

Explaining civilian control of militarisation in Indonesia: The case of military law amendment

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Abstract

This study explores the civilian control of militarisation practice in Indonesia, which refers to the discursive politics involving citizenry in the legitimisation mechanism of the use of military force for defence and non-defence objectives. To explore the empirical manifestation of the concept, the study applies the discourse network analysis method, which combines qualitative content analysis and social network analysis to investigate the public debates over the military law amendment. Accordingly, the study collected a dataset of 227 statements from 55 actors in 118 news articles on the military law amendment from May to July 2023. The analysis reveals that, first, the discourse was dominated by actors from non-governmental organisations, think tanks, and academia. Second, the discourse was driven by several main concerns, such as the return of military dual-function doctrine, the current state of military personnel occupying civilian posts, and the urgency of public participation in the deliberation process of the amendment. This article argues that the configuration of the dominant actors and the prominent issues reflect the prevalence of inward-looking defence policy orientation issue in Indonesia.

Keywords:

civil-military relations; civilian control of militarisation;
discourse network analysis; post-Reformasi Indonesia.

Introduction

Recent studies have indicated that the current civil-military relations in Indonesia's nascent democracy are volatile (Gunawan, 2017, 2019; Haripin, 2020; Haripin et al., 2023; Laksmana, 2019a; Ng & Kurniawan, 2022). The Indonesian military or TNI -*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*- maintains its role as an influential actor in the post-Reformasi socio-political dynamics. Indeed, opinion polls constantly place the highest level of public trust in the TNI compared to other civilian institutions such as political parties or the parliament (Muhtadi, 2022). The depoliticization of TNI, including the establishment of a new professional identity as a defence apparatus of Indonesia, was then heralded as a successful military reform agenda. Nevertheless, behind such a reform was

a political bargain between the elected civilians and the military elite during the Reformasi period of 1999 to 2024. Under this scenario, the military supported civilians' attempts to advance the democratisation agenda, provided civilians refrained from intervening in the internal affairs of the TNI, including matters related to promotions, budgeting, and the transition of military-owned businesses (Laksmana, 2024). Consequently, the TNI authority within the national defence and military organisation policymaking remains unchallenged by elected civilians (Croissant et al., 2013; Gunawan, 2019). Active TNI personnel dominate the bureaucratic positions of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), especially the top-level decision-makers (Gunawan, 2017; Haripin et al., 2023). With such domination, the

country's defence planning was left to the TNI personnel, practically without being challenged by elected civilians (Laksmana, 2024).

The TNI's unchecked authority in national defence policymaking was reinforced by the gradual erosion of civilian mechanisms for checks and balances designed to oversee the military. The legislative branch, particularly Commission I of Indonesia's House of Representatives (DPR), implements the so-called cooperative model of oversight towards the MoD and the TNI (Ng & Kurniawan, 2022). The model emphasises a harmonious working relationship between the parliamentarians, the military-dominated MoD, and the TNI (Ng & Kurniawan, 2022, p.16). Commission I perceived the military as its partner rather than a subordinate in a check-and-balances mechanism. This situation strengthens the military's ability to evade criticism or accountability from the legislative branch, which serves as its principal. In a nutshell, the current status of civilian control in post-Reformasi Indonesia paints a bleak picture of the future of democratic civil-military relations.

Recently, the TNI's authority over national defence and military organisation policies contributed to growing evidence of military assertiveness, particularly in personnel deployment for non-defence missions and the growing trend of militarisation. Since 2012, more than 30 Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed between the TNI and civilian institutions, serving as the basis for the involvement of TNI personnel and resources in non-defence activities across various sectors (Araf et al., 2020, pp 129-35). Under President Joko Widodo's administration, more uniformed officers were assigned to civilian posts, notably within the state-owned enterprises and non-defence-related ministries, such as the Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Tourism (Yosarie & Kosandi, 2023). Such assignments further signal President Widodo's leaning towards a more personalised civilian control of the

military and allowing military independence to formulate its policy (Laksmana, 2019a; Sambhi, 2023). In the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, military figures and leaders occupied a key position within the national COVID-19 task force team since the beginning (Chairil, 2020). At the sub-national level, the Army Regional Command (*Komando Daerah Militer*) commander took a position as the deputy chairman of the COVID-19 task force. This position allowed the military to deploy military personnel and resources as logistical and transport support for dealing with the pandemic (Laksmana & Taufika, 2020).

Amidst the growing literature on militarisation trends in post-Reformasi Indonesia, scientific inquiry on the dynamics of civilian control toward militarisation trends in Indonesia remains an understudied topic. This study aims to fill such a gap by exploring the political dynamics of civilian control of militarisation in Indonesia's emerging democracy. Specifically, this study focuses on two questions, i.e., who the pivotal actors in the civilian control of militarisation in post-Reformasi Indonesia are and what key issues of militarisation are being debated by these actors. To answer these questions, the study utilises the theoretical framework of civilian control of militarisation, as discussed in the next section.

Civilian control of militarisation

Democratic civilian control of the military is pivotal for consolidating democracy. Ensuring that the military's legitimate use of force under democratic civilian control has been a cornerstone of the democratic consolidation process. For decades, study on civilian control of the military was mostly focused on the military role in the political arena. The main issue of civilian control is to what extent the military—as an institution and personnel—takes part in a state's political decision-making and how far it influences the state's democratic quality. In this focus, scholars attempted to

establish a theoretical framework that captures the power distribution in the decision-making arena, contested between democratically elected civilians and the military. Definitions of civilian control in scholarly literature vary. One postulates civilian control as a democratically-elected civilian government's capacity to formulate, decide, implement, and oversee the defence or military policy (Aguero, 1995, p.19). Similarly, civilian control was understood as the authority of civilian government to decide the assigned mission, organisational structure, and deployment of the military without military interference (Trinkunas 2001, p.163). In a more stringent term, Croissant et al. (2011, p.77) suggested civilian control of the military as "civilians having exclusive authority to decide on national policies and their implementation. Under civilian control, civilians can freely choose to delegate decision-making power and the implementation of certain policies to the military, while the military has no autonomous decision-making power outside those areas specifically defined by civilians. Furthermore, it is civilians alone who determine which particular policies, or policy aspects, the military implements, and civilians also define the boundaries between policy-making and policy-implementation". Altogether, democratic civilian control of the military emphasizes elected civilians' capability to authorize and perform state policies without intrusion from the military.

The literature on civil-military relations suggested two core objectives of democratic civilian control of the military (Cottey et al., 2002). The first objective is to establish civilian institutions that subordinate the military. Once established, the second objective is to ensure that state institutions carry out good governance practices in civil-military relations. Altogether, the objectives urge civilian actors to maintain effective national defence and security policies through democratic mechanisms. The "civilian actors" involve not only actors from

the existing state institutions but also those from nonstate institutions, such as the civil society community (Bruneau & Matei, 2008; Cottey et al., 2002). Drawing from such understanding, current studies of civilian control have changed the scholarly attention from depoliticisation of the military to examining how democratic civilian control influences the military's effectiveness in fulfilling its assigned missions within an evolving strategic environment (Bruneau, 2005; Bruneau & Croissant, 2019; Bruneau & Matei, 2008; Croissant & Kuehn, 2017). More importantly, the nexus between civilian control and military effectiveness has significantly contributed to the recent theoretical development of the literature on civilian control of militarisation within civil-military relations (Kuehn & Levy, 2020, 2021; Levy, 2016). This new theoretical development becomes the conceptual basis of this study.

Levy (2016) proposes two modes of civilian control: control of the military and control of militarisation. The first mode of control emphasises the role of civilians through state institutions that set the scope and limits of military action in the military organisation and national defence policies (Levy, 2016, p.78). This mode is also known as control of military organisation. From such a perspective, elected civilians control the military by using the existing institutional mechanism of the state. The second mode of civilian control of militarisation focuses on controlling the legitimacy of the use of military force against perceived threats. Militarisation here is understood as the reinforcement of military status within the society that led to so-called cultural militarism ideology and the greater influence of military perspective and personnel in policy-making and policy implementation (Kimmerling, 1993; Schofield, 2007). Consequently, the military advances as the ultimate instrument for addressing domestic and external threats, and the scope of policy input and output becomes limited in

Table 1.
Control of the military and control of militarisation

	Control of military	Control of militarisation
The focus	Focus on military organisation; the operational aspects of the organisation's performance, mainly with regard to political implications	Focus on political culture i.e. targeting the legitimisation of the use of force
The goal	Limiting the civilians' autonomy to activate the military	Subjecting the elected civilians' use of force to a deliberative process that addresses the legitimacy of using force
How it works	Institutional mechanisms that affect policy-making and collective actors who seek to affect these mechanisms	Public debates affecting the political culture and the level of legitimacy it awards to the use of force, promoted by collective actors, the media, and politicians.
Dimension of power	Mainly first and second dimension: the observable dimension of institutional action	The third dimension, political discourse that questions and shapes the social power relations affecting the legitimacy of using force

Source: Levy (2016)

favour of military deployment (Kuehn & Levy, 2020, p.5).

At the empirical level, the scope of the control of militarisation would be reflected in several elements as follows (Table 1). The ultimate goal of control is to put elected civilians' use of military force under the scrutiny of a deliberative process, emphasizing the legitimacy of the use of force (Levy, 2016, p.85). In order to fulfil such a goal, the mechanism focuses on the public debates that can influence the political culture on the use of force and its legitimacy. These debates are carried out by collective actors such as civil society, the media, and politicians (Levy, 2016, p.85). Thus, we expect control of militarisation to take the form of public discourse on the socially accepted basis of the current and future role of the military in the state. Within the civil-military relations literature, the role and contribution of civil society in civilian control of the military is still an understudied subject. Unlike state actors, civil society communities do not enjoy legitimate authority to govern. Nevertheless, recent studies in South Korea, Venezuela, Thailand, and Indonesia indicate that civil society communities had a significant contribution in establishing civilian control of the military by encouraging active public participation in the legitimacy of the use of military force by the elected civilians

(Croissant et al., 2013; Innanchai, 2012; Lorenz, 2015). Through public discourse engagement, civil society communities influence the civilian control degree by setting the policy agenda, expanding public participation in the policymaking deliberation, and more importantly increasing the political stakes for the elected civilians on the policy issues (Scarpelo, 2014; Lorenz, 2015).

To sum up, control of militarisation centred around the third dimension of power, challenging the deeply entrenched ideological perception in society of the legitimate use of military force (Table 1). Unlike the control of the military as an organisation that focuses on technical aspects of military deployment, control of militarisation challenges the abstract and value-driven explanation of the elected civilian decision to deploy the military force. Viewed as such, the underlying logic of civilian control of militarisation is that the use of military force must be a socially acceptable tool of civilian politics and not only serve as strategic justification (Kuehn & Levy, 2020, 2021).

Methods

To explain the scope of civilian control of militarisation in Indonesia's nascent democracy, this study analyses the recent public discourse regarding the TNI law amendment in 2023. The TNI law amendment is intentionally

selected as the case study since the TNI law itself is the epicentre of current civil-military relations in Indonesia. The law institutionalises the power distribution between the elected civilians and the military in the post-Reformasi Indonesia politics and policymaking process (Mietzner, 2006, 2011). The current TNI law prohibits military involvement in the political arena, which was pervasive during Suharto's authoritarian regime. Indeed, the law also includes a limited exemption list of government agencies that can be staffed by active military officers. Empirically, the clause significantly limits the involvement of active officers in the non-defence position.

Nevertheless, military personnel involvement in the non-defence sector has been recently expanded through the distribution of active military top ranks in the newly-established agencies outside the exemption list, such as the Maritime Security Coordinating Agency (BAKAMLA - *Badan Koordinasi Keamanan Laut*) or the State Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN - *Badan Siber dan Sandi Negara*). Moreover, uniformed officers were deployed in various non-defence sectors through the establishment of an MoU between the TNI and the respected ministries/agencies. Upon closer scrutiny, the increasing involvement of active officers in the non-defence sector corresponds to the recent problem of "promotional logjam" caused by the lack of institutionalised personnel management inside the TNI (Laksmiana, 2019b). For decades, the highly politicised nature of the promotional policy of the officers was able to distribute hundreds of officers in the non-defence sector through the *dwifungsi* ABRI (the dual-function of the armed forces) policy under Suharto's authoritarian regime (Rinakit, 2005). Once the policy was removed through TNI law enactment, the non-defence position that could be occupied by active personnel was strictly limited, leaving hundreds of middle-rank officers and generals without positions, especially in the Army branch (Gunawan,

2019). To deal with the promotional logjam, adding new agencies to the exemption list was seen by the military and government as the ultimate solution, and this was evident in the leaked draft of the TNI law amendment that stirred public debates (Sugandi, 2023). In other words, any attempt for institutional change of the civil-military relations in Indonesia shall take place mainly through the amendment of the TNI law.

Control of militarisation is a deliberative process, manifested through political discourse, in which civilians play a role in regulating the legitimacy of military force usage (Levy, 2016, p.85). Following such theoretical expectation, this study utilises a qualitative approach through the discourses network analysis (DNA) method – combining category-based content analysis and network analysis to unravel the main discourses of TNI law amendment as well as the established networks (Leifeld, 2016a).

The unit of analysis in this study is a published statement delivered by an actor to the public or in a public space. A statement refers to "a text portion where an actor reveals his or her policy beliefs or preferences in the text" (Fisher & Leifeld, 2019, p.475). In the DNA method, the statement consists of three important components: the actor's identity (who?), the concept (what?), and the actor's position (how?) (Leifeld, 2016b). In this research, the actor statements were collected from online mass media articles. These take the form of media interviews or opinion pieces. The actors or stakeholders include politicians, observers/analysts, academics, civil society organisations, and/or associations that often use online mass media as a means to express their arguments to the public for a wider reach. According to the Digital News Report 2022 conducted by the Reuters Institute and Oxford University, 88% of the sources of media coverage in Indonesia were online media (Steele, 2023).

There are several stages in collecting and analysing data in this research. In the first stage,

researchers searched and collected online mass media news articles regarding the TNI law amendment in 2023, reported between May and July 2023. The search process was performed using search queries through the Media Cloud research platform (www.mediacloud.org) using the keywords of TNI law amendment. In the second stage, the news articles were filtered based on the criteria of whether or not there were statements related to the TNI law amendment issue. A news article that did not contain an actor's statement was then considered irrelevant and dismissed (Eriyanto, 2022; Eriyanto & Ali, 2020). In addition, if the actor's statements were published in several media, then researchers would choose news articles with more detailed statements (Ghinoi & Steiner, 2020; Leifeld & Haunss, 2012; Wallaschek et al., 2020).

In the third stage, the identified statement data proceeded to the coding stage using the latest version of DNA (Discourse Network Analyzer) software 3.0.10 (<https://github.com/leifeld/dna/releases>). In the coding process, four elements were identified: the identity of the individual/actor and their organisation, the concept (discourse), and the position (agreement/disagreement) on the concept (Ghinoi & Steiner, 2020). Referring to the research objectives and literature review in the previous chapter, an inductive model of coding was utilised, where concepts (discourse) were categorised based on the scope of the actors' statements (Leifeld, 2016a, 2016b). At the empirical level, the core arguments of the actors' statements were analysed, and the relationships between these core arguments and those of other actors were examined. The same core argument was then categorised under a unified concept or discourse. Through this process, hundreds of statements from the collected data were grouped into several distinct concepts (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). Additionally, it was identified whether each actor's statement expressed agreement or

disagreement towards a concept. A consensus coding process involving two researchers was applied to improve the reliability of the coding scheme in this study. Finally, in the last stage, the modularity aspects of the affiliation network, actors, and concepts/discourse were measured based on the codified data. This process of modularity analysis and visualisation of discourse networks was carried out using Visone software (<https://visone.ethz.ch/html/download.html>).

Results

Principally, the DNA method attempts to reveal two important features from discourse: actor and their network of connection. To do so, this study collected 130 news articles on the TNI law amendment from May to July 2023 from 24 news outlets. In the next stage, the filtering process resulted in 118 news articles that included 227 statements from 55 actors as the main dataset. The actors were part of 41 organisations that were categorized into governmental organisations, think tanks, non-governmental organisations, and public associations.

Based on the social network theory assumptions, this study statistically measures the centrality of actors and/or concepts within the discourse network and visualises the results (Liu et al., 2017). To do so, it is important to mention two key concepts to understand the analytical and visualisation results: nodes and edges. The nodes (also known as vertices) represent the elements within a network. In the DNA method, nodes are usually assigned to an actor or a concept. Meanwhile, edges (also known as links) denote the relationship between nodes within the network.

Accordingly, this study utilised four centralities to capture the dynamics of TNI law amendment discourse: degree, closeness, betweenness, and eigenvector centralities. *First*, degree centrality refers to the measure of direct edges an individual node (actor/concept) has with all others (Freeman, 1978). If one node

has a higher degree centrality, then it can be presumed that the node is important or central within the network. *Second*, closeness centrality calculates how many “steps” it would take to get from one actor to every other actor (Patty & Penn, 2015). Closeness centrality indicates to what degree an actor can be easily reached by other actors within the network. A higher closeness centrality score means that the actor is the closest to other actors in the network (Freeman, 1978; Golbeck, 2013; Hansen et al., 2011). *Third*, betweenness centrality measures how many actors are connected by a given actor (Golbeck, 2013; Patty & Penn, 2015). As such, an actor with the highest betweenness centrality score significantly influences the flow of information among the other actors within the network. *Finally*, eigenvector centrality is a measurement of a node’s centrality about other central nodes (Golbeck, 2013, 2015). This measurement was carried out by weighing all of the edges between the high-rank nodes. A node with higher eigenvector centrality indicates that the node is connected to nodes

with high centrality scores. In essence, it shows us the most central node among the central nodes within the network.

The actor network in the TNI law amendment debates

The first network analysis involves the actors’ network. As aforementioned, 55 actors were identified in the data collection process. The analysis identified several key actors based on their centrality scores within the network, as depicted in Figure 1.

Based on centrality measurement, the study identified several key actors in the networks (See Table 1). Al Araf, the director of the newly established NGO, Centra Initiative, was the actor with the most frequent statements on the network. Nevertheless, the actor with the highest degree of centrality was Gufron Mabruuri, the director of Imparsial, one of the most influential NGOs in Indonesia’s security sector reform (Figure 1). This indicates that Gufron Mabruuri is a pivotal actor in the public debate of the TNI law amendment. Moreover, Gufron Mabruuri also

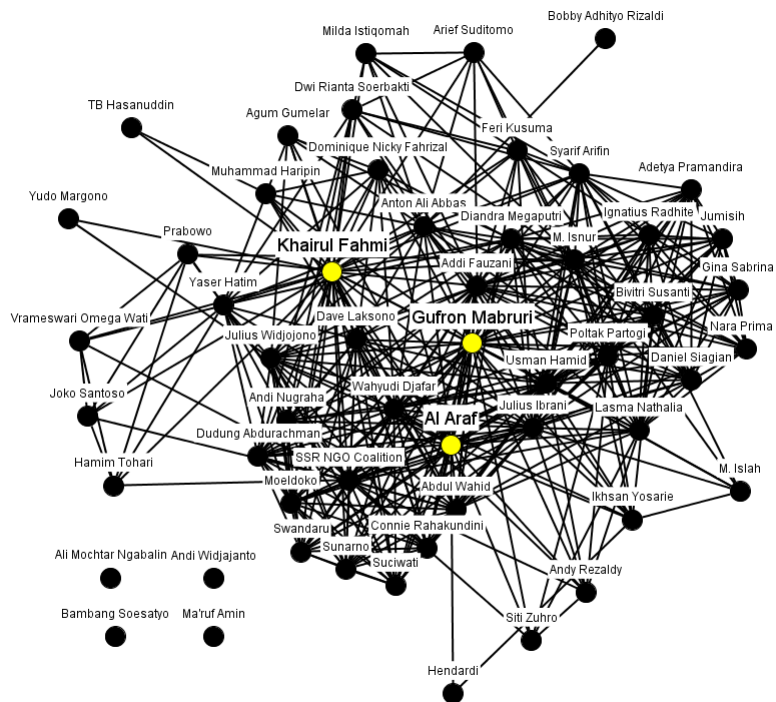


Figure 1. The actor network
Source: Visualization of the dataset using Visone

Table 2.
The centrality scores of the actor network

Actor	Freq	Degree (%)	Closeness (%)	Betweenness (%)	Eigenvector (%)
Gufron Mabruri	18	4,295	2,624	8,924	4,046
Khairul Fahmi	18	4,176	2,584	21,540	3,389
Addi Fauzani	4	4,057	2,545	6,415	3,957
Julius Ibrani	5	3,937	2,470	5,550	3,874
Usman Hamid	11	3,937	2,507	5,491	3,915
Al Araf	20	3,699	2,434	9,014	3,474
M. Isnur	4	2,863	2,210	4,886	2,503
Wahyudi Djafar	11	2,863	2,210	2,037	2,9795
Anton Ali Abbas	13	2,744	2,181	8,370	2,373
Diandra Megaputri	2	2,744	2,181	3,326	2,763

Source: Modularity analysis of the dataset using Visone

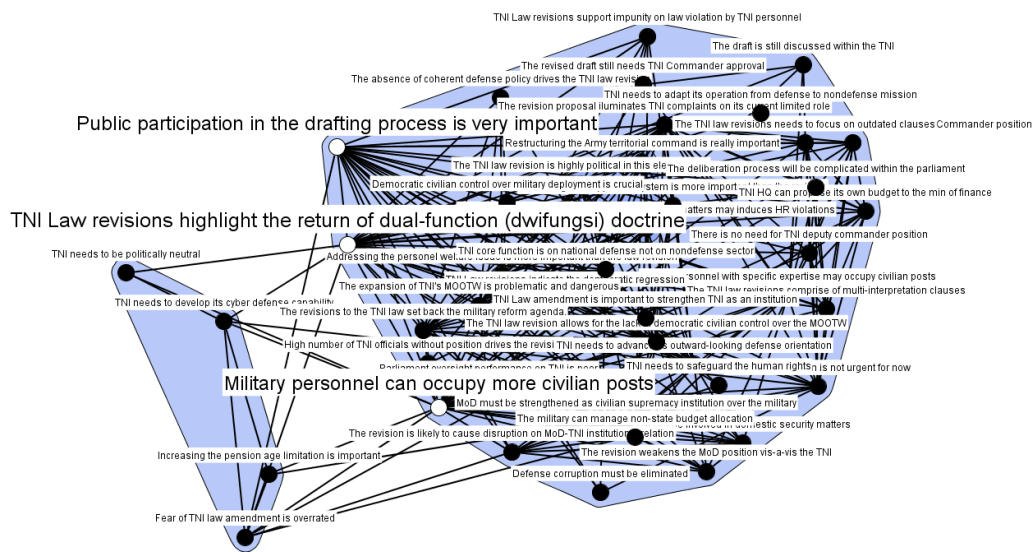


Figure 2. The concept network

Source: Visualization of the dataset using Visone

holds the highest numbers of closeness centrality (2,624) and eigenvector centrality (4,046), placing him as the actor with the closest relation with other actors and also with other influential actors within the networks. Meanwhile, the highest score of betweenness centrality (21,54) is owned by Khairul Fahmi, the co-founder of the Institute for Security and Strategic Studies (ISESS), an emerging security and defence think tank in Indonesia.

The concept network in the TNI law amendment debates

The next result is a concept network that visualises the specific discursive argument or

ideas expressed through the actors’ statements. Based on the 227 statements from 55 actors, 49 concepts were established, and the analysis resulted in the top three important concepts (see Figure 2). The concept of “TNI Law revisions highlight the return of dual-function (*dwifungsi*) doctrine” has the highest score in all centrality measurements (Table 2). Indeed, the concept is also the most frequently mentioned (24) by the actors in the network.

The second position of centrality measurements occupied the concept of “military personnel can occupy more civilian posts” followed by the concept of “public participation in the drafting process is very important” (Table

Table 3.
The centrality scores of the concept network

Concept	Freq	Degree (%)	Closeness (%)	Betweenness (%)	Eigenvector (%)
TNI Law revisions highlight the return of dual-function (<i>dwifungsi</i>) doctrine.	24	6,227	3,375	29,965	4,983
Military personnel can occupy more civilian posts.	14	5,693	3,181	18,744	4,751
Public participation in the drafting process is very important.	9	4,804	2,901	14,747	4,016
The amendments to the TNI law set back the military reform agenda.	12	4,270	2,756	5,523	4,208
The TNI law amendment minimise democratic civilian control over the MOOTW.	6	4,092	2,711	3,032	4,208
Military personnel with specific expertise may occupy civilian posts.	3	3,736	2,625	4,187	3,372
TNI needs to advance its outward-looking defence orientation.	4	3,736	2,625	1,838	4,001
The amendment proposal illuminates TNI's complaints on its current limited role.	3	3,558	2,584	2,948	3,654
TNI Law amendments indicate the democratic regression.	12	3,380	2,506	2,872	3,453
Reforming military justice system is more important than the amendment.	8	3,380	2,506	1,407	3,506

Source: Modularity analysis of the dataset using Visone

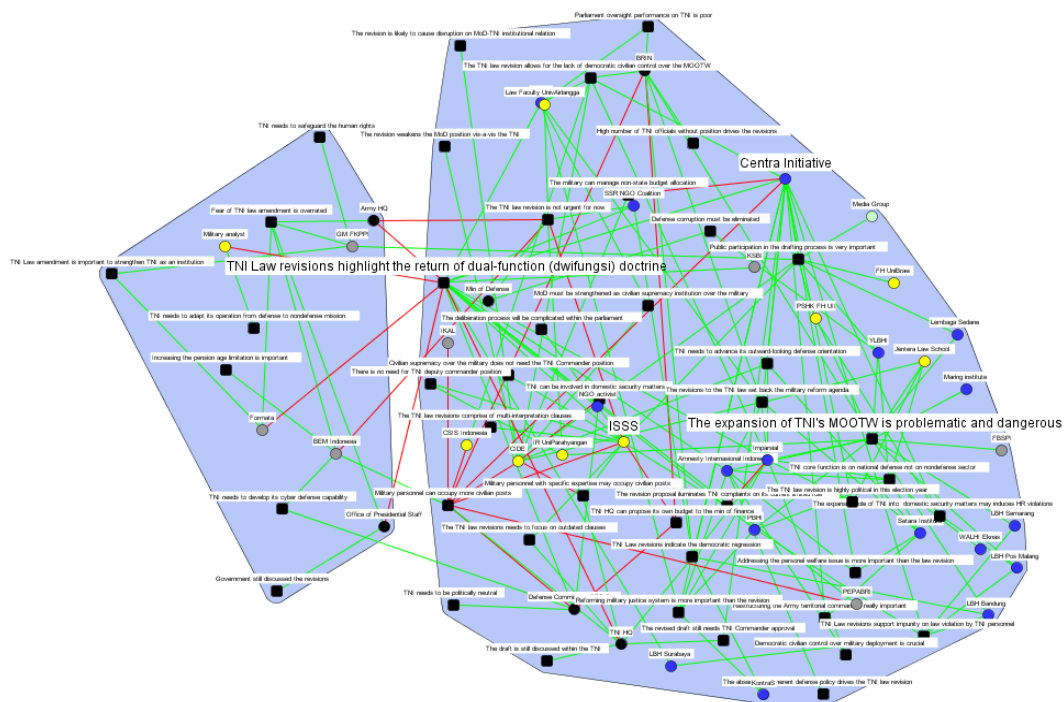


Figure 3. The affiliation network

Source: Visualization of the dataset using Visone

Notes: The square node represents the concepts. Meanwhile, the circle node with colours represents the actors' organisations with the categorisation as follows: blue represents the NGO; yellow represents a think tank and/or academic institution; grey represents CSO; and black represents the government institutions. In addition, the red edge means opposition and the green edge refers to supporters.

Table 4.
The centrality scores of the affiliation network

Concept/Organisation	Variable	Freq	Degree (%)	Closeness (%)	Betweenness (%)	Eigenvector (%)
TNI Law revisions highlight the return of the dual-function (<i>dwifungsi</i>) doctrine.	concept	24	5,151	1,692	13,894	4,506
Centra Initiative	organisation	22	4,545	1,622	8,106	4,733
The expansion of TNI's MOOTW is problematic and dangerous.	concept	20	4,242	1,415	6,512	3,061
ISSS	organisation	16	3,636	1,526	7,510	2,395
CIDE	organisation	12	3,333	1,354	4,637	2,626
Imparsial	organisation	16	3,333	1,512	4,067	3,9806
Military personnel can occupy more civilian posts.	concept	14	3,030	1,526	5,799	2,876
Public participation in the drafting process is very important.	concept	9	2,727	1,497	6,413	2,091
The amendments to the TNI law set back the military reform agenda.	concept	12	2,424	1,378	2,135	3,336
BRIN	organisation	12	2,424	1,366	3,142	2,506

Source: Modularity analysis of the dataset using Visone

2). To examine the existence of clusters (coalition) within the network, this study applied the Girvan-Newman algorithm commonly used in graph/network analysis (Girvan & Newman, 2002). As Figure 2 depicts, the result is two main clusters of concepts that are connected by concepts with high betweenness scores.

The affiliation network in the TNI law amendment debates

Next, we conducted an affiliation network analysis to unravel the intersection between actors and concepts. Figure 3 illustrates the emergence of two clusters within the affiliation network of the TNI law amendment debate.

If we scrutinise the nodes and edges within each cluster, then both clusters show two different coalitions but with caveats. The smaller cluster represents those who support the TNI law amendment, while the larger cluster shows the indifferent and/or opposition against the law amendment. The smaller cluster includes members from government institutions such as the office of Presidential staff (KSP - *Kantor Staf Presiden*) and the Army Headquarters (*Mabas AD*). Several

public organisations are also members of this cluster, such as the youth organisation's GM FKPPi (*Generasi Muda Forum Komunikasi Putra Putri Purnawirawan dan Putra Putri TNI Polri*) and student organisations such as Formata (*Forum Organisasi Mahasiswa Jakarta*) and BEM Indonesia. These actors were connected by the concept of "fear of TNI law amendment is overrated" as well as showing support for the concept. In addition, these actors oppose the concept of "TNI law amendments highlight the return of dual-function (*dwifungsi*) doctrine". The larger cluster includes larger varieties of actor organisations. The government institutions in the larger cluster were the parliament, MoD, TNI headquarters, and the government research think tank's BRIN (*Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional*). Based on the network statistical analysis, The concept of "TNI Law revisions highlight the return of dual-function (*dwifungsi*) doctrine" and the NGO actor "Centra Initiative" hold the highest score in all centrality measurements. This is followed by the concept of "the expansion of TNI's MOOTW is problematic and dangerous" and the think tank actor "ISSS" (see Table 2).

Discussion

Following the discourse network analyses above, there are several key findings on the civilian control of militarisation in the TNI law amendment debates that merit further discussion. *First*, the key actors in the TNI law amendments debate were dominated by NGO activists, think tank experts, and academia members (Table 1 and Table 3). Indeed, from the dataset, this study identified 68% of the actor's organisations were NGOs, think tank institutions, and universities. The membership category of key actors indicates that the public discourse over the TNI law amendment was mainly driven by the non-state actors and, thus, corroborates the theoretical expectation of civilian control of militarisation, postulating that citizenry plays an active and independent role in shaping the discourse (Levy, 2016, p.76). Within democracies, one of the main principles of civilian control is public engagement in the deliberation of military issues (Kohn, 1997). Such engagement is important to fill the vertical accountability space in democracies, allowing the citizenry to improve the accountability of political leadership regarding the use of military force as a state defence apparatus (Kuehn & Levy, 2021).

Upon closer scrutiny, the majority of the activists, think tank experts and academia actors are part of the long-standing civil society coalition for security sector reform (*Koalisi Masyarakat Sipil untuk Reformasi Sektor Keamanan*) -hereinafter SSR CSO community- that was established during the Reformasi period. The Indonesian SSR-CSO community emerged from intense discussion between the human rights NGO activists and a group of academics with an interest in pursuing a military reform agenda during the Reformasi period of 1999-2004. The community functioned as a watchdog, improving people-centred SSR, and SSR-related policy lobbying (Scarpello, 2014). As a watchdog, the SSR-CSO community plays the role of monitoring human rights

abuse by the military apparatus. The task was mainly carried out by human rights NGOs such as KontraS and Imparsial, involving their extensive networks of local NGOs across the country (Scarpello, 2014, p.137). To deepen SSR at the grassroots level, several human rights NGOs collaborated with the academic community to produce and disseminate information on the human security dimension of the SSR agenda publicly as well as in the scholarly debate (Lorenz, 2015; Scarpello, 2014). The SSR-CSO community also plays a pivotal role in lobbying the national defence and TNI bills. The community members extensively collaborated with the mass media, government officials, and parliamentarians to exert pressure on the deliberative process of both bills, dismantling the political role of the military (Lorenz, 2015; Mietzner, 2009; Scarpello, 2014). Nevertheless, post-Reformasi political development favours the strengthening of government. In the last decade, the public space for political negotiation in the legislative process has gradually become smaller (Wardana et al., 2023). Consequently, the lobbying role capacity and strategic influence of the SSR-CSO community have also gradually diminished. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the legislative process in Indonesia indicates the increasing trend of so-called fast-track legislation mechanisms within the parliament, which bypass the deliberation process of a bill by limiting public participation through concealed meetings in shorter periods (Saputra, 2022). To deal with the trend, reforming the parliament's rule of procedure (*tata tertib*) is urgently needed. For example, the current rule must include public hearings as the obligatory phase – not an option as currently mandated in the legislation process.

Second, the discourse coalitions in the political arena mirror the political alliances that were established from the issues (Fisher et al., 2013). If we look into the affiliation network in the result section above, two clusters (pro

and contra) of actors were formed in the TNI law amendment debate. Upon closer scrutiny, the discourse coalition against the TNI law amendment includes the Minister of Defence, Prabowo Subianto, who publicly stated that the TNI Law was already well implemented and thus, the amendment was not necessary (Kompas, 11.05.2023). Prabowo's statement indicates the existence of different opinions within the government on the urgency of the TNI law amendment. Perhaps one can argue that Prabowo's decision not to support the amendment was motivated by his hopeful presidential bid in the 2024 election, which affected his policy orientation in MoD (Haripin et al., 2023). Accordingly, if Minister Prabowo displayed a controversial position, such as supporting the TNI law amendment, then it would put him under the media spotlight and public criticism, leading to a tarnished reputation. In a nutshell, the TNI law amendment debate has carried an excessive political impact on the elites and thus become a highly political issue.

Third, the old military *dwifungsi* doctrine discourse is pivotal for explaining the current Indonesia's civil-military relations. The SSR-CSO community members express their concerns on the potential revival of the *dwifungsi* doctrine through the amendment of TNI law. For example, Gufron Mabruhi of Imparsial mentioned that the amendment is dangerous since the proposal reflects TNI's attempt to return its socio-political function of the *dwifungsi* doctrine that was removed in the reformasi period (Sucipto, 2023). In addition, Al Araf from Centra Initiative criticised the amendment proposal to expand the number of civilian posts that might be filled by active officers, emphasising it as a sign of democratic backsliding through the activation of the *dwifungsi* doctrine (Pradana, 2023). The SSR-CSO community's concern over the revival of the *dwifungsi* doctrine also gained support from key government and parliament actors. Vice

President Ma'ruf Amin publicly stated that the amendment could be deliberated but without any *dwifungsi*-related clauses (Chairullah, 2023). Legislator Dave Laksono from Commission I also declared that DPR guarantees that the revival of the *dwifungsi* doctrine would not take place during the deliberation process (Utami, 2023). On the contrary, the Presidential Chief of Staff Moeldoko claimed the fear of the *dwifungsi* doctrine revival was overrated, arguing that TNI was then focusing on improving its professionalism and staying away from the political arena (Ramadan & Prabowo, 2023). Civilian control of militarisation focuses on the legitimisation of the use of force (Levy 2016, p.85). Such focus was evident within the above statements made by several key actors that questioned the basis for TNI's expansive role and fear of the *dwifungsi* doctrine revival through the amendment draft.

The *dwifungsi* doctrine was adopted by the military during the second Seskoad (*Sekolah Komando Angkatan Darat*, Army School of Staff and Command) seminar from 25-31 August 1966 (Crouch, 2007). The seminar unequivocally supported the *dwifungsi* doctrine as the political philosophy that established the military's dual functions in both state defence and socio-political domains. Furthermore, the seminar declared the military as the sole guardian of the nation's Pancasila philosophy and the 1945 Constitution. The doctrine principles were then institutionalised through the *Kekaryaan* program supported by President Suharto. The program was officially established through a presidential decree in 1969 as part of the Indonesian Armed Forces' (ABRI - *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*) reform agenda. Under the *Kekaryaan* program, the military headquarters, with Suharto's approval, deployed thousands of active officers to take non-military positions in several government agencies (Notosusanto, 1984). More importantly, the program operated as a successful instrument of favouritism

for Suharto, aimed at cultivating allegiance among the military and deterring any potential opposition within the officer ranks by manipulating the selection process for esteemed and financially rewarding civilian roles (Crouch, 2007; MacDougall, 1982).

Currently, concern over the return of the *dwifungsi* ABRI has become more serious as the non-defence role of the military expands, as shown in the following discourse: “The expansion of TNI’s MOOTW (Military Operation Other Than War - *Operasi Militer Selain Perang*) is problematic and dangerous,” which has become the second most influential in the affiliation network. The discourse highlights the goal of civilian control over militarisation, emphasising that the elected civilians’ authority to use force is subjected to a deliberative process that scrutinises its legitimacy (Levy, 2016, p.85). As regulated by the TNI law, the TNI personnel are allowed to fill positions in ten ministries or government agencies that perform defence-related functions, such as the MoD and search and rescue (SAR) agency. The MoD holds the largest number of active officers, spanning from the top echelons to the lowest rank of the bureaucratic structure (Gunawan, 2017; Haripin et al., 2023). However, in practice, active-duty officers are often assigned to various ministries and state agencies that hold no significant role in defence matters. For instance, a middle-ranking Air Force officer was appointed as the head of the human resources division at the Ministry of Energy, while a senior Navy officer assumed a top-echelon position within the Ministry of Fisheries (Yosarie & Kosandi, 2023, p.88). The trend of military involvement in non-defence missions can be traced back to 2014. During the last months of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s administration, TNI leadership signed dozens of MoUs with other ministries to involve military support in government infrastructure and civic projects (Mengko, 2015). During Joko Widodo’s administration,

TNI’s assertiveness on the non-defence mission increased rapidly. President Widodo involved the military in supporting the ambitious food resilience (*swasembada pangan*) program together with the Ministry of Agriculture in establishing new rice fields and distributing farming equipment to farmers across the archipelago (Movanita, 2015). Recently, the government drafted a new government regulation (PP - *Peraturan Pemerintah*) on the management of civil service (ASN - *Aparatur Sipil Negara*) that permits active-duty TNI officers to assume a broader range of civilian positions. The draft sparked wider public criticism, not only from the civil society organisations but also from the civil servant association (Korpri - *Korps Pegawai Negeri RI*), which has expressed concerns about the limitations it imposes on civilian posts available for non-military personnel (Achmad, 2024; Uzma, 2024).

Finally, the dimension of power in the civilian control of militarisation is also reflected in the debates surrounding the amendment of the TNI law. The findings identified the discourse of “public participation in the drafting process is very important” as one of the central concepts (see Table 2). This discourse underscores the significance of incorporating public input into the process of legitimising the use of force through the proposed amendment. As such, the discourse reinforces the anticipated social power dynamics in the control of militarisation, emphasising the relationship between the government and society in a democratic state. It highlights public participation in the policymaking process as a *sine qua non* condition for the sustenance of democracy (Levy 2016, p.85). It should be noted, however, that the idea of public participation in democracies is not without critiques. A prominent argument suggests that widespread public participation may exacerbate irrational and biased voter behaviour among the citizenry, ultimately resulting in suboptimal decision-making at the

state level (Brennan, 2016). Thus, participation in democracy must be carried out mainly by those who are informed and knowledgeable, or so-called “epistocracy” (Brennan, 2016). A similar critique of public participation emerged in Indonesia's early democratic period. President Jokowi openly expressed concerns about Indonesia's democracy, arguing that it had overreached. He criticised the existing political freedoms for potentially paving the way for political extremism, which, in turn, could hinder government efforts to advance economic development (Ramadhani & Halim, 2017). Thus, public participation and political rights were significantly side-lined during the two terms of President Jokowi's leadership to maintain government focus on economic development through ambitious investment and infrastructure projects (Mujani & Liddle, 2021; Warburton, 2016). Altogether, the theoretical and empirical critiques highlight that public participation must be organised by those who hold the knowledge of the issues to create a meaningful impact on policy output. Within the TNI law amendment debate, this study identifies the influential actors as part of the long-standing SSR-CSO community that continuously develops civilians' knowledge and capacity in defence-related issues.

The discourse on public participation (see Table 3) indicates heightened concern among civilians over the growing tendency of the government and the parliament to deliberate bills through opaque processes and expedited decision-making procedures, commonly referred to as the fast-track mechanism. Such tendency indicates legislative backsliding, a substantive move away from liberal democracy in four critical dimensions of legislative quality: its public policy, legal-constitutional-formal, procedural, and stability aspects (Sebók et al., 2023, p.747). The opaque and expedited decision-making procedures in President Widodo's administration interrupted the procedural dimension of legislative quality,

specifically on stakeholder consultations and transparency of proposals (Sebók et al., 2023, p.753). Several notorious examples of legislative backsliding during Widodo's presidency were the deliberation process of the Cipta Kerja (Job Creation) Law in 2020 and the Ibu Kota Nusantara (New Capital) Law in 2022. Both laws were deliberated by the government and parliament without substantive participation from the public (Rahayu & Basari, 2024). In the defence sector, the deliberation of the Law on the Management of National Resources for State Defence (PSDN, *Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Nasional Untuk Pertahanan*) was one of the examples of the concealed legislation process. The PSDN bill was introduced by the government in mid-July 2019 and passed in September 2019, only a few days before the parliamentary term officially ended. The deliberative process was restricted from public access, with the parliament taking only 70 days to deliberate the bill alongside the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the TNI—an unusually brief duration for parliamentary deliberation (Imparsial, 2022).

The domination of CSO actors and the return of the *dwifungsi* doctrine in the case of military law amendment discourse above correspond to the inward-looking defence orientation in post-Reformasi Indonesia. The orientation can be traced back to the adaptation of the Total People Defence (*Pertahanan Rakyat Semesta*) doctrine after the Reformasi period. Historically, the doctrine was developed in the early years of the independent declaration to deal with the Dutch colonial power's ambition to regain control of Indonesian territory. Accordingly, the State Defence Council (DPN - *Dewan Pertahanan Negara*) issued Decree No. 85 in 1947 that encapsulated the so-called total people defence doctrine as the involvement of all people in fighting against threats (Widjajanto, 2010). Under Suharto's authoritarian regime, the doctrine was further developed and further institutionalised as the state defence doctrine

in law No. 20/1982 on the Principal of State Defence under the label of *Sishankamrata* (*Sistem Pertahanan Keamanan Rakyat Semesta*, Total People Defence and Security System). *Sishankamrata* was utilised as the socio-legal basis for the *dwifungsi* ABRI acknowledgement in the law (Anggoro, 2008). As stipulated in Article 26 of Law No. 20/1982, TNI holds dual functions: as the defence apparatus and the social force (Widjajanto, 2006).

During the Reformasi period, both the 2002 State Defence Law and the 2004 TNI law preserved the total people defence doctrine as the state defence doctrine. The DPR only made minor changes by removing the words *keamanan* (security) and *rakyat* (people) from *Sishankamrata*, turning it into *Sishanta* (*Sistem Pertahanan Semesta*, Total Defence). The minor change demonstrates that the inward-looking orientation of the defence policy has not been eliminated or prohibited but has instead been adjusted to align with the socio-political context of the Reformasi era. The promulgated TNI law allows uniformed officers to occupy positions in several government agencies that are perceived as defence-related institutions. As such, the TNI domestic role is still considered important by the majority of the elected civilians as part of the total people defence doctrine and may well be expanded when the socio-political situation affords it in the future. Such perception was evident in the TNI's MOOTW expansion and the lack of oversight from the elected civilians on the issue in the last decade, as aforementioned. Consequently, the CSO actors have been more assertive in criticising the militarisation agenda behind the TNI law amendment. The actors also emphasise the danger of the *dwifungsi*'s return, which has been entrenched in the status quo of Indonesia's defence sector, i.e., the total people defence doctrine.

Conclusion

Maintaining civilian control of the military is one of the most challenging objectives for

elected civilians in new democracies, especially those formerly subjugated by robust military intrusion in the political arena. Indonesia was considered one of the success stories of establishing civilian control of the military during the democratic transition. Under the Reformasi movement, elected civilians were able to curtail the Indonesian military, i.e., the TNI, from the political arena and institutionalise limitations on the role of the TNI as a state defence apparatus. Nevertheless, the trend of militarisation in recent years has raised significant concerns regarding the quality and sustainability of democratic civilian control. The civilian government has granted the military considerable leeway to assume non-defence roles, justifying these positions as part of the Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) functions of the TNI.

The principal objective of this study is to explain civilian control of militarisation in Indonesia's nascent democracy, specifically focusing on the public discourse on the TNI law amendment debate that takes place between May and July 2023. By combining the civilian control of militarisation framework and the discourse network analysis method, the study found that civil society communities such as NGOs, academic communities, and think tanks dominate the configuration of actors in the TNI law amendment discourse. This finding met the theoretical expectation of active citizenry in controlling the legitimacy of the use of force by elected civilians. Similarly, the study results and analysis confirm that the main discourses in the TNI law amendment debate were dominated by criticism questioning the basis of elected civilians' decisions to deploy the TNI for non-defence purposes, such as civilian posts. In fact, the focus on the political culture element within the control of militarisation was highlighted through NGO activists' concerns about the revival of the *dwifungsi* doctrine in the TNI law amendment.

Another important finding of this study shows the rising public concern over the

legislation process in Indonesia that gradually dismissed public participation. This was captured through the demand for public participation in the deliberation process of the TNI law amendment. The public pressure from the CSO-SSR community and political support from key government actors suspended the TNI amendment proposal in 2023. It should be noted, however, that the future TNI amendment proposal that favours TNI's expansive role may be more successful, considering the declining influence of the CSO-SSR community in policy lobbying and the current post-2024 election political configuration that converges towards Minister Prabowo as the president-elect.

Finally, the findings of this study are expected to encourage scientific investigation on civilian control of militarisation in new democracies. The recent trend of democratic backsliding in new democracies is often accompanied by the return of uniformed officers in the socio-political arena under the popular legitimisation of an autocratic leader. In the long term, democratic principles may gradually erode as uniformed officers potentially regain their previous political influence in decision-making. This could lead to the use of force to protect the regime's interests and suppress public criticism. Together with the diminishing check-and-balances mechanism, the role of active citizenry becomes pivotal to ensure civilian control of the military, keeping the latter in its expected role as state defence apparatus. Empirically, we would expect more evidence of civilian control in the future of new democracies. This study provided a novel framework to understand actors and issues in the civilian control of militarisation for new democracies. The Indonesian case shows that controlling militarisation levitates around the CSO community as key actors. Moreover, the case also indicates that romanticism on the past praetorian military image as the core issue in the militarisation policy debate can be capitalised on by the civilian actors to counter the elite's effort to expand the military role in society. Therefore,

future research should be directed towards exploring the actor network, the list of strategies or issues, and the effectiveness of civilian control of militarisation, especially on a comparative basis.

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