, and crowdsourcing policy become a path to reviving the meaning of popular sovereignty in legislative practice. In this regard, (MAVRIKI & Karyda, 2022) remind that technological integration must be accompanied by guarantees of privacy, fairness, and strict oversight so that digital democracy does not turn into a manipulative tool that actually narrows the space for fair participation. When this digital citizen engagement is successfully institutionalized, a structural transformation will occur in the legislative process.

Effective e-democracy design must be grounded in the reality that citizens do not act as isolated individuals, but rather as part of a social community with shared values. Therefore, systems like RAKYAT need to build deliberative spaces that enable collaboration and discussion within social groups to reach a more inclusive and sustainable consensus. Kneuer and Datts (2020) emphasize that the effectiveness of e-democracy is more pronounced at the local level, due to the geographic, emotional, and cognitive proximity between citizens and the government. For Indonesia, which upholds the principle of popular sovereignty, the presence of a digital legislative system like RAKYAT is a strategic tool to ensure that public policies are born from inclusive deliberation and gain broad public support and legitimacy. Thus, this system can reduce political tensions and the need for street demonstrations, because participatory spaces are already available and function constructively as a legitimate bridge between the people and parliament.

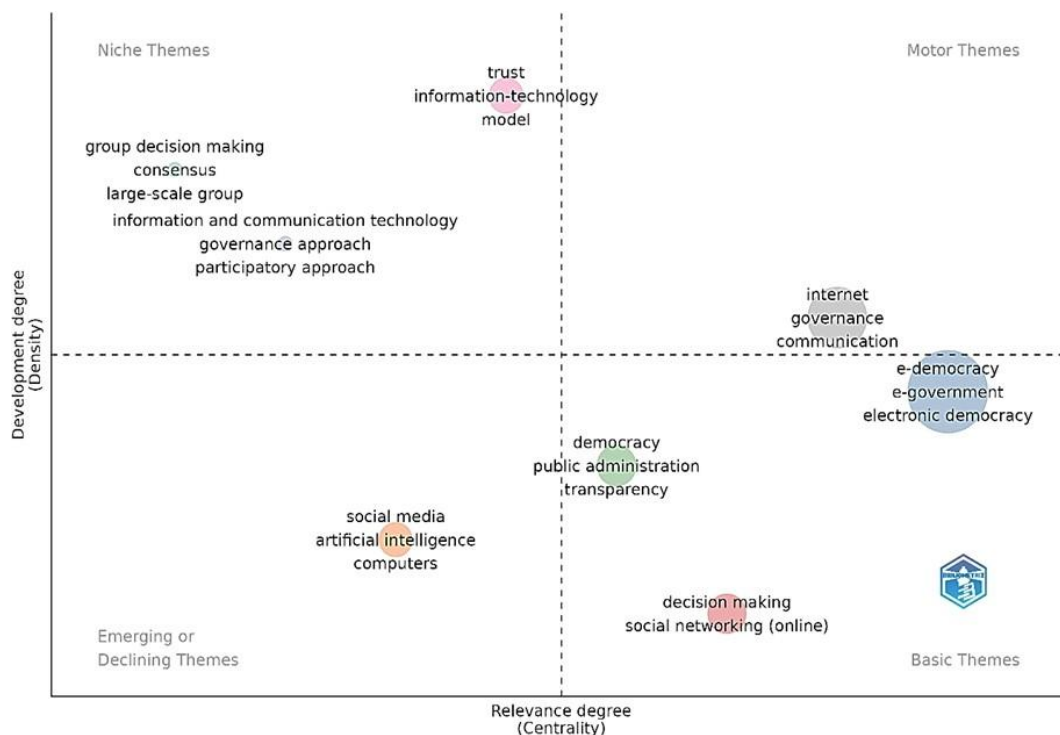


Figure 3. Thematic Map in e-Democracy

This map is divided into four quadrants that illustrate the position and dynamics of each theme based on two main indicators: centrality (connectedness to other themes) and density (depth or development of a theme).

1. Top right quadrant – Driving Themes:

Contains themes that are highly connected and rapidly developing. In the figure, this cluster includes keywords such as governance, internet, and communication. This means these themes are central to the e-democracy discourse and tend to be researched continuously and in-depth by the academic community.

2. Top left quadrant – Niche Themes:

Indicates topics that have developed intensively but are less connected to the mainstream discourse. Keywords such as ICT, decision-making, and consensus fall into this category. These topics have the potential to become new hubs if further linked to key issues.

3. Bottom right quadrant – Basic Themes:

Represents essential themes that are broadly connected but have not yet been studied in depth. This is where core concepts such as e-democracy, e-government, and electronic democracy reside. They serve as the foundation for other research, although their study is not yet fully exploratory.

4. Bottom left quadrant – Emerging or Declining Themes:

Indicates themes that have recently emerged or are starting to be abandoned. Examples: social media, computers, and artificial intelligence. These themes have not yet developed significantly, but could become future research trends or, conversely, are experiencing declining attention.

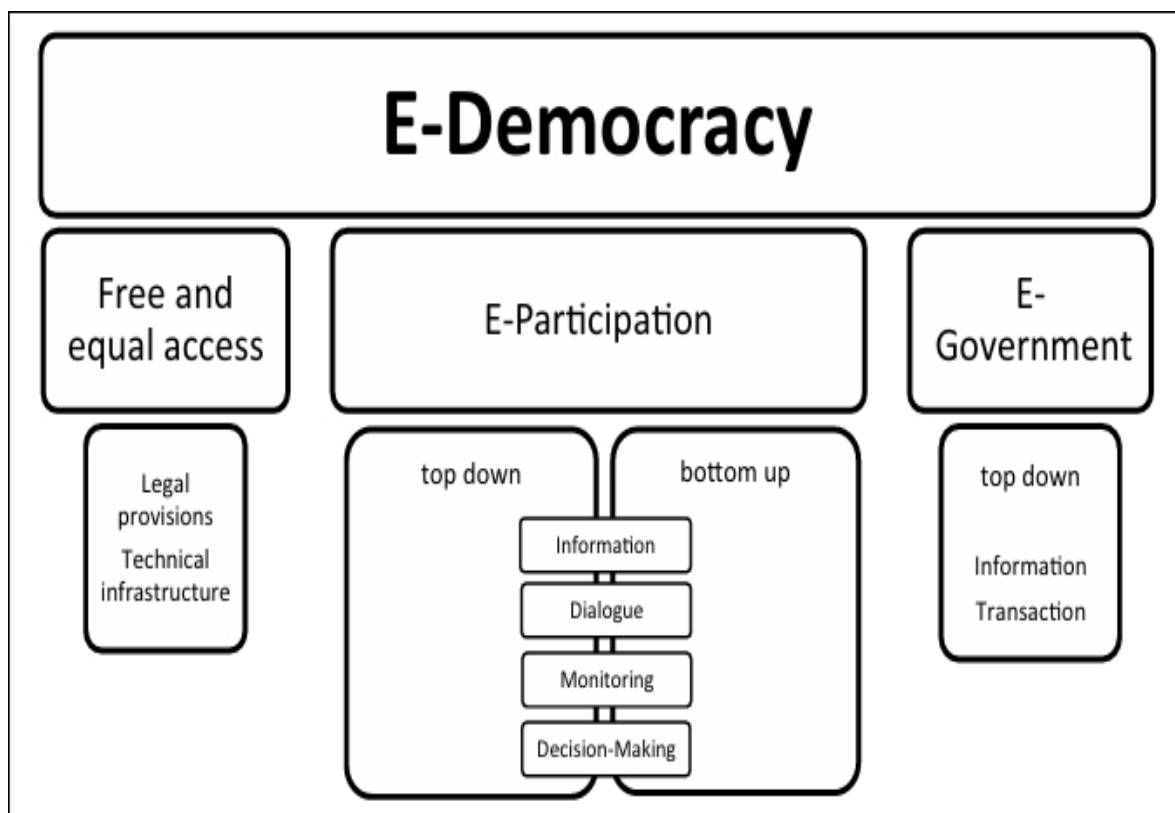


Figure 4. the concept of e- democracy

Based on the image above, adapted from Kneuer (2016: 672), the concept of e-democracy can be explained as follows: Source

E-democracy rests on three main pillars: first, Free and Equal Access, which is an absolute prerequisite for every citizen, without exception, to participate. This pillar is supported by two crucial aspects: the existence of legal provisions that protect and guarantee this right of access, and the availability of adequate technical infrastructure, such as internet access, necessary hardware, and software. Without this foundation, e-democracy would be a mere utopia. The second pillar is e-participation, which reflects citizen involvement in public decision-making. This e-participation can occur in two directions: top-down, which may refer to government initiatives to involve the public; and bottom-up, which indicates participation initiatives originating from the community itself. In both directions, the e-participation process follows a series of increasingly in-depth stages. It begins with the provision of information to the public, then evolves into a two-way dialogue between the government and citizens, then progresses to the monitoring stage where citizens can oversee policy implementation, and culminates in decision-making where citizen voices carry significant weight in policy formation.

The third pillar is e-Government, which focuses on the digitization of government services and processes. Like e-participation, e-government can also be viewed from a top-down perspective, encompassing government initiatives in providing digital services. This e-government involves two main aspects: the digital dissemination of government information to the public, and more importantly, facilitating online transactions between citizens and the government, such as tax payments, permit processing, or public service registration. E-government serves as the backbone of e-participation because it provides channels and platforms for citizens to interact with the government efficiently.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a Research and Development (R&D) approach to design a digital-based participatory legislative system named RAKYAT (Real Policy Plan). This approach was chosen because it allows for the integration of conceptual development, system design, and initial validation testing of the policy design. The R&D model in the context of policy studies not only functions to create innovative products but also to test their suitability to the sociopolitical context and stakeholder needs (Fernández et al., 2023).

This research procedure includes four main stages: (1) needs analysis, namely a review of literature and regulations to identify participation gaps in the legislative process; (2) system design, including the formulation of the principles of visibility, accessibility, and permeability as the normative foundation of the RAKYAT system, as well as mapping actors, digital instruments, and legislative communication flows; (3) development of a prototype model, in the form of a flowchart, participation module, and system interface simulation; and (4) conceptual validation, namely testing the model's suitability against international comparative studies (Norway and Finland) and input from the latest participatory policy literature.

This method also refers to the systemic-participatory approach suggested by De Smedt and Borch (2022), which emphasizes the importance of integrating digital system design, institutional structures, and the deliberative needs of the community. Therefore, the

RAKYAT system design was developed not merely as a technical tool, but as a deliberative political medium adaptive to the context of representative democracy in Indonesia.

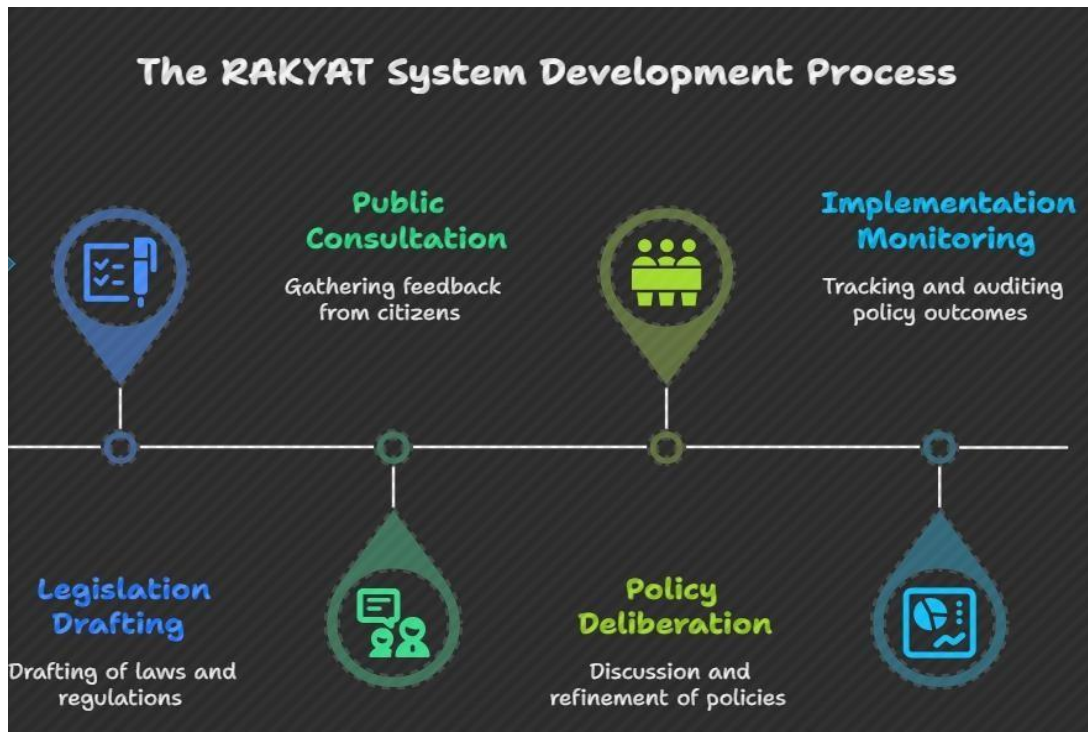


Figure 2. Design of the RAKYAT System

The digital-based collaborative legislative system consists of four main stages: Legislation Drafting, Public Consultation, Policy Deliberation, and Implementation Monitoring. Conceptually, these stages reflect the integration of the principles of visibility, accessibility, and permeability in democratic legislative practice. In the initial stage, the formulation of laws is carried out openly and documented, followed by public consultations to gather direct input from citizens. This input is then processed in the policy deliberation stage, which emphasizes dialogue and participatory refinement of substance. Finally, the system adopts a transparency-based approach to monitoring and evaluating post-implementation policy outcomes. This process aligns with the deliberative e-democracy model, which not only facilitates access to information but also ensures that the resulting policies are the result of legitimate, data-driven collective dialogue.

The development of the RAKYAT system is a strategic initiative involving close collaboration between key stakeholders, including parliament, academics, civil society organizations, technology players, and representatives of the general public. With this intersectoral synergy, the RAKYAT system is not only built technocratically but also developed through the principles of inclusivity and a commitment to authentic public voice. Cross-stakeholder participation at all stages from design and testing to evaluation guarantee that the system will function adaptively, accountably, and legitimately as the infrastructure for Indonesia's future digital democracy.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Public Involvement in the Parliamentary Legislative Process: The Direction of Substantive Democracy. Public involvement in the parliamentary legislative process

still experiences dynamics that do not fully reflect the principles of substantive democratic participation. Although the democratic system guarantees the right of individuals to participate in policy-making, in practice, public participation is often symbolic and does not directly impact the direction of legislation. (Matheus & Janssen, 2020) emphasize that in a healthy democracy, public participation should not be reduced to merely a supplementary procedure but rather should be positioned as a fundamental right that guarantees every individual's meaningful involvement in the decision-making process. Newell.

Furthermore, (Stratu-Strelet et al., 2023) show that while digital technology has great potential to strengthen the quality of democracy, its use in the context of e-democracy has not been fully optimized to strengthen the genuine participatory dimension. The public is still positioned as a recipient of information, rather than an active partner in shaping the substance of policy. This reinforces the criticism that current public consultations tend to be passive and not integrated into the strategic legislative cycle. Therefore, citizen engagement in the legislative process needs to shift from a consultative approach to a collaborative model that allows for the direct exchange of ideas, criticisms, and policy alternatives.

Ideally, in a democratic system like Indonesia, the principle of popular sovereignty is not only articulated normatively in the constitution but must also be implemented in daily legislative practice. The law-making process must provide a deliberative channel that bridges parliament and the public in a two-way manner. One concrete approach that can be proposed is the institutionalization of a digital participation space based on the official parliamentary website, which allows the public to interact directly with draft bills, provide feedback, and engage in online forums with experts or regional representatives. If this channel is designed with principles of transparency, responsiveness, and fair representation, the resulting policies will be more inclusive, accountable, and have strong legitimacy. Thus, public involvement is no longer merely symbolic but becomes a political practice that strengthens trust in democracy and strengthens the relationship between the people and parliament.

Table 1. Practical indicators of parliamentary engagement with the public.

No	Practical indicators	Indicators in detail
1	Parliament as public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What programmes and venues are offered for the public to explore their legislature including its history, system and process, MPs' working lives, and debating political-legislative issues? • How open and accessible is the parliament to people with special needs, particularly people with disabilities? • Can the purposive public approach the parliamentary arenas? How strict is the security system or procedural requirement for public attendance at the chamber gallery?

No.	Practical indicators	Indicators in detail
2	Sharing of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the parliament operate a visiting centre with professional staff to communicate better with the public? How is parliamentary information disseminated to the public? • How open and accessible is the parliamentary library system? Does the parliament operate regional offices or other channels to communicate with local people? • Has the parliament established its own open data policy with a separate online platform? Do the open parliamentary data sets satisfy international standards in their scope, format and actual availability for public re-use?
3	Contact with MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do MPs organise regular meetings with their local constituents? Do MPs organise day visits or tours of parliament for hard-to-reach groups in their constituencies? • Is there correspondence between MPs and constituents? How much time do MPs invest in answering questions sent by mail, email or through social media? Do MPs give practical help to constituents? • Do MPs keep in contact with constituents via social media (Facebook/Twitter/blogs)? • What links are found between the country's election system and MPs' constituency roles?
4	Media and digital engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What media channels are operated to inform the public of parliamentary affairs? Does the parliament offer a free working environment for journalists? • Is the parliamentary website informative and user-friendly? Does it allow the public to engage directly with MPs or comment on the processing bills online? • How is the participatory potential of new ICTs such as new social media utilised by the parliament? What impacts are observed through the parliamentary use of them?
5	Transparency of process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are plenary proceedings (debates/question time, etc.) open to the public, physically and digitally? How broad is the scope of broadcasting on parliamentary processes? • To what extent are the documents and records of parliamentary proceedings, including committees, available to the public? • Are standing committee meetings open to the public, including expert hearings? How does the level of transparency influence the effectiveness of legislative committees?

No	Practical indicators	Indicators in detail
6	Actual participation in legislative decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can citizens participate in initiating the legislative agenda, for example, through petition and an e-petition committee, or the citizens' initiative? • Does parliament open the legislative processes of scrutiny and expert hearings to the public - for example, through an online forum (e-Parliament) and public reading stage, submissions or open seminars, etc.? • Does the parliament utilise such methods of deliberative democratic forums as citizens' jury, consensus conference, and citizens' assembly? • Is there direct involvement of the public in final legislative decision-making, such as citizens' initiative linked with (consultative) referendums?

Note. MPs = Members of Parliament; ICTs = Information and Communication Technologies. Add the original source citation according to your journal style

Innovative Conception People as a Collaborative Legislative System. The lack of truly impactful participatory channels in the legislative process necessitates systemic innovation capable of addressing the substantive challenges of representative democracy in Indonesia. In this context, this study proposes the RAKYAT (Real Policy Plan) system as a digital-based public participation model designed to bridge three key principles in legislative work: visibility, accessibility, and permeability. Different from procedural and ceremonial approaches to participation, the RAKYAT system aims to establish a structured, two-way feedback mechanism that allows the public to participate in shaping the substance of policies through an inclusive, open, and measurable deliberative space. The urgency of this concept cannot be postponed, as it objectively addresses the legitimacy crisis in the legislative system. (Pattyn et al., 2022) assert that public policy formation that prioritizes the principles of pluralization and professionalization, particularly by involving diverse sources of expert advisors, is viewed positively as a fulcrum for policy quality and legitimacy.

The quality of legislation in Indonesia shows signs of serious decline. Hermanto, Nur, and Subawa (2024) revealed that parliamentary reform efforts over the past two decades have not yielded tangible improvements, primarily due to weak integration between institutional capacity, legislative planning, and public participation mechanisms. In this situation, participation cannot simply be viewed as a procedural complement but must be institutionalized into a system capable of fully capturing social values, relationships between actors, and the local context.

Challenges such as the misalignment of the National Legislation Program (Prolegnas) list with actual legal needs, the weak academic basis for drafting bills, and the absence of post-implementation evaluative mechanisms are key reasons why a system like RAKYAT must be designed as a collaborative platform that integrates the people's voice into the legislative cycle. In this system, public participation is no longer symbolic but becomes the core of the legislative process itself. This model also serves as a conceptual

contribution to the discourse on Indonesian parliamentary reform, presenting a participatory legislative protocol oriented toward quality, accountability, and representation.

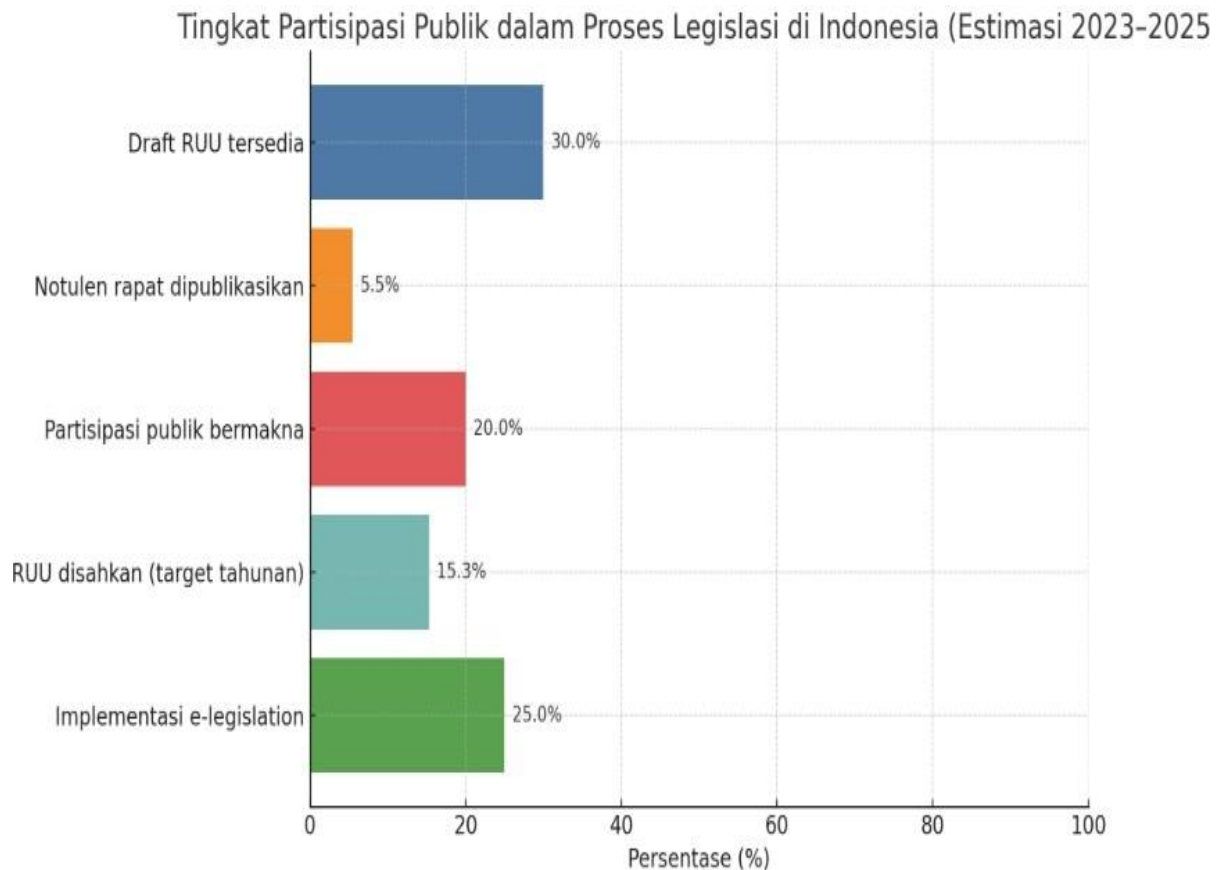


Figure 2. Data on Indonesian public participation in the legislative process (Kompas.id, 2024).

The level of public participation in the legislative process in Indonesia remains very low, as reflected by several crucial indicators. Only around 30% of draft laws (RUU) accompanied by drafts and academic papers are publicly available, while the publication of minutes of DPR meetings reaches only 5.5%. Meaningful public participation remains limited, with many strategic bill discussions held behind closed doors and minimal public consultation. Annual legislative target realization is also low, reaching only around 15.3% of the planned target. Although digital initiatives such as e-legislation and SILEG have been introduced, their implementation has been uneven and cannot be fully relied upon to support transparency and broad public engagement (Indonesian Parliamentary Centre, 2023; Jurnal Innovative, 2024; Kompas.id, 2024; Hukumonline, 2024; Open Government Partnership, 2023).

Normatively, public participation in legislation is guaranteed by Law No. 12 of 2011, including through access to legislative documents such as academic papers and draft bills. However, in practice, this access is often limited and not real-time, and effective feedback mechanisms are lacking. Constitutional Court decisions and various legislative studies (Jurnal Legislasi Indonesia, 2023) have emphasized that public participation must be deliberative and inclusive, ensuring equality of voice and institutional responsiveness to public input. Fishkin (2020), using a deliberative democracy approach, states that the

quality of participation depends on the extent to which the process includes balanced, inclusive, and documented discussions.

Digital technologies such as e-legislation can be a lever for expanding public participation. However, as criticized by the Open Government Partnership (2023), digitalization should not stop at administrative transparency alone; it must be accompanied by meaningful, sustainable, and impactful participatory design. Innovations such as citizens' assemblies (WFD Indonesia, 2022) can be integrated into the RAKYAT system to create a deliberative space that fairly represents the socio-political diversity of society. If implemented consistently, public participation will not only enhance legal legitimacy and parliamentary accountability but also deepen the quality of democracy itself.

Indonesia can learn from the practice of participatory democracy in Norway – one of the countries with the best democratic systems in the world. Norway has demonstrated that improving the effectiveness of communication between parliament and the people can significantly increase public participation. Various legislative communication projects in Norway emphasize the importance of open information channels, citizen involvement from the early stages of policy formulation, and transparent decision-making. In this context, the RAKYAT system proposed in this study aligns with these principles and can serve as a systemic foundation for strengthening deliberative democracy in Indonesia. Lessons from Norway demonstrate that when parliament is open to criticism and active public involvement, the resulting policies will be more representative, stable, and in the interests of the broader public.

“RAKYAT” as a Systemic Innovation for Substantial Legislative Engagement. The crisis of public participation in Indonesia's lawmaking process signals a gap between the principle of popular sovereignty and elitist and procedural legislative practices. Damanik, Farina, and Nugraha (2025) highlight that public participation in legislation often serves only as an administrative complement, with no guarantee that their aspirations are truly considered substantively. As a result, legal legitimacy is weakened, while social resistance is growing. Despite normative progress through the enactment of Law No. 13/2022 in response to Constitutional Court Decision No. 91/PUU-XVIII/2020, which requires meaningful participation, its implementation remains far from expectations. This is evident in the issuance of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) No. 2/2022 concerning Job Creation, which again ignores the principle of meaningful public involvement. that the root of the failure of participatory policies is the imbalance of power between the state and citizens, low policy literacy at the grassroots level, and the absence of inclusive participation channels.

In response to these normative concerns, the RAKYAT (Real Policy Plan) system was designed as an innovative model that revitalizes the relationship between the people and parliament through a collaborative approach. This system is built on three normative principles developed by Seo and Raunio (2017): visibility (the visibility of the legislative process), accessibility (the public's access to policy processes and documents), and permeability (the system's ability to incorporate citizen influence into policy). These principles are reinforced by the participatory systemic design approach described by De Smedt and Borch (2022), which states that effective policy interventions will only be

achieved if infrastructure, services, and institutional rules are designed in an integrated manner.

The Indonesian political context reinforces the urgent need for a system like RAKYAT. Indonesian democracy, while structurally stable, has suffered from declining quality due to weak political parties, a lack of programmatic differentiation, and the dominance of executive coalitions that erode legislative control (Pepinsky, 2025). Therefore, the RAKYAT system is designed not only as a technical channel for aspirations, but also as a discursive ecosystem capable of revitalizing deliberative practices through informed participation. a modeled democracy approach that is, simulating informed voter preferences to compensate for citizens' low political literacy so that the resulting decisions still reflect rational collective interests.

Public participation is not merely a ceremonial space. It must be an integral part of a deliberative, inclusive legislative process that influences the substance of policy. Public engagement designed with deliberative principles can produce more targeted policies, increase legitimacy, and open up space for previously marginalized voices. As in the context of climate policy, public participation means not only listening to aspirations but also creating collective interactions that produce shared solutions in the form of policies (Magalhaes & Roseira, 2020). The RAKYAT system is expected to answer this need by providing a two-way communication mechanism that is inclusive and adaptive to Indonesia's socio-political diversity.

E-democracy, as a representation of digital political transformation, connects technological innovation with popular sovereignty through broader participation. In Indonesia, demonstrations against policies deemed detrimental have become the dominant form of communication due to the absence of official channels that are effectively accessible to the public. (Berg & Hofmann, 2021) note, although open government and digital democracy initiatives have been developed, their implementation remains fragmented between representative institutions and citizens' digital participation. Therefore, the RAKYAT system exists as an integrative model that connects the two through the principles of visibility, accessibility, and permeability.

Effective e-democracy not only provides information but also transforms data into collective decisions through participatory and transparent legislative mechanisms. (Nikiforova & McBride, 2020) emphasize the importance of policy portal design that takes into account inclusivity and usability, so that citizens can access, understand, and respond substantively to policies. This is where the RAKYAT system comes into play: transforming data into discourse, and discourse into policy decisions.

By engaging citizens in the legislative cycle in a systemic and deliberative manner, the RAKYAT system returns power to its rightful place: the people themselves. In the Indonesian context, this system offers a way out of polarization and the destructive practice of street demonstrations by providing a formal and structured channel for voicing aspirations. If the state is able to fulfill the prerequisites of technology, transparency, and participatory literacy, the resulting public policies will be more legitimate, adaptive, and solution-oriented an important foundation for a mature and just democracy (Magalhães & Roseira, 2020).

Table 2. Comparative Table: RAKYAT (Indonesia) vs. E-Legislation (Finland)

Aspect	RAKYAT (Indonesia)	E-Legislation (Finland)	Key References
System Objective	Enhancing substantive public involvement in the legislative process through digital deliberation and co-production	Ensuring public access to legal texts, enabling transparency, and fostering legal interoperability	Seo & Raunio (2017); Ministry of Justice Finland, 2023
Platform Base	Participatory digital platform embedded in the official website of the Indonesian Parliament (DPR)	Finlex.fi (consolidated legal texts) and Semantic Finlex (open linked legal data)	Finlex.fi; op.europa.eu
Participation Model	Collaborative: citizens evaluate, comment on, and monitor legislative drafts	Informative: users access legal texts, without direct real-time contribution to legislative deliberation	Garcia-Rio & Bravo-Luna (2024); Reddit Finland, 2023
Functional Architecture	Four integrated phases: Drafting - Public Consultation - Policy Deliberation - Implementation Monitoring	Provision of official legal texts (laws, decrees, court decisions) in updated and original versions	Upegui et al. (2024); data.finlex.fi
Legal Foundations	Based on principles of visibility, accessibility, and permeability; lacks specific enabling legislation	Governed by Electronic Services Act (924/2010), Information Management Act (906/2019), and Shared ICT Services Act (571/2016)	data.europa.eu; opendata.fi
Transparency Features	Citizens assess legitimacy of policies, access real-time drafts and policy history	Public access to legal documents, metadata, and version history; no direct deliberative interface	VTV Finland, 2023; Open Government Partnership, 2024

Aspect	RAKYAT (Indonesia)	E-Legislation (Finland)	Key References
Technological Nature	Deliberative and interactive; requires citizen authentication	Legal-informative; focuses on data structure, metadata, and interoperability for institutions	Semantic Finlex; op.europa.eu
Democracy Approach	Substantive deliberative democracy; alternative to disruptive protest	Procedural democracy; focuses on open law access and administrative transparency	Kajava & Latti (2020); Ministry of Justice Finland, 2022
Design Philosophy	Systematic participatory design integrating social and digital architecture	Technocratic-legalistic design using schema-driven legal modeling and codification	De Smedt & Borah (2022); Villeneuve & McBride (2020)
Implementation Challenges	Low political literacy, bureaucratic inertia, limited digital legal infrastructure	Lack of real-time participatory mechanisms in legislative decision-making	Upegui et al. (2024); VTV.fi

The remarkable success of Finland’s e-legislation system built on transparency, legal interoperability, and public access—demonstrates how digital governance can enhance democratic legitimacy. Yet, unlike Finland, Indonesia continues to face a democratic deficit marked by symbolic participation, opaque legislative processes, and minimal public influence over policymaking. In this context, the *RAKYAT* system emerges not merely as a digital innovation, but as a constitutional necessity. By institutionalizing visibility, accessibility, and permeability within a collaborative legislative platform, *RAKYAT* offers a transformative solution to restore trust, bridge the gap between citizens and parliament, and ensure that public policies genuinely reflect the will of the people. Its adoption would mark a decisive step toward a more deliberative, just, and future-ready democracy in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This study offers a systemic solution to the chronic deficit of substantive public participation in Indonesia’s legislative process by introducing *RAKYAT* (Rencana Kebijakan yang Nyata) a digitally designed co-legislation model grounded in democratic deliberation. By integrating the normative principles of visibility, accessibility, and permeability, the *RAKYAT* system reimagines how citizen engagement can be institutionalized not as a symbolic formality, but as a core component of policy-making legitimacy. The research, conducted through a Research and Development (R&D) framework, contributes a hybrid approach that bridges

conceptual policy design with functional system architecture, offering both theoretical and practical advances in participatory governance.

RAKYAT is not merely a technological tool, but a political innovation that restructures the communication ecosystem between parliament and the people. It transforms episodic dissent often expressed through protest into structured, responsive, and traceable digital deliberation. Moreover, the system addresses the accountability gap by providing a concrete platform for civic influence throughout the legislative cycle. In an era of declining public trust and democratic erosion, particularly in representative institutions, this model serves as a resilient framework adaptable to diverse political contexts. Future research should explore pilot implementations of RAKYAT in regional legislative bodies and evaluate its long-term impacts on trust, transparency, and policy

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