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Berenschot, W.; van Klinken, G.

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Informality and citizenship: the everyday state in Indonesia

Ward Berenschot^a and Gerry van Klinken^b

^aRoyal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands; ^bDepartment of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

For many citizens in postcolonial states like Indonesia, the reality and experience of citizenship depend not just on the content of laws and regulations but also on the strength of their personal social networks. In this introduction to the special issue, we argue that instead of being antithetical to citizenship, this reliance on personal connections to deal with state institutions should be seen as a constitutive dimension of citizenship. Drawing on the articles in this issue, we illustrate this argument by discussing how informality in its three dimensions – mediation, the invocation of social norms and the use of social affiliations – shape the character of everyday state–citizen interaction in Indonesia. The cultivation of personal connections constitutes an important form of political agency. It enables citizens to deal with the unresponsive and unpredictable nature of Indonesia’s state institutions.

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Introduction

When Yoma took her son to the hospital in a Jakartan suburb, she did not want to go alone. She knew that hospital staff disliked treating patients like her. As a card-carrying beneficiary of Indonesia’s newly expanded subsidized healthcare programme, Yoma’s son might end up costing the hospital money. Apprehensive of the difficulties ahead, Yoma asked Rini to come along. Rini is a 40-year old political operative from her neighbourhood. They are not close friends, but Yoma has made sure to keep good connections – not least by voting for Rini’s party, PDI-P, in every election. Rini knew how to handle the bureaucracy at the hospital. After getting the paperwork in order, her combination of smooth-talking and cajoling minimized the waiting time. And to settle the negotiations over the bill, Rini used her connections with Rio Sambodho, a local city council politician. After a phone call, Rio agreed to contact the hospital’s director and after much to-and-fro Yoma’s hospital fees were finally waived.¹

Yoma’s experiences exemplify a common dimension of state–citizen interaction, particularly but not exclusively in the global south. Yoma’s capacity to realize her right to subsidized healthcare rested not just on her status as an Indonesian citizen or her fulfilment of certain

CONTACT Gerry van Klinken  G.A.vanKlinken@uva.nl

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formal criteria. It also depended on the quality of her connections, and their capacity to exercise largely personal and informal forms of pressure on street-level bureaucrats. For many citizens, both the reality and the experience of citizen rights depend not just on the content of laws and regulations but also on the strength of their personal social networks. Access to these rights moreover rests on a skilful cultivation and invocation of norms of reciprocity. Embedded in the connections between Yoma, Rini and the hospital staff were interpretations of social obligations and duties that boosted Yoma's capacity to realize her rights. The quality of personal networks and the social norms embedded in them are important, constitutive elements of what citizenship means and how it is experienced by (particularly poorer) citizens like Ibu (Mrs) Yoma.

Conventional theories of citizenship have considerable difficulty in accommodating such informal dimensions of state–citizen interaction. Rooted in western experiences of state formation, citizenship is generally interpreted in terms of the formal rights and duties citizens enjoy vis-à-vis the state. In such an interpretation the informal interactions on which Yoma depended remain out of view. If anything, reliance on such connections indicates a deviation from, or even an absence of, full citizenship. As a result, most studies on the history of citizenship, even those on colonial states, focus on the evolution of formal citizen rights, while paying much less attention to the informal relations that are necessary for actually realizing those rights.

Such a narrow and, arguably, western-oriented view of citizenship is increasingly being challenged. A growing body of studies is highlighting the importance of informal connections in shaping state–citizen interactions, particularly (but not exclusively) in post-colonial states. Once anthropologists turned to study 'the everyday state' (Gledhill 1994; Fuller and Benei 2001), a growing body of literature has emerged that details how a messy yet lively sphere populated by brokers and a wide range of informal networks helps citizens navigate their interaction with state institutions. This mediating sphere has been referred to as 'political society' (Chatterjee 2004), 'the gray zone' (Auyero 2007) and 'twilight institutions' (Lund 2006). In a similar vein, a recent collection of essays has argued that such third-party involvement is generating a form of 'mediated citizenship' across the global south (von Lieres and Piper 2014). The growing awareness that such actual, on-the-ground observable patterns of state–citizen interaction in the global south correspond rather poorly to established, normative theories of citizenship has led to calls to rethink our ideas about citizenship (Robins, Cornwall, and von Lieres 2008; Isin 2015; Berenschot, Nordholt, and Bakker 2016). The same consideration led Partha Chatterjee (2011, 24) to ask rhetorically: 'Could the accumulation of exceptions justify a redefinition of the norm?'

This special issue of the *Journal of Citizenship Studies* on informality and citizenship in Indonesia aims to contribute to this end. Indonesia makes for a rewarding setting to study the complexities of postcolonial citizenship. After three decades of authoritarian rule ended in 1998, the country embarked on a democratization process whose paradoxes resonate with experiences across the global south. New legislation has formally expanded citizen rights, but in practice citizens continue to struggle to realize rights to land, health care or welfare benefits. Indonesia's public sphere is increasingly lively, yet vote-buying and patronage easily stifle civic action. Electoral procedures are a success, yet democracy has failed to challenge the dominance and corruption of predatory oligarchs.

This issue aims to address these paradoxes as it takes stock of how democratization affected the character of citizenship in Indonesia twenty years after the fall of military

strongman Suharto. It synthesizes the results of a four-year research project on everyday state–interaction in Indonesia,² and also incorporates articles presented at a conference on citizenship in Indonesia held in December 2016. This special issue places a particular spotlight on the ways in which Indonesian citizens rely on informal connections to realize rights. The studies illuminate different dimensions of state–citizen interaction in Indonesia, from struggles to address human rights violations, realize land rights and access healthcare, to the plight of religious minorities, the peculiarities of state-led volunteerism, the advance of political Islam and the impact of colonial rule. In each case, we look at the different ways in which citizens draw on personal relationships to deal with state institutions. We ask how these connections shape the quality and experience of citizenship. We look at how this dependence on informal connections relates to political agency and the forms of political participation observable in Indonesia. All these studies make use of extensive ethnographic fieldwork on ‘the everyday state’ – i.e. on the everyday practices and experience of citizens when dealing with state institutions – in order to capture the intricacies of informal state–citizen interaction. In doing so we have derived inspiration from the growing field of ‘anthropology of the state’ (Blom Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005; Sharma and Gupta 2006).

In this introductory essay, we aim to do two things. Synthesizing the articles in this issue, we aim to provide an avenue to analyse informality as an integral, constitutive dimension of citizenship. We argue that informality is not an ‘aberration’ or ‘deviation’ that should remain outside the purview of the study of citizenship. Nor is informality necessarily an indication of a lower quality of citizenship. Instead, we propose that the quality of social networks and social obligations embedded in them shape the lived quality of citizenship. The nature of informal state–citizen interaction needs to be incorporated in accounts of citizenship. Our second aim is to discuss the interaction between informality and political agency, focussing in particular on the relative absence of rights-claiming behaviour in Indonesia. Using illustrations from other articles in this issue, we argue that in Indonesia a widespread dependence on informal, personal connections has generated a particular form of political agency in which (a discourse on) claiming citizen rights plays a relatively minor role.

The essay proceeds as follows. In the next section we review how informality has been incorporated in the study of citizenship by others so far. The subsequent section provides a brief historical sketch of state formation in Indonesia in order to contextualize the prevalence of informal state–citizen interaction. The third section discusses the ways in which informality shapes everyday citizenship struggles. The fourth discusses the interaction between informality and political agency. The fifth concludes.

Informality and the study of post-colonial citizenship

It is by now increasingly acknowledged (see for example Robins, Cornwall, and von Lieres 2008; Isin 2015; Meijer and Butenschøn 2017) that citizenship studies have paid too little attention to how the particular historical trajectories and the present-day character of post-colonial states impinge on the norms, attitudes and practices that citizens adopt vis-à-vis power holders. If one takes, for example, some of the general assessments of the field – such as the recent *Oxford Handbook of Citizenship* (Shachar, Bauböck, Bloemraad, & Vink, 2017) as well as older handbooks (e.g. Isin and Turner 2002; Kivisto and Faist 2007) – words like ‘informality’ as well as associated phenomena like ‘clientelism’ or ‘patronage’

find (almost) no mention. Nor is the weakly institutionalized nature of many post-colonial states a prominent theme. The reason for this neglect is partly attributable to the narrow way in which citizenship is usually conceptualized. Its study grew out of western experiences of state formation and democratization (Marshall 1950; Magnette 2005). Perhaps as a result, much early work conceptualized citizenship precisely in terms that contrast with patterns of state–citizen interaction outside Western Europe. Indeed, most mainstream definitions conceptualize citizenship in ways that explicitly exclude personalized and informal state–citizen interaction. Common definitions highlight that citizenship is shaped by rights that are ‘universal’ or applied ‘equally’ to all citizens (Brubaker 1992; Somers 1995). Tilly (1997, 599, emphasis added) defined citizenship as ‘a relation between (1) governmental agents acting *uniquely as such* and (2) whole categories of persons *identified uniquely by their connection* with the government in question.’ While we find Tilly’s relational conception of citizenship valuable, we also find it remarkable that he here defines citizenship in a way that explicitly excludes informal state–citizen interaction. Informality, by its very nature, implies that a state agent does not act uniquely as such an agent but also as, for example, a friend or a member of an ethnic group. Informality also implies that other social connections – i.e. beyond one’s formal, legal status – shape the relationship between citizens and the state. In Tilly’s conceptualization, informality stands in a rivalrous relation to citizenship. In this view the reliance on personal connections in dealing with the state amounts to an indication of a diminished form of citizenship.

Similarly, this literature often discusses citizen participation and ‘civic action’ in terms that prioritize formal dimensions of politics over informal interactions. The literature on the importance of a ‘civic culture’ for ‘making democracy work’ (Almond and Verba 1963; Putnam 1993) particularly celebrates rights-based collective action. The survey-oriented literature that stands in this tradition pays much attention to the willingness and perceived capacity of citizens to engage in such collective and rights-based forms of claim-making (e.g. Pattie, Seyd, and Whiteley 2004). This rather normative conceptualization of citizenship would force us to dismiss many actual forms of state–citizen interaction in a post-colonial state like Indonesia as ‘deviant’, ‘shallow’ or ‘not-yet-developed’.

Such interpretations of citizenship are increasingly being challenged by a growing body of close-up, ethnographic studies on state–citizen interaction. These studies on ‘the everyday state’ have argued that citizenship in post-colonial states cannot simply be described in terms of a ‘deviation’ from a (not realistic) western ideal. Nor can we say that post-colonial citizenship is ‘on its way’ to match this ideal (Lazar 2008). The type of citizen celebrated in the general literature of citizenship – the autonomous, rights-claiming and individualistic citizen – might indeed sometimes be found, but a focus on this particular type of citizen is hindering a much-needed understanding of the more varied kinds of state–citizen interactions prevailing in, particularly, post-colonial states. Of particular importance for our purpose is that these ethnographic studies challenge the above-mentioned view that informality stands in an antagonistic relationship to citizenship. For many citizens across the world, informal connections are simply indispensable when dealing with state institutions. Studies on access to public services, for example, point to the various ways in which brokers help citizens to put pressure on powerholders (Jha, Rao, and Woolcock 2007; Auerbach 2016). Ethnographic studies of local bureaucracies show that informal brokerage has become an institutionalized aspect of the everyday functioning of the state (Blundo 2006; Berenschot 2010). A considerable body of literature is highlighting how marginalized communities

like street vendors or slum communities rely on informal negotiations with state agents to avoid a harsh implementation of state regulations (Cross 1998; Brown, Lyons, and Dankoco 2010; Gandhi 2014, McFarlane and Waibel 2012). These studies also highlight the fact that individual citizenship is often mediated through membership of collective organizations like trade unions (Lazar 2008) as well as criminal gangs (Jaffe 2015). Relatedly, an emerging literature on 'hybrid governance' is drawing attention to the fragmentation of actual state authority and the role of non-state actors and organizations in regulating citizen behaviour (Meagher 2012; Jaffe 2013).

These studies resonate with a growing emphasis within citizenship studies on everyday negotiations and transactions between citizens and authorities. Citizenship, in this view, refers not only to a static status or membership, but rather to an evolving relationship, constantly refashioned through everyday interactions (Guillaume 2014; Tully 2014). 'Effective citizenship' requires a capacity to force state institutions to actually implement laws (Heller 2009; Bertorelli et al. 2017). Decisive to the question of who is 'in' or 'out' is not simply the content of laws or policies, but rather how these boundaries are negotiated on the ground. Along these lines, Lazar (2008, 5) defined citizenship simply as 'a bundle of practices that constitute encounters between the state and citizens'. The advantage of such a more open interpretation of citizenship is that it draws attention to both informal and formal processes, thus bringing into view a much wider diversity of forms of civic engagement. This is the interpretation of citizenship we adopt in this issue.

This interpretation resonates with a broader tendency within political theory to challenge the normative bias that concepts like citizenship frequently carry. Engin Isin (2015, x, 5, see also Chatterjee 2011) recently attacked the 'orientalism' that still characterizes conventional citizenship studies: '[P]olitical theories of citizenship proceed either with the assumption that societies like theirs [i.e. non-western ones] did not develop citizenship or that societies like ours were the first to develop it'. He called for a 'deorientalization' and 'decolonization' of the concept of citizenship, arguing that we need to 'explor[e] acts and practices of those who constitute themselves as political subjects not in terms of the dominant figure of the citizen and its orientalizing perspective but as a challenge to them'.

We argue that a key aspect of this challenge of ridding citizenship of its orientalizing perspectives concerns the incorporation of informality in accounts of citizenship. We use the term 'informality' to describe a particular mode of state-citizen interaction marked by the use of personal connections as a means to influence the implementation of state regulations. Personal connections in this context refer to connections developed in a context unrelated to the work and duties of state agents. Our focus, in other words, is not on the personal connections and reciprocity between citizens per se (cf. MacLean 2010), but more narrowly on how such personal connections shape citizen-state interaction. The defining element of informality (and 'informal citizenship') in our usage is the role of personal connections in dealing with state institutions. We argue that this involvement of personal connections has three dimensions – mediation, social norms and the usage of social affiliation. We will elaborate this below.

We draw images of such an interpretation of what informality actually entails from two literatures. One is a long-standing anthropological literature on patrimonialism (and on clientelism, patronage and related terms). The other is a more recent economic literature on the informal economy (black economy, shadow state and related terms). Max Weber was the first to think systematically about patrimonial authority – the Ottoman sultans provided a

prime example – which he contrasted with ‘legal-rational’ bureaucratic authority. American social scientists rediscovered Weber in the late 1950s and immediately saw instances of it all over the newly independent developing world, also in Southeast Asia (Landé 1965). Chains of personalized deference linked clients to patrons up and down the social hierarchy. Non-ideological, factional politics from the village to the national stage were the result.

When economists belatedly began to pay attention to the economics of these personalized polities, they at first saw the ‘informal economy’ only in terms of a lack of regulation (Kanbur 2009). But, as with western citizenship scholars who see only absences in the global south, a lack of formal economic regulation does not explain what *does* make these economies tick. Informality not only concerns the evasion of a state-imposed order, it also concerns the alternative order that the character of this informal exchanges imposes. A growing literature on ‘urban informality’ aims to capture this alternative informal order in relation to urban development (see Roy and AlSayyad 2004; McFarlane and Waibel 2012). Similarly, anthropologists have argued that informal economies are not unregulated at all. They are strictly controlled, but not through the rule of law. Key is the authority of powerful patrons who build hegemony by combining control over resource flows, bureaucratic powers, local normative values and threats of violence. Where formal state regulations fail, insecurity prevails. People compensate by trusting personal reputations, and myths of family-like ethnicity, religion, patriarchy or regional identity. William Reno, writing about Sierra Leone, devised the term ‘shadow state’ for this fusion of state and market, regulated without the rule of law (Reno 1995). We recognize it in parts of Indonesia.

Both the widespread dependence on such informal connections as well as their impact on the actual capacity of citizens to realize their rights suggest that informality needs to be seen as a constitutive element of the character of citizenship. There is no zero-sum game between informality and citizenship. While a reliance on informal connections can have various harmful effects, in other contexts such connections actually serve to deepen citizenship. The analytical challenge then, is how to move from conceptualizations of citizenship that see informality as its antithesis, to approaches that would allow us to capture and understand the ways in which informality constitutes citizenship. What is the impact of a dependence on personal connections (when dealing with the state) on the experience and interpretation of citizenship? How does this dependence shape political agency and forms of civic engagement? How and under what circumstances do personal connections succeed or fail to generate fuller forms of citizenship?

Democratization, decentralization and citizenship in Indonesia

Indonesia is a propitious case to address such questions because of the thoroughly informalized nature of Indonesia’s state institutions. Bureaucrats are highly susceptible to informal pressures coming from well-connected, wealthy elites aiming to circumvent onerous regulations (Winters 2011). Unconnected citizens who cannot afford to pay bribes, meanwhile, struggle to get civil servants to apply the law. The actual outcomes of bureaucratic processes are often the product of shadowy deal-making taking place in a netherworld where personal connections, bribe-taking and clientelistic exchange relations rule. Indonesia’s bureaucracy does not operate as a Weberian rule-bound institution applying its laws and regulations in an impersonal and universal manner. As a result, Indonesia, formally democratic since 1998, is now regularly characterized as a ‘patronage democracy’ (Schulte Nordholt and Van

Klinken 2007; van Klinken 2009; Simandjuntak 2010). Here, ‘what matters is who you know, what and who you pay, and to whom you pledge loyalty, [while] initiative, excellence and results matter little’ (Blunt, Turner, and Lindroth 2012, 215). In the process, laws and formal procedures are regularly violated. As the editors of a volume on ‘The State and Illegality’ argued, ‘illegality by state officials is as central to the way that the state operates in Indonesia as are the formal rules and bureaucratic structures that constitute the state on its surface’ (Aspinall and van Klinken 2011, 22–23).

In this context, it is hardly surprising that citizens take recourse to informal connections when dealing with state institutions. It is not that formal institutions are irrelevant, nor that more institutionalized forms of claim-making and contentious politics are absent in Indonesia. As a range of studies detail, Indonesia’s public sphere is enlivened by a range of social movements. Labour unions (Ford 2009), student movements (Aspinall 2005) and peasant organizations (Lucas and Warren 2013) regularly mobilize large masses of people to claim and expand the rights of Indonesian citizens to, for example, health care, land tenure and social security (see particularly Hiariej and Stokke 2017). Our argument, however, is that the actual, on-the-ground impact of these rights and hence the actual nature and experience of citizenship is shaped by everyday informal relationships.

The reliance on informal connections constitutes a response to the limited capacity of state institutions to implement its regulations in an impersonal manner. Ordinary citizens experience state laws and policies as a random and unpredictable force. They see that personal influence, politics and money shape bureaucratic outcomes just as much as do formal rules. At the same time, this reliance on informal connections also reinforces the particularized character of state institutions. This dialectic between the character of state institutions and the informal strategies of citizens can be found in many postcolonial states. Informality is not just a pragmatic response to the weakly institutionalized nature of state institutions. Such state–citizen interactions also reinforce the limited capacity of state institutions to apply rules in an impersonal manner (Berenschot 2010).

To contextualize this predominance of informal state–citizen interaction, three aspects of Indonesia’s history and economy need to be briefly highlighted. First, the historical process of Indonesian state formation inhibited the emergence of a rule-bound, impersonal bureaucracy. The kingdoms and sultanates that ruled Indonesia before colonial rule had maintained a quasi-feudalistic character. Rulers maintained small bureaucracies and relied largely on personalistic, clientelistic exchanges with vassals to sustain their rule (Schulte-Nordholt 2015). Rather than challenging such practices, the Dutch decided to build on them. As Van Klinken (2018) argues in his contribution to this issue, in many areas of particularly eastern Indonesia the Dutch opted to govern their colony through local aristocrats, whose despotic and particularistic rule was tolerated as long as they maintained order and supported the Dutch. And even in areas where the Dutch ruled directly – such as Java – state institutions remained relatively alien institutions, not infrequently associated with the oppressive, exploitative practices of colonial rulers. Throughout Indonesia – but especially in peripheral zones – the central colonial state remained largely irrelevant to everyday life. It expended little effort to provide Indonesians with a modicum of security and welfare. Instead, Indonesians dealt with adversities such as poverty, illness or violent threats by cultivating social networks and personal connections. In the light of this colonial history, it is not surprising that after independence in 1945, the formal procedures and regulations the new state had inherited from its colonial predecessor commanded little respect, even

among the elites. Indonesia's first president Sukarno, for example, was notoriously dismissive of legal institutions, famously arguing 'you cannot make a revolution with lawyers' as he weakened Indonesia's court system (Lev 2000, 172).

The three decades of Suharto's authoritarian rule (1965–1998) did little to strengthen the regulatory capacities of the Indonesian state. Suharto turned the bureaucracy into a vehicle of his personal rule. Identity-based politics was suppressed (Robinson 2014) but political interference in bureaucratic processes became commonplace. State officials were expected to use their discretionary power over the distribution of state resources to drum up support for Suharto's 'New Order' regime. As the Indonesian state penetrated deeper into everyday life, citizens known to be 'disloyal' could easily be harassed and cut off from access to public services or career opportunities (Antlov 1994). Those with strong connections to Suharto and his clique prospered while those outside without connections could not take recourse to rule of law to protect their interests. When Suharto was forced to step down in 1998, he left the newly democratic country with a bureaucracy that was not only quite powerful, but also accustomed to seeing the impersonal implementation of laws and policies being undermined by political and personal considerations.

A second important aspect of Indonesia's history is that its subsequent democratization process failed to strengthen the regulatory capacity of state institutions. Democratization went hand in hand with decentralization, in a way that further strengthened the informalized character of state institutions. Just after the fall of Suharto in 1998, Indonesia implemented a massive devolution of both financial resources and responsibilities to Indonesia's districts. These reforms played into the hands of local elites, who succeeded in using their connections to maintain and sometimes expand their capacity to bend the implementation of state policies and laws to their needs (van Klinken and Barker 2009; Hadiz 2010, Aspinall and van Klinken 2011). These bureaucratic and political elites benefit greatly from their privileged capacity to manipulate the implementation of state policies. For this reason bureaucrats have not necessarily become more responsive to citizens. Politicians, now seeking to recoup considerable election expenses, regularly demand bribes from individuals seeking senior bureaucratic appointments (Kristiansen and Ramli 2006). This, in turn, fuels rent-seeking and stimulates bureaucrats to engage in clandestine yet lucrative exchanges with business actors (Aspinall and Berenschot forthcoming).

As a result, today's decentralized state appears to be less capable of autonomous action, and more socially embedded in local hierarchies, than seemed to be the case even a couple of decades ago. Struggles about 'ins' and 'outs' in the provinces effectively redefined 'outs' as those who lacked influential personal connections (van Klinken 2014). As Van Klinken argues (2018) the citizenship regime in Indonesia today would have been different – less clientelist, more rule-based, more effective – if democratization had not been immediately followed by decentralization.

A third factor boosting informality is the character of Indonesia's economy. The country's informal economy is huge. Many sources of livelihoods particularly for the lower classes – from street vending and domestic work to transportation and agricultural labour – are informal. More than half of all urban workers are informal, and in the trade and agricultural sectors the figures rise above 80% (Angelini and Hirose 2004). As workers in the informal economy can hardly take recourse to the law, they often rely on powerful (political) intermediaries as well as on their (ethnic) trust networks to limit transaction costs and to safeguard their livelihoods. This dependency on informal connections is further compounded

by the fact that outside Java the industrial sector is small and local economies are heavily state-dependent. Economic activity depends either directly on state resources (in the case of, for example, the construction sector) or indirectly through the state's regulatory capacity (such as extractive industries). Various close-up studies (Tidey 2012; van Klinken 2014) show that this state-dependency is fostering the reliance on clientelistic exchange relations as a means of ensuring privileged access to state resources.

Informality and the everyday state in Indonesia

So, given this highly personalized character of state institutions, how does informality shape everyday state–citizen interaction in Indonesia? How do informal connections impact the capacity of citizens to realize their rights? Drawing on the studies in this issue as well as above-mentioned studies, we distinguish three different ways in which personal connections affect state–citizen interaction in Indonesia.

First, informality refers to the role of *third-party mediation* in state–citizen interaction. Particularly poorer Indonesian citizens regularly rely on various kinds of intermediaries or brokers to deal with state institutions. In the vignette at the start of this article, Rini performed such a role as intermediary. Berenschot, Hanani, and Sambodho (2018) focus on how brokers like Rini enable citizens to gain access to subsidized health care. So do Jakimow's 'state-led volunteers' (2018), who use their participation in government programs to cultivate useful contacts to better help their neighbours. Similarly, Hearman (2018) shows in her insightful study of the civic campaigns to address the 1965 political genocide how human rights organizations rely on their personal connections with local mayors to obtain at least some sort of respect for the rights and needs of victim-families. She also shows that third-party mediation is not always benign, as forces within Indonesia's military routinely use their own connections with power holders to suppress the rights of human rights groups to protest or even to hold reconciliation and truth-telling meetings.

This kind of mediation is different from interest representation in the sense that the aim is not to influence the drafting of policies but rather the ways in which bureaucrats implement these policies. Mediation thus involves the provision of access to state benefits through (a facilitation of) interaction with front-line bureaucrats. Often the access to state resources that brokers provide is clientelistic in nature. It comes with the expectation that citizens will repay the service by providing electoral support. As in the example of Rini above, the capacity of brokers to facilitate interaction with state authorities is often based on their connections with politicians. Legislators help brokers to pressure bureaucrats, with the expectation that brokers will remind their clients to repay this favour at election time. Yet this mediated state–citizen interaction need not be clientelistic in nature. As von Lieres and Piper (2014) argue in their collection of essays on 'mediated citizenship', there are various kinds of intermediaries who do not harbour any reciprocal expectations. Local NGO's, for example, perform an intermediary role by 'speaking for' the citizens they wish to represent.

Second, informality refers to the role of *social norms* in shaping everyday state–citizen interactions. The capacity of citizens like Yoma to deal with state institutions and get access to their resources, is not only based on her formal status and rights, but also on the inter-personal obligations that exist between her, intermediaries like Rini, and state agents. These norms and obligations are often referred to as 'informal institutions'. Helmke and Levitsky (2004, 727; see also Lauth 2000) define these as 'socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that

are created, communicated and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels.' Examples of informal institutions are patron–client bonds, norms of reciprocity or family obligations. All of these can compel state agents to be more (or less) responsive to citizens. In a slightly broader vein, anthropologists have employed the term 'moral economy', originally proposed by James Scott (1977), to capture the way in which social conventions and informal regulations influence the way in which citizen claims vis-à-vis the state are articulated and evaluated (McFarlane and Desai 2015). An account of informal dimensions of citizenship involves, in other words, paying attention to how both formal state regulation and informal institutions shape the way in which citizen claims are evaluated and realized. The capacity of a citizen to realize his or her rights not only depends on the willingness and capacity of state agents to implement state policies, but also on the prevalence of social norms that might serve to compel these state agents to actually provide the requested service.

Articles in this special issue provide examples of the importance of interpersonal obligations in shaping state–citizen interaction. Employing the term 'ethics of care', Jakimow (2018) highlights in particular how citizens in Medan actually feel uneasy about an impersonal implementation of state regulations. They want state agents to apply a more personalized ethic attuned to prevalent social norms. Berenschot, Hanani, and Sambodho (2018) highlight the way in which citizens draw strategically on norms of reciprocity to ensure access to healthcare. They describe, for example, how poorer citizens provide political support with the aim of cultivating relations with influential brokers. They argue that brokers operate at the intersection of citizens with state institutions, as well as that between formal and informal institutions.

A third dimension of informality concerns the role of *social affiliations* in structuring access to state resources. In the context of informalized state institutions, the membership of social groupings plays an important role in shaping who can – and who cannot – derive benefits from the state. Ethnic groups, kinship, regional connections, religious affiliation or even – as in the case of Indonesia – being an alumni of a particular university: these are all examples social affiliations that have a substantial impact on the capacity of its members to deal with state institutions. One's membership of (or, conversely, exclusion from) such communities can boost or curtail the capacity of citizens to deal with state agents and realize their rights. The effectiveness of such affiliations depends on whether the (informal) networks associated with them are infused with a sense of mutual obligation, and whether they include members with influence and clout. The importance of the informal networks provided by such communities has the effect of 'localizing' citizenship (cf. Lund 2011) because the membership of a particular community shapes the experience and reality of citizen rights, just as much as do formal laws. Informal citizenship is socially embedded. Social connections based on shared membership of a family or community provide an important means to ensuring a favourable implementation of state laws.

Jessica Soedirgo in this edition (2018) provides a dramatic example of the importance of such identity-based networks in her article on minority rights. She shows that the discrimination and violence against the minority Ahmadiyah community is at least partly due to the stronger informal connections that their attackers maintained with powerholders. Comparing the treatment of the Ahmadiyah community in two regions in Java, she shows that when religious networks of religious majorities are strong and well-connected, local religious leaders find it easier to convince politicians to adopt discriminatory policies and to tolerate violence against religious minorities. These arguments resonate with Chaplin's

analysis in this edition (2018) of how Salafi groups in Indonesia use their strong personal connections with local authorities to implement a form of differentiated citizenship that privileges the Muslim majority. Willem van der Muur's article (2018) highlights in a different way the impact of social affiliations in his discussion of the implementation of customary (*adat*) land rights. He shows that legal recognition of such rights has had relatively little impact on the ground. What matters, it seems, is the local standing of *adat* communities and their connections with power holders.

Informality and political agency

In these three forms – mediation, the reliance on norms of reciprocity and the usage of social affiliations – informality constitutes a key aspect of the everyday interaction between citizens and state institutions in Indonesia. This importance on personal connections shapes the strategies and attitudes that citizens adopt vis-à-vis state institutions. Everyday citizenship struggles bear the mark of this widespread dependence on personal connections. While the particular political subjectivity of 'subaltern' citizens is a broad topic which we cannot do justice here, the papers in this issue do stimulate us to make three stylized observations about this interaction between informality and the character of political agency in Indonesia.

First, in the context of mediated and informalized access to state institutions, the nurturing of personal relationships constitutes an important form of political agency. For example, as both Van der Muur's (2018) account of land struggles as well as Hearman (2018) study of Indonesia's human rights movement illustrate, a patient building up of personal relationships with authorities can be an effective strategy. Similarly, the invocation of family relations, the self-presentation of being someone's 'underling' (*anak buah*), or the obsessive socialization with bureaucrats are all useful means for marginalized communities to defend their interests. Jakimow suggests that such considerations partly explain the peculiar kind of state-driven volunteerism observable in Indonesia. Citizens participate voluntarily in government community programs partly out of a desire to develop useful connections with influential bureaucrats. Berenschot et al. suggest that citizens follow the voting advice of local brokers in order to maximize their chances of obtaining subsidized health care. This kind of political participation does not always constitute 'civic' behaviour in the narrow, western meaning of the term. Furthermore, the dependency on such personal relations often constrains citizens from voicing their opinion. In the context of thoroughly informalized state institutions, an assertive claiming of rights and entitlements is likely to harm the relationships with such influential contacts. This also helps explain the remarkable infrequency of resistance and protest against the manifest injustices of an inegalitarian political system built on personal connections. The dependency on informal connections often discourages contentious collective action.

Despite such obvious drawbacks, the cultivation of influential contacts does constitute an important form of political agency for citizens faced with highly informalized state institutions. Compared to strategies that involve an expressive claiming of, the quiet building of social connections and imbibing them with a sense of obligation often constitutes a more effective form of political agency in this context.

Our second proposition is that the pervasiveness of informality personalizes the experience of rights. Citizen expectations about the kind of services the state should deliver are shaped and mediated through interpretations of the obligations embedded in the personal

relationships between powerholders, brokers and their clients. The study by Berenschot, Hanani and Sambodho concludes that the everyday brokerage that mediators perform mutes the experience of access to health care as a 'right'. Instead, people perceive this access as being dependent on the personal obligations between citizens and their intermediaries, as well as between intermediaries and front-line service providers. Van der Muur (2018) makes a similar observation with regards to the role of informal connections in determining whether or not local authorities recognize communal land rights. The experience of citizen rights is not only practically but also normatively mediated. It is shaped by (and interwoven with) interpersonal norms and values. Another way to put this would be to say that the realization of citizen rights – such as access to welfare programs, subsidized health care or communal land rights – is experienced as a personal privilege granted by mediators and power holders, rather than as an impersonal right.

These observations suggest that the everyday experience that connections matter more than formal rights in itself discourages citizens from engaging in claim-making and adopting a discourse of rights. In particular, the informal nature of state-citizen interaction helps interpret the observation that a rights-based discourse is relatively absent in Indonesia (e.g. Gibbings 2016). Berenschot, Hanani, and Sambodho (2018), Jakimow (2018) as well as Hearman (2018) note, for example, that citizens often frame their claims in terms of needs and social obligations rather than in terms of rights. In this sense, informal citizenship is self-reproducing. As informality discourages the adoption of a discourse of state rights when dealing with the state, so the impetus for formalizing state–citizen interaction remains weak.

Our third observation is that informality generates a particular form of 'differentiated citizenship' both in between as well as within communities. Those with strong connections possess in practice a fuller form of citizenship because they enjoy a stronger capacity to realize their citizen rights. The capacity of citizens to realize formal rights and, hence, the quality of citizenship, is contingent on the quality of their personal networks and the depth and strength of the personal obligations embedded in them. For example, Chaplin (2018) notes that orthodox Islamic organizations do not need formal regulation to free the public sphere from 'unislamic influences'. Instead, these groups generally rely more on the strength of their networks to implement a form of differentiated citizenship that privileges Indonesia's Islamic majority. Hearman (2018) similarly highlights that the (families of the) victims of the 1965 anti-communist violence are at a severe disadvantage because Indonesia's military has much stronger connections within Indonesia's government.

Particularly Chaplin's (2018) and Soedirgo's (2018) studies show that membership of a religious or ethnic community constitutes a valuable asset. As this membership comes with useful social connections as well as a discourse of solidarity and obligations, ethnic and religious communities provide citizens with a useful avenue to deal with, and get benefits from, state institutions. Communities that lack influential connections – such as the minority Ahmadiyah community in Soedirgo's study – are at a considerable disadvantage. In other words, while citizens might have the same rights on paper, in practice they differ considerably in terms of their capacity to realize those rights.

This differentiation in terms of citizenship is not planned or designed. The term 'differentiated citizenship' is often used to refer to the ways in which policies and law discriminate between groups of people (e.g. Holston 2008). However here we refer to the way in which the character of social networks generates a differentiated capacity to enjoy citizen rights. This differentiation is social in nature and contingent on how social identities intersect

with the way in which informal networks have evolved. Class does matter here. Generally speaking, the lowest strata of society – in terms of income and social status – possess the least effective social connections. But ethnicity and religion also matter, particularly when identity-based divisions come to shape informal avenues to access the state. In this sense, the informal nature of citizenship is not only shaped by social inequalities, but also reproduces these inequalities. It is only at exceptional times – the 1945 Revolution, the 1998 anti-Suharto protests – that dissatisfaction with these inequalities trumps everyday strategic subservience to patrons, resulting in widespread protest (van Klinken 2018).

Conclusion

The experiences of postcolonial states like Indonesia are making it increasingly difficult to argue that citizenship in such countries is ‘on its way’ to corresponding to western patterns. Instead, a recognition of the varied nature of citizenship regimes across the world have led to calls to free citizenship of its association with western experiences of state formation. In this article we have argued that a key aspect of that challenge involves incorporating informality into accounts of citizenship. We propose that, instead of being antithetical to citizenship, the reliance on personal connections to deal with state institutions should be seen as a constitutive dimension of citizenship. Informality in its three dimensions – mediation, the invocation of social norms and the use of informal networks – shapes the capacity of citizens to realize their rights. Drawing on the articles in this issue, we illustrated this argument by discussing the character of everyday state-citizen interaction in Indonesia. We highlighted that informality is not simply some cultural thing that citizens impose on the state. Rather, their use of personal connections is also a response to the informalized, particularistic character of the Indonesian state itself. In this context, the cultivation of personal connections constitutes an important form of political agency as it enables citizens to deal with unresponsive and unpredictable state institutions.

The incorporation of informality in accounts of citizenship involves developing an approach to analyze how and when the character of social networks and embedded norms of reciprocity strengthen (or weaken) citizenship regimes. Such an approach would require paying attention to how variation in the character of informal networks affects the character of citizenship. Might there be different configurations of such networks that are more conducive to the realization of citizen rights than others? Truly comparative studies on the functioning of informal networks are, at present, rare. The essays in this special issue suggest that this is a worthwhile research agenda. Comparative research on informal dimensions of politics could help identify whether and how the evolution of informal networks can generate fuller forms of citizenship. As we have highlighted in this essay, in a country like Indonesia the character of informal networks constitutes an important mechanism separating citizens from subjects and ‘haves’ from ‘have-nots’.

Notes

1. This vignette is taken from Berenschot, Hanani, and Sambodho (2018, this issue).
2. See <http://www.kitlv.nl/research-projects-from-clients-to-citizens/> (accessed February 21, 2018). This project was funded with a SPIN grant of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW).

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