#### International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)

Volume 11, Issue 10, October 2024, PP 36-44 ISSN 2349-0373 (Print) & ISSN 2349-0381 (Online) https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.1110004 www.arcjournals.org



# The Intersections of Politics, Law and Social Stratification in Indonesia

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to describe the dynamic of legal, politics, and social hierarchies in Indonesia. Through qualitative approaches and document analysis, data were collected from a variety of source both primary and secondary. These results demonstrate the complex relationship between legal, political and social classes in Indonesia. Studies have found that legal systems often maintain and reinforce existing social hierarchies, thereby creating and deepening social inequalities. Laws on land rights, labor regulations, and access to justice have been examined and shown to unfairly support certain social groups and marginalize others. The influence of political processes, such as power relations and corruption, is also explored, highlighting their important role in shaping legal frameworks and deteriorating social strata. Marginalized groups such as women, minorities and indigenous peoples face obstacles in claiming their rights and enjoying justice, further empowering the disadvantaged. The implications of this dynamic for social justice and fairness are significant. Maintaining social hierarchies hinders inclusive development, exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities and limits social mobility

Keywords: Politics, Law, Social Stratifications, Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

Fundamental elements of societal dynamics that influence power structures, social inequalities, and the distribution of resources and opportunities are the intersections of law, politics, and social stratification (Gidwani 2018). Understanding these intersections is especially important in the context of Indonesia, the largest Muslim country (Pisani and Buehler 2017), because of the distinctive political, religious, and cultural intersections at play. Indonesia is a country with a diverse population made up of different ethnicities, religions, and social groups (Duile and Bens 2017). State law and customary or religious law both have an impact on the nation's legal system, creating a complex legal pluralism. The legal system, as well as who has access to justice and equality, is significantly shaped by political processes, on the other hand (Marlia, Lukmana, and Gunawan 2023).

By carefully analyzing these interactions, the study intends to pinpoint the challenges encountered by Indonesia's excluded communities and the implications for social justice and inclusion (Civil Society and Transitional Justice in Asia and the Pacific 2019). It also strives to provide evidence-based viewpoints that can direct the creation of laws, policies, and social change efforts designed to combat social injustice and build a more fair and equitable society (Santoso and Kusumasari 2019). Through the use of a multidisciplinary method that integrates legal research, political science, and sociological views, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the dynamic of law, politics, and social stratification in Indonesia. This will hopefully foster a deeper understanding of the challenges and implications posed by these dynamic and pave the way for major change that will result in a more inclusive and just society in Indonesia for all individuals and communities.

The literatures of the relationship between politics, law, and social stratification in Indonesia rely on earlier research in the area. The studies provide an overview of the current knowledge, gaps, and noteworthy contributions in the studied field with a focus on the pertinent literature and theoretical frameworks that direct the research. The previous studies on the topic, several aspects of Indonesian politics, law, and social stratification were examined. Legal systems that control things like access to

justice (Hutto and Green 2016), labor regulations (Dark 2011), and land tenure rules (Caniglia and Passalacqua 2019)have had their impact on socioeconomic inequality analyzed. These investigations have revealed the mechanisms through which legislation might preserve existing power structures and social hierarchies.

Some studies have also looked into how political actions impact the legal system (Volkov, Pulley, and Shlafer 2023) and socioeconomic stratification (Delgadillo 2016). Studies have looked at the connection between social justice and equality and how elites, power relationships, and corruption affect judicial rulings. Indonesia features a range of legal systems, including state law, customary law, and religious law, according to studies on legal diversity (Hidayati, Umar, and Azhari 2022; Marlia, Lukmana, and Gunawan 2023). These works have illuminated the difficulties and consequences of navigating a complex legal system, especially for those from impoverished backgrounds. Theories like those put forth by Bourdieu and Weber have considerably helped our comprehension of how politics, law, and social stratification interact (Stallings 2010). These theoretical underpinnings have shed light on the potential for legal systems to uphold current power relations and perpetuate social inequality (Donovan and Karp 2017). The three main pillars of all societies are politics, law, and social stratification (Petras and Veltmeyer 2017).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

# 2.1. The Law and Social Class

The review examines pertinent studies conducted in Indonesia and draws on the works of top authorities on the subject, including Bourdieu and Weber (Gale 2015). The significant contributions made by Bourdieu (1986) and Weber (1978) both highlighted the potential effects of the law on social inequality. Bourdieu's idea of the "legal field" is concerned with how legal systems can maintain underlying power structures and exacerbate social injustices. According to Weber's theory of legal-rational authority, laws are crucial to upholding social order and hierarchy. In the context of Indonesia, Iswahyudi (2022) investigated the relationship between the legal and social stratification systems. In his study, Iswahyudi examines how socioeconomic stratification in Madura, rural Indonesia, is impacted by the country's land tenure laws. The research shows how particular land policies that favor wealthy elites result in an unequal distribution of land and sustain social inequality. The impact of labor rules on social stratification is examined (Hirsch 2017). The study calls attention to the ways that labor rules, such as unequal compensation and a lack of social protection for workers in vulnerable groups, can worsen inequality.

All of these studies show how important law is as a tool that can either support or challenge social stratification. They stress how crucial it is to consider legal systems critically as well as how they affect various social groups. To find reform opportunities and advance more equitable outcomes, it is essential to comprehend how legal systems interact with social stratification. The literature review also highlights more general discussions and theoretical frameworks related to the relationship between the law and social class. It examines the idea of legal pluralism and how it interacts with social inequality. Regarding social stratification, Indonesia's legal pluralism—where state law coexists with customary and religious laws—presents particular difficulties. Researchers such as Zhan (2017) and Dibley et al. (2020) have looked at the dynamic between legal pluralism and the rights of people who identify as indigenous, of color, or with a particular racial or ethnic group, shedding light on the intricate intersections of law and social stratification in diverse societies.

Overall, the review of the literature emphasizes how important it is to look into how law and social stratification are related. It lays a foundation for comprehending the complexities of law in the Indonesian context by showing how legal systems can either maintain or challenge existing inequalities. Forging sensible policies and advancing equality and social justice in society require a thorough understanding of this issue. There has been a lot of scholarly research on the connection between the law and social stratification. Legal scholars such as Ardhana & Puspitasari (2023) and Gostin (2015) have emphasized how the law can reinforce existing social hierarchies and perpetuate inequalities. Specifically in relation to land rights, labor laws, and access to justice, studies by Ufen (2012) looked at how social stratification in Indonesia has been influenced by legal frameworks.

## 2.2. Politics, Law, and Power Dynamics

Indonesia was the venue for studies by Barton (2020) and Pisan and Buehleur (2017) that looked at the connections between politics, the law, and corruption. In his research, Barton examines how political affect legal procedures and how difficult it is to uphold the rule of law in Indonesia. The study demonstrates how political objectives and corruption can undermine the efficiency of legal systems, maintaining power disparities and undermining social justice. The research of Buehler focuses on how political concerns have impacted Indonesia's anti-corruption drive. It examines how political factors, such as party dynamics and judicial processes, influence the fight against corruption and the efficacy of legal sanctions.

The literature review as a whole underline the importance of comprehending the connections between politics, law, and power dynamics. It emphasizes how judicial decisions, legal frameworks, and social gaps can all be affected by political factors. The study offers guidance for programs promoting openness, accountability, and just governance and offers a framework for understanding Indonesia's complex legal system. Legislation, judicial interpretation, and legal compliance are all significantly influenced by political processes. Studies by Barton (2020) and Pisani et al. (2017) in the context of Indonesia look at the relationship between politics, law, and corruption, shedding light on the difficulties and effects for governance and social stratification.

## 2.3. Legal Pluralism and Social Inequalities

The significant literature in legal anthropology and a significant contributor to our comprehension of legal pluralism come from Steward and Harding (Stewart and Harding 2023). His literatures place a strong emphasis on how different legal systems coexist and explore how these interactions impact social inequality and access to justice. Others come from Arnes (2010), and Güneş-Ayata (2017) that contributes to the literature by studying the dynamic of legal pluralism with gender, ethnicity, and indigenous rights in order to offer insight on the ways in which these multiple legal systems interact with social inequities. Numerous academic studies have examined the relationship between social inequality and legal pluralism in Indonesia. For instance, Arnez (2010) investigates how legal pluralism affects women's and gender-based rights, emphasizing how customary and religious laws can support discriminatory behavior and gender-based inequality. Similarly, studies by Chong (2020), and Hefner& Robert (Hefner and Robert 2020) analyze the effects of legal pluralism for indigenous communities and ethnic minorities in Indonesia, highlighting the difficulties they encounter in asserting their rights and gaining access to justice within a pluralistic legal environment.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to thoroughly analyze how law, politics, and social stratification connect in Indonesia. The qualitative approaches can help us comprehend the intricate dynamics, difficulties, and implications of the Indonesian socio-legal system better. The following elements make up the research strategy.

An analysis of the literature to establish a theoretical framework and identify key ideas, theories, and discussions regarding law, politics, and social stratification in Indonesia, a thorough analysis of the most recent scholarly literature, including academic journals, books, and topical publications, will be carried out. The research design will be determined by this review, which will also aid in identifying information gaps. We collect qualitative data through participant observation, focus groups, and interviews. Important participants will be carefully chosen to present a range of viewpoints on how politics, the law, and social stratification interact. Legal professionals, decision-makers in government, social activists, and representatives from underserved areas may all fall under this category. These qualitative research methods will make it feasible to investigate people's attitudes toward the study's topic in great detail.

Thematic analysis used to uncover recurring themes, patterns, and relationships in the collected data. To uncover significant concepts and connections, the data will be coded and categorized throughout analysis. Researchers will have a complete understanding of their issue if they combine qualitative and quantitative findings.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Reinforcement of Social Stratification

Land management in Indonesia is included in several laws such as Supreme Court Decree No. 495 of 1975, Government Regulation No. 24 of 1997 concerning Land Registration and Law No. 5 of 1960 concerning Basic Agrarian Regulations (UUPA) (Dibley and Ford 2020b). The land registration system adopted by Indonesia is contained in several laws. This resulted in overlapping land ownership. In this case, the losers could be from the government, namely the National Land Agency (BPN) or the community whose ownership rights to their land are threatened because there is a possibility of overlapping land certificates. The inequality in land ownership in 2013 reached 0.68. Only 1% of Indonesian people control 68% of land resources. This makes the implementation of agrarian reform even more urgent to reduce inequality in land ownership and control. Regarding asset distribution, Indonesia's Gini ratio is greater than the income Gini ratio.

The data below shows control over natural resources precisely by a handful of groups. Table 1 show that the 53 million hectares of land tenure/exploitation provided by the government, only 2.7 million hectares are allocated for the people, but 94.8 per cent for corporations. Moreover, the land managed by corporations in Kalimantan reached 24.73 million ha., while those managed by the people are only 1.07 million ha(Astuti 2017).

**Table1.** Comparison of the Area of Land Managed by Corporations and Indonesian People August 2022 in Hectares (in Million)

Number	Regions	Land Ma	Land Managed	
		Corporations	Peoples	
1.	Borneo	27,4	1,1	
2.	Sumatera	11,9	0, 910968	
3.	Papua	8,6	0,169665	
4.	Moluccas	2,3	0,227888	
5.	Sulawesi	2,2	342233	
6.	Java-Bali-Nusa Tenggara	0,682320	0,060313	

Source: https://dataindonesia.id/varia/detail/icw-penindakan-kasus-korupsi-meningkat-pada-2022

Moreover, the perpetuation of social stratification in Indonesia looks at the research results that show how the legal system frequently upholds and reinforces preexisting social hierarchies (Rismawati et al. 2023; Mamonto 2019; Hidjaz, Mamonto, and Buana 2020). It explores the ways in which laws and legal systems can exacerbate social disparities, impede social mobility, and widen rifts in society. The certain laws and policies in Indonesia favor privileged groups, which results in an unequal distribution of resources, authority, and opportunities. For instance, land tenure laws may unfairly benefit powerful individuals and groups, resulting in a concentration of land ownership in the hands of a select few while undermining marginalized communities. Inequalities in wages, social protection, and working conditions for disadvantaged groups may be perpetuated as a result of labor laws, which would further social injustices.

In conclusion, power dynamics, political interests, and corruption frequently have an impact on how social stratification is reinforced by the legal system. The results of the study suggest that elites and vested interests in politics can influence legal decision-making, leading to laws that preserve the status quo and benefit particular groups. By allowing the wealthy to use the legal system for their own gain and putting obstacles in the way of marginalized communities receiving justice and equal treatment, corruption worsens social inequalities.

## 4.2. Influence of Political Processes

Indonesia's legal system is significantly impacted by political events. Legislation can be shaped to benefit particular groups or uphold the current power structure under the influence of political interests and power dynamics. This could exacerbate social inequality and maintain social stratification. The creation and implementation of fair legal frameworks are seriously hampered by corruption and the influence of special interests in politics (Donovan and Karp 2017). According to research, corruption can affect the legal system's integrity, resulting in biased decisions and inconsistent application of the law. Corruption weakens the rule of law and keeps social injustices alive (Zhang and Zhang 2020).

Table 2 show that there have been 579 corruption cases that have been prosecuted in Indonesia throughout 2022. This number has increased by 8.63% compared to the previous year of 533 cases. From these various cases, there were 1,396 people who were made suspects of domestic corruption. The number also increased by 19.01% compared to 2021 with 1,173 suspects. In detail, the Attorney General's Office (Kejagung) will be the law enforcement agency that handles the most corruption in 2022, 405 cases. The most corruption occurs in the village sector in 2022, 155 cases. This number is equivalent to 26.77% of the total corruption cases handled by law enforcement in 2022. Apart from villages, corruption will mostly occur in the utility sector in 2022, 88 cases. After that, there is the government sector with 54 corruption cases last year. A total of 40 corruption cases will occur in the education sector in 2022. Then, there will be 35 cases of corruption in the natural resources and banking sectors.

**Table2.** The Number of Corruption Cases and Suspects from 2018 – 2022 in Indonesia

Number	Year	The Number of Corruptions	
		Cases	Suspects
1.	2018	454	1087
2.	2019	271	1580
3.	2000	444	875
4.	2021	553	1173
5.	2022	579	1396

Source: https://dataindonesia.id/varia/detail/icw-penindakan-kasus-korupsi-meningkat-pada-2022

Comprehensive improvements that improve transparency, accountability, and the rule of law are needed to counteract the effect of political processes (James and Alihodzic 2020). Strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring the independence of the court, and combating corruption are crucial for reducing the negative consequences of political dynamics on the legal system. The results also highlight the value of citizen involvement, civil society engagement, and advocacy in influencing political processes and advancing legal reforms (Lufunyo 2013).

However, the application of laws and the operation of judicial institutions can both be affected by political processes (Thompson 2018). The fairness and impartiality of court decisions can be impacted by the selection and conduct of judges as well as by the influence of political actors on the judiciary. Marginalized communities may encounter challenges in obtaining justice and securing their rights when political interests take precedence over legal principles. Unfair political power distribution can lead to laws that reinforce social divisions and existing inequalities, preventing people from moving up the social ladder (Sihombing 2018; Putri Anzari 2020). The pursuit of justice and the defense of their rights may be made more difficult for marginalized communities by political meddling or bias in the legal system.

## 4.3. Legal Pluralism and Marginalized Communities

The legal pluralism and marginalized communities in Indonesia examines research findings that highlight the complexities and effects of having several different legal systems operating concurrently in the nation. The impact of marginalized communities access to justice and right enjoyment is examined, along with how social inequalities and legal pluralism interact (Mbe 2020). The study's findings imply that Indonesia's legal pluralism, where state law coexists alongside customary and religious norms, may result in legal inconsistencies, gaps, and discriminatory behaviors (Mccaffery 2011). Marginalized groups including indigenous peoples, women, and ethnic minorities typically struggle to express their rights and achieve justice in this multicultural legal context (Seligson and McCants 2022; Kuehling 2019; Rismawati et al. 2023).

Women who face the law are often still filled with problems, namely discrimination, whether they are victims, witnesses or even perpetrators. In fact, the state has an obligation to ensure that women get justice and are free from all discrimination in the justice system. Because often women do not get this at every level of the legal process. Often women who are in conflict with the law in cases of sexual violence, in particular, hardly find any light in resolving the cases they experience in the eyes of the law. Instead of resolving their cases in the eyes of the law, women who are often in the victim's position are far from being protected.

For 2022, Komnas Perempuan includes the heading CATAHU which provides an overview of the dynamics of the number, various types, forms, and domains, as well as structural, cultural and legal substance barriers in handling Gender Based Violence (KBG) against Women, reads "Shadows Stagnation: The Power of Prevention and Handling Compared to the Increase in Number, Variety and Complexity of Gender-Based Violence against Women". The dynamics of direct complaints to Komnas Perempuan, service agencies and Badilag. A total of 338,496 cases of gender-based violence (KBG) against women were collected with details, complaints to Komnas Perempuan 3,838 cases, service institutions 7,029 cases, and the Religious Courts Agency (BADILAG) 327,629 cases.

The patriarchal norms and cultural practices have an impact on religious and customary rules, which can subsequently support social inequities and continue discriminatory behaviors (Soedarwo 2014). The ability to own property, receive inheritances, or obtain a divorce may be restricted for women, creating unequal power dynamics and possibilities. Indigenous groups may struggle to defend their land rights, cultural history, and natural resources since they don't receive enough recognition and protection under state law. Other problems brought on by legal pluralism include inconsistentlegal interpretations and a lack of clear processes for resolving conflicts across different legal systems. Marginalized groups may have difficulty understanding these complex legal frameworks, which would restrict their access to justice and the protection of their rights (Wardhana 2019; Wardiono et al. 2022; Arun 2016).

## 5. CONCLUSION

Insightful information about the complex dynamics, difficulties, and implications for social justice and equality is provided by the study on the intersections of law, politics, and social stratification in Indonesia. The research emphasizes the interconnectedness of these domains and their significant influence on social hierarchies and power dynamics through a thorough literature review. The results show that laws and legal systems frequently reinforce existing social stratification, sustaining social injustices and impeding social mobility. Social disparities are exacerbated by political processes, such as power relationships and corruption, which influence the creation, application, and interpretation of laws. The disadvantages faced by marginalized communities, such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples, are exacerbated by barriers to accessing justice and receiving legal protections.

These intersections have significant effects on social justice and inclusion. Consistent social stratification restricts social mobility, exacerbates socioeconomic disparities, and hinders inclusive development. Comprehensive political and legal reforms are required to address these issues. Equitable legal systems, increased transparency, and anti-corruption measures should be the main goals of reforms. Promoting social justice and eradicating social stratification depend on marginalized communities engaging meaningfully in decision-making processes. In order to bring about transformational change, cooperation and advocacy efforts among policymakers, legal professionals, civil society organizations, and activists are crucial. The fight against social injustice and support for legislative and policy changes that advance social justice and equality is greatly aided by social movements. A more just and inclusive society may result from fortifying partnerships and promoting communication among stakeholders.

Finally, advancing social justice and equality in Indonesia necessitates addressing the interactions between politics, law, and social stratification. The study emphasizes the significance of extensive legal and political reforms, empowering marginalized communities, and encouraging cooperation and advocacy. By making these changes, Indonesia can work to create a society with fewer social inequalities, equitable access to justice, and increased opportunities for social mobility.

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**Citation:** Basuki Rahmat & Asep Nurjaman. "The Intersections of Politics, Law and Social Stratification in Indonesia" in International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE), vol 11, no.10, 2024, pp. 36-44. DOI: https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.1110004.

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