

A Philosophical Reading of Jacques Rancière through the Political Freedom of Democracy Enlightenment

Artha Debora Silalahi¹, Suandi Silalahi²

¹Faculty of Philosophy, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. (email: arthadeborasilalahi@mail.ugm.ac.id)

² Universitas Bina Bangsa, Indonesia.

Abstract

This paper explores Jacques Rancière's philosophical perspective on democracy, focusing on how his ideas challenge conventional understandings of political freedom and democratic order. Rather than viewing democracy as a fixed system with clear rules and outcomes, Rancière presents it as an ongoing, often disruptive process rooted in the assertion of political will. Through a critical-philosophical approach, this paper examines how Rancière's thought sheds light on the tensions between law, political participation, and individual autonomy. It argues that democracy, for Rancière, is defined not by institutional structures but by the continuous struggle over who gets to speak, act, and be recognised in the political space. This reading reveals the unresolved and fragile nature of democratic life, where freedom and order are in constant negotiation. By situating Rancière within broader debates on political theory and democratic practice, the paper highlights how his critique opens new ways of thinking about the ethical and political challenges of contemporary democracy. In doing so, it also raises questions about how democratic ideals from the past can still hold value in addressing present-day issues, even as their meanings evolve. Ultimately, the paper argues that Rancière's view encourages a more dynamic and inclusive understanding of democracy—one that remains open to rethinking and renewal.

Keywords:

democracy; Jacques Rancière; political act; political freedom; political will

Introduction

In the current political sphere, many people tend to achieve their aims of their own will. Many policies, of course, rest on the assumption that while people are capable of managing their own affairs, they still require intervention to have those affairs managed for them. What then is the people's will? In short, it must interact with others to participate equally in the creation of a meaningful life. It sees a consideration of the notion of politics through democracy. The main problem discussed in this paper is related to how the debates among the politicians and governors are quite related to their interests or just about maintaining their weight in public interest. Also, how does the profound concept relate to democracy in a developed country can be established? Any sort

of facts related to democracy bring the social imaginaries to uphold the way of implication in the complex of numerous political problems. They ultimately bend the stick a little too far in pursuing the frame of politics in its good aims. The ways of acting and ways of understanding are a combination of what is done with the rule justification to bind the political will and act. There is no reason to believe that political activities cannot be determined under certain circumstances.

Democracy is defined as a form of life and freedom determined by the economic scale. In the government regime, the whole people would both create and execute the law (Silalahi, 2024b). The consideration of the most fundamental methodological problems facing the social scientist involves the liberation

of the heritage of earlier writing containing biased notions and the influence of the entire cultural, social, economic, and political milieu (Bloom, 1980). The idea of politics as a set of real actions is regulated by ethics and pronouncing the values of the principle of action (Rancière, 2011). The question of Indonesia's political position addresses the government's action in taking the policy approach based on the political will and its national interests (Eriyanti, 2022).

The political position necessarily remains a tension between private will and the general will. There is an alternative perspective to generate those wills through the political philosophy, putting forward an alternative political thought. The task of political philosophy in the appearance of conditions does not allow a consensus on justice (Fajardo, 2022). It seems like the negative consequence shows the individual suffers from the injustice on the other side, but it is also a matter of fighting against what is harmful in all forms of social relations. (Fajardo, 2022).

The conception of political reality nowadays emerges from the grand narratives of practical democracy. The practical scope is concerned with a public official's policy and decisions that impact public necessity. Several possible problems so far have been reasoned through the concrete situation at hand, which determines what democracy matters and really impacts the way public officials create and decide the main policy for the wider public. Furthermore, an answer on how to constitute the autonomy of the space of political will is offered by developing a conception of the ethical dimension, namely the sensibleness of perspectives.

Those perspectives are aimed at building an understanding of what politics is. Politics is a world of competing interests or values. This paper will analyse and criticise the reality of the political sphere in Indonesia based on Jacques Rancière's argumentation on his thinking

about the differentiation between politics and the assumptions that emerge about will and authority. Conceptually, the state institution, with its will and authority posited as the state representation to rule the ruled societies. The state representation is understood as constructed in certain ideas that emerged in Greece at a previous time (Goff, 2016). Greek political concepts have given many of the assumptions that currently hold about the modern world. The multiple historical enterprises have framed the dialogue from one point of view, which is hard for the political thought. The past concept of politics in Greece is the transmission of material from the past to the present and authoritative (Goff, 2016). It considers itself validated through the more complex and reciprocal engagement among the public parties and government officials (Goff, 2016). The sensibility of politics can be put into the evidence of a perceptive way of being, saying, and seeing. Both are indispensable. In a political way, there is a perception built relating to the law practice. By the name of law, any public official acts as a legislative body; then there may be circumstances under which the full details of a law must be kept secret (Fuller, 1964). The law merely brings to explicit expression conceptions of right and wrong widely shared in the community. The enacted law, which should be publicised and clearly stated, diminishes in importance. It captures how the legal prescription relates to the act of the legislature, namely, establishing laws operating and applying the political wisdom to democratic situations.

An attempt at the specificity of politics as disagreement and the specificity of aesthetic heterogeneity breaks away from absolutisation. Through Rancière's perspective, it can be aligned with the critiques of the perception of political grand narratives in the democratic sphere. The government, as the public officials, show their will and desire under the public interest and necessity. The view of the plural

of policies in the plural society needs the transformation of state power in their political project. As this article was written, the public's attentions were drawn to the 2024 election through many debates containing the pro-cons arguments. Who would get their firm position to give the radical argument to invite public criticism and suggestions? Besides that, the ongoing negotiation to convince the objective government policy may encourage people to respect the government authority (Widaningrum, 2017). The default authority of the ultimate government and society has the duty to fulfil the open government space that performs the deliberate strategy to suppress mass criticism through the public involvement open space (Wodajo, 2023).

The relationship between people and government must eliminate the intensity of negative assumptions in policy implementation. It can only thrive if the trust in government includes the aspects of government behaviour, affection, and cognition, which largely open the intensity of interactions, such as in policy making in general, as efficient, fair, and honest (Widaningrum, 2017). The article problematised the most articulate of conventional democracy accounts, emphasising and assessing the freedom to hold an opinion and express people's thoughts (Wodajo, 2023). This represented the manifestation of an opinion process that depends on the wider community and configures the public's responses to specific situations in line with common interests (Wodajo, 2023).

This paper describes and criticises Rancière's work and highlights the ongoing struggle for democracy and the need for individuals to question and face challenges through the dominant narratives and structures of power in society. Rancière argues that democracy is not only a form of government, but also a way of thinking and acting that challenges established hierarchies and power structures. There is no denying that the power

consideration is unlikely to determine all questions that may arise about the importance of a legal rule (Raz, 2009). It seems like the nature of legal practical rationality, which would lead to a good deal of common authority. It is known as the government's legitimate authority regarding a certain range of issues. The government authority may be greater over some individuals than over others, and it depends on the government officials' personal circumstances.

The authority of reasonable and competent government is exercised through the making of laws and legally binding orders, which provide the political justification to obey undertaken by obeying law by people. So, what does democracy remain with the open government space if the government commands and wields its power within the limitations through the consideration of obeying and respecting the law? The paper highlights the different democracy writings in different landscapes, specifically when confronting the entailment of the obligation to obey the more political laws. It also supposes that many political acts and wills can be broken without endangering the very survival of institutions based on the people's recognition (Raz, 1986).

Rancière's perspectives may raise the judgment about the real understanding of the related point of law and democratic practice nowadays. Such consideration to demonstrate the potential political insight in the past, moreover, has given the potential into the challenge of the whole notion of the classical past as a model, which means it offers an important note on the current political discourse specifically in Indonesia (Goff, 2016). Indonesia, with numerous debates referring to democracy, should be linked by a focus on the significance of dialogue between classical past and present politics, which makes a difference way about how the contemporary discussion of the political reality poses the consideration and inflects the past discussions over time.

Democracy in its operation is entrenched by constitutional points that a certain feature is a necessary feature of a concept that will be proceeded by appealing to clear examples, analogies, or agreed conceptual connections, and will pursue its implications. From this point, the feature seems to be about how they can complete the enactment of the unbinding power in specific spheres of practice only at the cost of some sleights of hand, which in reinstating the principle of authority. In the light of objections to the simple explanation, rules and commands are protected reasons, and all authoritative utterances are power utterances (Raz, 1979). The criticism of democracy points out that the main problem of the democracy sphere is not significantly ungovernable, but it is threatened by power without its contentions for facing democracy's value (Silalahi, 2024b).

The interplay between military institutions and democratic governance has long been a contentious issue in post-authoritarian societies. In Indonesia, a nation grappling with the legacies of militarised governance under the New Order regime, recent revisions to the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) law have reignited debates about the military's role in civilian life. These revisions, which critics argue expand the TNI's authority into non-defence sectors such as public administration and domestic security, threaten to erode decades of democratic reforms. This article interrogates the implications of these legal changes through the lens of Jacques Rancière's concept of *aesthetic democracy*, which centred on the "distribution of the sensible" (*le partage du sensible*) to reveal how such reforms reconfigure political participation and visibility, entrenching hierarchies that stifle democratic plurality.

Rancière's notion of the distribution of the sensible refers to the implicit structures that dictate who is granted voice, visibility, and agency within a political order. For Rancière, democracy emerges not from institutional procedures alone but from moments that

disrupt entrenched hierarchies, enabling marginalised groups to redefine their place in the collective narrative. Aesthetic democracy, thus, is inherently subversive; it challenges the partitions that relegate certain actors to silence and others to authority. Applying this framework to Indonesia's TNI law revisions illuminates how legal codification of military power reinforces a policed order, one that circumscribes the boundaries of civic engagement and legitimises the military's dominance in spheres beyond defence. The revised TNI law, which permits greater military involvement in domestic security and socio-economic programs, risks re-militarising Indonesia's public sphere. By positioning the military as a key arbiter in civilian affairs, the state not only contravenes principles of democratic civil-military relations but also reconfigures the *sensible* order. Communities affected by military oversight, activists, ethnic minorities, or dissenters may find their narratives suppressed or their demands rendered unintelligible within a framework that privileges militarised logics of "order" over dialogue. Such dynamics exemplify what Rancière critiques as the antithesis of democracy: a regime that naturalises inequality by fixing roles and forecloses dissensus. By framing militarisation as a contest over the distribution of the sensible, this article contributes to interdisciplinary dialogues on democracy, militarism, and resistance, urging scholars and policymakers to reckon with the aesthetic dimensions of power in safeguarding democratic futures.

This article argues that the TNI revisions exemplify a regression in Indonesia's democratic journey, not merely institutionally but epistemically. By examining how the law reallocates authority, visibility, and voice, we uncover its broader implications for aesthetic democracy. The analysis bridges political theory and Southeast Asian studies, offering a novel critique of militarisation's

impact on participatory politics. In doing so, it underscores the urgency of reimagining civil-military boundaries as a project of democratic aesthetics, one that expands, rather than restricts, the possibilities for equality and collective self-determination. This paper also critically examines and reflects on the contingency of equality and inequality as foundational principles used to justify authority, drawing from Jacques Rancière's exploration of political freedom and democracy as acts of disruption and emancipation. Political thought uses common powers of linguistic innovation in order to make its objects visible and create connections between them. In this case, the consensual thinking argues both theoretically and empirically between the common goods of practices and the zero-sum goods of institutions. It asserts that every act of governments to govern the governed in the determination of their collective lives. From the equality point of view, generally underpinned the narrow understanding guided normatively embedded equality norms and meant primarily that the government, as the law maker and law executor, was supposed to treat everyone equally (Davy, 2023).

The given meanings and positions introduced by Rancière have been assigned to the element of social order, which reads as dissensus. Every act of dissensus requires a certain distance from consensus; it asserts that appropriating the prescribed sensible codes can reconfigure the sensory elements of the social order (May, 2010). There is a restricted space of political conversations and critical commentaries on democracy relating to the challenges of established power structures and the institutional constraints in the name of governing for the people. The reasonable argument is taking place in the core of democratic manifestation about facing the government authority with its ultimate power (Power & Warburton, 2020). This power remains the playing field of how the political

act and political will have been actively exacerbated by the attack of social forces through expressive and associative freedoms (Power & Warburton, 2020).

Literature Review

The literature review in this paper points out that the possibility of democracy in its various meanings has a moral meaning in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution to the growth of every member of society (Barret & Aiken, 1962).

The literature review represents the research topic discussed and the theoretical core of this paper on the political will and freedom for criticising the democratic cores applied in Indonesia. In the previous works "A Few Remarks on the Method of Jacques Rancière" put its research consideration on the polemical nature makes an object of thinking the cause of domination will in democracy scheme, it is not the form of any content nor the mark of any will, a situation that is interpreted in the opposite terms of a 'return of politics' and of an 'end of politics' (Rancière, 2009)

That work has been explained, and found that there is always a relation of power. It can be understood as the moment when the power of anybody emerges most significantly (Rancière, 2010). It has redefined politics in its contextual meaning. The democracy, in its defining words, can be described as a government representation form to puts the supreme power in the hands of the people and exercises directly or indirectly, involving periodic free elections (Azwar and Subekan, 2022). The previous research mentioned that the prerequisites for democracy relating to political liberalisation through formal and material means can be changed through constitutional changes and structural changes (Lay, 2012). Both are considered to be the consolidated democracy that necessarily pave the democracy way is take place (Lay, 2012). The recent presence

of modern institutions, as well as the party structures, has taken the limited implication in alternatively creating the political power for the *demos* and public affairs (Lay, 2012).

Methods

This research method uses the philosophical critique method in addressing many debates and viewpoints associated with the concept of democracy and the political way as the key to a comprehensive understanding of reality nowadays.

The political philosophy ground posed in this paper has a function to elaborate schemes for explaining and justifying democracy as the way that will assist in discovering the causes of political reform issues. The fundamental points will pose the idea of a fixed, final, and supreme end that is never questioned.

The data were collected through the literary studies on the philosophy, politics, and democracy references. All of the materials are considered to be analysed based upon the criticisms and suggestions regarding the political freedom and political acts in their conceptual and contextual practice. The qualitative data used in this paper analysed the visualisation of the democratic common understanding to give a fresh insight, yet the new findings are based upon Jacques Rancière's arguments on democracy and its problems. In addition, scholarly works that specifically criticise and reflect the democracy with philosophical readings on political freedom conceived from the political will and political act are still limited. This research, therefore, is aimed at putting the critics and reflections of the democracy unstable in concept and practice, as well as the reasonable arguments relating to democracy in recent Indonesian politics (Utami, 2018). This research also discusses the importance of political awareness to achieve the democracy aim in a significant and reliable system. Democracy has not just the political jargon or political utilities to generalise the

government policy based upon the public interest. There is the biggest dimension, like form and stance, how which democracy can create and emerge the critical thinking and assert the upcoming challenges in the social and political landscape.

Results

This paper research provides some preliminary results in its finding that democracy generates how the government system works through the effective checks and balances within the ability of governments to act and implement their policies impartially (Azwar and Subekan, 2022).

Democracy, as the profound concept explained in this paper, must be discursively and communicatively constructed based upon the procedure of a critique of reason. Each part of the discussion in this paper will give insights more precisely into the social and even political introspection regarding to proposed freedom and will nowadays.

The discursive character is further analysed through the criterion of democracy's critics to which philosophy is also subjected. This leads to the main element, which is taken from social theory and has a political characteristic. The common aim of the democracy entire work is guided by the consensus goal (Höffe Otfried, 2001). This article seeks to resolve the superior brand of dogmatic knowledge through philosophical criticism. The illustration sets the evidence of discursiveness to survey the land of reason. It might announce misgivings as to whether general democratic assumptions can be invalidated through the suspicions (Höffe Otfried, 2001). It can resolve within a rational process and declare that the claim of reason is highlighting the possibilities of democracy, which should be able to express the profound meaning without the common dogma.

The enlightenment enterprise in this paper does not require the special social standing of an official act or human mercy; at

the same time, an aspect of reason comes from something that human beings, in common with everyone, enable for gaining knowledge (Höffe Otfried, 2000). The matters posed in this paper are not restricted only to the social and political spheres influenced by democracy, but it is also articulated and discussed in a systematic concept without the need for far-reaching knowledge of the history of political philosophy.

Discussion

Jacques Rancière and the Conception of Political Freedom

Jacques Rancière explores the relationship between democracy and the law in contemporary society. Rancière critiques the idea that the law is a neutral and objective framework that governs society. The determination to choose to be objective and not subjective cannot be at the same time. Objective means to accept limitations upon what one can do (Christie, 1969). In other ways, to act objectively is not merely to act in a manner whereby one convinces oneself that one has acted objectively (Christie, 1969).

Instead, he argues that the law is a tool of power that is used by those in authority to maintain their dominance over others. Rancière believes that democracy, on the other hand, is a way of giving voice and agency to those who have been historically marginalised and excluded from the political process. Rancière also explores the concept of the “enlightened” individual, who can transcend the constraints of the law and society through rational thought and action. He argues that while the enlightenment may have led to important social and political advances, it also created a new set of hierarchies and exclusionary practices (Rancière, 2010). Central to Rancière’s philosophy is the notion that democracy is not merely a system of governance but an ongoing act of emancipation and equality. He challenges the traditional understanding of politics as the

administration of power, redefining it as the interruption of the given order by those who are traditionally excluded from its structures.

Rancière challenges us to reconsider democracy not as a stable set of institutions but as an ongoing struggle for equality and freedom. His emphasis on dissensus, equality, and the active participation of the excluded offers valuable insights into the philosophical and practical dimensions of political freedom in contemporary democratic practice. Rancière’s works are applied to understand the dissensus as the core of democracy. In the author’s opinion, these contrasts sharply with consensus-driven approaches, which he sees as mechanisms that suppress true democratic engagement. For Rancière, democracy thrives on the conflict and contestation that reveal the gaps in representation and power. Democracy as the main core of public officials’ actions has led to many voices behind and in front of the government officials. The claim that democracy is receiving the public attention it deserves—out of necessity and for the common good—remains open to question. The nature of the broader inquiries presenting the argument of democracy is intended to contribute to and derive the democracy developed in its sense.

Rancière’s exclusionary structure refers to the structures and mechanisms in society that prevent certain individuals or groups from fully participating in political and social life, including economic, educational, and cultural barriers that reinforce existing power structures and exclude marginalised groups. Rancière’s exclusionary structure focuses on the structural and institutional inequalities that perpetuate inequality, while Schmitt’s constitutional emergency act is intended to respond to emergencies or crises that threaten the stability of the political system (Sudibyo, 2019).

The notion of politics in Rancière’s perspective is opposed for providing politics properly. The challenges of the power of the

elected branches, as the judiciary exercises in its constitutional competences, usually lead to consensual outcomes even if it means accepting interpretations and the other branch has its disagreement. Disagreement in this context is still a communicative government. In other words, disagreement must first be framed with reasonability or good faith before it can qualify as political. Instead, the Rancière discourse undoes the boundaries of legal authority on the assumption that fits the legal field of objectivity. It has underpinned the whole hierarchy of democracy in political philosophy discourses.

Rancière wants to reconstruct the discussion of the political problems we are facing today through his logical critique of the democratic government. Based on Rancière's criticism, a democratic government can be defined as the formal legal mechanisms that make the content of policies and the identity of those in charge of implementing them sensitive to the wishes of the governed society. The expression of the logic of equality through its assertion has no part in the determination of governed collective lives. The presupposition of equality does not function as an ontology of human beings. It is not a political ontology, but rather a political assumption. The idea of equality of all human beings was an authority based on reason, which meant that the context of equality in democratic circumstances is given further interpretation focused on equal worth and unpredictable upcoming challenges.

The framing of public discourse of human dignity, social justice, and social equality profoundly asserts the potential ground from which the fact of democratic constitutionalism is regulated or even abolished in the entire capitalist market (Kochi, 2017). It shows the discourse of democracy in the constitutionalism context, also open to such a radical perspective, holds onto the idea that public discourse frames are often overlooked or not remembered (Kochi, 2017). The normative claims about democracy, justice, equality, and human dignity nowadays

are presenting a multifaceted aspect of counter-hegemonic discourses aimed at marshalling and reorganising the global development, utmost the political freedom (Kochi, 2017).

When we view the entire activity of those people in the public sphere more broadly, as an element in the larger world of human life, it rests on some misconceptions. A complete account of political action and the democratic sphere should be structured in terms of reasonable action. In each case of democracy, it is concerned with the same action, which is not faced with the spectacle of an entirely causal. The endless manipulation of competing and shifting political claims into an understanding of the relationship between political power, law, and linguistic meaning had been echoed by an older conception of the site of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic contestation (Pogge, 2008). These open onto the possibility of underpinning the restraint of globalising the redistributive principles within the framework of the idea of social democracy in modern states' institutions (Habermas, 2012).

The democracy case is usually faced with a single action that can be viewed either from the personal point of view of the agent or from the collective point. All those causal factors that might potentially influence people's actions are able to do so only to the extent that they are perceived as relevant and important (Toulmin, 1976). The topics for discussion of the recent issue are the general election with its adequate account of the preconditions and general forms of searching for the purity of politics (Rancière, 2010).

Democracy can be explained by the people based on the reasons. It is used for acting as the people do by pointing to those features of democratic dynamics that are specifically relevant to the action. Those features may refer to the collective situation. Then, the problem of sorting out reasons and getting them in proper proportion depends on people knowing what factors to look out for, what their bearing is,

and so on.

The extent of the democracy case demands a reflective understanding of the government's acts and decisions. In other ways, the government is also facing difficulties in determining and assigning the social and political consensus. It should be emphasised that political theory has a strong normative argument regarding the relationships between political changes and the constitution-making process (Albert, 2020).

There is a connection between political thought and democracy. The connection carries implicitly the forms of political decision-making on the preferable futures (Kelz, 2019). It appears only if contemporary politics is concerned primarily with short-term goals. Today, the necessary what democracy could mean involves the justice to seek how the account of democracy maintains the disproportionality of political decision-making. The notion of political responsibility as democracy's ongoing task should be able to bring about unexpected events and thus radical political change (Kelz, 2019).

A renewal of democracy insight that speaks and works with the qualified democracy participatory should not posit as the knowledge for visions of social justice or institutional support, but it must be committed to public enlightenment for those numerous social communities who have given part in the public sphere (Knadler, 2011). Democracy is not limited to presenting the well-received commonly; there are ambiguities of the public sphere through an appeal to scientific authority, no matter how it is meant (Knadler, 2011).

Understanding Jacques Rancière's Perspectives: The Essential Characteristics of Political Nature

This section raises questions for dealing justly with others. It is easy to see that laws should be clearly expressed prospectively in effect and made known to the citizen. The

concept can be built on how to balance the undertaking and being of a lawgiver under the political circumstances. The interpretation of recent statutes, the force of the generalised argument for the authoritative intention thesis seems compelling. Most countries that are democratic today were not democratic then. But, even if they were, there is no compelling reason to think that democracy wrapped the power of the one majority generation, binding the future generations.

However, there is the frame of our perceptions and our effects that may open new passages towards the other side of democratic forms. It has not just gained the democratic goals to preserve public senses, there is also aimed at illustrating the social and political could merge into the same discourse of support to the government's political courage (Rancière, 2009). There are the nuanced and multifaceted readings of Rancière's provocative works relating to political works. Rancière's writings have largely overlooked that democracy should transform altogether in its sensibility and perceptibility in the existence of political authority.

Applying this lens to the proposed revisions to Indonesia's TNI Law reveals why these changes are so critical to the country's democratic future. The revisions, which may expand the role of the military in civil governance, are not just a matter of technical legal reform. They are a reconfiguration of the political order itself. If democracy is about the participation of all, about the constant negotiation of power and inclusion, then placing more authority in the hands of a military institution, historically associated with hierarchy, discipline, and exclusion, risks undermining that democratic space. Rancière warns against what he calls the "police order," not simply law enforcement, but any system that maintains a fixed social hierarchy and prevents genuine political disruption. In this context, the growing influence of the military

can be seen as a move toward policing society rather than engaging in politics in Rancière's sense. It could silence the "part that has no part," those ordinary citizens whose voices should challenge power and demand equality.

Therefore, these revisions should not be evaluated solely in terms of national security or administrative efficiency. They must be examined as a political act—one that redraws the boundaries of who has the right to govern, to speak, and to act. Democracy, through Rancière's eyes, is not a settled state but a constant process of unsettling the established order. It is an ongoing struggle to make room for those voices and demands that the system tries to ignore.

The authority's existence puts the distinction between 'essence' and 'substance'. It was originally conceived as a purely ontological distinction between an existence 'in itself,' and an existence 'in something else' (Agazzi, 2014). The authority posits participation by the people in governmental decisions as legally defined, relating to the government's roles to share in making collectively binding decisions and put the highest respect for rights that are assigned by the legal system (O'Donnell, 1999). The system in contemporary societies has an important role that is legally defined and regulated, and it has important consequences in overlooking by the existing democracy (O'Donnell, 1999).

Those points allow the notion of Rancière's offerings in his critique of political philosophy to come from the dimension of human experience. It is necessary to build the relationship between the possibility of instituting justice and what is unjust through human experience. The experience is not just about human action, but also about how to understand the approach of the human condition in its historical possibility. Both requirements of human experience can investigate what that equivalence presupposes (Fajardo, 2022).

The most considered option relating

to upholding the characteristic of political nature is seeking the possibility of the rational argument and supposed to the understanding orientation in the political state of institutions and governmental practice (Rancière, 2010). The representation and orientation as the dialectical tension to build a democratic country in its context basically need the operation of law. It can illustrate the regulation patterns and action packages. Both are modes of imagining and constituting the democratic reality regarding political surroundings. The form of legality favours a pattern of regulation based on and geared to representation and position.

The possibility of democracy evident in the modern state depends upon electoral representation and a professional, accountable, and civil service. Democracy will always remain a façade behind which the political elite wields the real power. This condition genuinely considers the stable and unremovable position of the leaders (L.Hyland, 1995). In this case implies the capacity to preserve itself (L.Hyland, 1995). There might be some grain of truth in democratic control over the rules and conditions produced by the government's decisions. Those controls depend on a representative system of control by citizens over political parties (L.Hyland, 1995).

The representative system through the government controlled by the legislature is needed to create a critical method that elaborates reasons for judgment and the conditions for democracy implementation. Nowadays, political partisanship can lead people to avoid putting their beliefs on facts and overpower the truth; this significantly needs further strategies for countering politics to the most credibility and can circulate the argument, posing a misleading people perception through conveying the false information as truth (Utami, 2018). A discursive correspondence between the legitimacy, consent, and the institutional standards of the state constitutes the conditions of possibility for understanding and governing

the policy through the standardising tendencies into the ideal qualification to be considered as a democracy based on public-centred (Molnar, 2020).

Thus, democracy should not be understood merely as an essential form of communication rooted in human nature. Instead, it should aim toward a rational consensus achieved through open and reasoned argumentation in an ideal communicative society (Rancière, 2009). Jacques Rancière challenges fixed ideas of democracy, presenting it as an open, unresolved process rather than a finalised system. He critiques mainstream democratic models for overlooking the true nature of political will and freedom, emphasising the fragile foundations of law, order, and autonomy. For Rancière, political freedom exposes the tension between participation and critique, revealing democracy's internal contradictions. He also highlights the state's limited role in evolving democracy, pointing to conflicts between legal authority and collective negotiation. Ultimately, Rancière calls for ongoing dialogue and accountability, recognising both the promise and the limits of democratic practice. Moreover, the constitutional design of a potentially antagonistic political relationship only becomes actual when the option of consensual power-sharing government is no longer possible. At that point, the shared powers of government become separated. There is bargaining about how the authority and power would be apportioned, which means that within a system of institutions and rules engaged in reciprocity with the commitments and restraints (Kochi, 2017).

The shared powers are regulated based on the constitution of a state. The constitution as an expression of the political unity's existence within a tension is grounded in the perpetual potentiality of open conflicts, which marked the government's decision to exist politically (Silalahi, 2024a). Towards Rancière's critics regarding democratic practice, every subject

that is in power branches only should be shared by people who are ready to attribute a cognitive power that provides the cognitive presence, including several theoretical requirements.

The Enlightenment of Democracy: Can Democracy Establish Universal Principles?

Democracy is the only regime that can be legitimate, but not all democratic governments are legitimate. It relates to the government authority that qualifies or limits authority, either through their ability to give expression to people's standing as free, autonomous agents, or whatever other values they serve. The relevance and establishment of democratic conditions cannot qualify as an obligation to obey the law. It must be based on the thought that any condition on the authority of states and governments is undermined. The acts and abilities of the government to discharge the task that justify its existence. There is essentially no reason to give it general credence, and in some special situations, when the critical and alert population will withdraw recognition from measures thought to be unjust (Raz, 2009).

Democracy, as a political ideal, holds a unique position among forms of governance; it is the only regime that can claim legitimacy through the collective will of its people. Yet, not all democratic governments are truly legitimate. The key issue lies in the actual exercise of authority: does the state genuinely reflect the autonomy and freedom of its citizens, or does it simply operate under the formalities of democratic procedure while undermining its spirit? This question becomes especially pressing in light of the proposed revisions to Indonesia's TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) Law. These legal changes could expand the role of the military in civilian life and governance, raising fundamental concerns about the boundaries of state power and the integrity of democratic norms. From a Rancièrian perspective, such a moment marks a critical *rupture* as a point at which the

aesthetics of democracy must be re-evaluated. For Rancière, democracy is not merely about institutional structure but about the constant disruption of hierarchical order through the appearance of the “part that has no part,” those voices excluded or marginalised by dominant political narratives. Thus, the revisions to Indonesia’s TNI Law must be scrutinised not just for their legal soundness but for their deeper implications on the nation’s democratic imagination. If democracy is to establish universal principles, they must be rooted in inclusion, equality, and the permanent contestation of power—not merely in formal representation or institutional endurance.

In this sense, the legitimacy of a democratic government cannot rest solely on the obligation to obey laws or respect institutional procedures. It must be measured by its capacity to represent and include all members of the political community. When the authority of the state begins to prioritise stability or control over genuine political participation, such as by militarising governance, it risks hollowing out the very principles that justify its existence. There is also the notion of rationality as so to put it non technically, a matter of making a sensible choice in terms of outcomes, costs, and probabilities of handling democratic reality. Reality coincides with existence, and therefore encompasses the total domain of being; indeed, any objectification depends on a point of view (Agazzi, 2014). The broader notion of rationality is also relevant to all intents and purposes, identical to the concept of autonomy.

Considering the concept of autonomy relates to the ideas of justices as a set of principles is required for choosing among the various social arrangements which determine for underwriting an agreement on the proper distributive shares (Rawls, 1999). The autonomy principle might be the instrumental role in promoting representative and responsible government (Stone, 2022). Further, the autonomy should be protected, as

it necessarily ensures the appropriate exercise of the citizen’s political function (Stone, 2022). Rancière’s argument slightly explains and presupposes a distribution of what is not visible and one visible, including something that can be heard and not heard (Rancière, 2009). It qualifies that he merely verifies the moral imperative of protecting political freedom, invoking the liberty that is stripped of an explicit recognition of the lawful standards (Rancière, 2010). The recognition is based upon the modes of perception, which assumes the specific form in programmatic text, which is considered through the standard that is put in the regulation.

It becomes delimited expressions of sovereign power as right and remains the political rationality while coming from the ultimate legitimacy, accountability, and transparency through judicial practice of sovereign authority, partial and opaque (Molnar, 2020). The core and ground device for analysing the political rationality refers to the law as a command and sanction enforced by the sovereign power (Bello, 2012). When facing the elements of legal core covered through the obedience, habits, and threats that are generally accepted, they do not produce an idea of rule (Bello, 2012). It is the misconception of the ruling power to impose its will and enforce it on the governed. Democracy, which has been considered the system and perspective in the definitive society, needs an understanding and knowing the best answer based on moral and political considerations, focusing on the existence of legal system aims (Bello, 2012).

Indonesia, as one of the countries that implements the representative democratic institution, willingly relinquishes its mandate to escape political crises, may arise during the lawmaking process. It means that subversion of democracy by legal means is still hardly of a magnitude to affect the very core of the constitutional order. It shows the social theatre that is split up into divergent stage

plays, leading to clashes of conflicting patterns of expectation. However, it can explain the justification problem in political narrative towards describing democracy through politicians' gestures and options. In this respect, universal valid judgment is consequently impossible.

Additionally, those who respect democratic norms regulated in the system would not be given their commitment to democracy. It is pushing the democratic institutions and other societal and external constraints that may require some considerable rationality to the strength of countervailing norms and institutions (Diamond, 2021). This research paper also focuses on how contemporary power relations to contemporary politics are influenced from the classical material that is unquestionably and absolutely relevant to the present day (Goff, 2016). Thus, it also aligns and poses a very acute question about the limits of democracy to interpretation (Goff, 2016).

The pillars of democracy in Indonesia most likely broaden and sharpen the public horizon in arguing the trends related to political realms (Arifuddin, 2016). The main role of the pillars of democracy under the challenges to strive for justice shows some doubts. It can be put in several lenses of the complex democratic power under the implemented government system. It is undeniable that democracy does not create the perfect institution to control political parties, elites, and their private media. It only partly distributes and supports the deliberations approach, as well as criticising political parties, elites, and their dominant private media (Arifuddin, 2016).

Enlightenment nevertheless leads to destructive cultural equalisation. In the criticism of democracy, usually looking forward to individual freedom and rights provides the best constitutional guarantee of social diversity (C.W. Marris and Jacobs, 2011). The political will of the government can

be arranged for prioritising the possibility of clear and well-defined strategies for providing concrete guidance and assembling the opinion before the public engagement (Essink, 2023). The actuality of public argumentation will often be hindered by the ideologies that legitimise the prevailing power relation (Nickel, 1987).

The powerful indoctrination establishes a general acceptance of the current social order. Though democracy, in its goal for respecting the public demands at the time, is thereby closer to the ideal performance of democracy in its public-oriented (Arifuddin, 2016). Democracy is not just about the potential improvement to create and visualise a professional public service, but how the challenges and threatening situations can trigger the government to afford the establishment of humanity as well as protect the tiniest of public interests (O'Donnell, 1999).

According to those conditions, we must strive for a society free from power asymmetries where everyone can participate freely and on equal footing in public deliberation (C.W. Marris & Jacobs, 2011). This reason is covered by a subject-to-subject model, which means the most appropriate deliberation undertaking the intersubjective agreement as required by the consensus of society. For the rest, however, the aim of placing democracy in the core of law is to strive for justice, though it also relies on factual knowledge of the historical and social context. It strives towards value judgments which are dependent on judgments concerning reality (C.W. Marris and Jacobs, 2011). Reciprocally, reality, as one of the social circumstances, must be interpreted under its legal relevance.

We live in pluralistic societies in which freedom of thought and freedom of conscience are valued and rightly recognised. Therefore, what we can propose for a better approximation to our ideal situation is an honest confrontation of the different ethical approaches. Something is real only if it is different from nothing, and nothing itself is simply the contrary of being, which in turn is understood as the simple fact

of existing. The recognised value in this paper can be defined as the rationality process that selects one of at least two possible courses of action that purportedly would lead to the goal (Tucker, 1971). Those judgments can be made and tested concerning some concrete empirical situation and must depend absolutely upon empirical evidence and rational calculation (Tucker, 1971).

Conclusion

The proposed revisions to Indonesia's TNI Law mark a critical juncture in the nation's democratic trajectory, one that demands rigorous scrutiny through the lens of Jacques Rancière's aesthetic democracy. By expanding the military's mandate into civilian governance, domestic security, and socio-political programs, the revisions risk institutionalising a *policed order*. Rancière's framework reveals how such legal reforms are not merely administrative adjustments but epistemic shifts that naturalising hierarchies, relegating civilians to passive roles while consolidating the TNI's authority as the arbiter of "order" and "security." This reconfiguration of the *distribution of the sensible* undermines the very possibility of democracy, which, for Rancière, thrives on the disruptive inclusion of marginalised voices and the contestation of fixed identities.

Yet, Rancière's theory also offers a path toward resistance. The very act of contesting the TNI law through protests, legal challenges, or grassroots organising constitutes a democratic intervention. By asserting the equality of voices excluded from the militarised sensible order, civil society actors reclaim the right to redefine Indonesia's political narrative. These struggles, though fragmented and fraught, embody the "part of no part" that Rancière identifies as the catalyst for democratic rupture. They expose the contingency of the TNI's authority and open possibilities for reimagining civil-military relations beyond the logic of securitisation. Ultimately, safeguarding

Indonesia's democratic future requires more than procedural reforms; it demands a collective reclamation of the sensible. Only by unsettling the partitions that privilege militarised logics can Indonesia forge a democracy that truly embodies the egalitarian promise of Rancière's aesthetic vision—one where every voice, however dissonant, finds its place in the chorus of the political.

References

- Agazzi, E. (2014). Scientific objectivity and its contexts. In *Scientific Objectivity and its Contexts* (Vol. 9783319046600). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04660-0>
- Albert, R., & Y. R. (2020). *Constitutionalism Under Extreme Conditions: Law, Emergency, Exception*. Springer International Publishing.
- Arifuddin, M. T. (2016). Why Political Parties Colonize the Media in Indonesia: An Exploration of Mediatization. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 20(1), 16–33.
- Azwar, & Achmat, S. (2022). Does Democracy Reduce Corruption in Indonesia? *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 25(3), 195–208.
- Barret, W. & H. D. A. (1962). *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century Volume One*. Harper & Row Publisher.
- Bello, P. C. (2012). The Controversy about the Essence of Law: A Dispute between Hart and Dworkin. *Indonesia Law Review*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.15742/ilrev.v2n1.11>
- Bloom, H. (1980). *Deconstruction and criticism*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Christie, G. C. (1969). Objectivity in the Law. In *Source: The Yale Law Journal* (Vol. 78, Issue 8). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/795234>
- C.W, M. & F. C. L. M. J. (2011). *Law, Order, and Freedom: A Historical Introduction to Legal Philosophy*.
- Davy, U. (2023). Decolonizing Equality: The Legacies of Anti-Colonial Struggles at International Labour Conferences 1920-

1940. *Human Rights Law Review*, 23, 1–25.
- Diamond, L. (2021). Democratic regression in comparative perspective: scope, methods, and causes. *Democratization*, 28(1), 22–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2020.1807517>
- Eriyanti, L. D., Makmur, H. M., & Intansari, D. A. (2022). Indonesia's Political Position on the Protection Policy of Migrant Workers in ASEAN. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 26(1).
- Essink, J. A. Q. & J. T. (2023). The Indivisibility of Human Rights: An Empirical Analysis. *Human Rights Law Review*, 23, 1–18.
- Fajardo, C. (2022). Jacques Rancière: Aesthetics, Time, Politics. *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, 14(1).
- Goff, B. and M. L. (2016). Introduction: The Legacy of Greek Political Thought. *Classical Receptions Journal*, 1–10.
- Habermas, J. (2012). The Crisis of the European Union in Light of the Constitutionalization of International Law. *European Journal of International Law*, 23(2), 335–348.
- Höffe Otfried. (2001). *Kant's Cosmopolitan Theory of Law and Peace*. Translated by Alexandra Newton. Cambridge University Press.
- Kelz, R. (2019). Thinking about future/democracy: towards a political theory of futurity. *Sustainability Science*, 14(4), 905–913. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00697-6>
- Knadler, S. (2011). Democracy hesitant: Sociological knowledge production, policy, and the public sphere. *American Literary History*, 23(1), 135–147. <https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajq082>
- Kochi, T. (2017). Dreams and Nightmares of Liberal International Law: Capitalist Accumulation, Natural Rights, and State Hegemony. *Law Critique*, 28, 23–41.
- L. Hyland, J. (1995). *Democratic Theory: The Philosophical Foundations*. Manchester University Press.
- Lon L. Fuller. (1969). *The Morality of Law*, Rev. Ed. Yale University Press.
- May, T. (2010). *Review Book Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. Continuum Publishing.
- Molnar, A. & I. W. (2020). Governing Liberty through Accountability: Surveillance Reporting as Technologies of Governmentality. *Critical Criminology*, 28, 13–26.
- Nickel, J. W. (1987). *Making Sense of Human Rights: Philosophical Reflections on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. University of California Press.
- O'Donnell, G. (1999). *Democratic Theory and Comparative Politics*. Kellogg Institute for International Studies.
- Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Polity Press.
- Power, T., & Warburton, E. (2020). The decline of Indonesian democracy. *Democracy in Indonesia: From Stagnation to Regression?* 1–20.
- Rancière, J. (2009). A Few Remarks on the Method of Jacques Rancière. *Parallax*, 15(3), 114–123.
- Rancière, J. (2010). *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. Continuum.
- Rawls, J. (1999). *A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Raz, J. (1988). The Morality of Freedom. In *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford University Press Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198248075.001.0001>
- Raz, J. (1979). *The authority of law : essays on law and morality*. Clarendon Press.
- Raz, J. (2009). *Between authority and interpretation: on the theory of law and practical reason*. Oxford University Press.
- Silalahi, A. D. (2024a). Comprehending the Epistemic Examination of the Final and Binding Principles in Indonesia's Constitutional Court. *Yustisia Tirtayasa Jurnal Tugas Akhir*, 4(4), 39–55.

- Silalahi, A. D., Mustansyir, R., Tjahyadi, S., Maharani, S. D. (2024b). Axiological Insights into Unveiling Independent Constitutional Judge Decisionism. *Yustisia Jurnal Hukum*, 13(3), 230–245.
- Stone, A. (2022). *Rights, Personal Rights and Freedoms: The Nature of The Freedom of Political Communication*.
- Sudibyo, A. (2019). *Demokrasi dan Kedaruratan: Memahami Filsafat Politik Giorgio Agamben*. CV Marjin Kiri.
- Toulmin, S. (1976). *Knowing and Acting: An Invitation to Philosophy*. Macmillan Publishing.
- Tucker, C. J. (1971). Value Judgement and Social Science: Structures and Processes. *American Sociological Review*, 36(1).
- Utami, P. (2018). Hoax in Modern Politics: The Meaning of Hoax in Indonesia Politics and Democracy. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 22(2), 85–97.
- Widaningrum, A. (2017). Public Trust and Regulatory Compliance. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 21(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.28679>
- Wodajo, K. (2023). The User State: An Alternative Reading of The State Role and Duty in the Age of Platformized Harm. *International Journal of Law and Information Technology*, 1–21.