

Human Dignity as the Normative Foundation of Legal Legitimacy: A Pancasila-Based Philosophical Framework

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This article examines human dignity as the normative foundation of legal legitimacy within the framework of Pancasila. This research stems from the conceptual problem that legal legitimacy is often reduced to formal legality, procedural compliance, and policy effectiveness, thus neglecting the dimension of normative justification toward legal subjects. The purpose of this research is to explain how Pancasila positions human dignity as a non-derivative principle that serves as the foundation and limit for the validity of law and the exercise of state power. Using a normative-philosophical approach, this article analyzes the relationship between Pancasila as a material basic norm, human dignity as the right to justification, and its implications for the principles of the rule of law, democracy, and legal pluralism. The research results indicate that in the Pancasila legal system, legal legitimacy cannot be understood solely as the outcome of procedures or the will of the majority but rather as a normative practice that must be rationally accountable to humans as dignified subjects. This research also shows that legal pluralism, including customary law practices, can serve as a means of actualizing human dignity as long as it remains within the horizon of rational justification and the prevention of institutional humiliation. This finding confirms that Pancasila offers a coherent philosophical framework for integrating legal legitimacy, democracy, and human dignity in a pluralistic society and provides a normative basis for human-centered legal reform.

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Intruduction

In legal discourse, legal legitimacy is increasingly recognized as a fundamental normative issue. The rule of law is often reduced to compliance with formal procedures, regulatory effectiveness, and institutional stability, so law is treated primarily as a functional instrument for regulating behavior and managing public policy. This kind of approach does promise order and predictability (Widiyono & Khan, 2023), but it often overlooks more fundamental questions, namely why the law is entitled to be binding and on what basis state power can be normatively justified. When this dimension of justification is neglected, law risks losing its substantive legitimacy and becoming a formally legitimate but morally fragile technique of social management.

This legitimacy problem becomes increasingly complex in pluralistic democratic societies. In a society with diverse values, identities, and social interests, law must not only be effective and certain but also rationally accountable and respectful of human beings as dignified subjects. Therefore, human dignity is often referred to as a fundamental value in constitutional and human rights discourse. However, in many legal studies, human dignity is still more often treated as an ethical principle or a normative symbol rather than as the basis for the internal legitimacy of law that determines the validity of legal power and obligations. This argument is also in line with Teguh Prasetyo's view of dignified justice, where he asserts that legal legitimacy does not arise solely from procedural validity but from its fidelity to human dignity and national identity (Prasetyo, 2025).

Various previous studies have shown that human dignity has developed as a layered and cross-legal regime normative concept. In judicial practice, human dignity serves as an implicit normative standard that limits state action and guarantees equal recognition for the most vulnerable groups as subjects of rights (Andreetta, 2026). In the socio-economic sphere, the acknowledgment of human dignity necessitates equitable access to education as a fundamental prerequisite for the realization of that dignity (Edeji, 2025). At the transnational level, human dignity serves a dual function in international private law: as the basis for recognizing foreign judgments and as a mechanism for providing a normative voice to marginalized groups that challenge the classic boundary between public and private law (Jiménez & Dávila, 2025).

Jurisprudential advancements indicate a substantial transition from status-based dignity to a recognition of inherent and equal human dignity, facilitated by the horizontal application of the principle of human dignity (Steinmann, 2025). However, empirical research on specific professional practices—such as nursing education—shows that human dignity is still often ambiguously understood and has not been consistently operationalized, requiring conceptual strengthening based on human rights (Douglas et al., 2025). Theoretically, human dignity is understood simultaneously as the basis of rights and a source of moral obligations that demand continuous normative justification (Rosenkranzová, 2024), as the right to be recognized as a

legal person and the foundation for all individual rights (Kirste, 2024), and as a general legal principle that underpins the validity of *jus cogens* norms in international law (Karliuha, 2024). Nevertheless, the literature also reveals ongoing conceptual tensions, particularly between dignity as status and dignity as value, and between the necessary and contingent dimensions of human dignity, which require clarification to prevent its normative power from being reduced (Gutschmidt, 2023).

Comparative and religious studies also show that human dignity has both universal and contextual dimensions. Human dignity is affirmed as the highest principle in Chilean constitutionalism, although it has not yet been fully and systematically dogmatized (Cruz, 2023). In Islamic law, human dignity is articulated as a universal value that rejects both denial and excessive absolutization, including through the *al-wasatiyah* approach, which emphasizes the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, pluralism, and the rejection of violence in the name of religion (Al-Asmari, 2023) (Hefni et al., 2022). Furthermore, human dignity necessitates a legal culture that fosters interpretive competition to cultivate inclusive and mutually respectful coexistence within a pluralistic society (Kiss & Mercz, 2022).

Nevertheless, one major theoretical gap still seems evident. Most literature focuses on human dignity as the basis of rights, constitutional values, or ethical principles but has not adequately developed human dignity as a non-derivative principle of legal legitimacy. This gap becomes increasingly significant in the Indonesian context. Constitutionally, Indonesia explicitly places Pancasila as the highest philosophical and normative basis of national and legal life. However, in practice and in the study of positive law, Pancasila—particularly the principle of Just and Civilized Humanity—is still often understood abstractly and symbolically, without being systematically elaborated as a normative framework for justifying law and state power. Starting from this gap, this article poses the main question: how can human dignity be understood as a non-derivative principle and a source of internal normative legitimacy of law within the framework of Pancasila? Unlike approaches that view human dignity solely as an added value or a substantive right to be weighed against other interests, this article positions human dignity as a normative starting point that precedes and limits all practices of lawmaking, interpretation, and enforcement.

The main objective of this article is to develop a coherent normative framework regarding human dignity as the basis for legal legitimacy in the Pancasila legal system. This article is based on the normative hypothesis that law is only legitimate insofar as it can be held accountable to humans as equal rational subjects, and that Pancasila provides an adequate constitutional basis for integrating human dignity as a principle of internal legitimacy for law. Thus, this study aims to demonstrate that Pancasila not only functions as a source of moral values but also as a relevant and operational normative framework for addressing the crisis of legal legitimacy in a pluralistic democratic society.

1. Methodology

This paper is normative legal research that aims to examine human dignity as the basis for legal legitimacy in the Pancasila legal system. The research materials used include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Pancasila as the state ideology, and various scientific books and articles discussing human dignity, legal legitimacy, human rights, and legal pluralism. All materials were chosen because they were related to the research topic and came from reliable academic sources. This formatting makes it easy for other researchers to understand and follow this study.

The analysis was conducted by critically reading, comparing, and evaluating the concepts and arguments found in the research materials. The analysis phase begins by explaining the meaning of human dignity and legal legitimacy and then linking them to the position of Pancasila in the Indonesian legal system. Next, these concepts were analyzed to see the extent to which human dignity can be used as a basis for justifying law and state power. The analysis results are valid because the logic is consistent and the reasons are clear, allowing other researchers to follow and apply the line of thought in Indonesia and in comparative studies.

2. Results

2-1 Pancasila as the Highest Normative Source of Legitimacy

Pancasila, as the foundation of the Indonesian state, consists of five principles that form a unified set of normative values. The Almighty Godhead affirms belief in God while demanding a tolerant attitude in religious life; Just and civilized humanity places the dignity and equality of every human being as the fundamental principle of social and legal relations; the unity of Indonesia directs the administration of the state to prioritize the collective interests of the nation above personal or group interests; people's sovereignty guided by wisdom in deliberation/representation affirms that decision-making must be based on consultation and deliberative rationality; while social justice for all the people of Indonesia projects the legal goal toward the realization of inclusive justice and prosperity for all citizens (Susilo, 2025b).

The integrity of the values of the five principles explains the uniqueness of the Indonesian legal system, which places Pancasila not merely as a political ideology, historical symbol, or post-independence sociological consensus, but as the state philosophy containing the highest normative claims regarding legal and power legitimacy (Susilo, 2025a). In this configuration, Pancasila does not function as a discursive ornament or a normatively neutral declaration of values but as a horizon of rational justification that determines how, why, and to what extent state power can be exercised legitimately (Susilo, 2024). Thus, Pancasila places law in an inherent relationship with philosophical issues concerning legitimacy, justification, and human dignity, so that law is understood not merely as an instrument of regulation but as a normative practice that must be morally accountable to humans as dignified subjects.

Within this framework, Indonesian law is not understood solely as the result of formal procedures, a product of majoritarian legislation, or an expression of institutionalized political will, but rather as a normative practice that must always be justifiable before humans as dignified moral subjects (Susilo, 2025b). Pancasila establishes a reflective relationship between power and rationality, where every form of legal coercion requires publicly acceptable reasons, not merely procedural legitimacy. In other words, the law's validity is based on its legitimacy, which is rooted in normative justification.

Pancasila's positioning as the source of internal legitimacy for this law conceptually distinguishes the Indonesian legal system from the pure procedural positivism model, which strictly separates legality and legitimacy. In procedural positivism, adherence to the procedures for creating norms is often considered sufficient to generate legal obligation. Conversely, within the framework of Pancasila, procedural legality never stands alone but is always in an evaluative relationship with constitutionally enshrined human values. Therefore, the validity of positive law cannot be separated from the normative question of its compatibility with human dignity as a fundamental principle of communal life.

The normative position of Pancasila finds concrete legal articulation through its placement in the Fourth Paragraph of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This is where the second principle—Just and Civilized Humanity—becomes the normative pivot connecting the entire constitutional structure with the idea of human dignity as both the foundation and the limit of state power. Although the principles of Pancasila are often perceived as abstract, it is precisely this abstract nature that allows Pancasila to function as a cross-contextual constitutional principle, guiding legal reasoning in constantly changing social, political, and historical situations. That abstraction is not a normative weakness but rather a prerequisite for fundamental values to maintain their critical power against concrete power practices.

From the perspective of contemporary legal theory, this normative configuration aligns with inclusive legal positivism, which recognizes that moral values are not entirely external to the law but rather gain normative binding force when institutionalized through constitutional structures (Pastor Muñoz, 2023). Thus, Pancasila morality—particularly the principle of human dignity—does not function as an external correction or extrajudicial consideration but rather as an internal condition for the validity of the law itself. Law is valid only if it can be justified by the constitutionally institutionalized values of Pancasila.

2-2 Hierarchy of Norms and Human Dignity as a Non-Derivative Principle

This normative legitimacy structure can be understood systematically through the theory of the hierarchy of norms as formulated by Hans Kelsen. Through the concept of *Stufenbau*, Kelsen asserts that every legal norm derives its validity from a higher norm, ultimately resting on a basic norm (*grundnorm*) as the ultimate source of legitimacy for the entire legal system. Within this framework, legal validity is not a matter of subjective moral preference but rather a normatively structured and hierarchically rational relationship (Zalewska & Heidemann, 2024).

In the Indonesian context, Pancasila can be understood as a material *grundnorm*, meaning a basic norm that is not only formal-transcendental but also contains substantive value content. This means that Pancasila not only provides the form or structure for the legal system but also determines the normative content that must permeate the entire legal framework. Thus, every legal norm and state action is only legitimate if it can be traced back to and justified by Pancasila's values, especially the principle of just and civilized humanity.

In this context, human dignity cannot be diminished to an ancillary value, a policy interest, or a utilitarian objective subject to negotiation for the purposes of stability, security, or administrative efficiency. Human dignity must be understood as a non-derivative principle, meaning it is not derived from the will of the state, majority preferences, utilitarian calculations, or technocratic rationality. On the contrary, it is the state, the law, and all practices of power that must be justified in the face of human dignity as a normative starting point.

Rainer Forst's concept of the right to justification provides the most coherent theoretical articulation of this principle. For Forst, every individual as an equal moral subject is entitled to obtain rational, reciprocal, and universal justification for every norm and act of power that affects them. The right to justification is not only a procedural right; it embodies human dignity as a rational agent deserving to be regarded not merely as an object of regulation but as a collaborator in the process of normative justification (Meyer, 2024).

Thus, legal legitimacy cannot be reduced solely to compliance with formal procedures or majority acceptance. Legal legitimacy depends on whether the norm can be held accountable to those subject to it as equal rational agents. At this point, human dignity transforms from an abstract ethical value into a concrete institutional demand, influencing how laws are formed, interpreted, and enforced.

2-3 Right to Justification, Rule of Law, and Procedural Rationality

When human dignity is understood as the right to justification, then legitimate law is not sufficient to merely meet the requirements of formal legality. Law must also be realized through procedures that allow legal subjects to understand the reasons behind the norms that bind them, as well as provide space for participation, criticism, and rational evaluation. It is this relationship between human dignity and the rule of law that Jeremy Waldron strongly emphasizes.

Waldron places the rule of law not merely as a principle of order, stability, or predictability, but as a form of respect for human beings as rational agents. Law, in his view, must be embodied in understandable general rules, transparent public language, and procedures that allow citizens to assess and respond to legal reasoning. Procedures that are formally legitimate but closed, technocratic, or deliberately obscure their normative rationality lose legitimacy because they fail to treat humans as dignified subjects (Gregory, 2025).

The substantive dimension of human dignity protection is reinforced by Ronald Dworkin's rights as trumps doctrine. Within this framework, fundamental rights are not understood as interests that can be aggregated and weighed against collective goals, but rather as moral claims that serve as a firm normative limit on state authority. Rights mark normative boundaries that the state cannot cross, even in the name of administrative efficiency or majority preference (Wilkinson, 2024).

In line with this, Joseph Raz, through his service conception of authority, asserts that authority is only legitimate insofar as it helps individuals comply with the normative reasons that are already valid for them independently. The obligation to obey the law is not absolute but conditional on the law's ability to truly serve the practical rationality of legal subjects. When the law fails to perform this function—for example, by producing rules that are arbitrary, unjustifiable, or demeaning to human dignity—its claim to authority becomes normatively fragile (Satola, 2025).

2-4 Legal Pluralism, Customary Practices, and Dignity in the Indonesian Context

In a pluralistic society, human dignity serves as a normative horizon that allows the law to function without eliminating diversity. Indonesia's experience shows that legal pluralism is not merely a sociological fact but also a normative potential for building a more humane and contextually reflective legal legitimacy.

Empirical evidence from South Sumatra demonstrates that customary law-based conflict resolution mechanisms, the peace-offering *tepung tawar* tradition, effectively sustain social cohesion within a heterogeneous society. This tradition works by placing human dignity as the primary normative orientation. Conflict is not resolved through win-lose logic, stigmatization of perpetrators, or social exclusion, but rather through dialogue, deliberation, and family reconciliation that restores the parties' status as equal, dignified subjects (Nurdiansyah et al., 2023) (Junaidi, 2024).

A similar approach appears more institutionalized in Aceh through customary courts (*gampong courts*), which have the authority to handle various disputes, including minor criminal cases and social conflicts. Various empirical studies indicate that customary law in Aceh is oriented toward restoring community balance through deliberation involving traditional figures, village officials, and conflicting parties. Customary sanctions serve as a proportional and humane corrective instrument, ensuring that customary law acts as an ethical buffer against the potential formalism and repressive excesses of state law (Mansur et al., 2020) (Mansur et al., 2025).

This empirical framework finds a strong theoretical foundation in the thinking of Mireille Delmas-Marty. Through the concepts of ordered pluralism and internormativity, Delmas-Marty demonstrates that the diversity of legal systems—national, customary, and transnational—does not necessarily need to be understood as a threat to legal certainty but can be organized through

a shared normative commitment to human dignity (Bigo, 2025) (Saldanha & Do Nascimento, 2024) (Boister, 2025). Dignity serves as a limiting principle that prevents both coercive legal unification and extreme relativism, which allows injustice in the name of difference.

3. Discussion

3-1 Democracy, Public Discourse, and the Actualization of Dignity

The democratic dimension of human dignity gains significant conceptual articulation through the idea of democratic iterations developed by Seyla Benhabib. Within this framework, human rights are not understood as final norms to be applied technocratically by state institutions, but rather as the outcome of an ongoing discursive process in the public sphere and legal institutions. Democracy is not simply a means of consolidating majoritarian preferences; it is a practice of collective normative learning that enables society to reflectively reinterpret and broaden the concept of human dignity in response to social transformations and value conflicts (Muñoz, 2023).

This approach is relevant to the Indonesian context, which is characterized by social, cultural, and religious pluralism. In a pluralistic society like this, legal legitimacy cannot be built through the homogenization of values or the standardization of morals, but rather through a process of public justification that is open to differences. The right to justification acts as a normative link between universal moral equality and actual social diversity, as it requires that every norm governing citizen be justifiable with reasons that are mutually acceptable to all parties involved.

Onora O'Neill's version of Kantian constructivism strengthens the logical basis for this claim of justification. O'Neill asserts that the legitimacy of norms does not depend solely on subjective preferences or factual consensus, but rather on their ability to be justified to all parties through universal practical reasoning. This principle rejects all forms of instrumental treatment of human beings and affirms dignity as an internal limit to normative rationality and public policy (Reath, 2022). Thus, legitimate democracy is not merely a democracy of will but a democracy of justification.

At the social level, human dignity is also inseparable from the relationship of recognition. Axel Honneth posits that the quest for recognition is the primary catalyst for societal normative advancement. Denial of recognition harms not only the material interests of individuals or groups but also their moral status as equal subjects. In this context, law functions not only as a regulatory mechanism for behavior but also as an institution of recognition that ascertains an individual's status as a full member of the normative community (Pada, 2022).

Meanwhile, Martha C. Nussbaum, through the capabilities approach, expands the understanding of dignity by emphasizing that formal recognition alone is insufficient if not accompanied by the real ability to live a meaningful life. Dignity demands social, economic, and institutional conditions that enable individuals to develop their basic human capacity

(Čekavičius, 2022). Thus, legal legitimacy does not only depend on its normative structure but also on the extent to which law contributes to creating social conditions that enable the concrete realization of dignity.

3-2 Criticism of the Functional Reduction of Law and Institutional Humiliation

Although human dignity is placed as the highest normative principle, modern legal practice often moves in the opposite direction through the functional reduction of law. In this configuration, law is treated primarily as an instrument of social management that prioritizes efficiency, predictability, and the stability of the system. Consequently, humans are reduced to administrative units, policy variables, or objects of risk management, rather than dignified subjects with reflective capacity.

Christoph Menke sharply criticized this trend by showing that modern law creates freedom and limits it at the same time. Instead of serving as a medium for emancipation, law now operates as an internal mechanism that technocratically regulates the space of freedom. In this situation, freedom is not present as an autonomous practice but as a side effect of systemic rationality (Golia, 2024). The paradox emerges when we execute the law more efficiently, increasing the risk of reducing humans to normative subjects.

Jürgen Habermas's analysis deepened this disconnect between law and the human subject through the concept of the *Lebenswelt*. Habermas posits that the interplay of theory and practice within the intersubjective lifeworld gives rise to human autonomy. When law is uprooted from the *Lebenswelt* and fully managed by systemic rationality, it loses its communicative basis of legitimacy because it fails to reflect the experiences and reasoning of the subjects it governs (Mejía Fernández & Romero, 2022).

Hannah Arendt demonstrates the political dimension of this process through her analysis of the degradation of the public realm. Technocratic rationality drives law and governance, replacing plural and dialogical spaces of action with administratively managed behavior. Under these conditions, bureaucratic management replaces humans as dignified political actors (Meyrick, 2025).

Radbruch's Formula affirms the final normative limit of the functional reduction of law. When the law itself began to deny human dignity, Radbruch rejected the claim of legal certainty. In extreme situations, laws that are formally valid but substantially very unjust lose their claim to normative legitimacy (Sajó, 2024). Criticism of legal functionalism is thus not merely a policy critique but a critique of the very nature of legal legitimacy.

The concrete manifestation of this denial of dignity is evident in the practice of institutional humiliation. Humiliation works by damaging an individual's moral status as an equal human being, either through direct violence or through legal procedures that shame, exclude, or disqualify. The definition of humiliation proposed by Hojman, Miranda, and Wein indicates that humiliation is a form of failure to recognize dignity, leading to alienation and normative anger (Perrin et al., 2023).

The principle of the prohibition of humiliation is reflected in various constitutional regimes and international human rights, such as Article 21 of the Russian Constitution and Article 3 of the European Convention, which affirm the prohibition of treatment that degrades human dignity (Fikfak & Izvorova, 2022) (Horák, 2022). Avishai Margalit, via the notion of a decent society, generalizes this principle by contending that the foremost institutional duty is not to establish perfect justice but to avert systemic humiliation. States and legal institutions are evaluated not only by the results they achieve but also by the extent to which they successfully avoid practices that humiliate legal subjects (Ashenden & Hess, 2022) (Warne, 2022).

3-3 Capital, Legal Coding, and the Challenges of Contemporary Democracy

Challenges to human dignity in modern law stem not only from bureaucratization and technocracy but also from the structure of private law, which creates socio-economic inequality. Katharina Pistor shows that contemporary inequality is not a spontaneous product of market mechanisms but rather the result of legal coding processes that transform economic assets into state-protected power. Through contracts, property rights, collateral, and corporate regimes, private law actively creates hierarchical structures of wealth and power distribution (Pistor, 2022).

Within this framework, law is never normatively neutral. Criticism of Pistor—for example, by Thomas Mulligan—does highlight aspects of the conceptualization of capital, but Pistor's normative significance lies precisely in dismantling the illusion of legal neutrality and affirming that legal design is a political choice that must be democratically accountable. Private law reform, therefore, cannot be limited to technical harmonization but demands structural renewal that expands public participation and limits the dominance of capital interests (Mulligan, 2022).

This critical framework intersects with the thinking of Patchen Markell, who rejects the idea of full sovereignty—whether in the form of identity, the market, or the state. Markell asserts that the political subject is always bound and constrained by relations of dependence and uncertainty. In his view, democracy is not a project of eliminating limitations but an open arena where claims of justice must always be contestable and accountable (Henderson, 2024).

Waldron completes this framework by placing equality as a normative principle rooted in the way law treats everyone as a dignified subject with equal moral capacity. The concept of equal standing before the law demands general rules, understandable public language, and procedures that reject arbitrary domination. Equality here does not eliminate factual differences but prevents those differences from transforming into normative subordination (Gold & Smith, 2025).

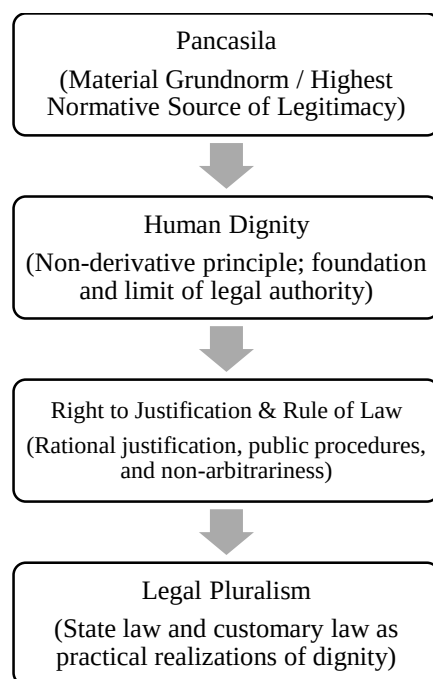
3-4 The Philosophical Contribution of Pancasila to Global Discourse

Through the framework of Pancasila, the Indonesian legal system offers a significant philosophical contribution to the global debate on legal legitimacy, human dignity, and normative pluralism. Human dignity in Pancasila law functions simultaneously as the basis of legitimacy, the limit of power, and the evaluative criteria of law. He demanded that the law not

be reduced to a functional mechanism or an instrument of power accumulation but rather be practiced as a normative practice that is always accountable to the subjects it governs.

Indonesia's experience with customary law and legal pluralism demonstrates that legal legitimacy does not need to be built through homogenization or coercion but can grow from recognizing human dignity in diversity. From this perspective, law can only maintain its normative legitimacy to the extent that it is able to provide rational justification, prevent institutional humiliation, and place humans at the center of all power practices in a democratic and pluralistic society.

As explained above, legal legitimacy within the framework of Pancasila cannot be understood partially or in a fragmented manner. Conversely, this legitimacy is formed through a hierarchical normative structure that connects the philosophical foundation of the state, the principle of human dignity, legal justification mechanisms, and legal practices within a plural social context. To summarize the systematic relationship between these elements concisely and conceptually, this study presents the following visual framework, which represents the architecture of human dignity-based legal legitimacy in the Pancasila legal system.



Source: Elaborated by the author, 2026.

Picture 1. *The Pancasila Framework for Dignity-Based Legal Legitimacy*

The picture visualizes that Pancasila functions as the highest normative source of legitimacy (material *grundnorm*), providing substantive direction for the entire legal system. From this foundation, human dignity is placed as a non-derivative principle, serving as both the basis and the limit for the formation, interpretation, and implementation of law. Human dignity is not

derived from the will of the state or utilitarian considerations but rather serves as the starting point for justifying all practices of power.

At the operational level, the right to justification and the principle of the rule of law represent institutional mechanisms that translate human dignity into rational, transparent, and non-arbitrary legal procedures. Through this mechanism, law gains legitimacy to the extent that it can be held accountable to legal subjects as equal moral agents. Furthermore, legal pluralism—including state law and customary law—is understood as a concrete form of human dignity's actualization in a diverse society, as long as it remains within the horizon of rational justification and the prevention of institutional humiliation. Overall, this framework confirms that legal legitimacy from a Pancasila perspective is layered, reflective, and human-centered and can only be maintained if every level of law remains connected to the principle of human dignity as its fundamental normative orientation.

Conclusion

This research aims to examine whether human dignity within the framework of Pancasila-based law can function as the highest normative source of law's legitimacy and not merely as a symbolic moral value. The hypothesis proposed is that human dignity is a non-derivative normative principle that serves as both the foundation and the limit for the validity of law and the use of state power, especially in democratic and pluralistic societies like Indonesia.

The results of the normative and theoretical analysis in this study confirm the hypothesis. The findings indicate that human dignity within the Pancasila legal system is not external to the law as a moral correction but rather integrated into the very structure of legal justification. The rule of law cannot be reduced to mere formal legality, procedural compliance, or policy efficiency; rather, it depends on the law's ability to provide rational justification to its subjects as equal moral agents, as well as on its ability to prevent legal practices that degrade dignity or result in institutional humiliation. This confirmation was obtained through conceptual analysis and the integration of legal and political philosophy theories, without any indication of methodological bias within the normative research framework used.

The research objectives were also achieved through the explanation of Pancasila's position as a material basic norm, the formulation of human dignity as the right to justification, and the analysis of the relationship between democracy, legal pluralism, and the normative legitimacy of law. In general, this study can be considered a success because it created a clear philosophical framework for how legal legitimacy can be kept without going into procedural positivism or instrumental reductionism. These findings can be generalized to show that a human dignity-based approach provides a strong normative foundation for the reform of laws and democratic practices.

The implications of this research suggest that human dignity can be used as an evaluative standard in legal reform, judicial reasoning, and public policy formulation, particularly in the

context of pluralistic societies. However, this research has limitations because it is normative and has not empirically tested the application of the principle of human dignity in judicial practice or legislation. Therefore, future research can be directed toward empirical studies of court decisions, comparative studies with other legal systems, or interdisciplinary research on the relationship between human dignity, legal technology, and modern state governance. Returning to the initial question of legal legitimacy, this research affirms that law can only maintain its authority insofar as it remains accountable to humans as dignified subjects who are at the center of all power practices.

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