

## **Rediscovery of the demos in the radical democracy of the Philippines**

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### **Abstract**

This paper attempts to contribute to the discourse on radical democracy in the Philippines. The influential research on radical democracy in the Philippines revolves around former President Duterte. Christopher Ryan Maboloc, rooting from Chantal Mouffe's radical democracy, appropriated the style of leadership of former President Duterte as a form of radical democracy. Contrary to this view, Jacques Ranciere's theory of democracy and politics emphasizes the power of demos – 'the part of those who have no part'- to demonstrate and assert their equality. The demos disrupt the distribution of sensible in their proper place and confine everyone to a specific role disabling anyone from partaking in anything other than their proper role. Ranciere believes that the beginning of democracy and the institution of politics is when the demos enable themselves to partake in the space or activity the police order prohibits them from experiencing. Politics is a break from the charge that entitles others to speak or participate and others not. Using Ranceire's framework, I theorized that instead of fixating on former President Duterte, the beginning of radical democracy in the Philippines was when those Filipinos who were not supposed to speak spoke, and those who were not supposed to partake partook.

Key words: Radical Democracy, Politics, Police Order, Demos, Jacques Ranciere

## Introduction

Radical democracy in the Philippines revolves around the "character" of Rodrigo Duterte. A person who has power -or in power- that transgresses laws and policies to bring immediate societal change. Rooting from Chantal Mouffe's radical democracy that argued democracy is not all about negotiation of interest or dialogue to arrive at understanding/consensus. Mouffe believes that democracy has an antagonistic character, which means instead of aiming to eliminate differences, i.e. political perspectives, it usually eradicates conflict. Mouffe argues that conflict and antagonism are crucial in maintaining democracy. She believes if democracy genuinely desires pluralism, it must accept that there will always be people with different views and political leanings that will antagonize the system. But, these people who antagonize the system must not be eliminated like an enemy in a battle but must be transformed into an adversary. An adversary for Mouffe is a 'legitimate enemy' who shares 'ethico-political principles' in liberal democracy but disagrees on how to implement these principles.

From these concepts, The birth of radical democracy in the Philippines emerged, centering on Former President Duterte's approach to Philippine politics.<sup>1</sup> Some Filipino thinkers believed Duterte's political strategy to end long-standing problems in the Philippines society follows the radical democracy of Chantal Mouffe. I submit this view as Rodrigo Duterte was a presidential candidate who surely destabilize Philippine politics. However, I argued that there are certain concepts that former President Duterte failed to satisfy to be a radical politics/radical democracy<sup>2</sup> contrary to the other Filipino thinkers' perspective. This led me to look at another political thinker, Jacques Ranciere, who rethought politics. Ranciere claims that the demos, the people, have a central role in instituting politics.

Jacques Ranceire envisages that politics, as people see it today, is more focused on ordering and placing everyone in their proper

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "President Rodrigo Duterte and the birth of Radical Democracy in the Philippines," *International Journal of Politics and Security (IJPS)* 2, no. 3 (May 2020): 116-134

<sup>2</sup> Benjiemen A. Lambastin, "Two faces of Dutertismo: Two Visions of Democracy in the Philippines," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy* Special Issue (December 2019): 31-54.

place, which he calls police order. Politics begins when the demos/people -the part who has no part- begin to take part, i.e., speak, interrupt the natural order of things. Politics is the disruption of the police order. The demos, the people, have a peculiar role in Ranciere politics. The demos begin politics. The demos whom the police order unaccounts and press to their proper place, disabling them speak, begin to speak and partake in the sphere where police order commands them not to. Ranciere believes this is the beginning of politics and democracy. Democracy is the power of the demos to break the system of entitlements that give certain people to rule and others to obey. Democracy is the power of demos to act as equals to everyone else.

This paper contributes to the discourse of radical democracy in the Philippines by redirecting and acknowledging the presence of the people (ordinary Filipinos) in breaking the system of domination rather than certain individuals who have the power and position to exert radical change in the Philippines society. Ordinary Filipinos are equal to those empowered to change the Philippines possibly.

### **Duterte's radical democracy and its problem**

In May 2016, Philippine politicians were caught off guard when Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of Davao City decided to run for the presidency and won. It was a historic event for Mindanaoans because former President Duterte was the first-ever Mindanaoan President. Many celebrated and expressed their high hopes for change. As the slogan says, "CHANGE IS COMING." However, several political thinkers feared a Duterte presidency. Since the campaign, former President Duterte has been clear about what he will do when he assumes the presidency.

Ateneo Professor Christopher Ryan Maboloc argued that the triumph of former President Duterte is the birth of radical democracy in the Philippines. Rodrigo Duterte disrupted traditional Philippine politics. In the past, the banners in which politicians promoted themselves were moral character and institutional reform, but former President Duterte is different. He is honest that he does not have a good character and is probably not as brilliant as the other candidates. The use of explicit words and gestures proves that Rodrigo Duterte is far from a moral leader. Maboloc believes that this is part of radical

politics. The use of explicit words is considered grammar of dissent. A protest against imposition from Western ideals imposes that leaders must act in accordance with good demeanor.<sup>3</sup> This also evokes a strong sentiment of frustration from the past administration's failures to change the dire situation of Filipinos and commitment to the promise that former President Duterte made. The use of the affective aspect of human beings is a crucial element of radical politics.<sup>4</sup> Emotion and feeling propel people to engage with political issues. Reason does not have privilege in the political domain but the affective aspect has also its role to play in politics.

Moreover, he did not believe in institutional reform or dialogue; he believed in a more practical and progressive approach to the ills of Philippine society. Former President Duterte made public order and security his banners, which made him different from all the past presidents. All previous presidents' slogans promoted justice, peace, and equality, but Rodrigo Duterte shifted from the traditional slogan. He chose public order and security that captured the minds and hearts of Filipinos. Maboloc believes Filipinos want action and results that traditional political approaches cannot achieve.<sup>5</sup> However, Nicole Curato and Jonathan Corpus Ong<sup>6</sup> provide more empirical evidence for the baffling support of Filipinos for public order and security. In her interview, in the urban poor she noticed that public safety is also the primary concern of poor Filipino people. The interviewee expressed that most people are afraid to walk in their community after dark because of 'drug addicts' lurking around, but when former President Duterte assumed the presidency, their streets became safer. Criminality is part of the daily concern of ordinary Filipinos, especially in urban poor where 'drug addicts' lurk in the alleys. Duterte brought this to the forefront of his administration, making Filipinos feel that Duterte understands their daily struggles.

Oligarchy is one of the oldest ills of Philippine society. The oligarchs control the economy and the rest of the different facets of

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "Situating the Mindanao Agenda in the Radical Politics of President Duterte," *Iqra* 4 (2017): 3-24

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Maboloc, "Situating the Mindanao Agenda in the Radical Politics of President Duterte," 14

<sup>6</sup> Nicole Curato and Jonathan Corpus Ong, "Who Laughs at a Rape Joke? Illiberal Responsiveness in Rodrigo Duterte's Philippines," in *Ethical Responsiveness and the Politics of Difference*, eds. Dreher, T. & Mondal (London: Palgrave, 2018), 65.

Philippine society for their benefit, and that makes the lives of poor Filipinos harder. Former President Duterte made the fight against oligarchs central to his administration. He publicly warned big corporations to pay the right amount of taxes to the Philippine government. Otherwise, he will shut them [big corporations].<sup>7</sup> Other presidents might choose a more procedural approach, probably filing a case against corporations that will take years before it has merit. Former President Duterte chose a radical approach that transgressed the liberal democratic procedure bound by the legal system, which is too slow in making effective results for the Philippines. Joezenon Purog believes that the radical politics of former President Duterte showed the oligarchs that they are no longer in control.<sup>8</sup>

Duterte's radical democracy was able to change the political values in the Philippines. It brought forth many age-old problems of ordinary Filipinos from the colonial past to the safety of each ordinary Filipino in the street that many politicians barely use since they are in their luxurious cars and subdivisions. It brought the voice of the voiceless into the political sphere. At the same time, other politicians recite the same speeches that silence ordinary Filipinos. Former President Duterte broke the partition that hinders ordinary Filipinos from engaging with other Filipinos, especially the oligarchs.

The Mindanao agenda (as Maboloc calls it) is the exemplar. Former President Duterte brought the marginalized people of the South as a priority of his administration. The decade-long marginalization of the problems, concerns, or even predicament of the Mindanaoan people is strongly emphasized by Former President Duterte.<sup>9</sup> The negligence of many politicians coming from the elite families of the northern part of Luzon is over now that the president is coming from Mindanao. Former President Duterte understood and even experienced the problems of the Mindanaoan people and promised he would rectify the injustice that has plagued the marginalized region of the Philippines. It is only through a strong political will that this decade-long problem can be addressed. The

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<sup>7</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "Fighting the oligarchs: President Duterte and the argument against the elite rule- A perspective from the academe," *MALM: Jurnal Pengajian Unum Asia Tenggara* 21 (2020): 32-44.

<sup>8</sup> Joezenon Purog, "President Rodrigo Duterte's Radical Leadership," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy* Special Issue (October 2022): 28.

<sup>9</sup> Maboloc, "Situating the Mindanao Agenda in the Radical Politics of President Duterte."

procedural approach is ineffective, and will take a long time to rectify these injustices. But with Duterte's strong political will and unwavering commitment to serving the Filipino people, Mindanaoan glimpses hope.<sup>10</sup>

Duterte resembles some traits of radical politics, as Mouffe envisages. They expose the power relation between identities, disclosing the conflicts and marginalization of many parts and sectors of the Philippines and antagonizing the well-accepted way of being a politician. However, there are three problems with the radical politics of Duterte: a) maintenance of antagonism, b) conversion of an enemy to an adversary, and c) participation of the people. Duterte, with his vulgar and unorthodox presidency, hardly maintains antagonism. Who can antagonize an individual sitting in the seat of power? A person who threatens anyone who opposes him will face severe consequences, i.e. death or imprisonment. Opposing Duterte is almost wishing for one's death. Duterte initiates conflict because no harm can befall him, but to those who oppose his decisions and statements, severe consequences can happen to them. [De Lima, ABS-CBN, VP Leni & Maria Ressa] Antagonism is not the end of radical democracy; it is constitutive to radical democracy, but it is crucial that an enemy can be converted into an adversary. While Mouffe recognizes the inevitability of antagonism, she nonetheless offers another way to construct the antagonistic form of pluralistic democracy. She proposes agonism in this model; instead of eradicating an enemy, it aims to transform an enemy into an adversary where it recognizes the legitimacy of the adversary and its claims. Mouffe defines adversary as:

an enemy, but a legitimate enemy, one with whom we have some common ground because we have a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality. But we disagree on the meaning and implementation of those principles and such a disagreement is not one that could be resolved through deliberation and rational discussion.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "The Predatory State and Radical Politics: The Case of the Philippines," *ASEAN Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019).

<sup>11</sup> Chantal Mouffe *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?* (Vienna: Institute for Advanced Studies, 2000), 15.

Mouffe expounds this model further, "while in conflict, they see themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place."<sup>12</sup> There is a shift in dealing with people with opposing views. There is a recognition that these people with different views will always be there, yet the aim is not to destroy them. The problem of antagonism in Duterte's radical politics is that an adversary cannot be achieved. Duterte has more than just a disagreement with those people who oppose him. He vocally threatens them. He continuously suppressed any form of opposition to his administration. The transformation of the enemy to the adversary cannot be attained because Duterte considers those who oppose him as an enemy to be eradicated. Many activists who express their opposition to Duterte's policies end up dead or red-tagged.

This "radicality" of Duterte endangers and contradicts the very aim of radical democracy, the expansion of participation in politics. Duterte's radical democracy revolves around him to the point that the people (Filipinos) become invisible and passive. The support of many Filipinos was crucial in Duterte's rise to power, but it was not argued that it was part of radical democracy. It mentioned that Filipinos are exhausted and discontented with the current situation of the Philippines, so they chose Duterte as the leader to solve the ills of Philippine society. Yet, this act and the Filipino's choice were not considered part of radical democracy. The Filipino remains passive and only contributes to choosing on election day. The people's role is reduced to choosing or electing the leader that will salvage their lives. In a way, people remain passive and momentarily become active in participating in political affairs.

Duterte rejected consensus as a method of nation-building and antagonized the old ways of participating in politics in the Philippines, which does not mean he is radical. It could also mean he had a different way of doing things, or perhaps it is more suggestive to adopt such a style because this will make him popular and win the hearts of the Filipinos.

If Duterte falls short of radical democracy, Is radical democracy impossible in the Philippines? No, there are glimpses of

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<sup>12</sup> Chantal Mouffe, *On The Political* (Routledge: New York, 2005), 20.

radical democracy in the Philippines to which I want to direct my argumentation. I will use another thinker who theorizes radical democracy, Jacques Ranciere, who believes that politics begins when the part of no party demonstrates their equality and speaks. The next section will elaborate on Ranciere's idea.

### **Ranciere's Police order**

Ranciere has a peculiar outlook on what people usually think of as politics. The management, administration, implementation of the law and conflict negotiation are not strictly speaking politics. Ranciere called this kind of "politics" Police politics/police order. He defines this as "Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the system for legitimizing this distribution."<sup>13</sup>

People usually think of politics as focused on managing society, placing everyone in its proper place, and accounting for everyone who belongs to society and who does not. Alluding to Foucault archeology of police in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the police function as the force of law and order that maintains everything in society in order. However, Ranciere argued this is a narrow view of the police function. Ranciere believes that the police have a more fundamental function in society. It functions as the one who arranges and distributes everyone and anyone to its proper place. It defines who belongs to the community. It defines who can participate in political affairs and who cannot. It tells who has a voice and who has not. Ranciere elaborates on the function of the police order:

The police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and way of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and sayable that sees that a particular activity is

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<sup>13</sup> Jacques Ranciere *Disagreement*, Trans. Julie Rose (University of Minnesota: Minneapolis, 1999) 28



visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another is noise.<sup>14</sup>

Essentially, then, police order is about -as Ranciere calls it- distribution of the sensible that organize bodies and place them where they must be at all times. This order specifies individuals who can partake (participate) in a specific activity and be seen in a particular place and time. Police order ties everyone to a specific occupation, place, and activity. Ranciere defines the distribution of the sensible as:

A partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between a shared common (un commun partage) and the distribution of exclusive part is determined in sensory experience, anticipates the distribution of part and shares (parties), itself presupposes a distribution of what is visible and what is not, of what can be heard and what cannot.<sup>15</sup>

The police order defines the relationship of everyone to anyone within the shared world. It enables certain individuals to perceive specific people as part of the shared world and those who are not. The police order is about distributing and organizing those who are part and not part of the community. It defines what could be considered valuable and thinkable and what could not.

What, then, is the problem of police order? Is this not normal in society? People are placed in their proper place and organized to function uniformly. Structuring and placing people in their proper space is integral to a functioning society. Ranciere recognized this; he mentioned some police orders are inevitable. The problem is closing the possibility of a dispute<sup>16</sup> where people contest and express their unfair experiences. Thus, the inequality it creates and sustains for the name of a proper and functioning society (it reduces people to mere objects that must be distributed appropriately).

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<sup>14</sup> Ranciere, *Disagreement*, 29

<sup>15</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran (Bloomsbury: London, 2010), 36.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver Davis, "The Mature Politics: From Policing to Democracy," in *Key Contemporary Thinkers Jacques Ranciere* (United Kingdom: Polity, 2010), 79.

The demos/people (the part that has no part) in the police order are excluded since the demos/people are counted as not part of the political community. The people are excluded from partaking in any political affairs. The people have a voice but cannot be heard because they are not counted as part of the political community. Distributing people [the police order] in their specific place in the shared world hinders specific people from participating in political matters. It reduces specific people into a cog whose only role is to function for the common goal like a carpenter is expected only to build a house, a vendor is only expected to make a sale, and a shepherd tends their sheep. These people are not expected and cannot participate in decisions that matter to the whole society. Their place is in domestication, and so they must remain in their place. No one is allowed to be other than their selves. The mere overtaking of one's place is wrong. This act can destabilize the whole community.

The police order is the order of domination. It reproduces the logic of inequality cloaked in the law of the natural order of things; This is how things begin. The "arkhe" is the origin of how the world works. It maintains the hierarchical order that excludes others. It preserves the superiority of one person over another. The police order -the politics that people come to get used to is the very order that hinders them from participating and maintaining their oppressive status. What, then, is the politics Ranciere proposed that is not an order to dominate and liberate the demos?

### **The beginning of Politics, and political subjectification**

Ranciere proposed the term "politics" in opposition to the police order. The police logic is the order of domination where everyone and anyone is put in their proper place. Politics undoes this placement. Politics disrupt this distribution. Politics is "[for] an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing."<sup>17</sup> Politics begins when the demos/people -the part who has no part- begin to take part i.e., speak, interrupt the natural order of things. Ranciere described politics as "whatever breaks with the tangible configuration whereby parties and parts or lack of them are defined by a presupposition that, by definition, has no place in that configuration-

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<sup>17</sup> Ranciere, *Disagreement*, 29

that of the part of those who have no part. This break is manifest in a series of actions that reconfigure the space where parties, parts, or lack of parts have been defined."<sup>18</sup> Politics begins when the parties who are not supposed to partake in a specific activity or place because that is the natural order that these parties do not partake in begin to partake. In effect, it shows the contingency of the police order. It shows the fragility of the foundation of the police order. It shows that this order can be overturned and changed. Politics shows the contingency of any social order and 'there no natural, divine law that regulates this order.'<sup>19</sup>

The existence of politics is not dependent on the opposition of the poor against the rich. If so, rich versus rich can establish politics, and conflict of interest can also establish politics. Ranciere argued that politics occurs because the part of those who have no part, -those people assigned by the police order not to take part in a particular activity or place- struggle as an entity. The demos' struggle to exist as an entity and part of the community constitutes politics. Ranciere rejects the notion of politics as the management of conflict of interest or the remediation of injustice done with another. If this is the case, a solution is obvious to restore each party's equity, e.g., distributing the wealth or properties properly and evenly to each involved party. This kind of approach ends politics. It puts everyone in its proper place.

Moreover, this only works if the party has a legitimate claim to be heard if the party has a legitimate claim for the property. What if the party involved does not have a legitimate claim for any disputed issue? What if the party involved does not have a right to intervene? The answer is simple. There is no dispute. There should not be an issue because one of the parties has no legitimate claim in the dispute. They do not count as a party who has a legitimate claim. However, the party's intervention that has no part (demos) in a dispute in which they should not intervene is what constitutes politics.

From the perspective of the police order, this is wrong. But, for Ranciere, this is very wrong in politics. Politics is setting up a wrong. The wrong is set up through the interruption of the part which has no part (demos) from the order of domination, from the natural order whose aim is to put everyone and anyone in its proper place. It is making the invisible visible. It is the speaking of those who are not

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 16.

supposed to speak. Political activity Ranciere explains, "Whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was once heard as noise."<sup>20</sup>

Politics, then, is not just seeking reparation for the injury one received. It is an act of making oneself appear. Disrupting the natural order of things that makes them invisible and the pain, they utter as a noise becomes a discourse (a speech that utters an injustice done to them.) Politics occurs through the appearance of subjects that were not there before. The disruption it (politics) creates causes reconfiguration of the system. The political subjects reconfigure the shared world arrangement by the police order. This process Ranciere called "political subjectification:

redefines the field of experience that gave to each their identity with their lot. It decomposes and recomposes the relationship between the ways of doing, of being, and of saying that define the perceptible organization of the community, the relationship between places where one does none thing and those where one does something else, the capacities associated with this particular doing and those required for another.<sup>21</sup>

Political subjectification is a process of disrupting the police order by 'decomposing and recomposing links among relationships in the police order that makes everyone and anyone perceive in the organization of the community. Political subjectification is not the appearance of a new subject that is hidden by the police order. Political subjectification is disruption by the demos in the police order through delinking and linking themselves with others and with a place that is not for them.

Ranciere uses the event of plebeian succession on Aventine Hill as an example of political subjectification where the plebs retreat to Aventine Hill, refusing to do any work unless their demands are met. The patricians refuse to recognize the plebs as an entity from the city. Patricians refused to talk and negotiate with the plebs because

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 40.

they believed that plebs could not speak and were nameless, which meant plebs were not part of the city. As Ranciere notes: "There is no place for discussion with the plebs for the simple reason that plebs do not speak. They do not speak because they are being without a name deprived of logos,"<sup>22</sup> yet, the patricians eventually sent an emissary to meet and talk to them. Ranciere theorized this as an act of political subjectification where plebs who were not part of the city and were nameless could speak with an emissary and demand a treaty. In police order, this is a violation of the arrangement of the city. The plebs could not and did not have any right to speak, yet the plebs were able to demand a treaty and speak with an emissary. The plebs could delink themselves from a class that does not speak and relink to another form and place within the shared world, a class of plebs who can speak. The plebs rejected the order of domination through an act of appearance and speaking that the police order did not bestow upon them.<sup>23</sup>

Political subjectification is politics. It breaks the order of domination that dictates one is not supposed to speak or appear. It breaks the cycle and arrangement of police order that dictates that one has no business or place in a specific place. Political subjectification is an act that commences politics. It is not a goal to be achieved. It is not an end that an individual must aim for. Political subjectification is a demonstration and verification of one's equality to everyone and anyone, which democracy is. Ranciere argued that democracy is characterized by the absence of entitlements where one is entitled to command and one is to obey, which the next section will discuss.

### **Ranciere's Radical democracy**

Ranciere retrieves the very meaning of democracy, which is 'the power of the demos/people.' Ranciere elicits the historical

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<sup>22</sup> Ranciere, *Disagreement*, 23. "The "plebs" initially referred to individuals who had neither name nor right to speak in public, Devin Zane Shaw, "Command that does not command," 100-101 in Martin Breaugh *The Plebeian Experience: A Discontinuous History of Political Freedom* trans. Lazer Lederhendler (New York: Columbia University Press., 2013), xix.

<sup>23</sup> Breaugh's *The Plebeian Experience* recounts the success of the plebs after the succession. The patricians agreed to have plebeian magistracies to defend plebeian cause against the consul, 10.

development of the meaning of democracy to expose the demos' power to break the system of domination/police order. Ranciere explains the origin of democracy "was invented by its opponents, by all those who had an 'entitlement' to govern seniority, birth, wealth, virtue or knowledge. In using the word democracy as a term of derision, these opponents marked an unprecedented reversal in the order of things: the 'power of the demos' referred to the fact that those who rule are those whose only commonality: the poor"<sup>24</sup> Democracy does not have any foundation unlike other form of government that based their legitimacy on birth, wealth, virtue and others. Democracy has no goal, unlike other forms of government that promote a good life or just society. Democracy is the disruption of the legitimacy of every form of government. Democracy-the demos- breaks the entitlement of others to govern and others to obey. "Democracy precisely means that the power of the demos' is the power of those that no arkhe entitles them to exercise."<sup>25</sup> Democracy enables those not entitled to participate, speak, and govern.

With this view, democracy is a kind of scandal.<sup>26</sup> Breaking the very foundation, the legitimacy of any form of government seems so natural at first, yet in the end, it can be refuted by demos (the part of those who have no part). Ranciere alluded to this breaking of legitimacy in Plato's *Laws*, where Plato enumerates seven titles (qualifications) for governing. Among these seven titles, Plato chose the sixth title, the power to those who know over those who do not. However, the seventh title intrigued Ranciere: "for determining who can exercise the arkhe. Thus, he [Plato] calls this 'the choice of God' or the 'drawing of lots'<sup>27</sup> , which Plato did not elaborate. However, Ranciere theorized this as democracy (democratic procedure) in *Hatred of democracy*, Ranciere explains that "Athenian is considered to be the most just: the title of the authority that has the favor of 'heaven and fortune': the choice of god of chance, drawing of lots, i.e. the democratic procedure by which people of equals decides the distribution of places.<sup>28</sup> The scandal of democracy is that even those

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<sup>24</sup> Ranciere, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, 32.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>26</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Verson: London, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Ranciere, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> Ranciere, *Hatred of Democracy*, 40.

whom police order prohibits from governing (participating at the least), the demos, have an equal chance to govern the whole political community. Democracy eradicates the assurance of birthright, wealth, & virtue as political superiority to anyone. Democracy enables everyone and anyone to choose the life each individual wants against the dictates of police order.

### **Duterte in the radical politics of Ranciere**

The beginning of politics is the demos' appearance and demonstration of equality. Rodrigo Duterte, as a Presidential candidate, appearance in Philippine politics dominated with manila-centric leaders or elite names, breaks the system that immemorial marginalizes the Mindanaoan potential leaders. It demonstrates the equality of everyone and anyone to become a President. Two of the new narratives of Rodrigo Duterte in his election campaign were the negligence of previous administrations to address the dire situation of "mass Filipino" in the presence of crimes rooted in drug addiction and the continuing marginalization of Mindanaoans in the progress of the Philippine breaks the traditional narrative of moral leadership towards progress. This moral leadership argues that when elected leaders are moral, the lives of Filipinos flourish.

The appearance<sup>29</sup> of Rodrigo Duterte in the Presidential election exposed the gap between the cry of the ordinary Filipino people and its public officials. There is a gap in the vision for the good life. On the one hand, ordinary Filipinos want an immediate solution to their struggle. Thus, the promise of moral leadership of institutional reform often neglects the ordinary Filipino struggle. Rodrigo Duterte breaks the normal narrative in Philippine politics that only institutional reform and moral leaders can bring about prosperity into the lives of Filipinos. A Mindanaoan who speaks of their agenda, the struggle of Mindanaoan people, A local mayor who speaks the language of millions of ordinary Filipinos disrupts the logic of Philippine politics, which places these agendas as secondary to the country's economy.

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<sup>29</sup> Appearance has a peculiar meaning to Ranciere. It has something to do with the opposition of appearance/disappearance. Appearance of a subject means previously it is prohibited to appear or show itself. In the act of appearing, it breaks the order not to appear.

Unfortunately, assuming the Presidency, Rodrigo Duterte can barely be considered a radical politician because he is part of the police order. As President, Rodrigo Duterte has a part in society. He can account for who belongs and who does not belong to society. He has done this by commanding the police to eradicate drug addicts and criminals. Several political opponents and those who are vocal in opposing his administration are threatened, harassed, and red-tagged. The case in point is Maria Ressa and the closure of ABS-CBN,

Former President Duterte hampers the possibility of confrontation in the name of order and security in the Philippine nation. Pres. Rodrigo Duterte distributes bodies to their proper place, barring them from participating in political affairs. The bodies that lie down on the streets devoid of life, the imprisoned political opponents unable to use their voice, ends politics.

Former President Duterte may have fought the elite who have controlled the Philippines for the longest time, perpetuating poverty and silencing the voice of the people. Still, he is as guilty as them for hindering political voices who oppose his administration. The catchphrase "Sumunod na lang kayo!" reflects the closure of confrontation of individuals to demonstrate their equality to everyone. "Sumunod na lang kayo!" perpetuates inequality. This is a command that exhibits the entitlement of others to order and others to obey. This command aims to place bodies in their proper site, averting a possible occurrence of democracy.

Rodrigo Duterte was a potential radical politician at the outset, but he betrayed his principles. As a Presidential candidate, he destabilized the system that bars specific individuals from participating in political affairs. He could disrupt the narrative of moral politics, yet he created a political atmosphere that ended politics in his presidency.

### **Political subjects: A Philippine Experience?**

Ranciere believes that democracy belongs to the demos, the part that has no part. It is in the intervention of the demos that politics begins. The demos demonstrate their equality to everyone and anyone. The current discourse on radical democracy in the Philippines revolves around Duterte and his style of disrupting the dominant system of politics in the Philippines. Commentators have read



Duterte's radical democracy as a misappropriation or second vision of democratization in the Philippines and a postponed synthesis. All these focus on Duterte and overshadow the crucial part of democracy: the people, the demos. This paper intends to redirect the attention of radical democracy in the Philippines to the people, to the demos.

The ordinary Filipinos who exerted themselves to participate in the election campaign and continued to support former President Duterte were often missing in radical democracy in the Philippines. The ordinary Filipino voices also break the dominant narrative in Philippine politics. The ire voice of the Filipinos disputing the moral and educated candidate to bring genuine change in the Philippines shuts the traditional politics that silence ordinary Filipinos. The ordinary Filipinos' participation in the election campaign of Rodrigo Duterte and their participation in an online forum to defend Rodrigo Duterte's tirade disrupted the distribution of places in Philippine politics. Filipinos are finding their voices and arguing against the educated/experts in politics, laws, and the like, reflecting Jacques Ranciere's scandal of democracy. Democracy enables those who have no business in politics to be in politics. Democracy overturns entitlements of specific people to rule and lets other people - particularly, the demos - able to rule.

Is this not detrimental to society? The people who rule society are those who are not experts in ruling or are not trained to rule. Is this not what Plato warned the people of Athens in *The Republic*? This concern for Ranciere is the interest of police order that arranges society to its proper place and distributes roles. Democracy enables everyone to act as equals to everyone. Democracy enables society to remain open to possibilities. It allows people to change their lives and not remain in the life that society gave them. Democracy provides the possibility of a life that is equal to everyone. It destroys the norm that some are born to rule and others to obey. It presents that these norms are contingent and can be changed.

Let us return to the discussion of those Filipinos who stand against Duterte's policies. As mentioned above, Duterte's administration is part of a police order that distributes individuals to their proper places. As a form of police order, Duterte prohibits Filipinos from going beyond what is given to them. Duterte instructs Filipinos to follow the government's protocols or suffer the consequences. As a result, protesters and even the opposition are

threatened to voice their frustration and demands. Duterte silences the voice of the demos, the people, in tightening the policies so that Filipinos follow the rules.

The Filipinos who cry for justice are part of radical democracy, regardless of the content of their arguments. Maboloc argued that using the moral compass to criticize former President Duterte's stance on different political issues is miss the point. Rooting from Chantal Mouffe's demarcation on what is political and what is moral discourse. The priority of antagonism over consensus, dialogue, and even universal values, i.e., human rights, became "anti-political" because these are part of the deliberative democracy that liberals in the Philippines used to sustain the oppressive system that continuously marginalizes ordinary Filipinos. There is some truth in this that the use of moral discourse sends some ordinary Filipinos to the periphery of Philippine society, disabling them from participating in political affairs.

But this does not invalidate their claim to politics. Ranciere did not specify what arguments a person must have to partake in politics. Ranciere states that whatever society unaccounts whoever society does not consider as a part and partook, i.e., political affairs, this person does democracy. The Filipinos who fought for due process and justice have liberal traits. Nonetheless, these Filipinos during former President Duterte were the people being pushed to their proper place. The strategy of Duterte's administration to put Filipinos in their proper place is an act of policing. The act of Filipinos criticizing the Duterte is an act of democracy. Disturbing those empowered arranging where people should be, barring them from voicing their concerns and frustrations demonstrates their equality to take part in political affairs.

On the undying support of ordinary Filipinos to Duterte, Maboloc explained the ordinary Filipinos chose to support Duterte is attributed to the 'disenchantment of the Filipino masses' to the promise of elite democracy after the fall of Marcos dictatorship.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Duterte's demeanor reflects the ordinary Filipinos manner

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<sup>30</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "President Rodrigo Duterte and the birth of Radical Democracy in the Philippines," 124.

of dealing with their problems. The ordinary Filipinos felt that Duterte is one of them and understand their plight as a poor people.<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, Ranciere does not prioritize reason behind the demos' choice or what causes the demos to break or interrupt domination of police order. Ranciere highlight the fact of equality of everyone to anyone. The "realization" of the demos of their equality to everyone is the beginning of politics, the beginning of democracy. Ranciere emphasized the importance of enacting one's equality over reason (or deliberation) in the plebian recession on Aventine Hill. Ranciere did not elicit the reason why the plebian revolted and refuse to do any work for the patriarch. He stressed the fact that the plebs demonstrate their equality to the patriarch. Todd May also provides a good example of enacting one's equality on the incident on North Carolina 1960 known as the Greensboro where four students sat down at the lunch counter in an only white American lunch counter. Todd May explains the act of the four students as the presupposition of their own equality to the whites.<sup>32</sup> Both Ranciere and May did not prioritize in elicit the reasons why act like that, or why the plebs or the four students' choice to act and break the natural order of things instead, Ranciere and May highlight the enactment of equality.

In the case of Philippine politics, the support and choice of Filipinos for Duterte in Ranciere's view is the expression of equality of every ordinary Filipinos to everyone. Democracy is not all about moral choice (choosing good and bad leaders). It is not about choosing a leader with a good platform to advance the interest of the few or the many. It is not even about choice. For Ranciere, democracy is about enacting one's equality to everyone. An ordinary Filipino i.e. street sweeper, tricycle driver, housewife who choose to support Duterte (even after his term) and refuse to give rational arguments on why still choose to support "such person/such President" have equal right to speak against those Filipinos who can provide rational arguments on why support Duterte or why not support Duterte. This is a confrontation of two logics; The logic imposition of rational

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. see also Maboloc, "Situating the Mindanao Agenda in the Radical Politics of President Duterte," Maboloc, "The Predatory State and Radical Politics: The Case of the Philippines."

<sup>32</sup> Todd May, *The Political thought of Jacques Ranciere: Creating Equality* (Edinburg University Press Ltd: United Kindgom, 2008), 50-51.

argumentation or deliberation as a valid form to speak and be accounted and the insistence of everyone's equal right to speak.

Democracy is not all about transgressing rules or laws to improve things. Democracy is not a negotiation of conflict or interest toward understanding. Democracy is not about a choice. Democracy is the power of the demos, the unaccounted, to insert themselves into the place, into the sphere where society prohibits them in the name of order and proper arrangement of society. Democracy is the demonstration of individuals their equality to everyone and anyone.

## **Conclusion**

As a presidential candidate, Rodrigo Duterte paved the way for radical democracy. It showed Philippine society's age-old problems, i.e., the marginalization of Mindanaoan people and the security and order that concerns ordinary Filipinos. Rodrigo Duterte shifted the narrative of Philippine politics from moral leadership and good governance towards a prosperous life to strong leadership and political will to solve problems in Philippine society regardless of the cost. Rodrigo Duterte paved the way for radical democracy that antagonizes the elite politics that control Philippines society. However, Rodrigo Duterte failed to transform antagonism to an adversarial form, which Chantal Mouffe suggests to democratize politics. Moreover, in Rodrigo Duterte's radical democracy, the people remain passive and momentarily appear at the scene but immediately disappear because the focus of theorization is Rodrigo Duterte.

This paper acknowledges the presence of the demos/people using Jacques Ranciere's concept of politics. Ranciere argued that the beginning of politics is the intervention of the part with no part, the demos. Politics is instituted whenever the demos insert themselves from the place or activity that is not supposed to be for them. Democracy is not a regime nor a form of government. However, in this perspective, Rodrigo Duterte can be considered a radical politician. He was a presidential candidate who interrupted the natural order of things in the Philippines, where the president usually came from Luzon and had a good moral character. Rodrigo Duterte is neither of these. Unfortunately, becoming the president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte is part of the police order that places everyone in its proper place. He can decide who is part of the society and who is not.

He could bar Filipinos from participating in specific activities, i.e., protests.

But this does not mean that radical democracy is impossible. Rodrigo Duterte is not the sole source of radicality and interruption in Philippine Politics. The demos, the people who continued and went beyond their boundaries to support Rodrigo Duterte, also exhibit radical politics from a Rancierean perspective. Ordinary Filipinos who fearlessly respond to the mavericks of different fields of academia exhibit their equality with these experts. Ordinary Filipinos find their voice to express their frustrations in a way they want to be heard.

In the same way, Filipinos who criticize former President Duterte regardless of their political leaning must be acknowledged as doing a democratic process. Those who cry for justice, due process, and accountability are equally interrupting the ruling order. The order not to intervene. The order not to speak and follow is the police order, and those who speak interrupt the police order. Ranciere calls this politics. In short, the demos are crucial in instituting radical politics/radical democracy when the part with no part speaks and partakes.

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