



## THE RELATIONS OF POLITICS, LAW, AND ECONOMICS IN A SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY PERSPECTIVE\*

**Abdurrahman, Nur Rohim Yunus, Refly Setiawan**

Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium,

Gosudarstvennyy Universitet Upravleniya, Moscow Russia,

Sakarya University, Turkiye

Email: [abdurrahman@uclouvain.be](mailto:abdurrahman@uclouvain.be), [nurrohimyunus@yandex.ru](mailto:nurrohimyunus@yandex.ru), [refly@sakarya.edu.tr](mailto:refly@sakarya.edu.tr)



[10.15408/sjsbs.v12i1.45728](https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v12i1.45728)

### Abstract

The relationship between politics, law, and economics forms the main foundation in the dynamics of national and social life. These three elements not only influence each other structurally but also create a power structure that directly affects the distribution of social justice, policy-making, and the functioning of state institutions. This study aims to examine in depth how the relationship between politics, law, and economics is formed, implemented, and questioned through a social philosophy approach, and how this approach can open up space for criticism of the structural inequalities that occur. The research method used is qualitative with an interdisciplinary approach that combines political, legal, and economic analysis within a social philosophy framework. Data were obtained through a literature review of critical philosophy, social justice theory, and relevant empirical studies. The study's results reveal that the relationship between politics, law, and economics is often constructed to maintain the dominance of certain groups, rather than achieving social justice. Law is not always neutral, but usually becomes a tool for legitimising economic and political power. Politics also does not always run within the framework of democratic participation, but is often controlled by market interests. Social philosophy plays a crucial role in dismantling these power structures and providing ethical and critical perspectives to promote policy reform and social stability.

**Keywords:** Social Philosophy; Political Law Economy; Social Justice; Power; Public Policy

---

\* Received: January 27, 2025, Revision: February 18, 2025, Published: March 31, 2025.

## A. INTRODUCTION

In the life of a nation and state, politics, law, and economy are the three main pillars that form the social structure and influence the direction of a country's development. The three do not stand alone, but are interrelated in a complex and dynamic way. Politics determines the direction of power and public policy; law becomes an instrument of legitimacy and social control, while the economy drives the allocation of resources and community welfare. The relationship between these three elements does not always run harmoniously. Still, it is often colored by the tug-of-war of interests that have a direct impact on social justice and the public welfare.

Historically, law has often been a formal means for political power to maintain its dominance over the economy and society. In a democratic system, for example, although law is usually claimed to be a product of public consensus, the legislative process is frequently controlled by political elites and large investors who have specific economic interests.<sup>1</sup> This causes the law to lose its neutrality and function as a tool for reproducing social and economic inequality.

The relationship between politics and economics also tends to be mutually exploitative. The state, through its political power, determines economic policies that can benefit certain groups, while large economic actors utilise the power of capital to influence political policies, a phenomenon known as "democratic oligarchy." In this context, law is often present not as a corrective tool, but as a tool to legitimise power.<sup>2</sup>

From the perspective of social philosophy, this relationship is ethically and structurally questionable. Social philosophy examines not only the formal structure of the state, but also power relations, ideology, and their impact on social justice.<sup>3</sup> Social philosophical critique is crucial for dismantling the normative assumptions underlying legal and economic policies, and for encouraging a transformation towards a more just, participatory, and humane social order. Therefore, understanding the relationship between politics, law, and economics through the lens of social philosophy is crucial as a means to develop an ethical and theoretical framework that addresses the issue of structural injustice in modern society.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hadiz, V. R. (2017). Indonesia's New Regressive Elite and the Illiberal Turn. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 47(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2016.1239752>

<sup>2</sup> Winters, J. A. (2011). *Oligarchy*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Honneth, A. (2014). *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*. Columbia University Press.

Social philosophy plays a crucial role in dismantling and critiquing the structure of relations among politics, law, and economics in society. Unlike the empirical approach, which is often descriptive and technocratic, social philosophy offers a reflective and normative approach—namely, questioning the values, goals, and justice that underlie the existing social system. In this context, social philosophy discusses not only what happens, but why something happens and whether the order is worth maintaining or should be changed.<sup>4</sup>

Philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas emphasize the importance of rational communication in the public sphere as a basis for the formation of morally legitimate laws and policies. He criticizes the dominance of economic and political systems over the lifeworld, which results in the erosion of democratic and participatory values.<sup>5</sup> When laws and policies no longer originate from rational public discourse, but are instead determined by the power of capital and the interests of political elites, the emancipatory function of law is disrupted. In addition, Axel Honneth, through his recognition theory, asserts that political, legal, and economic structures should support the dignity and social recognition of individuals. When relations between these institutions fail to create conditions of relational justice, social pathologies such as alienation, marginalisation, and inequality will emerge that are not only material but also existential.<sup>6</sup>

Within the framework of social philosophy, the relationship between politics, law, and economics is not seen as a mere technical relationship, but as a network of social relations that are full of ideology and power. Social philosophy helps reveal hidden structures of domination and offers an alternative vision towards a more just and humane society. Thus, social philosophy not only provides a theoretical basis for the analysis of relations between state elements, but also directs discourse towards normative values such as justice, freedom, and equality—which are the foundation for sustainable social transformation.

This study aims to analyze the relationship between politics, law, and economics conceptually and philosophically, and to provide a critical understanding of the dynamics of the three in a social context. These three elements not only form a formal structure in a country, but also play a central

---

<sup>4</sup> Allen, A. (2016). *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. Columbia University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Habermas, J. (1987). *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Beacon Press.

<sup>6</sup> Honneth, A. (1996). *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. MIT Press.

role in determining the direction of development, justice, and social welfare. However, in practice, these relations are often shaped by power imbalances, hidden ideologies, and economic and political interests that do not always align with the values of social justice.

In the tradition of social philosophy, an analytical approach to the relationship between social structures and normative values, such as freedom, justice, and recognition, is crucial. Social philosophy asks not only “how the system works,” but “for whom it works” and “what values it seeks to achieve.” This approach therefore allows for a critique of the status quo and opens up space for the possibility of a more ethical and just social transformation.<sup>7</sup>

This research will examine how the legal system frequently becomes an extension of dominant political and economic interests, rather than a neutral space that ensures justice.<sup>8</sup> In this context, social philosophy becomes a tool to reveal the power relations behind seemingly objective legal products. In addition, in the context of political economy, this study also aims to criticise how political and corporate elites often determine economic policies without adequate public participation, which ultimately results in increasing inequality and social exclusion.<sup>9</sup>

With a philosophical approach, this study will not only analyse the theoretical concepts underlying the relations between state elements, but also provide a reflective framework for understanding the issue of social justice in contemporary reality. The goal is that law, politics, and economics are not only understood as technocratic systems, but as moral arenas that must continue to be criticised, improved, and directed towards the common good.

The urgency of research on the relationship between politics, law, and economics from a social philosophy perspective lies in the urgent need to understand and critique the increasingly complex and interest-laden social structures of the contemporary era. In many cases, public policies intended for the common good are often dominated by the political and economic agendas of a small group of elites. Law often loses its function as a guardian of justice and

---

<sup>7</sup> Benhabib, S. (2002). *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Tamanaha, B. Z. (2006). *Law as a Means to an End: Threat to the Rule of Law*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>9</sup> Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.

assumes a more formal role as a legitimization of established structural inequalities.<sup>10</sup>

In the context of globalisation and neoliberalism, law and politics are often used to expand the power of capital and reorganise the economic order for market efficiency. This results in reduced space for civil society participation in decision-making processes, and deepens social inequality.<sup>11</sup> When law, economics, and politics support each other but are not guided by principles of social ethics, these relationships can become sources of domination and exclusion, rather than liberation.

This is where social philosophy becomes very relevant. The social philosophy approach can reopen fundamental questions: For whom is economic policy designed? Does the law still side with substantive justice? Does the political process genuinely reflect the will of the people? In other words, social philosophy is not only a theoretical tool but also a normative compass for assessing the moral validity of social structures.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of Indonesia, this urgency is even stronger considering the rampant oligarchic practices, economic inequality, and the weakness of neutral and fair legal supremacy. This research is expected to provide a basis for critical thinking that not only portrays reality descriptively, but also presents a reflective framework that can be used to evaluate and improve the existing socio-political-legal order. Thus, this research is essential not only for academics, but also for the broader community that yearns for a more just, democratic, and humane social order.

The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which explicitly combines political, legal, and economic analysis through a critical social philosophy framework. This method has not been widely employed in multidisciplinary studies in Indonesia. Often, studies on politics, law, and economics stand alone as separate disciplines, thereby failing to reveal the interconnections and tensions between the three that shape power structures and social inequality in a comprehensive and nuanced manner.

---

<sup>10</sup> Pistor, K. (2019). *The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Supiot, A. (2017). *Governance by Numbers: The Making of a Legal Model of Allegiance*. Hart Publishing.

<sup>12</sup> Zurn, C. F. (2011). Social Pathologies as Second-Order Disorders. In B. van den Brink & D. Owen (Eds.), *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory* (pp. 345–371). Cambridge University Press.

This study employs a social philosophy approach, particularly from the Critical Theory tradition, to examine the dynamics of the three simultaneously, with a focus on the values, structures, and social practices that influence collective life. This approach enables a new understanding of phenomena such as legal oligarchy, political capitalism, and the use of law as a means of legitimising power, which are often considered normal within the logic of formal institutions in many contexts.<sup>13</sup>

Another novelty is the combination of normative and critical dimensions, which not only describe factual conditions, but also evaluate social structures in terms of ethics and social justice. Thus, this study presents a new conceptual model to assess how the relationship between politics, law, and economy can be harnessed to drive social transformation, rather than merely reproducing the status quo. Therefore, this study fills a gap in Indonesian academic literature, as it still rarely integrates social-critical theory with cross-disciplinary studies, especially in the context of globalisation and neoliberalism, which influence state institutions.

From the background above, the researcher focuses the research on several questions as problem formulations, namely: How do politics, law, and economics become elements that influence each other and cannot be separated? and how does social philosophy help dismantle the power structure and demand ethical accountability for these relations?

## B. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method, incorporating a literature review approach (library research), and combines political, legal, and economic perspectives within a social philosophy framework. This method was chosen because it aligns with the research objectives, which are conceptual and reflective, namely to analyse in depth the relationships between state elements in the social structure and interpret the philosophical meaning behind the dynamics of power, regulation, and economic interests that interact with each other.

A qualitative approach is employed because this research focuses on understanding the meaning, structure, and social logic underlying political, legal, and economic phenomena, rather than numerical measurements.

---

<sup>13</sup> Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press. Also see: Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.

Qualitative research enables interpretive and critical analysis, particularly in understanding the texts, discourses, and ideologies embedded in public policies, legal systems, and economic practices.<sup>14</sup> The literature approach involves analyzing academic sources, including social philosophy books, scientific journal articles, legal documents, and policy reports on political economy. This analysis is hermeneutic and dialectical, as it links theories from figures such as Jürgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser, and Karl Marx with contemporary social realities, both globally and nationally. Additionally, political, legal, and economic approaches are employed in an integrative manner to dismantle the structure of power relations in modern society. The political approach focuses on the distribution of power and the decision-making process, while the legal approach highlights how regulations are formed, enforced, and manipulated. The economic approach, in contrast, emphasises the role of capital, the distribution of resources, and the inequality it produces.<sup>15</sup>

By combining these three approaches within the framework of social philosophy, this research can provide a comprehensive and critical understanding of reality. The results are expected not only to provide a rich description of the interaction between political, legal, and economic elements, but also to offer normative evaluations that can serve as a basis for thinking about more just and humane social renewal.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Definition and Scope of Politics, Law, and Economics

Conceptually, politics is the decision-making process in a society concerning the distribution of power, authority, and resources.<sup>16</sup> Law, on the other hand, is a system of institutionalised norms that regulates the behavior of society with the legitimacy of the state, functioning as a tool of social control and justice.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, economics refers to the system of production, distribution, and consumption of resources in society to meet human needs.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

<sup>15</sup> Jessop, B. (2008). *State Power: A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Polity Press.

<sup>16</sup> Heywood, A. (2013). *Politics* (4th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>17</sup> Friedman, L. M. (1975). *The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective*. Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>18</sup> Samuelson, P. A., & Nordhaus, W. D. (2010). *Economics* (19th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

These three elements are closely related and inseparable in the reality of national and state life. Politics influences law through the process of legislation and regulation; law regulates the course of political and economic activities, while economics influences politics through the power of capital and class interests. Social philosophy views this relationship as part of a power structure that continues to exhibit dynamics and conflict, particularly in terms of domination and resistance.<sup>19</sup>

One concrete example of the relationship between these three elements can be seen in the implementation of the Job Creation Law (Law No. 11/2020) in Indonesia. Politically, this law was driven by the government's interest in creating an investment climate and economic growth. Legally, it was produced through a controversial legislative process and was challenged through the Constitutional Court. From a financial perspective, this policy aims to facilitate investment and deregulation; however, it has drawn criticism for being perceived as prioritising financial interests over labor and environmental protection.<sup>20</sup>

Policies like this illustrate how economic interests can influence political decisions and shape the development of laws. From a social philosophy perspective, this kind of interaction is not neutral; instead, it reflects structural inequality in society, where dominant groups can manipulate these three elements to perpetuate their power and interests.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Social Philosophy as a Lens of Analysis

Social philosophy is a branch of philosophy that discusses the conditions, structures, and dynamics of collective human life in society. Key concepts in social philosophy, such as justice, freedom, power, and social structure, serve as analytical tools for understanding the relationships between politics, law, and economics.

The concept of justice, as explained by John Rawls (1971),<sup>22</sup> encompasses the principles of distributive justice and procedural justice that aim to ensure equal treatment within social institutions. While freedom is not only interpreted

---

<sup>19</sup> Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Mulyani, S. (2021). "Kontroversi UU Cipta Kerja dan Tantangan Demokrasi Konstitusional." *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 18(2), 321–340.

<sup>21</sup> Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press.

<sup>22</sup> Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.



as individual freedom from state intervention, but also positive freedom, namely the ability to determine one's own life in a just structure.<sup>23</sup>

Power in social philosophy is not seen solely as formal authority, but also as a form of domination in social structures, as criticised by Foucault (1980).<sup>24</sup> This is where social philosophy plays a crucial role in exposing the forms of power concealed behind legal and economic policies. The social structure is understood as a network of relations that shape social positions and their influence on access to rights, opportunities, and resources.<sup>25</sup> Social philosophy plays a critical role in exposing the ideology that underlies public policy. It questions the legitimacy of political, legal, and economic institutions, and assesses whether these institutions genuinely reflect the values of social justice or perpetuate inequality and exploitation.

Habermas (1996), for example, through his discourse theory, emphasises the importance of democratic legitimacy in the legal and policy process.<sup>26</sup> He criticises instrumental rationality, which ignores citizen participation, and emphasises the importance of equal communication. In the Indonesian context, inequality in wealth distribution, a weak rule of law, and political oligarchy are examples of social orders that require philosophical critique.<sup>27</sup> Thus, social philosophy is not only a theory, but also a tool for liberation. It provides a framework for re-evaluating political, legal, and economic systems within the framework of ethics and social justice.

### 3. Theories and Figures in Social Philosophy Discourse

Plato, in *The Republic*, describes the ideal society as a harmonious and hierarchical order, in which justice is achieved when each social class—rulers, guardians, and workers—plays its role according to its nature. Within this framework, politics and law should be directed toward the common good, rather than individual or group interests. Although utopian, Plato's thought lays the

---

<sup>23</sup> Berlin, I. (1969). *Two Concepts of Liberty*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. Pantheon.

<sup>25</sup> Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Polity Press.

<sup>26</sup> Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press.

<sup>27</sup> Hadiz, V. R. (2017). "Indonesia's Oligarchic Democracy: The Limits of Reform." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 47(1), 67–83.

groundwork for a normative understanding of the relationship between political power, legal justice, and economic well-being.<sup>28</sup>

Karl Marx posited that economic relations form the structural basis of society, determining the superstructure, including law and politics. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx (1859) emphasised that law and the state are not neutral entities, but rather tools of domination of the capitalist class. Economic inequality fosters a legal and political structure that primarily serves the interests of the bourgeoisie. Marx's thought serves as a critical basis for examining how the capitalist economic structure fosters unequal power and legal relations in modern society.<sup>29</sup>

John Rawls (1971) presents an alternative approach to establishing a just social order through the principle of "justice as fairness." In *A Theory of Justice*, he introduced the concept of the "veil of ignorance" as a method for formulating principles of justice that are free from bias due to social position. Rawls emphasises the importance of political and legal institutions in ensuring equality of rights and opportunities, and in paying attention to those who are least advantaged. His views become an essential reference in the design of normatively just public policies.<sup>30</sup>

Jürgen Habermas emphasises the importance of rational communication in the public sphere as a means of legitimising law and political policy. In *Between Facts and Norms* (1996), he states that legitimate law is not only formally determined, but must also be based on the discursive participation of citizens. Habermas criticises the dominance of the system (economic and bureaucratic) over the world of life, and encourages the democratisation of the public sphere as a deliberative arena.<sup>31</sup>

#### **4. Politics and Law as Tools of Power or Justice?**

In practice, law never exists in a value vacuum. It is born, grows, and is implemented in a socio-political context that is full of interests. According to Hunt (1990), law is a social product that reflects the dominant power relations in society. When political elites have control over the formation of laws, then the law can be engineered to protect the interests of certain groups and negate

---

<sup>28</sup> Plato. (2007). *The Republic* (trans. D. Lee). Penguin Classics.

<sup>29</sup> Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970). *The German Ideology*. International Publishers.

<sup>30</sup> Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>31</sup> Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press.

substantive justice. This phenomenon is evident in various neoliberal policies that are legally valid but socioeconomically create inequality.<sup>32</sup>

In many cases, the law functions as a tool for legitimising power, rather than as a guardian of universal justice. As shown by Tamanaha (2006), law is often controlled by dominant political and economic actors to maintain the status quo, especially in formal democratic systems that are not fully deliberative. This is where the importance of critically examining law through a social philosophy approach lies.<sup>33</sup>

Social philosophy serves as an analytical tool to dissect the power relations underlying the formation of law. Michel Foucault (1977) highlighted how law and legal discourse are part of the "regime of truth" constructed by power. Law is not just a set of rules, but also a mechanism of social supervision and control wrapped in moral legitimacy.<sup>34</sup>

In Habermas's perspective (1996), ideal law should emerge from a process of free and rational communication between citizens in an equal public space. However, when the law only reflects the will of the elite, it loses its legitimacy as a product of consensus. Therefore, social philosophy not only critiques the substance of law, but also the democratic procedures behind its creation.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the fundamental question that needs to be continually asked is: can law and politics still be tools of justice, or are they merely instruments of power? This is where social philosophy comes in, rejecting submission to an unequal legal and political order while simultaneously imagining an alternative order that is more just and humane.

## 5. Economics and Politics: Symbiotic Relationship or Exploitation?

From the perspective of social philosophy, the relationship between economics and politics cannot be separated from the ideological structure that supports the capitalist and neoliberal systems. Modern capitalism emphasises capital accumulation and economic growth supported by free market mechanisms, while neoliberalism extends market logic into non-economic areas such as education, health, and even public policy.<sup>36</sup> Social philosophers such as

---

<sup>32</sup> Hunt, A. (1990). *Rights and Social Theory*. Longman.

<sup>33</sup> Tamanaha, B. Z. (2006). *Law as a Means to an End: Threat to the Rule of Law*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>34</sup> Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Pantheon Books.

<sup>35</sup> Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press.

<sup>36</sup> Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Jürgen Habermas and Karl Polanyi have criticised this tendency as a form of colonisation of the public sphere by market forces, in which economic interests co-opt political freedoms.

Capitalism is not only an economic system, but also a power structure that can influence the direction of state policy. Polanyi (1944) in *The Great Transformation* asserts that markets freed from state control create social crises because the state ultimately submits to the logic of the global market. This is where the fundamental question arises: who regulates—the state or the market?<sup>37</sup>

The relationship between the state and the market often appears as a mutual symbiosis in the narrative of economic development and progress. However, in practice, this relationship usually turns into exploitation. Economic actors use the state as an instrument to legitimize corporate interests through deregulation, privatisation, and liberalisation policies. Even legal institutions are often used to reinforce unequal economic power structures, rather than to promote distributive justice.<sup>38</sup>

This reality reveals that, within the framework of neoliberalism, the state's role has transformed: from regulator to market facilitator. In the context of Indonesia, for example, economic decentralisation that is not balanced with strong institutional capacity opens up space for local oligarchies to control natural resources. This shows the exploitative relationship between political power and economic power.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the relationship between economics and politics tends to be exploitative if not controlled by social ethics and the principle of justice. The perspective of social philosophy demands the need to reconstruct this relationship towards a just symbiosis, where the state has the power to control the market for the public interest, not the other way around.

## 6. Law and Economics: Equalizer or Oppressor?

In the context of social philosophy, law serves as an ideal balancing tool between economic interests and social justice. It is expected to protect the financial rights of citizens, especially vulnerable groups, from the dominance of market forces and large economic actors. However, in practice, law often functions as an instrument for the reproduction of structural inequality. This criticism has long been voiced by critical thinkers such as Michel Foucault and

---

<sup>37</sup> Polanyi, K. (1944). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Beacon Press.

<sup>38</sup> Crouch, C. (2011). *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*. Polity Press.

<sup>39</sup> Hadiz, V. R. (2010). *Localising Power in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asia Perspective*. Stanford University Press.

Pierre Bourdieu, who view law as neither neutral nor objective, but rather as produced and conditioned by dominant power structures.<sup>40</sup>

In the capitalist and neoliberal regimes, law is often constructed to guarantee investment certainty and economic growth, rather than protecting social justice. This is reflected in pro-market legal policies, such as ease of business licensing, deregulation, and protection of capital ownership. Law becomes a tool for legitimising economic interests, not a protector against exploitation.<sup>41</sup>

Cases of forced evictions, criminalisation of farmers, or agrarian conflicts between indigenous communities and corporations show how the law favors economic power over the fundamental rights of citizens. As demonstrated by the Center for Law and Policy Studies (PSHK), many regulations are born from legislative processes influenced by corporate lobbying, rather than through inclusive public participation.<sup>42</sup>

In this context, the law fails to fulfil its balancing function and often becomes part of a system of structural oppression. This demonstrates that the law must be viewed not only through its normative text, but also through its production process—namely, who creates the law and for whom it operates. However, this does not mean that the law lacks the potential to be a tool for social change. The perspective of social philosophy encourages a reinterpretation of the law as an ethical and political instrument that must be rooted in the principles of social justice and humanity. For this, political courage and institutional reform are necessary to ensure that the law effectively protects economic rights, rather than reinforcing inequality.

## **7. Actualization of Social Justice in the Relationship between the Three**

In the context of social philosophy, social justice is not merely understood as the equal distribution of wealth in material terms, but also encompasses broader dimensions, including inclusive political participation and equal access to various social resources, such as education, healthcare services, and economic opportunities. Nancy Fraser's (2005) thought is a crucial reference

---

<sup>40</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1987). *The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field*. *Hastings Law Journal*, 38(5), 805–853.

<sup>41</sup> Banakar, R., & Travers, M. (2005). *Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research*. Hart Publishing.

<sup>42</sup> Ardiansyah, M. (2020). *Legislasi dan Oligarki Ekonomi: Studi Kritis atas Proses Legislasi di Indonesia*. *Jurnal Legislasi Indonesia*, 17(1), 1-15.

point in explaining that social justice necessitates integration among three primary aspects: redistribution as an economic aspect, recognition and participation as political aspects, and fair representation in law and public policy. All three must go hand in hand to realise substantial and sustainable social justice.<sup>43</sup>

Economic redistribution is the first element that must be critically reviewed. In the context of a strengthening capitalist and neoliberal system, wealth accumulation tends to be concentrated in a handful of economic elites. The state often fails to carry out its redistributive function through progressive taxes, subsidies, or social security due to pressure from market forces. Laws and public policies strengthen these mechanisms by protecting capital ownership and promoting economic deregulation.<sup>44</sup>

Political participation is also a weak point in the actualisation of social justice. Decision-making processes concerning public interests often do not involve the wider community. Procedural democracy without substantive participation will only strengthen the status quo of political and economic power. Young (1990) emphasised that justice demands the inclusion of all parties in political discourse, especially those who have been marginalised.<sup>45</sup>

Equality, as the third dimension in the framework of social justice, must be understood deeply, not only in a formal, legalistic sense, but also in a substantive sense that touches on the real life of society. Legal equality that only guarantees equal treatment on paper, without providing real access to education, decent health services, and fair employment opportunities, ultimately becomes just an empty slogan that fails to address the root of the problem of inequality. Therefore, the law needs to take a more proactive and transformative role in dismantling structural barriers and creating conditions that allow every citizen to develop equally.<sup>46</sup>

In the context of Indonesia's political, legal, and economic relations, the realisation of social justice requires structural reform, including the establishment of a fair redistribution system, enhanced citizen participation in policymaking, and the enforcement of laws that promote equality. The three cannot be separated because social justice is not just a goal, but a collective process that must be maintained and fought for.

---

<sup>43</sup> Fraser, N. (2005). Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World. *New Left Review*, 36, 69–88.

<sup>44</sup> Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>45</sup> Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>46</sup> Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

This study shows that politics, law, and economics are three fundamental elements in social life that cannot be separated. The three form a system that mutually influences and supports each other in creating social structures, regulating the distribution of power, and determining the direction of public policy and community life. Politics plays a role in regulating the legitimacy of power and decision-making; law functions as a normative instrument to bind and limit behavior, while economics provides the material basis of existing social relations. However, in practice, the relationship between these three elements is not always harmonious, but often gives rise to domination and inequality.

Social philosophy makes a vital contribution to critically understanding the relationship between politics, law, and economics. It helps to uncover the hidden power structures that shape social systems, and raises fundamental questions about who benefits and who is harmed by a policy or regulation. Through the thoughts of social philosophers such as Nancy Fraser, Karl Polanyi, and Pierre Bourdieu, we are made aware that law is not always neutral, politics is not always democratic, and economics is not always fair. Social philosophy also demands ethical accountability for the relationship formed between political power, legal regulation, and economic power in society.

In this context, social justice becomes an ideal that can only be achieved if the relationship between politics, law, and economics is directed towards the public interest, not merely the interests of the elite. The state must play its role as a fair regulator, not as a facilitator of market forces or corporate interests. Law must be used as a tool for the liberation and protection of citizens' rights, rather than as a means of legitimising inequality. Politics must be built based on inclusive participation, not oligarchic domination. Thus, through a social philosophy approach, this study emphasises the importance of building a just social structure—where politics, law, and economics synergise within an ethical framework to create a more equal, participatory, and humane society.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several strategic recommendations can serve as a direction for renewal in the relationship between politics, law, and economics, particularly within the framework of social justice and public ethics.

First, a critical and ethical approach is needed in designing legal and economic policies. So far, public policy has often been viewed as a technocratic issue; however, behind every regulation lie social and political consequences that directly affect people's lives. Therefore, every legal product and economic policy must be formulated with a full awareness of the values of justice, equality, and impartiality towards vulnerable groups. A social philosophy approach can be used as a reflective tool to test whether a policy indeed favors the public interest or only strengthens the dominance of certain powers. In practice, this means the need for transparency, meaningful public participation, and supervision of the influence of economic oligarchy in the legislative process and political decision-making.

Second, the role of academics and civil society needs to be increased in promoting a more just social order. Academics not only play a role as producers of knowledge, but also as drivers of social change through criticism, advocacy, and community empowerment. Interdisciplinary research that links law, politics, and economics in a critical perspective must continue to be developed to provide alternatives to dominant narratives that tend to be pro-market and anti-social. On the other hand, civil society needs to be strengthened as a collective actor capable of exercising social control over the state and the market. Through social movements, public education, and legal advocacy networks, civil society can become a powerful moral and political force in the fight for structural justice.

## REFERENCES:

- Allen, A. (2016). *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. Columbia University Press.
- Ardiansyah, M. (2020). Legislasi dan Oligarki Ekonomi: Studi Kritis atas Proses Legislasi di Indonesia. *Jurnal Legislasi Indonesia*, 17(1), 1-15.
- Banakar, R., & Travers, M. (2005). *Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research*. Hart Publishing.
- Benhabib, S. (2002). *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton University Press.
- Berlin, I. (1969). *Two Concepts of Liberty*. Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1987). The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field. *Hastings Law Journal*, 38(5), 805–853.
- Crouch, C. (2011). *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*. Polity Press.



- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. Pantheon.
- Fraser, N. (2005). Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World. *New Left Review*, 36, 69–88.
- Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.
- Friedman, L. M. (1975). *The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Polity Press.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press.
- Hadiz, V. R. (2010). *Localising Power in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asia Perspective*. Stanford University Press.
- Hadiz, V. R. (2017). "Indonesia's Oligarchic Democracy: The Limits of Reform." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 47(1), 67–83.
- Hadiz, V. R. (2017). Indonesia's New Regressive Elite and the Illiberal Turn. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 47(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2016.1239752>
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Heywood, A. (2013). *Politics* (4th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Honneth, A. (1996). *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. MIT Press.
- Honneth, A. (2014). *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*. Columbia University Press.
- Hunt, A. (1990). *Rights and Social Theory*. Longman.

- Jessop, B. (2008). *State Power: A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Polity Press.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970). *The German Ideology*. International Publishers.
- Mulyani, S. (2021). "Kontroversi UU Cipta Kerja dan Tantangan Demokrasi Konstitusional." *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 18(2), 321–340.
- Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press.
- Pistor, K. (2019). *The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*. Princeton University Press.
- Plato. (2007). *The Republic* (trans. D. Lee). Penguin Classics.
- Polanyi, K. (1944). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Beacon Press.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Samuelson, P. A., & Nordhaus, W. D. (2010). *Economics* (19th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Supiot, A. (2017). *Governance by Numbers: The Making of a Legal Model of Allegiance*. Hart Publishing.
- Tamanaha, B. Z. (2006). *Law as a Means to an End: Threat to the Rule of Law*. Cambridge University Press.
- Winters, J. A. (2011). *Oligarchy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press.
- Zurn, C. F. (2011). Social Pathologies as Second-Order Disorders. In B. van den Brink & D. Owen (Eds.), *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory* (pp. 345–371). Cambridge University Press.