THE ROLE OF INFORMAL CONNECTIONS IN REALIZING RIGHTS FOR INDONESIAN CITIZENS

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Abstract:

This article aims to analyze the role of informal connections as a form of community citizenship informality in Sidomulyo Hamlet RW 003 Sumberberas Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency, in an effort to realize the rights of citizens in Indonesia. The method used is library research, where activities such as reading, taking notes, processing or reviewing written references in books, journals or other research, which are connected to civic phenomena occurring in society, will be carried out. This study produces findings that citizenship is described as various formal and informal aspects of civic engagement as a depiction of citizens' interactions with the state. The context of informality, which in this study is described as the personal social connections of citizens, is one way to accelerate public virtue which is not limited to a negative perspective, but can also be directed into a more positive aspect.

Keywords: informality of citizenship, informal connections, citizens' rights

1. Introduction

Citizenship is not only related to status or membership as a citizen. Citizenship is membership in a state that is valid in the eyes of the law and on that basis the rights and obligations inherent in being a citizen of a state or a nation, which are then socialized to lead to civil virtue, for certain purposes of a community/state as an institution that gives rights (Turner, 1997). Such a definition of citizenship is only limited to the normative way that citizenship can be obtained by someone, whereas citizenship takes place depending

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on the citizen's civic involvement in state affairs or public interests. The intention to participate in an activity and have a relationship with the public interest is included in the aspect of citizen involvement. With the existence of citizenship and citizens who are sovereign and legitimate in the eyes of the law, it is hoped that it will produce a quality public spirit in their involvement in the public interest (Asen, 2004). In this way, citizenship obtained by a citizen is not merely about status and how the state includes rights or obligations for citizens, but citizens should also be responsible for their status or membership in the state. This can be done by involving oneself in activities related to the state or public interest, which is actualized by the concept of public participation. Public participation is described into 5 levels, the implementation of which requires high levels of trust between institutions and the public, such as informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering activities (Bandelli & Konijn, 2015).

The existence of public participation is also intended for the common good. One of the important things is public participation so that citizens' rights are allocated properly. Participation is an effort to build hope for the social change desired by citizens (Boone *et al.*, 2019). Apart from that, civil involvement which is actualized through this participation is carried out for the sustainability of state government. The context of citizen involvement with the state often contains elements of coercion, for example, a citizen is obliged to participate as a condition for certain funding offers and to improve the quality of services (Newman *et al.*, 2004). The next impact that arises is that citizens will tend to participate if they have a certain interest. Therefore, public participation is not really a priority for the common good, sometimes participation is carried out because all parties participate thoroughly and equally (Boone *et al.*, 2019), does not look at social class or is not based on informal connections that would allow for certain personal benefits.

The phenomenon of informality is described through a dualistic method that views the state as a formal actor that has legal legitimacy, while non-state actors are the origin of the emergence of informality (Polese, 2023). Dependence on informal personal connections of citizens results in a decrease in the actualization of citizenship, because it only focuses on how to obtain these rights while paying less attention to how to actually realize the rights (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). So this kind of thing only leads to something that is instant and justifies any means to obtain the rights of citizens. However, citizens' personal connections as a form of informality actually become an appropriate controlling factor for government, because they can easily interact with state officials. As confirmed, personal connections or informality have the potential to contribute to improving the quality of state governance (Polese, 2023).

Viewed from another point of view, this connection can also be used as an intermediary so that civilians can channel their aspirations to parties they feel are appropriate, so that they can be allocated into a policy that is mutually beneficial, and as a result, it is hoped that citizens' rights can be fulfilled. Personal connections, which are a manifestation of informality, can be identified in indicators of community involvement, neighborhood cohesion, diversity, and network/connection size (Li, 2016). Based on the various statements above, the importance of this article is to look in depth at the

implementation of citizenship in Sidomulyo Hamlet RW 003 Sumberberas Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency, which specifically focuses on the role of personal connections as a form of informality that develops in the community.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Informality of Citizenship

Citizenship is membership in a state that is valid in the eyes of the law and on that basis the rights and obligations inherent in being a citizen of a state or a nation, which are then socialized to lead to civil virtue, for certain purposes of a community/state as an institution that gives rights (Turner, 1997). The inclusion of a person in a particular community can increase the capacity of citizens to interact with the state, in this case as a means of ensuring the implementation of policies that are beneficial to that community and most importantly, minimizing its negative impacts (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018).

The concept of citizenship includes possible issues related to social justice, equal rights of citizens, and those related to participation (Oyedemi, 2015). Citizenship offers recognition of equal opportunities for all citizens to participate (Oyedemi, 2015). Citizenship is a manifestation of the characteristic factors that ensure the rights of citizens are enjoyed, both those formally stated on paper and the capacity of citizens to realize these rights (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). Citizenship and rights refer to the way in which the relationship between citizens and the state is established (Dermaut *et al.*, 2020). Citizenship actually includes a commitment to the common good, the public interest, and a commitment to the common interest taking precedence over individual interests (Oyedemi, 2015). Therefore, the basis of the concept of informality is institutions based on particularism, and competition between formal and informal institutions which is related to differences in written formal rules and informal ways of working in practice (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019).

The phenomenon of informality is described through a dualistic method that views the state as a formal actor that has legal legitimacy, while non-state actors are the origin of the emergence of informality (Polese, 2023). The practice of informality is a social context in society that is imposed by the environment, that there are choices that can make things easier, namely that people need to have connections to get things done, due to the lack of resources and responsive public institutions (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019). Informality is also said to occur due to being faced with an unresponsive and often intimidating bureaucratic system, which makes citizens rely more on third parties or intermediaries to gain access to public services (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). It is reiterated that the emergence of informality is often caused by a lack of responsiveness from formal authorities, forcing society to respond in informal ways which causes the relationship between citizens and the state to no longer be strong (Witcher & Fumado, 2022). Therefore, low trust in state institutions supports citizens to prefer roles in the informal sector that are considered more significant, such as membership in a political party which produces informal practices in the form of social capital for the future (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019).

The culture of informality in the concept of citizenship can contribute to an informal practice of public participation (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019). The intention to participate in an activity and have a relationship with the public interest is included in the aspect of citizen involvement. With the existence of citizenship and citizens who are legitimately sovereign in the eyes of the law, it is hoped that it will produce a quality public spirit in their involvement in the public interest (Asen, 2004). Public participation is described into 5 levels, the implementation of which requires high levels of trust between institutions and the public, such as informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering activities (Bandelli & Konijn, 2015). Participation is an effort to build hope for the social change desired by citizens (Boone *et al.*, 2019). The context of citizen involvement with the state often contains elements of coercion, for example, a citizen is obliged to participate as a condition for certain funding offers and to improve the quality of services (Newman *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, public participation is not really a priority for the common good, sometimes participation is carried out because all parties participate thoroughly and equally (Boone *et al.*, 2019).

Based on the explanation above, taking advantage of the informality of citizenship is a significant situation to handle the situation immediately, without waiting long for assistance to be instituted (Witcher & Fumado, 2022). Therefore, informality in this case is positioned as supporting the reaffirmation of the supremacy of law due to violations of citizens' rights (Shatkin & Soemarwi, 2021). However, democracy cannot be implemented effectively even though general elections are held regularly, because formal and informal institutions are still in conflict, and informality prevails over the universality of formal norms (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019).

The emergence of intermediaries is interpreted as a character that characterizes informality as well as obligations that accompany it between citizens, intermediaries and the state(Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). Intermediaries or third parties who are organs of informality function as citizen empowerers or agents of democratization so that the capacity to deal with state institutions (related to rights) is more balanced (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). In this case, informal space is used as a stepping stone for citizens (especially minorities) to be able to get involved or participate in government interests (Díez *et al.*, 2011). It is emphasized that mediators in the informality of citizenship can have implications for aspects of integration of marginalized communities or civilians who do not have power into a capacity capable of making/demanding rights claims from the state (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018).

Conceptions of citizenship within the framework of a formal relationship between citizens and the state often ignore the impact of informality on the quality of the citizenship experience itself (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). Dependence on intermediaries can foster citizens' experience of rights towards dependence on personal relationships/connections and a desire to fulfill obligations afterwards (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). Citizens who are morally conscious will feel indebted to intermediaries for the assistance they have provided and feel that failure to fulfill this debt will endanger access to state resources in the future (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, the support or

assistance provided by intermediaries to citizens cannot be considered completely unconditional (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018).

Informality is categorized as having a close relationship with nepotism, because acts of nepotism tend to prioritize the interests of family, friends or relatives and discriminate against non-family members (Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2013). As explained, the practice of informality can be seen from various forms of solidarity, such as relying on relatives, parents, neighbors and neighbours (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019). This kind of nepotism is mostly negative, especially when management employs incompetent relatives and results in some tolerance for inappropriate behavior (Schmid & Sender, 2021). Efforts to recruit family/relatives to get work is a common thing and is considered good if they comply with applicable requirements and have the appropriate abilities/skills (Padgett *et al.*, 2015).

2.2 Informal Connections

There are different ways that citizens use to be able to connect with state institutions, so that their rights can be recognized and enforced, namely by utilizing their personal connections or relationships with related parties (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). Informal connections are utilized in order to launch clientelistic networks (Aliyev, 2015). The existence of formal and informal networks is able to develop competence as well as become a source of strength for residents in the group (Kelly, 1989). Understanding related to social networks which are informal connections of citizens, related to interactions between elites and non-elites whose ultimate goal is the distribution of state resources (Estes, 2023).

A civil network/connection using legitimate methods in framing issues between citizens and the state can pressure power holders to be responsible for the values they have claimed (especially related to citizens' rights) (Coe, 2015). As a result, informal connections are coordinated from the bottom up through such connections in all types of organizations, intended for the provision of public goods (Estes, 2023). As also emphasized, informal relationships are seen as equally important as states that have formal regulations regarding the rights of citizens, as are external efforts to support the realization of these rights by cultivating relationships with power-holders (Willem, 2018). Civil society networks or connections are framed to influence the course of policy so that the state is pressured to act (Coe, 2015). Informal connections also have a big influence on citizens' understanding of narratives and state political outcomes (Estes, 2023). Civil society social networks can be actors that influence the emergence of social movements to influence the construction of the meaning of frequently occurring social issues (Coe, 2015). The presence or absence of informal connections is also a major factor in support for fulfilling a service need (Ezell & Gibson, 1990).

Informal social connections have implications for the ability to reproduce inequality in society with bottom-up mechanisms (Estes, 2023). Informality is also often associated with forms of discrimination, such as when completing work it is considered necessary to have connections with people in important positions (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019), whereas if it is associated with an opposing perspective then some people who do not

have a personal connection will tend to be overlooked. The result of this kind of informal citizenship character is that groups of people who have better connections with authority holders can obtain their rights, while groups who do not have dominance over these connections are likely to be marginalized (Willem, 2018).

The role of third parties is a characteristic characteristic of an informal connection in the state's interaction with citizens (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). Political parties that aggregate aspirations from the community to be able to formulate them into policy proposals which are then fought for in parliament to become policies for the public interest, are also an example of the role of third parties in being able to bridge the aspirations of citizens to the state (Fales, 2018). The role of third parties such as political parties can be relied on as an intermediary or a kind of broker to deal with bureaucracy, as a provider of access/facilitation (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). Therefore, the role of intermediaries/third parties/mediators in informal connections is used to provide services to citizens in the elderly category in order to fulfill their needs for things such as housework, recreation, daycare, companionship, and meal preparation (Ezell & Gibson, 1990). It is reiterated that taking advantage of informal connections that naturally exist in the social environment of society, can be done by getting a job with the help of political connections or by paying, registering children in educational institutions of choice, using informal connections to get health care, up to patterns that make it profitable the outcome of the decision at trial (Cveticanin *et al.*, 2019).

Resolving conflicts in society through third parties or mediation is another example of the role of third parties in utilizing informal connections. Informality also refers to the role of third parties, whose role is as a mediator in interacting to gain access to their interests (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). This can be done by: identifying the demands of each conflicting party along with the reasons; convincing each other that the demands and reasons are intended by each party by means of active listening and based on empathy; then generating and evaluating alternative solutions that are in the common interest; and the results create a fair agreement with the principle of a win-win solution (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). Consulting with a third party can be done by agreement between the disputing parties because there is an intermediary (third party), advising with full wisdom to the disputing parties, and bringing together the wishes of each party so that it can be directed into something mutually agreed upon (Fisher, 1972).

The pattern of dependence on informal connections occurs as a manifestation of its relationship with formal institutional officials, or in this case the state (Aliyev, 2015). Dependence on informal personal connections of citizens results in a decrease in the actualization of citizenship, because it only focuses on how to obtain these rights while paying less attention to how to actually realize the rights (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). Personal connections or informality have the potential to contribute to improving the quality of state governance (Polese, 2023). Personal connections, which are a manifestation of informality, can be identified in indicators of community involvement, neighborhood cohesion, diversity, and network/connection size (Li, 2016).

Reliance on informal connections is directly related to political agency and forms of political participation (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). Access provided by informal

institutions or third parties (such as political parties), which bridge the interests of citizens and the state, is often clientelistic in nature, in that the facilities provided also come with the hope that they will be reciprocated by providing electoral support (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). This is made clear that community participation can be actualized by providing political support, sometimes as a social norm that citizens give to intermediaries (in this case political parties) as a return for several things that have been given, sometimes also as material to maintain good relations with such intermediary (with the intention of a connection for the future) (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). Therefore, political parties nowadays tend to be busy fighting for the interests of society, instead of fighting for power, namely gaining votes during general elections, so the existence of political parties is actually far from people's lives (Iskandar, 2016). This is not in accordance with Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2017 concerning general elections, which states that the implementation of general elections in Indonesia is based on the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair.

Changes or developments that occur in society can destroy informality patterns because they force people to adapt to new patterns in the formal-informal system in society (Kelly, 1989). Improving the work environment by increasing the awareness of officials in formal and informal institutions, as well as improving the aims and objectives of the role of informal institutions for civil society, can help reduce the negative role of utilizing informal connections/networks (Aliyev, 2015). However, bureaucratic reform from formal agencies will not reduce the influence of acts of corruption, bribery, or nepotism carried out through informal connections, because dependency has built a community culture of making profits from informality (Aliyev, 2015).

2.3 Citizen Rights

Citizens' rights are obtained through their citizenship status, as a result of the enforcement of legal rights by the state(Marshall & Bottomore, 2015). Citizenship rights refer to issues related to the right to foster effective citizenship for citizens, such as those related to human rights and the right to participate in society (Oyedemi, 2015). Citizens' rights within TH Marshall's theoretical framework consist of 3 components, namely: civil rights, political rights and social rights (Oyedemi, 2015). Civil rights include individual freedoms as citizens (freedom of speech, thought, the right to practice religion according to one's beliefs, the right to justice, and the right to own property). Political rights relate to citizens' rights to participate in the political and democratic system. Social rights regarding the right to perpetuate economic prosperity, security, and the right to share/participate in living a civilized life in accordance with the norms applicable in society. Citizenship is indeed concerned with the rights of citizens, namely emphasizing the importance of civil and political rights as well as a means of expanding the social rights of citizens (Marshall & Bottomore, 2015).

Citizenship's focus on citizens' rights can be framed through an individual's relationship with the state, both of which are constructed in different ways, depending on the underlying assumptions (Dermaut *et al.*, 2020b). Claims for citizens' rights are not only based on normative legal rules, but also based on relative bargaining, such as

informal relationships between communities, mediators and authority holders (Willem, 2018). Citizens' rights are seen as most likely to be obtained by people who have strong connections or networks with influential state actors (Willem, 2018). It is clear that Indonesian citizens often rely on informal connections to realize their rights, starting from the dimension of fighting against human rights violations to the dimension of realizing the right to access health services (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018).

Social marginalization which has been described as such, is often carried out by bureaucracy in society, so that it becomes a cruel combination because it produces a gap between the rights of citizens which are strictly regulated in a formal juridical manner on paper and the rights of real citizens. Realized (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). The gap between citizens' rights that are formally regulated by the state and the rights that are actually realized has given rise to a mediator who bridges citizens dealing with state institutions, with the state's procedural knowledge (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). Intermediaries as third parties in the formal relationship between the state and citizens enable the realization of citizens' rights (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). Such as the right to services and access to health obtained from intermediaries as a manifestation of citizen informality are considered as patterns of citizenship experience (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018).

A balance between freedom, equality and solidarity is the solution to realizing citizenship and the practice of citizens' rights (Dermaut *et al.*, 2020a). Informality with existing formal networks will have the opportunity for social solidarity if we take the consequences of shared responsibility, to build professional support for guaranteeing the rights of every citizen. (Dermaut *et al.*, 2020b).

3. Material and Methods

The method used is qualitative with a type of literature study (library research) which will carry out research activities by collecting data in the form of reading, taking notes, and processing data sources in the library or without going to the research location as written by Zed (Supriyadi, 2016), but limited to those in libraries such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, and so on, as expressed by Mardalis (Mirzaqon & Purwoko, 2018). So, data sources are obtained from documents such as books or articles that support the research background, which will then be linked to citizenship phenomena related to connections and social class in the community Sidomulyo Hamlet RW 003 Sumberberas Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency.

The data analysis stages refer to Krippendorff's (Sofiah *et al.*, 2020) which include: (1) unitizing, activities to unite, group, and identify various sources of data obtained; (2) sampling, namely the activity of taking important data so that the study is further narrowed/purified; (3) recording, the activity of noting, recording, or marking important data so that it is easy to understand; (4) reducing, making selections and activities that focus on important data; (5) inferring, concluding the data that has been reduced; (6) analyzing, analyzing the data that has been found; (7) narrating, namely presenting or presenting data that has been analyzed into a narrative that can be understood as a research conclusion.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The following is a presentation of the results of field observations and the author's experience regarding phenomena related to social connections as a form of the informality of citizenship in Indonesian society, especially Sidomulyo Hamlet RW 003 Sumberberas Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency.

First, based on recent citizenship phenomena, the role of very obvious social connections can be classified as the construction of village roads. Road construction in one village environment has not been followed up by the village government from year to year, making residents anxious and feeling that there is discrimination because in many other environments where road construction has been carried out several times. The uneven development of village roads has given rise to social jealousy among people among one another. People who are active in a political organization then follow up on this inequality phenomenon, by proposing themselves as representatives of the community's aspirations so that road construction can be carried out immediately. One of the residents who was a member of the leadership of a certain political party in the sub-district area, dared to apply for funding for the construction of a paving block-based road to the political party.

Second, social connections as a form of the informality of citizenship can also be seen in the phenomenon of vaccination which was intensively implemented during the Covid-19 era. People who have social connections within a health agency can easily and quickly get information or the availability of vaccines to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The results of the author's observations regarding this phenomenon are that one of the employees in the vaccination process at the Community Health Center (Puskesmas) was talking on a smartphone. The content of the conversation was about the availability of certain types of vaccination, and the employee then set aside some COVID-19 vaccine fluid for the person he was talking to on the smartphone.

Third, membership in one of the Muslim youth communities called FSMJ (Friday Night Silaturahmi Forum) is also a social connection that people can have. Participation in becoming a member of a community such as FSMJ can strengthen oneself to participate in the public interest and strengthen solidarity between communities, and several work programs implemented in it have a mission to improve the welfare of the surrounding community. One of the work programs in the FSMJ community (Friday Night Gathering Forum) that helps improve the welfare of the surrounding community is social service activities, which are held every two months on Fridays. Such social service activities carried out by the FSMJ community can increase the community's capacity as citizens to obtain their rights (through social connections), which in this case is in the form of social assistance for underprivileged residents.

Fourth, another citizenship phenomenon is related to the social connections that individuals in society have, namely several things that can benefit people in getting a job or making it easier to register their children in an educational institution. These two phenomena are things that parents often discuss in groups, whether during recitation or

when visiting people's homes to celebrate certain holidays. Parents who have family members who hold certain positions in a particular agency or work in a particular place, feel that they will be able to help another family member to get a job in the same agency. Likewise, if it is related to the issue of parents who have children who want to enter a higher education institution next year. These parents will also tend to ask for help from other parents who have family members in certain positions or are working at the educational institution in question so that a place is provided for the child to go to school there.

Fifth, problem-solving by third parties is also a citizenship phenomenon that can be identified as a form of social connection/informality that people have as Indonesian citizens. As said, the role of third parties is a characteristic characteristic of an informal connection in the interaction between the state and citizens(Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). The third party referred to as the connection is a member of the community and also has a position as a village government employee or a community member who is also a member of the TNI (Indonesian National Army). Because society has members with certain positions at a certain level of government, this is a blessing in itself for the citizens and is for the common good. A community environment in which there is a resident with a certain position will present privileges or privileges for other residents. Members of the community will easily and quickly get information, one of which is about basic necessities that will be distributed by the local government.

The effect of community ownership due to the existence of citizens who have positions in a particular institution, is also related to preventing the community from prolonged disputes. The residents in question are then used as third parties who are considered to have the wisdom to resolve problems in the community so that problems do not easily spread to the general public who are not interested and can still be resolved in a friendly manner (without legal action).

4.2 Discussion

Citizenship in this case refers to relationships that develop through daily interactions that show formal and informal aspects of civic engagement as a depiction of citizens' interactions with the state (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). Citizenship's focus on citizens' rights can be framed through an individual's relationship with the state, both of which are constructed in different ways, depending on the underlying assumptions (Dermaut *et al.*, 2020b). Informality in citizenship is a depiction of the use of citizens' personal relationships or connections to gain opportunities to fulfill public interests. So that informality is related to the relationship between a citizen (individually) and the bureaucratic elite or high-ranking state officials so that what is desired can be realized. This is in line with the fact that personal connections or informality are used to facilitate citizens' interactions with the state so that the allocation of rights or aspirations desired by citizens can be fast and on target. As explained, there are different ways that citizens use to be able to connect with state institutions, so that their rights can be recognized and enforced, namely by utilizing their personal connections or relationships with related parties (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). The result of this kind of informal citizenship

character is that community groups who have better connections with authority holders can obtain their rights (Willem, 2018).

The ease of accelerating interaction between citizens and the state, which is expected to have a mutually beneficial end result, can be exemplified by the following various phenomena that occurred in Sidomulyo Hamlet, RW 003, Sumberberas Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency. As confirmed, citizenship actually includes a commitment to the common good, the public interest, and a commitment to the common interest taking precedence over individual interests (Oyedemi, 2015). It is hoped that the existence of citizenship and citizens who are sovereign and legitimate in the eyes of the law will produce a quality public spirit in their involvement in the public interest(Asen, 2004).

First, the implementation of village road construction with paving block construction proposed by a member of a party, is an example of informal connections utilized by the community in Sidomulyo Hamlet RW 003 Sumberberas Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency. This is a way to ensure that their rights as citizens are equally recognized in the eyes of the law and government. Informality in this case is positioned as supporting the reaffirmation of the supremacy of law due to violations of citizens' rights (Shatkin & Soemarwi, 2021). Citizens' rights are obtained through citizenship status, as a cause of the enforcement of legal rights by the state (Marshall & Bottomore, 2015).

Political parties as intermediaries that bridge the realization of citizens' rights play an important role in this matter. As explained, claims for citizens' rights are not only based on normative legal rules, but also based on relative bargaining, such as informal relationships between communities, mediators and authority holders (Willem, 2018). Intermediaries or third parties who are organs of informality function as citizen empowerers or agents of democratization so that the capacity to deal with state institutions (related to rights) is more balanced (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). The role of third parties such as political parties can be relied on as an intermediary or a kind of broker to deal with bureaucracy, as a provider of access/facilitation (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). Therefore, citizens often rely on third parties or intermediaries to gain access to public services (Berenschot *et al.*, 2018). In this case, the function of political parties as a means of political communication has been carried out well. Political parties aggregate aspirations from the community to be formulated into policy proposals which are then fought for in parliament to become policies in the public interest (Fales, 2018).

Several things are the result of the realization of road construction using party funds, namely: community participation can be influenced by political parties. A form of influence that can be exercised by political parties as service providers or mediators between citizens and the state, namely by influencing the public to participate in electing legislative candidates with related party backgrounds in a general election. As explained, political parties nowadays tend to be busy fighting for the interests of society, instead of fighting for power, namely gaining votes during general elections, so the existence of political parties is actually far from people's lives (Iskandar, 2016). As a result, people's political participation no longer adheres to one of the principles of general elections,

namely free, as mandated by Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2017 concerning general elections, that the implementation of general elections in Indonesia is based on the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair.

Reliance on informal connections is directly related to political agency and forms of political participation (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). Community participation can easily be influenced and directed towards activities supporting the party. This is because informal connections are used to launch clientelistic networks (Aliyev, 2015). Access provided by third parties (such as political parties) is often clientelistic, in that the facilities provided also come with the hope that they will be reciprocated by providing electoral support (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018). The proof is that after the road construction was completed, many political party flags were flying along the road along with the legislative candidates who would sit in the electoral seats.

This kind of informal social connection can create a sense of return that society needs to give to political parties. The returns are referred to as a result of the role of party connections in influencing public participation in general elections on the basis of assistance provided by the party. This is made clear that community participation can be actualized by providing political support, sometimes as a social norm that citizens give to intermediaries (in this case political parties) as a return for several things that have been given, sometimes also as material to maintain good relations with such intermediary (with the intention of a connection for the future) (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). However, intelligent citizens will not be swept away by the persuasion or influence of political parties regarding their political participation.

Second, people's personal informal connections are used to obtain quick information, especially regarding the availability of the Covid-19 vaccine, which is also a right for the entire Indonesian nation. The right to services and access to health obtained from intermediaries as a manifestation of citizen informality is considered a pattern of citizenship experience (Berenschot et al., 2018). It is emphasized that the use of informal connections which naturally exist in the social environment of society, can be done by getting a job with the help of political connections or by paying, registering children at the educational institution of choice, using informal connections to get health care, to creating a pattern to benefit the outcome of the decision. at trial (Cveticanin et al., 2019).

Such informality is categorized as having a close relationship with nepotism. Acts of nepotism tend to prioritize the interests of family, friends or relatives and discriminate against non-family members (Jaskiewicz et al., 2013). Just like society's habit of tending to favor certain groups, such as family, friendships, the same cultural or social background, and so on. This kind of nepotism is mostly negative, especially when management employs incompetent relatives and results in some tolerance for inappropriate behavior (Schmid & Sender, 2021). However, efforts to recruit family/relatives are a common thing and are considered good if they comply with applicable requirements and have the appropriate abilities/skills (Padgett et al., 2015).

The success of vaccination can be achieved one way through public communication, which is expected to have a positive influence on the knowledge, understanding and civil participation of citizens in carrying out vaccinations (Dewi,

2021). However, acts of informality carried out between friends/relatives and Puskesmas employees, actually hinder hopes that all levels of society can receive vaccinations successfully and smoothly, due to the negative use of citizens' personal informal connections. Getting certain types of vaccinations is the right of all Indonesian citizens or the nation without discrimination against each other. This is in line with the statement that Indonesian citizens often rely on informal connections to realize their rights, starting from the dimension of fighting against human rights violations, to the dimension of realizing the right to access health services (Berenschot & Van Klinken, 2018).

Third, membership in a community such as the Muslim youth community called FSMJ is also part of the informality that citizens may experience. The inclusion of a person in a particular community can increase the capacity of citizens to interact with the state, in this case as a means of ensuring the implementation of policies that are beneficial to that community and most importantly, minimizing its negative impacts.(Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). With the existence of a social network such as a community that plays a role in a certain matter, it is possible to produce more capacity to immediately enjoy the rights as a citizen. The existence of formal and informal networks is able to develop competence as well as become a source of strength for residents in the group (Kelly, 1989).

Joining a community also requires a sense of shared obligation, so that to be able to obtain and provide their rights, members must also feel ownership and contribute to civic engagement in it. The intention to participate in an activity can produce a quality spirit of involvement in the public interest (Asen, 2004). As emphasized, an informal space within a group is used as a stepping stone for citizens (especially minorities) to be able to get involved or participate in the public interest (Díez *et al.*, 2011). As a result of this kind of informality of citizenship, community groups who have better connections with authority holders can obtain their rights (Willem, 2018).

Fourth, the personal connections citizens use to get certain jobs or to enter certain educational institutions is another form of the impact of informality in Indonesia. Having informal connections with parties who are on good terms with the family is enough to be able to provide information regarding job vacancies, so on the other hand it can also be used as a reason to take sides or give priority. Efforts to recruit family/relatives to get work is a common thing and is considered good if they comply with applicable requirements and have the appropriate abilities/skills (Padgett *et al.*, 2015). Likewise, with schools, children who have families with strong connections to teaching staff at school can easily get special seats to become prospective students there without having to meet certain requirements. However, again, behind such acts of help, there must be a sense of reciprocation that will be carried out by the child's family or from those who get certain jobs thanks to their informality/personal connections. So what is meant by reciprocation is an act of participation for the common good, which in this case is for the good of both parties (those who are given the assistance and those who provide the assistance).

Fifth, conflict in society should be avoided because it has very destructive impacts even though a consensus has been reached in solving the problem. Conflict resolution depends on internal and external factors, namely on how to respond to the conflict faced, both from the parties in conflict and external parties who act as mediators in handling

the conflict (Rosana, 2015). So in this case, resolving the conflict by consulting a third party is the right thing to do. Solving problems using family channels that involve a third party is also an aspect of informality that occurs. It is clear that informality also refers to the role of third parties, whose role is as a mediator in interacting to gain access to their interests (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018).

It is hoped that a third party can mediate or achieve balance with optimal discussions to reach a resolution. The presence of a third party does not mean that you always get a wise and virtuous solution together, there are several aspects that need to be considered so that mediation by a third party can be friendly for both parties in conflict. Resolving conflicts in society through third parties or mediation (an example of the use of informal connections) can be done by: identifying the demands of each party in the conflict and the reasons; convincing each other that the demands and reasons are intended by each party by means of active listening and based on empathy; then generate and evaluate alternative solutions that are in the common interest; and the results create a fair agreement with the principle of a win-win solution (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). Consulting with a third party can be done by agreement between the disputing parties because there is an intermediary (third party), advising with full wisdom to the disputing parties, and bringing together the wishes of each party so that it can be directed into something mutually agreed upon (Fisher, 1972). So, based on the statement above, selecting the right third party is very important for balance in resolving conflicts in society. On the basis of informal conflict resolution or without legal channels, it can avoid polluting the poor environmental conditions of society, so that disputes are prioritized and optimized in a friendly manner first.

5. Recommendations

Various forms of informal connections/personal relationships of citizens which lead to all kinds of nepotism, bribery, or clientelistic relationships, are a manifestation of the everyday experience of citizenship informality in Indonesia. Citizens tend to take advantage of informal social connections as an effort to launch themselves so that they can quickly claim their rights as citizens. This experience of citizenship informality then becomes a habit for Indonesian citizens to depend on informal connections. This pattern of dependence on informal connections is due to the many conveniences that citizens obtain when dealing with informality. Informality is also often caused by the unresponsiveness of formal authorities to realize the rights of citizens that have been written in legal regulations. Based on the explanation above, this is a process of system illegality that is irrelevant to the formality which states that Indonesia has been a democratic country since 1998. A bureaucratic reform will also not reduce the influence of acts of corruption, bribery or nepotism carried out through informal connections if dependency has become a civic culture in Indonesia to expedite profits over informality (Aliyev, 2015).

6. Conclusion

Citizenship is described as various formal and informal aspects of civic engagement as a depiction of citizens' interactions with the state. Various literature regarding citizenship views that the existence of informal connections can have an important impact on the lives of citizens. The discussion of informality or personal connections between citizens as a way to accelerate civil will is not only related to negative things but can also be directed into a more positive aspect. The role of informal connections that emerged in Sidomulyo Hamlet RW 003 Sumberberas Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency, among others; (1) membership in a political party can be used as an intermediary to propose village road construction; (2) personal connections with Puskesmas employees can be used as a means of getting quick information and providing some Covid-19 vaccine availability for several groups/relatives; (3) membership in a community (in this case FSMJ) indirectly becomes an informal connection that citizens have to expand their social networks and become a platform for generating more capacity to immediately enjoy their rights as citizens; (4) connections with relatives who have certain authority in an agency, can be used as a means to get a particular job, and entering a particular educational agency is another form of the role of informal connections; and (5) conflict resolution by a third party who is a member of the local community and also has authority/an important position in a government, is a form of informal connection role that is obtained naturally but is quite meaningful for the community.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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