

Democracy, Governance, and Citizenship in Indonesian Political Studies: A Bibliometric Mapping of Intellectual Structures

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Abstract

This study examines the development, thematic structure, and intellectual configuration of democracy, governance, and citizenship research in Indonesian political studies. Using bibliometric analysis, this article analyzes 637 Scopus-indexed journal and review articles related to Indonesia and major political themes such as democracy, governance, citizenship, decentralization, electoral politics, identity politics, digital politics, and political economy. The study combines performance analysis and science mapping, with keyword co-occurrence analysis conducted using VOSviewer. The findings show that Indonesian political studies have developed into a multidimensional field structured by interconnected debates on democratic transformation, governance reform, citizenship participation, local politics, electoral competition, digital transformation, identity, and informal political economy. The bibliometric mapping identifies Indonesia as the central contextual anchor of the literature, while governance, decentralization, citizenship, and electoral politics emerge as major thematic concentrations. Digital politics, identity politics, and political economy appear as more specialized but analytically important areas. This study contributes to Indonesian political scholarship by providing a systematic and replicable mapping of its conceptual linkages and thematic concentrations, while demonstrating the value of bibliometric methods for evaluating the development of political science research in a national context.

Keywords: Democracy; Governance; Citizenship; Indonesian politics.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has become an important empirical site for examining democratic transformation, governance reform, and citizenship practices in the post-authoritarian world. Since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has undergone major political reforms, including electoral liberalization,

decentralization, party-system transformation, bureaucratic reform, and the expansion of civil society participation. These reforms repositioned Indonesia from an authoritarian political system toward an electoral democracy and made the country a significant case for studying democratic transition, institutional change, and state-society relations in the Global South (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2010; Mietzner, 2012; Power & Warburton, 2020). At the institutional

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level, the post-Reformasi political order has also been shaped by decentralization and regional autonomy, particularly through Law No. 23 of 2014 on Local Government, which regulates the authority of regional governments within Indonesia's unitary state framework (Talitha et al., 2020).

The significance of Indonesia for political science extends beyond its domestic transformation. Indonesia is frequently discussed as a case of post-authoritarian democratization, decentralized governance, electoral competition, political pluralism, and Muslim-majority democracy (Lim, 2013; Tapsell, 2017; van Klinken & Berenschot, 2019). Its political development provides a valuable analytical lens for understanding how democratic institutions operate in a large, diverse, and territorially fragmented state. Elections, local government, political parties, civil society, and citizenship practices have become central components of Indonesia's democratic experience (Johansson, 2016). Official political data also show that elections and electoral institutions have become regular features of Indonesia's political system, involving national and subnational electoral processes administered by formal electoral bodies. These institutional developments provide an empirical background for scholarly debates on democracy, governance, representation, accountability, and citizen participation (Hiariej & Stokke, 2017; Pepinsky, 2009; Slater, 2004).

Despite these institutional achievements, Indonesia's democratic development has not followed a linear path. Democratic reform has expanded

political participation and electoral competition, but it has also been accompanied by persistent challenges such as oligarchic power, clientelism, patronage, corruption, identity-based mobilization, uneven governance capacity, and democratic regression (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019; Hadiz, 2010; Mietzner, 2012; Robison & Hadiz, 2004). The literature on Indonesian democracy has therefore moved beyond the study of formal democratic institutions to examine how informal political practices shape political competition and governance outcomes. This suggests that Indonesian democracy cannot be understood only through elections, parties, or constitutional reforms, but must also be examined through the interaction between formal institutions, informal power networks, local elites, and citizen participation (Berenschot, 2018; Faguet, 2014; Lewis, 2017).

Within this broader debate, Indonesian political studies have developed through several major scholarly conversations. Research on democratization has examined institutional reform, electoral competition, civil society, democratic stagnation, and democratic regression (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2010; Mietzner, 2012; Power & Warburton, 2020). Research on governance and decentralization has explored regional autonomy, local government, public service delivery, bureaucratic reform, village governance, and the uneven performance of subnational institutions (Diamond, 1999; Hadiz, 2010; Schulte Nordholt & van Klinken, 2007). Research on citizenship has shifted attention to

rights, participation, representation, civic engagement, and the everyday relationship between citizens and the state (Hiariej & Stokke, 2017; van Klinken & Berenschot, 2019). Other studies have examined electoral politics, clientelism, patronage, identity politics, political economy, and more recent transformations associated with digital politics and political communication (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019; Liddle & Mujani, 2007; Robison & Hadiz, 2004).

This expanding body of scholarship demonstrates the intellectual vitality of Indonesian political studies. However, it also creates a significant analytical problem. The field has developed across multiple themes, concepts, methods, and empirical sites, yet its broader intellectual structure remains insufficiently mapped. Existing studies have provided important insights into specific themes such as democratization, decentralization, governance reform, citizenship, electoral politics, identity politics, religion, digital politics, and political economy. However, most existing reviews remain narrative, theme-specific, or subfield-oriented. They explain particular dimensions of Indonesian politics, but they do not systematically show how the wider literature is organized, how major concepts are connected, which themes occupy central positions, and which areas remain less developed. This creates both a substantive and methodological gap in Indonesian political studies.

Bibliometric analysis provides a rigorous approach to address this limitation. It enables researchers to examine large bodies of scientific literature systematically by identifying

publication patterns, conceptual relationships, thematic clusters, and intellectual structures within a research domain (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Science mapping is particularly useful because it allows researchers to visualize relationships among keywords, authors, sources, citations, and research themes (Cobo et al., 2011). VOSviewer is widely used for this purpose because it is designed to construct and visualize bibliometric networks, including co-occurrence, co-authorship, citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation networks (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). In the context of Indonesian political studies, bibliometric analysis can help clarify how democracy, governance, citizenship, and related political themes are positioned within the wider scholarly landscape.

Despite the growing use of bibliometric methods in the social sciences, their application to Indonesian political studies remains limited. More specifically, little is known about the bibliometric structure of scholarship located at the intersection of democracy, governance, and citizenship in the Indonesian context. Previous studies have examined individual themes such as democratization, decentralization, electoral politics, citizenship, or clientelism, but they have not systematically mapped the conceptual relationships among these themes within a broader field-level structure. Consequently, there is still limited understanding of how Indonesian political studies are intellectually configured and how its main themes relate to one another.

This study addresses that gap by applying bibliometric analysis and science mapping to Scopus-indexed literature on democracy, governance, and citizenship in Indonesian political studies. Unlike previous narrative reviews and theme-specific assessments, this article maps the field's intellectual structure through keyword co-occurrence analysis. Its novelty lies in providing a systematic and replicable mapping of conceptual linkages, thematic organization, and research concentration within Indonesian political studies. By doing so, this study contributes not only to scholarship on Indonesian politics but also to methodological debates on how bibliometric tools can be used to evaluate the development of political science research in a specific national context.

Against this background, this study aims to examine the development, thematic structure, and intellectual configuration of research on democracy, governance, and citizenship in Indonesian political studies. The study addresses three research questions. First, how has the literature on democracy, governance, and citizenship in Indonesian political studies developed within Scopus-indexed publications? Second, what are the main thematic relationships that structure this field? Third, what research gaps and future research directions can be identified through bibliometric mapping? These questions allow the study to move beyond a descriptive review of Indonesian political scholarship and toward a systematic mapping of its intellectual structure.

This article makes three contributions. First, it provides a data-

driven overview of Indonesian political studies as a multidimensional research field. Rather than focusing on a single topic, it examines how democracy, governance, citizenship, and related political themes are positioned within the broader literature. Second, it contributes methodologically by applying bibliometric analysis and keyword co-occurrence mapping to a field that has more often been reviewed through qualitative or narrative approaches. Third, it contributes to agenda-setting by identifying areas where future research can further develop the study of Indonesian politics in more integrative, comparative, and methodologically diverse ways.

METHODS

This study employed bibliometric analysis to examine the development, thematic structure, and intellectual configuration of democracy, governance, and citizenship research in Indonesian political studies. Bibliometric analysis was selected because it enables researchers to systematically examine a large body of scientific literature, identify publication patterns, map conceptual relationships, and formulate future research directions within a specific field (Donthu et al., 2021; Small, 1973; Zupic & Čater, 2015). In addition to descriptive bibliometric analysis, this study applied science mapping to visualize the relationships among keywords and to identify the intellectual structure of the field. Science mapping is useful for revealing how concepts, authors, sources, and research themes are connected within a scientific domain (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Callon et al., 1983; Cobo et al., 2011).

The bibliographic data were retrieved from the Scopus database on May 15, 2026. Scopus was selected because it provides broad coverage of peer-reviewed publications and is widely used as a bibliographic data source in bibliometric studies. The search strategy was designed to retrieve publications that explicitly discuss Indonesia or Indonesian politics in relation to democracy, governance, citizenship, and related political themes. The search query was applied to the title, abstract, and keyword fields using the following search string: *TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Indonesia" AND ("democracy" OR "democratization" OR "governance" OR "public policy" OR "citizenship" OR "political participation" OR "civic engagement" OR "local politics" OR "decentralization" OR "electoral politics" OR "political parties" OR "identity politics" OR "digital democracy" OR "political economy"))*. The use of title, abstract, and keyword fields was intended to ensure that the retrieved documents were substantively related to Indonesian political studies rather than only mentioning Indonesia incidentally.

The search was limited to publications relevant to political science and adjacent social science disciplines. The document types included in the analysis were journal articles and review articles. Editorials, notes, book reviews, errata, short communications, and records with incomplete bibliographic information were excluded. Publications were included if they met three criteria. First, Indonesia or Indonesian politics had to be a central empirical, geographical, or analytical context of the study. Second, the publication had to

address at least one of the core themes of democracy, governance, citizenship, decentralization, public policy, electoral politics, identity politics, digital politics, or political economy. Third, the record had to contain sufficient bibliographic information, including title, abstract, keywords, authorship, source title, year of publication, and affiliation information. The initial search produced 812 records. After screening titles, abstracts, keywords, and bibliographic completeness, 637 documents were retained for the final bibliometric analysis.

The bibliographic records were exported from Scopus in RIS format and prepared for analysis. Data preparation involved checking duplicate records, removing irrelevant entries, and standardizing bibliographic information. Particular attention was given to keyword standardization because inconsistent keyword forms may fragment the bibliometric network and affect the interpretation of co-occurrence patterns. Keyword cleaning is important in bibliometric research because variations in spelling, singular and plural forms, abbreviations, and synonymous terms may influence the formation of clusters and the interpretation of thematic structures (Bornmann & Mutz, 2015; Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Therefore, similar or overlapping terms were reviewed before visualization. Terms such as *democracy* and *democratization*, *local governance* and *decentralization and local politics*, and *digital democracy* and *digital politics* were checked to reduce unnecessary fragmentation in the keyword map.

The analysis consisted of two complementary components: performance analysis and science mapping. Performance analysis was used to describe the general characteristics of the dataset, including publication development, source distribution, authorship patterns, institutional contribution, and country affiliation. Science mapping was used to identify the conceptual and thematic structure of the field through keyword co-occurrence analysis. Keyword co-occurrence analysis was selected because it enables researchers to identify conceptual relationships among research themes based on the frequency with which keywords appear together in the same publications (Bornmann & Mutz, 2015; Cobo et al., 2011; Donthu et al., 2021). In this study, co-occurring keywords were interpreted as indicators of conceptual proximity among themes in Indonesian political studies.

Bibliometric visualization was conducted using VOSviewer version 1.6.20. VOSviewer was selected because it is specifically designed to construct and visualize bibliometric networks, including co-occurrence, co-authorship, citation, co-citation, and bibliographic coupling networks (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2014). In this study, the type of analysis was set to co-occurrence, and the unit of analysis was all keywords. The counting method was set to full counting. A minimum keyword occurrence threshold of 5 was applied to identify the most relevant keywords for visualization. From the total number of keywords in the dataset, 48 keywords met the threshold and were included in the final keyword co-occurrence map. These parameters are

reported to ensure transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor in the bibliometric procedure.

Three types of visualization were generated from the keyword co-occurrence analysis: network visualization, overlay visualization, and density visualization. Network visualization was used to identify thematic clusters and conceptual relationships among keywords. In VOSviewer, the size of a node represents the weight or frequency of an item, while the links between nodes indicate the strength of relationships among items in the bibliometric network (van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Waltman et al., 2010). Keywords that are closely connected are grouped into clusters, allowing the study to identify the major thematic structure of Indonesian political studies.

Overlay visualization was used to examine the relative positioning of keywords based on the selected overlay score. VOSviewer allows overlay visualization to display additional attributes of items, including scores, publication years, citation impact, or other normalized indicators (Bornmann & Mutz, 2015; van Eck & Waltman, 2014). In this study, the overlay map displayed a normalized score ranging approximately from 0.9996 to 1.0004. Therefore, the overlay visualization was interpreted as relative keyword positioning within the network, not as direct evidence of chronological development. This distinction is important because overlay visualization can only be interpreted as temporal mapping when the selected attribute is average publication year and the legend displays actual years.

Density visualization was used to identify the most concentrated research hotspots in the keyword co-occurrence map. In VOSviewer, density visualization shows the concentration of items based on the number and weight of neighboring items, with warmer colors indicating higher density and cooler colors indicating lower density (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2014). Unlike network visualization, which focuses on thematic relationships, density visualization emphasizes the intensity of keyword concentration. Therefore, this visualization was used to identify dominant research hotspots within Indonesian political studies, particularly around Indonesia, governance, decentralization, local politics, citizenship, electoral politics, and related themes.

The analytical procedure was conducted in five stages. First, bibliographic data were retrieved from Scopus using a predefined search string. Second, the data were screened using inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure topical relevance. Third, the dataset was cleaned and standardized, particularly in relation to keywords and bibliographic metadata. Fourth, the cleaned dataset was imported into VOSviewer to generate keyword co-occurrence maps. Fifth, the resulting network, overlay, and density visualizations were interpreted according to their specific analytical functions. Finally, the findings were synthesized to formulate a future research agenda for Indonesian political studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Network Visualization: Thematic Structure of Indonesian Political Studies

The network visualization was employed to identify the thematic structure and conceptual relationships among keywords in the literature on Indonesian political studies. In bibliometric research, science mapping is widely used to uncover the intellectual structure of a research domain by examining relationships among bibliographic units, including keywords, authors, citations, and sources (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Keyword co-occurrence analysis is particularly useful because it reveals how concepts are associated within a body of literature and how research themes are organized into clusters (Donthu et al., 2021). In this study, VOSviewer was used to construct and visualize the keyword co-occurrence network because the software is specifically designed for bibliometric mapping and clustering of large bibliographic datasets (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2014).

As shown in Figure 4, the keyword “Indonesia” occupies the central position in the network and appears as the largest node. In VOSviewer, node size indicates the weight of an item, commonly interpreted through its frequency of occurrence, while the links between nodes represent relationships among items in the bibliometric network (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Therefore, the centrality and size of “Indonesia” indicate that it functions as the main contextual anchor of the dataset. The keyword connects major thematic areas such as democracy, governance, citizenship, decentralization, electoral politics, digital

politics, identity politics, and political economy. This finding suggests that Indonesian political studies are not organized around a single thematic trajectory, but rather around multiple interconnected research domains.

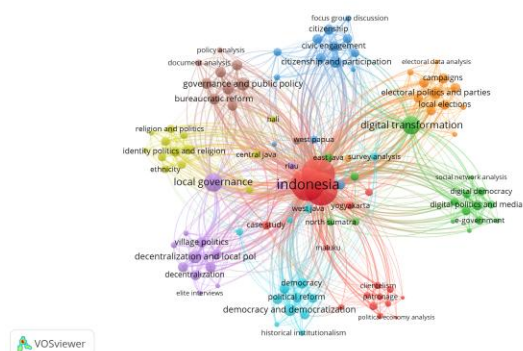


Figure 1. Network Visualization Of Keyword Co-Occurrence In Indonesian Political Studies

The first major cluster relates to democracy and democratization. This cluster includes keywords such as *democracy*, *democracy and democratization*, *political reform*, and *historical institutionalism*. The presence of these terms indicates that the intellectual foundation of Indonesian political studies remains strongly connected to post-authoritarian political transformation, democratic transition, institutional change, and the legacy of Reformasi. The relationship between *democracy* and *political reform* suggests that democracy is discussed not merely as an electoral mechanism, but also as a broader institutional process involving state reform, political representation, and democratic consolidation.

The second cluster is associated with governance and public policy. Keywords such as *governance and public policy*, *bureaucratic reform*, *policy analysis*, and *document analysis* appear closely connected within this cluster. This pattern indicates that governance is a central

research stream in Indonesian political studies. The connection between governance, bureaucratic reform, and policy analysis reflects scholarly interest in state capacity, accountability, public administration, and policy implementation. From a bibliometric perspective, the clustering of these terms demonstrates how co-occurring keywords can reveal the dominant conceptual organization of a research field (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

The third cluster concerns citizenship and participation. This cluster consists of keywords such as *citizenship*, *citizenship and participation*, *civic engagement*, and *focus group discussion*. The emergence of this cluster suggests that Indonesian political studies increasingly address citizen-oriented themes, including civic participation, rights, public engagement, and state-society relations. Its position near both democracy and governance-related nodes indicates that citizenship research serves as a bridge between institution-centered political analysis and society-centered political inquiry.

The fourth cluster is organized around decentralization and local politics. This cluster includes *decentralization*, *decentralization and local politics*, *local governance*, *village politics*, and *elite interviews*. The formation of this cluster indicates that local politics has become a significant component of Indonesian political studies. The connection among decentralization, local governance, and village politics suggests that the literature pays substantial attention to political authority, local elites, public service delivery, and

democratic practices below the national level. The presence of methodological terms such as *elite interviews* and *case study* also implies that this research stream is frequently examined through qualitative and fieldwork-based approaches.

The fifth cluster focuses on electoral politics and parties. It includes keywords such as *electoral politics and parties*, *campaigns*, *local elections*, and *electoral data analysis*. This cluster shows that electoral studies are strongly connected to broader discussions of democracy and local political competition. The keyword *local elections* indicates that Indonesian electoral politics is not only studied at the national level, but also through subnational electoral contests, regional leadership elections, party competition, and campaign strategies. This cluster therefore represents the electoral dimension of Indonesian democracy.

The sixth cluster represents digital politics and media, consisting of keywords such as *digital transformation*, *digital democracy*, *digital politics and media*, *e-government*, and *social network analysis*. The appearance of this cluster indicates the growing relevance of digital technologies in Indonesian political studies. The connection between digital transformation, digital democracy, and social network analysis suggests that scholars increasingly examine online participation, political communication, e-government, digital activism, and data-driven political analysis. This also reflects a methodological shift in which computational and network-based approaches become more visible in political communication and digital democracy research.

Another visible cluster is related to identity politics and religion. Keywords such as *identity politics and religion*, *religion and politics*, and *ethnicity* indicate the continuing importance of identity-based political mobilization in Indonesian political scholarship. The connection of this cluster with democratic and electoral themes suggests that identity politics is often examined in relation to political competition, representation, polarization, and democratic stability.

Finally, the map also identifies a smaller but analytically important cluster related to political economy, represented by *clientelism*, *patronage*, and *political economy analysis*. Although this cluster appears less central than democracy, governance, and local politics, it remains significant because it captures informal power relations, distributive politics, elite networks, and resource-based political exchange. Its links to electoral politics and local governance suggest that political economy perspectives are important for understanding how formal democratic institutions interact with informal political practices.

Overall, the network visualization shows that Indonesian political studies are structured around several interconnected thematic clusters: democracy and democratization, governance and public policy, citizenship and participation, decentralization and local politics, electoral politics and parties, digital politics and media, identity politics and religion, and political economy. The centrality of “Indonesia” demonstrates that these clusters are connected through a shared national and institutional context. This finding supports the role of bibliometric mapping

as a systematic method for identifying the conceptual and intellectual structure of a research field (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). Thus, the network visualization reveals that Indonesian political studies have developed as a multidimensional field in which democratic transformation, governance reform, citizenship practices, local political dynamics, electoral competition, digitalization, identity, and political economy mutually shape the structure of the literature.

Overlay Visualization: Relative Thematic Positioning in the Keyword Network

The overlay visualization was used to examine the relative positioning of keywords in the bibliometric network based on the overlay score generated in VOSviewer. Unlike the network visualization, which identifies thematic clusters and relationships among keywords, the overlay visualization adds an additional layer of information by assigning colors to items based on a selected attribute or score. VOSviewer is widely used for constructing and visualizing bibliometric maps because it enables researchers to explore large bibliometric networks through network, overlay, and density visualizations (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). In bibliometric studies, such visualization is useful for identifying the intellectual structure and thematic configuration of a research field (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

As shown in Figure 5, the color scale ranges from approximately 0.9996 to 1.0004. This indicates that the overlay score is displayed on a normalized scale rather than as explicit publication years.

Therefore, the interpretation in this section is limited to relative thematic tendencies within the keyword network. Keywords shown in darker blue or purple represent lower overlay scores, while keywords shown in green to yellow represent higher overlay scores. Because the score range is very narrow, the color variation should be interpreted cautiously and should not be treated as evidence of large temporal differences among themes.

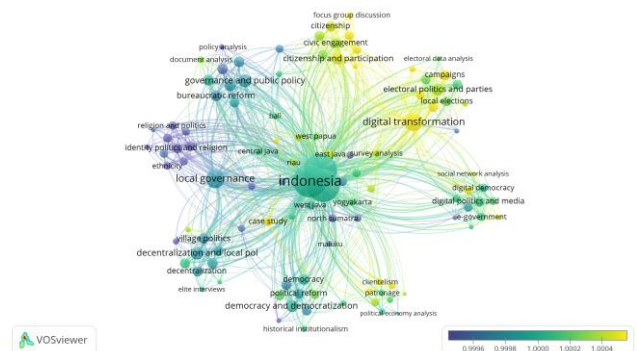


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization Of Keyword Co-Occurrence In Indonesian Political Studies

The central keyword “Indonesia” appears in green and remains the largest node in the map. This confirms its role as the main contextual anchor of the dataset. However, in contrast to the network visualization, the main purpose of Figure 5 is not to identify cluster membership, but to observe how keywords differ according to the overlay score. The central position of “Indonesia” suggests that it connects keywords with both lower and higher overlay values, indicating that Indonesian political studies are formed by a mixture of established and developing thematic areas.

Keywords with relatively lower overlay scores include identity politics and religion, religion and politics, ethnicity, historical institutionalism, village politics, and some parts of the e-

government and survey analysis areas. These terms appear closer to the blue or purple side of the scale. This does not necessarily mean that they are old in a chronological sense. Rather, it indicates that, within the selected overlay setting, these keywords have lower relative scores compared with other items in the network. Substantively, these themes represent important conceptual foundations in Indonesian political studies, especially in relation to identity formation, religion, ethnicity, institutional change, and local political practice.

A second group of keywords appears around the middle of the color scale, especially in green or turquoise. These include Indonesia, local governance, governance and public policy, bureaucratic reform, decentralization, democracy, and political reform. These keywords represent the core institutional and governance-oriented agenda of Indonesian political studies. Their middle-range overlay position suggests that they function as connecting themes between lower-score and higher-score areas. In other words, governance, democracy, decentralization, and political reform act as conceptual bridges linking studies of identity, local politics, citizenship, electoral politics, digital politics, and political economy.

Keywords with relatively higher overlay scores are represented in yellow or yellow-green. These include citizenship, civic engagement, citizenship and participation, focus group discussion, campaigns, local elections, digital transformation, clientelism, and patronage. These terms occupy the higher

end of the overlay range. In substantive terms, this pattern suggests that Indonesian political studies increasingly connect institutional themes with questions of citizen participation, electoral mobilization, informal political exchange, and digital transformation. However, because the legend does not display publication years, these terms should be described as having higher relative overlay scores, not automatically as “newer themes.”

The position of digital transformation is particularly important. It appears as a large node with a relatively high overlay score and is connected with digital democracy, digital politics and media, e-government, and social network analysis. This indicates that digital transformation is an important bridging concept between political communication, public administration, and democratic participation. The presence of social network analysis also suggests that digital politics is associated not only with substantive political change, but also with methodological diversification in Indonesian political studies.

The keywords campaigns, local elections, and electoral politics and parties also appear toward the higher-score side of the map. This suggests that electoral studies remain an active and well-connected area in the dataset. Their links with digital transformation, local governance, and democracy indicate that electoral politics is not isolated from broader debates on democratic quality, campaign strategy, local political competition, and political communication.

The political economy terms clientelism, patronage, and political economy analysis also appear in the yellow-green area. This indicates that informal political practices are strongly connected with the broader network of Indonesian political studies. These keywords show that the study of democracy and governance in Indonesia is not limited to formal institutions, but also includes informal networks, distributive politics, elite exchange, and patron-client relations.

Overall, Figure 5 shows that the keyword network contains three broad overlay tendencies. The first consists of lower-score themes such as identity politics, religion, ethnicity, historical institutionalism, and village politics. The second consists of middle-score themes such as Indonesia, governance and public policy, local governance, decentralization, democracy, and political reform. The third consists of higher-score themes such as citizenship, civic engagement, digital transformation, campaigns, local elections, clientelism, and patronage. These findings indicate that Indonesian political studies are shaped by the interaction between foundational themes, institutional-governance themes, and more differentiated contemporary concerns.

Thus, the overlay visualization complements the network visualization by showing variation in keyword scores across the bibliometric map. However, because the scale in Figure 5 is normalized and not expressed as publication years, the analysis should be interpreted as relative overlay positioning, not as a definitive chronological evolution of the field. To

make a stronger temporal claim, the VOSviewer setting should be changed to average publication year, so that the legend displays actual years rather than normalized values.

Density Visualization: Research Hotspots and Thematic Concentration

Density visualization was used to identify the most concentrated research hotspots within Indonesian political studies. In VOSviewer, density visualization indicates the concentration of items in a bibliometric map. Areas shown in red and yellow represent higher density, meaning that many strongly weighted keywords are located close to one another, whereas green and blue areas indicate lower density or more dispersed topics (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2023). Therefore, unlike network visualization, which focuses on thematic relationships among clusters, density visualization is used here to identify the dominant and most frequently concentrated research areas in the dataset.

As shown in Figure 6, the highest density is concentrated around the keyword "Indonesia." This area appears in red and orange, indicating that "Indonesia" is the strongest hotspot in the keyword map. This finding confirms that the dataset is strongly centered on Indonesia as the primary geographical and analytical context. The central density of this keyword also suggests that major research themes in the dataset are integrated through the Indonesian case rather than being distributed as separate or unrelated research areas.

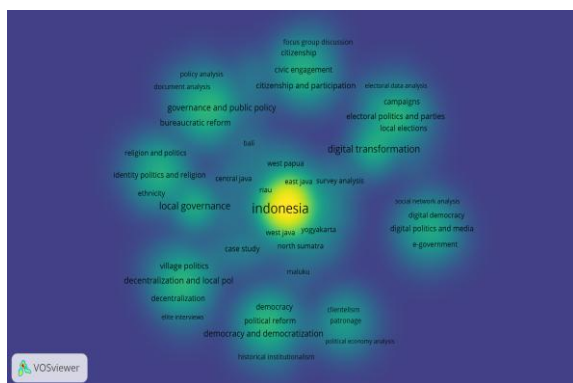


Figure 3. Density Visualization Of Keyword Co-Occurrence In Indonesian Political Studies

The density around “Indonesia” is reinforced by the presence of several regional keywords, including East Java, West Java, Yogyakarta, North Sumatra, Riau, West Papua, South Kalimantan, and Maluku. The concentration of these provincial terms near the central hotspot indicates that Indonesian political studies are not only focused on national-level politics, but also strongly grounded in subnational political contexts. This suggests that regional case studies are an important empirical basis for examining democracy, governance, citizenship, elections, and local political dynamics in Indonesia.

A second important hotspot appears around local governance, decentralization and local politics, decentralization, and village politics. The yellow-green density in this area indicates that local politics and decentralization constitute one of the most concentrated research domains in the dataset. This finding suggests that post-Reformasi decentralization, regional autonomy, village governance, and local political authority have become central concerns in Indonesian political scholarship. The presence of elite interviews near this area also indicates

that studies of local politics are frequently supported by qualitative and fieldwork-oriented approaches.

Another dense area is found around governance and public policy, policy implementation, policy analysis, and bureaucratic reform. This hotspot shows that governance-oriented studies represent a major concentration within Indonesian political studies. The density of this area reflects strong scholarly attention to public administration, policy implementation, bureaucratic reform, institutional performance, and state capacity. This indicates that governance is not a peripheral theme, but one of the dominant analytical pillars in the literature.

The density map also shows a visible concentration around citizenship and participation, civic engagement, citizenship, and focus group discussion. Although this area is less intense than the central “Indonesia” hotspot, it remains an important research concentration. This suggests that citizenship-oriented studies have become a significant part of Indonesian political scholarship, particularly in relation to civic participation, public engagement, participatory practices, and citizen-state relations.

A further hotspot appears around electoral politics and parties, campaigns, local elections, and electoral data analysis. The density of this area indicates that electoral politics is another important research concentration. The presence of local elections and campaigns suggests that Indonesian electoral studies are strongly connected to subnational political competition, campaign practices, and party dynamics. This finding

reinforces the importance of electoral democracy as a major theme in Indonesian political studies.

The right side of the map shows a moderate-density area around digital transformation, digital democracy, digital politics and media, e-government, and social network analysis. Compared with the central hotspot around "Indonesia," this area is less intense, but it remains analytically important. The density of this group suggests that digital politics has developed as a recognizable research area, especially in relation to online political communication, digital public services, political participation, and network-based methods. However, based on the density map, digital politics appears less dominant than governance, local politics, and Indonesia-centered themes.

Another visible but more specific density area is related to identity politics and religion, religion and politics, and ethnicity. This indicates that identity-based political analysis remains an important subfield in Indonesian political studies. Its density is lower than the central and local governance areas, but it still represents a meaningful concentration of research on religion, ethnicity, identity mobilization, and political representation.

The lower-right area contains a smaller density concentration around clientelism, resource governance, and political economy analysis. This suggests that political economy is a specialized but relevant research area within the broader field. Although it does not appear as one of the most dominant hotspots, its presence indicates that informal political exchange, resource distribution, and

patron-client relations are important for understanding the interaction between formal democratic institutions and informal political practices.

Overall, the density visualization shows that the most dominant research hotspot in Indonesian political studies is centered on Indonesia, followed by strong concentrations around local governance and decentralization, governance and public policy, citizenship and participation, and electoral politics. Meanwhile, digital politics, identity politics and religion, and political economy appear as more specialized areas with moderate or lower density. These findings suggest that the field is most strongly concentrated around national and subnational governance, democratic institutions, public policy, and citizen participation, while also incorporating newer and more specialized areas such as digital politics and informal political economy.

Thus, density visualization complements the previous analyses by showing which topics are most concentrated in the bibliometric map. While the network visualization identifies the structure of thematic relationships and the overlay visualization presents variation in overlay scores, the density visualization highlights the dominant research hotspots. The findings indicate that Indonesian political studies are primarily anchored in the intersection of Indonesia, governance, decentralization, democracy, local politics, citizenship, and electoral studies.

Future Research Agenda

The findings from the network, overlay, and density visualizations indicate that Indonesian political studies have developed as a multidimensional field shaped by democracy, governance, citizenship, decentralization, electoral politics, digital politics, identity politics, and political economy. However, the bibliometric mapping also shows that several research areas remain open for

further development. Since bibliometric analysis is not only useful for identifying the intellectual structure of a field but also for formulating future research directions, this section proposes several research agendas that may guide subsequent studies on Indonesian political science (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

Table 1. Future Research Agenda Derived from Bibliometric Mapping

Bibliometric Finding	Related Keywords	Research Gap	Future Research Agenda
Digital politics appears as a visible but less dense thematic area compared with governance and local politics.	digital transformation, digital democracy, digital politics and media, e-government, social network analysis	Existing studies have identified digital politics, but deeper analysis is needed on how digital platforms transform democratic participation and governance.	Future studies should examine digital campaigns, online civic engagement, disinformation, e-government, platform politics, and citizen-state interaction.
Citizenship-related keywords form a distinct thematic area connected to democracy and governance.	citizenship, citizenship and participation, civic engagement, focus group discussion	Citizenship is often discussed in relation to participation, but less attention is given to differentiated citizen experiences.	Future research should examine youth participation, women's political participation, marginalized communities, rural citizenship, and digital citizenship.
Local governance and decentralization represent one of the densest research areas.	local governance, decentralization, decentralization and local politics, village politics, elite interviews	Local politics is well established, but comparative subnational analysis remains underdeveloped.	Future studies should compare local democratic practices across provinces, districts, and villages to explain variation in accountability, leadership, and public service delivery.
Electoral politics is strongly connected with democracy, local politics, and digital transformation.	electoral politics and parties, campaigns, local elections, electoral data analysis	Electoral research has expanded, but the relationship between electoral competition, digital campaigns, and informal networks needs further examination.	Future research should analyze campaign finance, digital campaigning, vote mobilization, local elections, party competition, and electoral integrity.
Political economy appears as a smaller	clientelism, patronage, resource	Informal political practices remain	Future studies should examine clientelism,

but analytically important area.	governance, political economy analysis	insufficiently integrated into studies of formal democratic institutions.	patronage, elite bargaining, resource distribution, and informal governance in democratic institutions.
Identity politics remains visible but less central than governance and local politics.	identity politics and religion, religion and politics, ethnicity	Identity politics is often examined through polarization, but its relationship with representation and inclusion needs further exploration.	Future research should study religious mobilization, ethnicity, nationalism, polarization, minority representation, and democratic resilience.
Methodological keywords indicate diverse but fragmented research approaches.	case study, survey analysis, social network analysis, electoral data analysis, document analysis, focus group discussion	The field uses multiple methods, but more integrative and mixed-methods designs are needed.	Future studies should strengthen mixed methods, longitudinal analysis, computational methods, comparative design, and network-based political analysis.

Table 1 summarizes the future research agenda derived from the bibliometric mapping. The proposed agenda is not formulated independently from the visual findings, but is based on the thematic structure, relative overlay positioning, and density concentration identified in the keyword co-occurrence maps. The table shows that future Indonesian political studies should continue established debates on democracy, governance, decentralization, and local politics, while expanding toward digital politics, differentiated citizenship, informal governance, identity-based mobilization, and methodological innovation.

First, future research should further examine the relationship between digital transformation and democratic participation. The visualization results show that digital transformation, digital democracy, digital politics and media, e-government, and social network analysis form a visible thematic area within the keyword map. This suggests that

digitalization has become an important dimension of Indonesian political studies. However, future studies need to move beyond general discussions of digital politics by examining how digital platforms shape political participation, electoral campaigns, public opinion formation, disinformation, online civic engagement, and citizen-state interaction.

Second, future studies should expand the analysis of citizenship and civic engagement in Indonesian democracy. The presence of keywords such as citizenship, citizenship and participation, civic engagement, and focus group discussion indicates that citizen-oriented research has become a meaningful part of the field. Nevertheless, future research needs to examine citizenship not only as a formal legal status, but also as a political practice shaped by participation, rights, representation, social inclusion, and local governance. More attention should be given to how different groups of citizens, including youth, women, marginalized

communities, rural citizens, and digital publics, participate in democratic processes and negotiate their relationship with the state.

Third, local governance and decentralization should remain a central agenda in future Indonesian political studies. The density visualization shows strong concentration around local governance, decentralization, decentralization and local politics, and village politics. This indicates that subnational politics continues to be one of the most important empirical foundations of the field. Future research should investigate how decentralization affects democratic accountability, public service delivery, local leadership, village governance, and regional inequality. Comparative studies across provinces and districts would also be useful for explaining why local democratic outcomes vary across Indonesia.

Fourth, future research should pay closer attention to the intersection between electoral politics, clientelism, and informal governance. The bibliometric map identifies electoral politics and parties, campaigns, local elections, clientelism, patronage, and political economy analysis as important themes within the field. This suggests that Indonesian democracy cannot be understood only through formal institutions such as elections, parties, and state agencies. Future studies should examine how informal networks, patron-client relations, political financing, vote mobilization, and elite bargaining shape electoral competition and governance outcomes.

Fifth, future studies should further develop research on identity politics,

religion, ethnicity, and democratic stability. The network visualization shows that identity politics and religion, religion and politics, and ethnicity form a distinct thematic area. This indicates that identity-based political mobilization remains a significant issue in Indonesian political scholarship. Future research should explore how religious identity, ethnicity, nationalism, and polarization influence electoral behavior, political representation, social cohesion, and democratic resilience. Rather than treating identity politics only as a source of conflict, future studies should also examine when and how identity-based mobilization contributes to inclusion, representation, or democratic participation.

Sixth, there is a need to strengthen comparative and cross-national perspectives in Indonesian political studies. Although the field is strongly anchored in the Indonesian context, future research should connect Indonesian political experiences with broader debates in Southeast Asian and comparative politics. Comparative studies may examine how Indonesia differs from or resembles other democracies in terms of decentralization, electoral politics, citizenship, digital democracy, governance reform, and democratic resilience. This would allow Indonesian political studies to contribute more directly to international theoretical debates rather than remaining primarily case-specific.

Seventh, future research should improve methodological diversity in the study of Indonesian politics. The keyword map indicates the presence of several methodological terms, including

case study, elite interviews, focus group discussion, survey analysis, electoral data analysis, social network analysis, document analysis, and political economy analysis. Future studies should combine qualitative, quantitative, computational, and comparative methods to produce more robust findings. Mixed-methods designs, longitudinal analysis, big data approaches, and network-based methods can help scholars examine complex political phenomena such as digital campaigns, policy networks, local elite relations, and citizen participation more systematically.

Overall, the future research agenda suggests that Indonesian political studies should move toward more integrative and comparative approaches. The field needs to connect democracy, governance, and citizenship with emerging issues such as digital transformation, informal political economy, identity-based mobilization, local governance, and methodological innovation. By doing so, future scholarship can contribute not only to a deeper understanding of Indonesian politics, but also to broader theoretical debates on democracy, governance, and citizenship in post-authoritarian and developing democracies.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the development and intellectual structure of democracy, governance, and citizenship research in Indonesian political studies through bibliometric analysis. The findings show that Indonesian political studies have developed into a multidimensional field in which

democratic transformation, governance reform, citizenship, decentralization, electoral politics, digital politics, identity, and political economy are conceptually interconnected. Rather than being organized around a single dominant theme, the field reflects the complexity of Indonesian politics as a post-authoritarian and decentralized democracy.

The bibliometric mapping indicates that Indonesia serves as the main contextual anchor of the literature, while governance, democracy, decentralization, citizenship, and electoral politics form the most visible thematic foundations. At the same time, digital politics, identity politics, and political economy appear as more specialized but increasingly relevant areas. These patterns suggest that Indonesian political studies have moved beyond the initial concern with democratic transition and now engage with broader questions of state capacity, citizen participation, local governance, informal political practices, and political transformation.

This article contributes to the literature by providing a systematic mapping of Indonesian political studies, a field that has often been reviewed through narrative or theme-specific approaches. By applying bibliometric analysis, this study identifies the field's conceptual linkages, thematic concentrations, and potential directions for future research. It also demonstrates the value of science mapping for understanding how political science scholarship develops within a specific national context.

This study is limited by its reliance on Scopus-indexed publications and keyword co-occurrence analysis, which may not fully capture Indonesian-language scholarship, books, policy reports, or the substantive arguments of individual studies. Future research may therefore expand the dataset across multiple databases, incorporate non-English publications, and combine bibliometric mapping with qualitative literature review. Overall, this study provides a foundation for more integrative, comparative, and methodologically diverse research on democracy, governance, and citizenship in Indonesia.

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