
Measuring Deliberation within Indonesia's Representative Institutions: A Roadmap for Public Aspiration Management by the MPR RI

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Keywords:	ABSTRACT
Deliberative Democracy; MPR RI Public Aspirations; Representative Institutions; Meaningful Participation; Agonistic Democracy Constitutionalism	This article examines the compatibility of implementing deliberative democracy in Indonesia through a comparative constitutional analysis that draws on normative-juridical and empirical-comparative studies, positioning deliberative democracy as the main analytical framework while critically engaging with Mouffe's agonistic perspective and Dryzek's discursive perspective. This article analyzes the gap between the ideal of deliberation and the institutional reality of the MPR, DPR, and DPD as representative institutions in Indonesia. Comparative studies with models from Ireland, Germany, and Nordic countries are guided by the strict tertium comparationis criteria regarding the level of institutionalization of deliberation, the mechanism of coupling with legislative institutions, and the capacity to produce legitimate policy outputs. The findings indicate that Indonesia has significant deliberative cultural roots through deliberation and consensus, but these cultural values contain internal tensions that have the potential to hinder authentic deliberation if not carefully designed. Based on this analysis, this article proposes a roadmap for managing public aspirations by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR RI), which includes regulatory reform, institutional repositioning, the development of ideal mechanisms, and the anticipation of potential challenges, while also accounting for the inherent risk of elite capture within deliberative institutional frameworks.

INTRODUCTION

The paradox of contemporary Indonesian democracy lies in its success in establishing electoral procedures while simultaneously failing to realize the deliberative substance that underpins democratic legitimacy. After more than two decades, almost 28 years since the 1998 reforms, various global indicators consistently point to a decline in the quality of Indonesian democracy. Data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute shows that Indonesia's Deliberative Democracy Index (DCI) fell from 0.45 in 2023 to 0.409 in 2024, placing it in 71st place out of 171 countries, far below the global average of 0.372, which should place Indonesia higher given the scale and age of its democracy. Meanwhile, Indonesia's Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) was recorded at 0.33 in 2024, placing it in 94th place globally, far below Denmark (0.88), which consistently dominates the index. In its report, Freedom House noted a decline in Indonesia's democracy score from 61 in 2020 to 57 in 2024, a downward trend spanning five consecutive years (Katadata, 2025).

This decline is not isolated. Academics from Gadjah Mada University, in their book "Polikrisis Demokrasi: Neraca Kasus Indonesia" (2025), assert that Indonesian democracy has

degraded into a mere procedure, presenting it as a democratic celebration, while actually serving to legitimize the power of elite party oligarchies (Puspitasari et al., 2025). Research (Petlach, 2025) published in *Policy & Politics* shows that the democratic backsliding process during the 2014–2024 period occurred gradually through the consolidation of executive power, eroding institutional balance. This is the macro context in which the debate on deliberation must be positioned, not as a mere institutional technicality, but as a fundamental issue concerning the nature of popular sovereignty (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019; Beetz & Rossi, 2017; Böker, 2017; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2017).

The novelty of this research lies in several key contributions. First, this study develops a synthesis of agonistic-inclusive deliberation as a new theoretical framework, integrating Habermas's communicative rationality, Dryzek's discursive contestation, and Mouffe's agonistic pluralism. This synthesis serves as the normative foundation for the roadmap recommendations (Li et al., 2018). Second, the research provides the first systematic comparative constitutional analysis of deliberative institutions (Ireland, Germany, Nordic countries) applied to Indonesia using consistent tertium comparationis criteria (institutionalization level, coupling mechanism, output capacity). Third, the study diagnoses deliberative deficits across all three representative institutions (MPR, DPR, DPD) and identifies institution-specific gaps. Fourth, the research formulates a comprehensive five-component roadmap for MPR RI: regulatory reform, institutional repositioning, restructuring the MPR Assessment Body, deliberative digital platform development, and anticipation of implementation challenges. Fifth, the study introduces the concept of "deliberative separation of powers" as an anti-elite capture mechanism, explicitly integrating lessons from recent Western literature into a contextualized design for Indonesia (Astanujati, 2026; Firdaus, Kamal, & Anoegrajekti, 2025; Inder, Ramadhany, & Sukardi, 2026; Raharja, 2025).

This is where the relevance of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR RI) as a people's deliberative body with a constitutional mandate to amend and establish the Constitution, as well as the task of absorbing, collecting, and managing public aspirations, becomes crucial. The provisions of Article 3 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and Article 5 of Law Number 17 of 2014 concerning the MPR, DPR, DPD, and DPRD (MD3 Law) require the MPR to absorb public aspirations related to the implementation of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. However, the fundamental question is, has the existing mechanism for absorbing aspirations been operating deliberatively, or is it still trapped in procedural formalities that empty the meaning of popular sovereignty?

This article, in addition to answering this question from a normative-constitutional perspective, also presents insights from the study of deliberation and the tensions between Habermas, Dryzek, and Mouffe; an empirical analysis of the deliberative deficit of the MPR, DPR, and DPD; comparative lessons from established democracies; to the formulation of an institutionally grounded roadmap that not only adopts global best practices but also anticipates the inherent paradoxes and risks of institutionalizing deliberation itself. This article's original contribution lies in the development of an agonistic-inclusive deliberation model as a new theoretical synthesis, as well as the formulation of the principle of deliberative separation of powers as a structural mechanism to prevent elite capture in the institutional design of the MPR RI.

METHOD

This research employed a comparative constitutional analysis approach that combines two major strategies. First, a normative-juridical analysis of Indonesia's constitutional legal framework the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the MD3 Law, Law Number 13 of 2022, and MPR Regulation Number 1 of 2024 concerning the Rules of Procedure of the MPR RI is conducted to identify normative opportunities and gaps for the institutionalization of deliberation. Second, an empirical-comparative study of deliberation practices in four contexts: Indonesia (MPR, DPR, DPD), Ireland, Germany, and the Nordic countries.

The comparison is guided by tertium comparationis, which consists of three consistent criteria: (1) the level of institutionalization of deliberation, namely whether deliberation is ad hoc or has been institutionalized within a permanent legal and institutional structure; (2) the coupling mechanism, namely how the deliberative process is formally connected to the decision-making body; and (3) output capacity, namely whether the deliberative process has been proven to produce verified policies or constitutional changes. Qualitative data were obtained through a literature review of indexed academic literature, official documents of state institutions, OECD reports, and the V-Dem database.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis and discussion of the main issues raised are intended to determine the extent to which deliberative democracy is compatible with the Indonesian context and how the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) can develop a roadmap for managing public aspirations that is deliberative, inclusive, and has real policy impacts. To answer this, a flow of understanding is presented that includes a theoretical framework and its synthesis, conceptual compatibility of deliberative democracy, a portrait of the deliberation deficit of representative institutions, comparative studies, normative opportunities and gaps, a roadmap for managing public aspirations by the MPR, as well as the dynamics and challenges of implementation.

Theoretical Framework and Synthesis

The theory of deliberative democracy finds its most systematic formulation in the work of Jürgen Habermas, particularly in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (1996). Habermas argues that the legitimacy of law and political decisions can only be achieved through inclusive deliberative procedures not simply from the content of the decisions themselves. In his perspective, legitimate law is law born from a process of opinion and will formation structured through public discourse: "the discursive level of public debates constitutes the most important variable" in determining the quality of democratic legitimacy.

Furthermore, Habermas (1996) reinterprets the principle of separation of powers in the terms of his discourse theory, namely that administrative power (executive-legislative) must originate from and be limited by the communicative power formed through public discussion among citizens. In the Indonesian context, this means that the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the House of Representatives (DPR), and the Regional Representative Council (DPD) can only legitimately exercise their power if their decisions can be traced back to a genuine public discourse process, not merely a ceremonial consultation procedure.

John Dryzek, in *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond* (2000), provides a productive internal critique of the Habermasian model. Dryzek distinguishes between liberal

constitutionalist deliberative democracy, which confines deliberation within the confines of formal state institutions, and a more radical discursive democracy, which emphasizes discursive contestation within the broader public sphere (Dryzek, 2000). Dryzek's argument is considered relevant for Indonesia because he warns that relying on the MPR, DPR, or DPD as the sole arena for deliberation without considering discursive contestation in the broader public sphere will actually reproduce existing institutional biases.

In his essay "Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies" (2005), Dryzek specifically analyzes how deliberation can operate in societies polarized by conflicting identities. He argues that a power-sharing state model with attenuated sovereignty and deliberative politics semi-detached from the state is actually more effective in divided societies (Dryzek, 2005). This proposition is highly relevant for Indonesia following the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2024 presidential election, which left deep wounds of polarization. The implication is that the design of deliberation for Indonesia should not rely entirely on state institutions but rather provide substantial space for autonomous civil society networks.

Chantal Mouffe offers the most challenging critique of the Habermasian deliberative model, coming from the framework of agonistic pluralism. Mouffe argues that Habermas has not fully addressed the "political" dimension, a dimension that cannot be reduced to rational argumentative exchange because it fundamentally involves power relations. In Mouffe's view, Habermas's idealized rational consensus is actually a mechanism for concealing conflict, a hegemony that masks real antagonisms.

Mouffe's critique is particularly relevant to Indonesia. Research (Duile & Bens, 2017) in the *Asian Studies Review* shows that Indonesian democracy suffers from what they call conflictual consensus, a condition in which political discourse is structured in such a way that it forces consensus and harmony on almost all political issues, resulting in systemic depoliticization. For example, the discourses of "Islam" and "the people" are used to forge consensus while actually concealing deep economic and social contradictions. In such conditions, deliberative forums designed to achieve consensus without acknowledging and managing real antagonisms risk becoming new tools of legitimacy for existing powers.

Adib Khairil Mustafa's (2025) study, published in *An-Nida: Journal of Islamic Thought*, reinforces this argument in the context of contemporary Indonesia. Analyzing the cases of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2019 presidential election, the study shows that the rhetoric of moderation and harmony narrows the space for opposition and marginalizes divergent voices, a pattern that will reproduce itself in any deliberation forum designed solely with a consensus orientation.

The synthesis in this article does not position Habermas, Dryzek, and Mouffe as mutually exclusive. Instead, it develops a synthesis of agonistic-inclusive deliberation: a model that recognizes communicative rationality as a prerequisite for legitimacy (Habermas, 2000), emphasizes the network of public spheres that transcend formal institutions (Dryzek, 2005), and explicitly recognizes and manages antagonism as an internal component, not an external obstacle, of the deliberation process (Mouffe, 2000). This synthesis serves as the normative foundation for the roadmap recommendations formulated later, and is an original distinction of this article from studies of Indonesian deliberation that have tended to be mono-theoretical.

Conceptual Compatibility of Deliberative Democracy

The tradition of deliberation and consensus, rooted in the fourth principle of Pancasila, "Democracy guided by the wisdom of deliberation/representation," is often claimed as evidence of a natural compatibility between deliberative democracy and Indonesian values. This claim is supported by several comparative studies that have found conceptual similarities between deliberative democracy and Habermas's theory of communicative action, both emphasizing dialogue, consensus-seeking, and the rejection of unilateral domination. Kawamura (2011) of the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO) even argues that deliberative democracy provides an "institutional foundation for democratic stability" because it gives every actor in both large and small parliamentary contexts an equal opportunity to express their interests.

However, this claim of compatibility contains serious internal tensions. A historical study (Paramita, 2023) in the *Historical Studies Journal* reveals that the transformation of deliberation and consensus into a state ideology has instead become a tool for the "taming of the political masses," namely, the taming of political masses that prioritize unity as a social obligation over individual rights as citizens. This analysis reveals a fundamental ambivalence in which *Gesellschaft* (the state's character that enforces unity as an individual obligation) and *Gemeinschaft* (the deliberative character that promotes unity as a personal initiative) are always in unresolved tension.

In practice, deliberation and consensus often operate within a hierarchical logic where "consensus" is the product of social pressure on weaker groups to accept elite or majority positions, rather than a consensus born of equal dialogue. Kawamura himself acknowledged that the deliberation and consensus system "reduces political efficiency" because it requires an excessively long time, indicating that what is occurring is not effective deliberation, but rather a prolonged process of negotiation and pressure. Ulum (2021) in the *Indonesian Law Review* (UI) shows how Indonesia's party system, based on mutual cooperation, has resulted in a failure of checks and balances, reducing the role of the opposition to co-optation, and creating a blanket of non-transparency for consensus.

Duile & Bens (2017) assert that the greatest obstacle to deliberation in Indonesia stems not from institutional failure alone, but from a political discourse that structurally enforces broad consensus on nearly all issues, creating a "conflictual consensus" that depoliticizes the debate that should be taking place. Therefore, relying on deliberation and consensus as the foundation of deliberation without first reforming the accompanying power relations risks legitimizing this depoliticization.

The analytical implication is that the compatibility between deliberative democracy and deliberation and consensus is not a given, but rather something that must be built through institutional design that actively corrects the hierarchical logic and pseudo-consensus that often permeate actual deliberation and consensus practices.

Portrait of the Deliberative Deficit of Indonesian Representative Institutions

In the post-amendment constitutional architecture, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) holds a unique position as a state institution whose membership structurally integrates political representation (DPR) and territorial representation (DPD) into a single assembly. Research (Rusnan, 2004) indicates that the 1999–2002 constitutional amendments shifted the MPR from the highest state institution to one that is equal to other state institutions a

transformation that conceptually opened opportunities for the MPR to become a deliberative apex institution, neutral from the dominance of any branch of government.

However, in practice, the MPR's most prestigious deliberative forum, the Annual Session, has not yet functioned as a genuine arena for deliberation. The session remains largely ceremonial, with reports from state institutions being delivered and state addresses being delivered. There is no formal response session from the MPR, no binding institutional follow-up mechanism, and civil society participation is largely symbolic. It differs substantively from the model prevailing in established democracies, where the Annual Session of Parliament is always followed by a formal response session and open debate, such as the Debate on the Address in the UK or the Regierungserklärung in Germany.

Research (Junius, 2025) published in the *European Political Science Review* analyzed the world's most advanced Ostbelgien model, finding that even in the most mature designs, "the design elements that enable meaningful citizen engagement paradoxically increase the risk of elite capture," because skilled facilitation, information provision, and expert testimony can become conduits for elite influence.

In the context of the House of Representatives (DPR), a study (Soeprapto, 2024) in the *Trunojoyo Law Review* found that although meaningful participation has been normatively regulated through Constitutional Court Decision Number 91/PUU-XVIII/2020 and subsequently codified in Law Number 13 of 2022, its implementation in the DPR remains far from the established standards. The Constitutional Court's ruling established three meaningful participation rights: the right to be heard, the right to be considered, and the right to be explained. However, Ahmadi & Fikri (2025) in their *Journal of Constitutional and Government Studies* (Islamic University of Indonesia) showed that the revision of the 2025 TNI Law proceeded without a publicly accessible academic draft and with minimal public consultation. It exemplifies a practice that creates an "illusion of participation" that undermines constitutional legitimacy.

A transparency study by Goodwood Publishing (2024) found that the House of Representatives' commitment to public information disclosure remains suboptimal, particularly with sporadic institutional commitment to transparency. Overall, implementation of the Public Information Disclosure Law in the House of Representatives has not been optimal, as evidenced by the limited public access to documents on the revisions to the Corruption Eradication Commission Law, the Omnibus Law, and the Job Creation Law.

Likewise, the DPD RI institutional structure faces the most striking structural paradox among the three representative institutions. The DPD has a constitutional mandate to voice regional aspirations, but lacks the power to translate those aspirations into policy. As analyzed by research by UIN Sunan Kalijaga law students (2024) in the *STIS Darussalam Journal*: "The imbalance of authority between the DPR and DPD, as well as the decision-making mechanism dominated by political party-based factions, has obscured the DPD's role as regional representation" (Day et al., 2025). The DPD can only propose and deliberate bills related to regional autonomy and central-regional relations, without the right to decide. It creates a system that constitutional law experts call weak bicameralism or soft bicameralism.

Taliki's (2017) research on strengthening the DPD through the fifth amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes the urgency of this transformation. Without a balance of authority between the DPR and DPD, Indonesia's bicameral system will

remain merely a pseudo-bicameral system. The regional aspirations successfully collected by the Regional Representative Council (DPD) lack an effective institutional pathway for transformation into national policy. Optimizing the DPD's function, as recommended by recent research (2024) in the *Journal of Government and Development Reform*, requires initiating a fifth amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which would strengthen the DPD's position within the parliamentary system.

In the current context, Mohammad Reza (2025) argues that a deliberation deficit is still frequently felt in our state system. Most recently, in August 2025, riots broke out in various regions of Indonesia, with the primary target of public anger being the House of Representatives (DPR). The public perceives the country as experiencing a representation deficit, where parliament, political parties, and formal institutions are no longer perceived as channels for aspirations, but merely arenas for power transactions. Demands for democracy to provide space for expression through the presence of statesmen capable of exemplary leadership and morality, as well as demands for the revitalization of representative institutions so that the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the House of Representatives (DPR), the Regional Representative Council (DPD), and political parties can truly return to being channels for public aspirations, continue to emerge.

Comparative Study

After establishing a diagnosis, the analysis moves to comparative learning, employing three consistent criteria of *tertium comparationis*: (1) the degree of institutionalization of deliberation, i.e., whether deliberation is ad hoc or already institutionalized within legal and institutional structures; (2) the coupling mechanism, i.e., how the deliberative process connects with decision-making institutions; and (3) the output capacity, i.e., whether the deliberative process produces concrete and verifiable policies or constitutional changes. These three criteria are relevant to the question of how the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) can develop a truly impactful aspiration management mechanism.

Ireland, Germany, and the Nordic countries are established European democracies, significantly different from Indonesia's situation. This difference in context must be explicitly acknowledged and serves as an important caveat: no institutional transplant can work without profound adaptation. However, their comparative value lies not in calling for imitation, but in understanding the design principles that enable deliberation to produce legitimate policy outputs and then adapting those principles to the distinct Indonesian context.

The Irish model is the most systematic case in the history of the use of deliberation for constitutional reform. Farrell, Suiter, and Harris (2019) in *Irish Political Studies* analyze how Ireland became the first country to use deliberative mini-publics twice in succession for a constitutional review process, demonstrating a degree of "systemization" of deliberation unseen in other countries. The 2016–2018 Citizens' Assembly, comprised of 99 randomly selected citizens (civic lottery), plus one ex officio member, concluded its mandate with recommendations on abortion, aging, climate change, referendums, and fixed-term parliaments.

What makes the Irish model exceptional is not simply the method, but the coupling mechanism that connects the deliberative process with actual policy outcomes. When the Citizens' Assembly recommended a referendum on abortion, the Oireachtas (Irish parliament) followed suit by holding a national referendum in May 2018, which won with 66% of the vote,

permanently changing the constitution. An analysis (Courant, 2021) in *Frontiers in Political Science* cautions that Ireland's success should not be romanticized; rather, it resulted from a specific combination of the post-Celtic Tiger collapse institutional confidence crisis, thoughtful design, and strong political will from the Oireachtas. This requires careful study and development before it can be replicated.

The German model developed the Bürgerrat (Citizens' Council) model, whose journey is highly informative for the Indonesian context. The Bürgerrat Demokratie (2019), consisting of 160 citizens selected from the population registration list, produced 22 recommendations, including the institutionalization of a permanent citizens' assembly. Junius (2025) in the *European Political Science Review* analyzed the Permanenter Bürgerdialog (PBD) model in German-speaking Belgium, the most institutionalized variant of this model: a permanent citizens' assembly that formally collaborates with the regional parliament.

Junius's crucial finding is that even in the most advanced Ostbelgian model, the risk of elite capture remains and even increases as the process becomes more institutionalized. "Due to its complex procedures, there is considerable leeway for capture in the PBD." The only mechanism proven to mitigate this risk is "checks and balances through a separation of powers," namely, a clear separation between the entities that set the agenda, those that facilitate, those that fund, and those that implement recommendations.

The Nordic model places Denmark (0.874) and Norway (0.855) in the top two positions globally. This position is no coincidence; both countries are products of a long tradition of state committees and inclusive corporatism, where government, parliament, labor unions, business associations, and civil society organizations participate formally and systematically in the policy-making process. From Dryzek's perspective, this is the most successful example of discursive democracy: institutionalized discursive contestation not only in parliament, but within a broad network of actors with the capacity to negotiate as equals.

The relevance of the Nordic model for Indonesia lies not in structural replication, as social, economic, and institutional conditions are vastly different, but in its underlying principle: that sustainable and impactful deliberation requires a supportive institutional ecosystem, not just episodic forums. Therefore, Indonesia's roadmap needs to address this ecosystem dimension, namely building facilitation capacity, a mature civil society, and adequate public literacy as long-term prerequisites for authentic deliberation.

Normative Opportunities and Gaps

Indonesia's legal framework has provided an adequate foundation for the institutionalization of deliberation, although it has not yet explicitly operationalized deliberative principles. Article 1, paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia affirms that "sovereignty rests with the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution," a constitutional mandate that underpins citizens' right to participate in the policy process. Article 5 of the MD3 Law requires the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) to absorb public aspirations regarding the implementation of the 1945 Constitution, and MPR Regulation Number 1 of 2024 regulates the MPR's rules of procedure, including the mechanism for absorbing aspirations. However, it has not yet adopted explicit deliberative standards.

The most significant development has come from the legislative realm, namely Constitutional Court Decision Number 91/PUU-XVIII/2020, which was later codified in Law Number 13 of 2022, which introduced the concept of meaningful participation as a minimum

standard for participation in the formation of legislation. A study by Nursetiawan & Ardhanariswari (2022) in the *Jambe Law Journal* identified three components of meaningful participation established by the Constitutional Court: the right to be heard, the right to be considered, and the right to receive an explanation. A study by Prastyo (2022) in the *Journal of Law and Justice (Supreme Court)* adds an important dimension: meaningful participation encompasses not only those directly affected but also groups with specific concerns about the issues discussed, an extension that aligns closely with the Habermasian principle of inclusivity.

However, a critical gap separates the standards for meaningful participation from those for genuine deliberation. A study by Ticoalu & Haqq (2025) found that while meaningful participation has been successfully regulated normatively, it has not been effectively implemented. It remains stuck at the pre-legislative and legislative stages, without addressing the post-legislative stage, where citizens should receive an explanation of how their input is considered or rejected. Tjandra (2025) reinforces this finding by demonstrating that the failure to implement meaningful participation is a usurpation of popular sovereignty as a "legislative dictatorship," contrary to the principles of a democratic state under the rule of law.

In the context of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the current process of aspiration absorption has not even met the standards of meaningful participation, let alone the higher deliberative standards. There is no formal mechanism requiring the MPR to report on how received aspirations have been considered, acted upon, or why they have not been acted upon. It is the most urgent regulatory gap to be addressed.

Roadmap for Managing Public Aspirations by the MPR RI

The following roadmap is a synthesis of theoretical, comparative, and empirical analyses. The roadmap was designed with an awareness of the paradoxes and risks inherent in institutionalizing deliberation, particularly the risks of elite capture, conflictual consensus, and depoliticization. Each component explicitly builds protective mechanisms against these risks.

1. Regulatory Reform

The first step in the roadmap is to strengthen the normative foundation of deliberation through three complementary regulatory channels. The first channel is a revision of the MD3 Law, which explicitly adopts deliberative standards as a legitimate prerequisite for the MPR's aspiration absorption mechanism, going beyond the mere standard of meaningful participation by adding a reasoned response obligation: the MPR is required to publish a report explaining how each cluster of aspirations received has been considered and how it influenced (or did not influence) the MPR's policy position. This standard directly operationalizes the third component of meaningful participation, the right to receive an explanation, within the MPR's institutional mechanisms.

The second channel is a revision of MPR Regulation No. 1 of 2024 to include a binding minimum deliberative protocol for each aspiration absorption forum, a standard of representative inclusiveness in participant selection, an obligation to provide adequate information before the forum, an independent facilitation mechanism, and a transparent and publicly verifiable procedure for reporting results. This protocol draws directly on the Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes developed by the OECD based on an empirical comparison of nearly 300 deliberative practices.

The third path is the most complex, relating to the discourse on the Main State Policy Agenda (PPHN). If the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) continues its study of the

PPHN, the process of formulating its substance must be preceded by comprehensive public deliberation, not simply consultation with parliamentary elites. This is not only a normative but also a democratic imperative. A PPHN formulated through a closed process by an institution composed of the same political parties that have experienced elite capture will lose its legitimacy even before it is implemented. Furthermore, a constitutional amendment, if pursued as a vehicle for the PPHN, must receive legitimate support from a public deliberation process that can be independently verified.

2. Institutional Repositioning of the MPR

Repositioning the MPR as Indonesia's deliberative apex institution requires institutional reform at two levels. The first level is internal reform, namely the reformulation of the MPR Annual Session from a ceremonial forum into a substantive deliberative-evaluative forum. This can be achieved without a constitutional amendment, simply by amending the MPR Regulation by adding three new elements: a formal MPR response session to reports from state institutions and a presidential speech; The development of an MPR Policy Note that synthesizes the aspirations received during the year, and an open forum that can be attended by elected civil society representatives. Research by Mohammad Reza (2025) argues that an MPR Annual Session that engages in deliberation will strengthen the implementation of checks and balances within the presidential system and reflect the principles of constitutionalism and popular sovereignty.

The second level is the external repositioning of the MPR within the national deliberative ecosystem, namely the MPR as a hub connecting the deliberation process at the regional level (through DPD members) with deliberation at the national level (through DPR members), creating a coherent vertical deliberative architecture. It requires a clear coordination protocol between the aspirations of DPD members in the regions and the centralized aspiration management system managed by the MPR Secretariat General, an integration system that has not been implemented systematically to date.

3. Reform of the MPR Assessment Body and the Scope of Aspiration Groups

The most innovative component of this roadmap is a fundamental change to the orientation and performance of the MPR's supporting organs, particularly the MPR Assessment Body. Its task is to review the constitutional system, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, and its implementation. This includes gathering aspirations from the public, regions, and state institutions related to the implementation of the 1945 Constitution, and formulating key ideas on MPR recommendations related to the dynamics of public aspirations.

The management of public aspirations, currently carried out independently by the MPR Leadership, MPR Apparatus, and all MPR Members, is implemented in each MPR Member's electoral district, focusing the public aspiration collection pattern on the general public within that electoral district. Furthermore, the current format for the MPR's aspiration collection is also based on themes determined by the MPR Assessment Body, ensuring that the aspirations obtained align with the themes of the community aspiration activities.

This situation needs to be considered to further support and enrich the public aspirations absorbed by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). Efforts are needed to reach broader sectors of community life and reach out to community groups that have not

been or are less accommodated in conveying their aspirations. These include community groups that are inseparable from the Indonesian people and have equal rights and obligations to make real contributions to the Indonesian nation and state. These include border communities, diaspora communities, indigenous communities, communities in frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged areas (3T), creative communities, farming and fishing communities, and marginalized communities such as economically vulnerable communities and communities with disabilities.

Each of these community groups faces different challenges and needs that must be understood and championed in public policy. To ensure democracy and the implementation of the principle of popular sovereignty proceed as expected, the MPR needs to pay attention to, explore, absorb, and manage the aspirations of specific community entities. Even in this situation, the author believes that the MPR RI should focus on carrying out its performance and duties in accordance with its constitutional authority to amend and enact the Constitution. With its representative function as a representative institution for all Indonesian people, the task of absorbing, collecting, managing, and fighting for aspirations into national policies is certainly more meaningful to complement the socialization of national values to the younger generation which has been performed by the MPR for more than two decades, although for many views this socialization task should ideally be the domain of the Government or institutions that have structural coordination lines down to the regions.

4. Deliberative Digital Platform

The development of a digital platform for managing public aspirations by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR RI) is an unavoidable component in the context of Indonesia's high internet penetration. However, digital platforms that are not designed for deliberative purposes are highly risky. They can turn into populist polling tools susceptible to polarization, bot manipulation, and the echo chamber paradox, which actually undermines deliberation. The lessons from the deliberative democracy literature are clear here: structured online deliberation, based on arguments, is very different from online polling, which is based on the expression of preferences.

The MPR's e-aspiration platform must be designed with features that actively encourage quality argumentation, including a reason-giving requirement, neutral procedural moderation, access to contextual information before users provide input, and a deliberative reaction mechanism where users can respond to others' arguments, rather than simply voting. These standards can be developed by referring to the deliberative digital democracy literature and the OECD (2025) study on new frontiers in citizen participation.

5. Dynamics and Challenges of Implementation

The biggest challenge with this roadmap is not technical, but rather political and structural. First, the challenge of political will: Is there sufficient will among parliamentary elites to design deliberation mechanisms that structurally limit their own power? Research by Petlach (2025) shows that the consolidation of executive-legislative power over the past decade has created an incentive structure that is not conducive to deliberative reforms that genuinely empower citizens.

Second, the challenge of unequal participation capacity. Indonesia faces significant disparities in education, access to information, and the digital divide. Findings from the

Journal of Deliberative Democracy (2023) revealed that the selection of participants in citizens' assemblies, even in Europe, often fails to meet the principle of equal representation; successful participants tend to be recruited from politically literate groups. In Indonesia, this risk is far greater. Without explicitly designed affirmative inclusion mechanisms, any deliberative forum will reproduce existing unequal representation.

Third, the challenge of conflictual consensus identified by Duile & Bens (2017), namely that Indonesian political discourse is structured to impose artificial harmony, can actually co-opt deliberative forums, transforming them into arenas for legitimizing pseudo-consensus. Anticipating this challenge requires a design that explicitly allows space for diverse and dissenting voices, in accordance with the principle of agonistic-inclusive deliberation developed as a theoretical synthesis of this article.

Fourth, the challenge of institutional sustainability. The OECD (2020) study, *"Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions,"* identified that successful ad hoc deliberative forums often fail to produce sustainable systemic change because they are not institutionalized within a binding legal structure. For Indonesia, this means that the formulated roadmap must explicitly identify the stages of institutionalization: from pilot phases, through evaluation, revision, and finally formal institutionalization through binding legal instruments.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that deliberative democracy is not only compatible with the Indonesian context but also has authentic cultural roots through the tradition of deliberation and consensus. However, these cultural roots do not necessarily guarantee the implementation of authentic deliberation; they contain internal tensions in the form of hierarchical logic and pseudo-consensus that can hinder genuine deliberation if not addressed through careful institutional design. Empirical analysis of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the House of Representatives (DPR), and the Regional Representative Council (DPD) reveals significant deliberative deficits: the MPR's Annual Session remains largely ceremonial, the implementation of meaningful participation in the DPR falls far short of the normative standards set by the Constitutional Court, and the DPD's weak legislative authority. Comparative studies with Ireland, Germany, and the Nordic countries yield specific and adaptable design lessons: institutionalizing deliberation requires a strong coupling mechanism with decision-making bodies (lessons from Ireland and Germany), a deliberative separation of powers to prevent elite capture, and a supportive institutional ecosystem over the long term (the Nordic model). This article's original contribution to the literature on deliberative democracy in Indonesia is a roadmap formulated with regulatory reform components, institutional repositioning of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) as the deliberative apex institution, restructuring the MPR's work through the MPR Review Board (Badan Pengkajian MPR), and the development of a deliberative digital platform. This original contribution lies specifically in the development of the concept of deliberative separation of powers as an anti-elite capture mechanism that explicitly integrates lessons from recent Western literature into a contextualized design for Indonesia. The greatest challenge of this roadmap is not technical, but political: Is there sufficient political will among parliamentary elites to design a deliberation mechanism that truly limits their own power? This question

cannot be answered by theory; it can only be answered by practice. However, theory provides a solid foundation: without genuine institutionalization of deliberation, Indonesia's representative institutions will continue to face a deepening legitimacy deficit, while popular sovereignty remains a constitutional slogan that has yet to find a mechanism for its realization.

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