

The Influence of Legal Politics on Economic Development in Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia is a country rich in abundant natural potential, which can be utilized as a resource and transformed into a potential source of funding to advance and improve the welfare of its people, as well as to develop the national economy – making it an attractive target for other countries in the global market. To meet investor needs, Indonesia is expected to create a conducive climate for the entry of foreign investors so that they continue to serve as a source of revenue for economic development in the country. Law, politics, and economics are key pillars of national economic development, and these three elements must be aligned, harmonious, and synergistic. The direction of legal and political policy in the economic sector holds significant value and benefit, enabling the objectives of the law to be achieved. This is because law is formed and constructed to regulate the economic or business behavior of investors and entrepreneurs. In formulating policies, the political role within the government both executive and legislative is crucial. The resulting legal policies are expected to accommodate all national needs, ultimately ensuring equitable welfare for citizens. At the same time, these policies must also provide space for investors to invest their capital safely, comfortably, and confidently within a stable political environment, thereby supporting the achievement of economic development in Indonesia.

Keywords: *economy, law, politics*

Abstrak

Indonesia merupakan negara kaya akan potensi alamnya, yang sangat melimpah, dan itu dapat dipergunakan sumber daya yang dapat dipergunakan menjadi sumber dana potensial dalam memajukan dan mensejahterakan rakyatnya juga dalam memajukan perekonomian nasional dan ini menjadi incaran negara-negara lain menjadi pasar dunia. Dalam memenuhi kebutuhan investor, Indonesia diharapkan mampu menciptakan iklim yang nyaman bagi masuknya investor asing agar terus menjadi sumber pendapatan bagi pembangunan ekonomi di Indonesia. Hukum, politik dan ekonomi adalah salah satu penopang dalam pembangunan ekonomi nasional, dimana ketiganya harus selaras, serasi dan beriringan. Arah kebijakan hukum politik dalam bidang ekonomi merupakan sesuatu yang memiliki nilai dan manfaat tinggi sehingga tujuan hukum dapat dicapai. Karena hukum dibentuk dan dibangun dalam rangka mengatur bagaimana perilaku ekonomi atau bisnis yang dilakukan oleh para investor ataupun pengusaha. Dalam rangka membuat kebijakan peran politik yang berada dalam pemerintahan, baik eksekutif maupun legislatif. Kebijakan hukum yang dihasilkan diharapkan mampu mengakomodir semua kebutuhan negara yang pada gilirannya dapat mensejahterakan warga negara secara merata, disisi lain kebijakan tersebut harus mampu untuk memberikan ruang kepada investor agar dapat

menginvestasikan dananya secara aman, nyaman dan tenang dengan kondisi politik yang stabil dalam rangka tercapainya pembangunan ekonomi di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: *ekonomi, hukum, politik*

A. Introduction

Politics and law are fundamentally intertwined, forming a complex and dynamic relationship that is essential to the functioning of any modern nation-state (Florela, Martin, & Klaus, 2023). Their interdependence is not merely conceptual but structural, political institutions shape the production, interpretation, and enforcement of law, while legal norms provide the formal foundations through which political power is distributed, legitimized, and constrained. This symbiotic interaction has long been recognized in political legal scholarship. According to Utami, Puspita, Hidayat, Pradipa, & Lestari (2025) understanding a legal system under conditions of political transformation requires observing how legal norms operate at the societal level how they are interpreted by the population, how they are implemented by authorities, and how political actors utilize them as instruments of governance. In Indonesia, the law emerges not as a neutral set of abstract rules but as a living expression of political reality, molded by historical experiences, ideological orientations, power configurations, and state-building aspirations (Juanda, 2023).

The formative years of Indonesia's political and legal development further illustrate this interdependence (Fernanda, Patmos, & Syam, 2024). From the constitutional debates of the early independence period, through the centralization policies of the New Order regime, to the decentralization and democratization reforms of the Reformasi era, each political shift has left a profound imprint on the legal system. Legal institutions have expanded, contracted, and reoriented themselves in response to political pressures and national priorities (Ismaidar, Sembiring, & Hadi, 2025). This historical trajectory underscores the necessity of understanding politics and law as mutually reinforcing structures that together shape Indonesia's economic development.

Indonesia's natural endowment a vast archipelago rich in mineral resources, fertile lands, diverse marine ecosystems, and significant energy reserves represents one of its most significant comparative advantages. Numerous studies in development economics highlight the potential of natural resources to accelerate economic growth when supported by strong governance institutions (Raihan, 2024; Saleh, Surya, Nur, Ahmad, & Manda, 2020). For

Indonesia, these resources hold tremendous potential not only for economic expansion but also for fiscal sustainability and welfare enhancement. Yet, this potential remains partially unrealized. International observers, including the World Bank, IMF, and UNDP, have noted that Indonesia's resource wealth has not consistently translated into equitable development outcomes. This discrepancy highlights the enduring challenge of the "resource governance paradox", a situation in which abundant resources coexist with regulatory unpredictability, institutional weaknesses, and political uncertainty (Koporcic, 2025).

Foreign investment, a key driver of economic modernization and technological advancement, is particularly sensitive to political and legal conditions. Empirical data from UNCTAD and the OECD demonstrate that investor confidence is closely linked to perceptions of political stability, regulatory transparency, and legal certainty. Investors prefer jurisdictions where the rule of law is consistent, bureaucratic discretion is limited, corruption is minimized, and political risk is manageable (Osuma, Ayinde, Ntokozo, & Ehikioya, 2024). Indonesia's fluctuating investment climate over the past decades from the turbulence of the Asian Financial Crisis, through the transition years of Reformasi, to the more recent efforts at regulatory harmonization demonstrates how political legal environments directly affect capital mobility (Kandia & Wiryawan, 2025). The urgency to ensure legal certainty and political stability is therefore not merely theoretical but economically consequential.

Law, in its function as a regulatory apparatus, plays a central role in shaping economic interactions. It defines property rights, enforces contracts, structures market behavior, regulates competition, ensures fair dispute resolution, and provides mechanisms for accountability (Darnia et al., 2023; Martyniszyn, 2025). Economic scholars such as Douglas North (1990) and Acemoglu & Robinson (2012) assert that institutions particularly legal institutions are the fundamental determinants of long-term economic performance. Without credible and predictable legal frameworks, economic actors are unable to make long-term investment decisions, economies fail to allocate resources efficiently, and overall development stagnates. In Indonesia, persistent concerns regarding legal uncertainty, regulatory inconsistency, and uneven law enforcement illustrate systemic challenges that continue to affect economic performance. Such conditions create transaction costs, elevate business risks, and hinder the country's integration into high-value global markets.

However, the legal system does not operate in a vacuum. Its effectiveness depends on the broader political environment (Mueller, 2020; Utami et al., 2025). Political stability fosters coherent policymaking and reduces the likelihood of abrupt policy reversals. Conversely,

political contestation, elite fragmentation, and institutional volatility often undermine legal consistency. Political science literature emphasizes that strong and coherent political institutions are prerequisites for successful legal reform. In Indonesia's case, the decentralization reforms of the early 2000s brought democratic benefits but also introduced regulatory fragmentation, local political bargaining, and inconsistent local-level governance (Aulia & Andhini, 2025). These challenges continue to affect investor perceptions and economic outcomes, demonstrating the need for political legal harmonization.

In theory and in law, Indonesia's economic development is guided by constitutional principles. Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution establishes the foundational philosophy of Indonesia's political economic order: that natural resources must be controlled by the state and utilized for the greatest welfare of the people. This mandate establishes clear obligations for the government to design, enforce, and uphold legal policies that ensure equitable distribution of economic benefits. Yet despite constitutional guidance, Indonesia has not fully achieved the level of prosperity envisioned by its founders (Meliala & Woods, 2023). Structural inefficiencies, corruption, bureaucratic complexities, and policy inconsistency have hindered the transformation of natural resource wealth into broad-based development. The persistent disparities between regions, socio-economic classes, and industrial sectors highlight gaps in governance and legal implementation (Rochmansjah & Saputra, 2024).

Indonesia's development trajectory can be broadly categorized into three historical stages: (1) political unification, (2) industrialization, and (3) welfare provision. These stages reflect a progression from establishing national stability, to initiating structural economic transformation, to ensuring social protection and equity. However, movement across these stages has not been linear. Political upheaval, global economic shifts, and internal governance complexities have influenced the pace and direction of development. Research by Bhujabal, Sethi, & Padhan (2024) demonstrates that investment flows both domestic and foreign are heavily influenced by government credibility, political predictability, and legal quality. Investors consistently prioritize jurisdictions where political systems are coherent and where laws are applied consistently.

The intricate interplay between politics, law, and the economy necessitates comprehensive and coordinated policy interventions (Budiana & Pasundan, 2024). Economic policy does not exist independently of political context; rather, it is deeply embedded within it. Political considerations influence economic priorities, determine resource allocation, and shape regulatory frameworks (Malik, Gusela, Azfa, Fauziansah, & Rosidin, 2024). Likewise, legal

institutions cannot fulfill their regulatory functions without political support and institutional backing. As such, the alignment of political, legal, and economic systems is essential for effective governance. When political institutions function effectively, laws are enforced consistently, and economic actors operate with confidence, development becomes sustainable, inclusive, and resilient (Handoyo, 2024).

Yet significant gaps remain. Despite ongoing reforms, Indonesia continues to face challenges in achieving full political legal coherence (Crouch, 2021). Issues such as regulatory overlap, institutional fragmentation, local level power struggles, judicial inconsistency, and political interference continue to hinder economic momentum (Malik et al., 2024). These persistent problems underscore the urgency of research that examines the political legal foundations of economic development research that not only identifies structural weaknesses but also proposes pathways for institutional strengthening.

In this context, the present study becomes urgently relevant. It seeks to comprehensively analyze the interplay between political stability, legal certainty, and economic development in Indonesia. It aims to fill theoretical gaps by integrating legal, political, and economic approaches within a unified analytical framework. It also contributes practical recommendations that can support policymaking, particularly in designing legal policies that enhance investor confidence, strengthen governance, and ensure that natural resource wealth is utilized for the greatest benefit of all Indonesian citizens. As Indonesia positions itself within an increasingly competitive and globalized economic environment, the need for strong political–legal alignment is more critical than ever.

B. Research Methodology

This study employs a normative juridical approach, which emphasizes the analysis of applicable laws and regulations as well as relevant scholarly literature related to the issues under examination. This approach is utilized to explore the legal norms governing the subject matter and to assess how these norms are implemented within the context of Indonesia's economic development. By focusing on the normative dimension, the research seeks to understand the legal framework not merely as a set of formal rules but as a system of principles that guide state policy and institutional practice. The research integrates two primary methodological approaches: the statute approach and the conceptual approach. The statute approach is used to examine existing positive legal provisions related to legal politics and economic development, including statutes, constitutional mandates, and regulatory instruments. Meanwhile, the

conceptual approach is applied to explore foundational legal concepts, theoretical perspectives, and doctrinal developments found in academic literature. This dual approach enables a comprehensive understanding of both the formal legal structure and the conceptual underpinnings that shape Indonesia's legal policies in the economic sector.

The legal materials utilized in this study consist of three categories: Primary Legal Materials, including statutory regulations, the Constitution, and other normative instruments directly relevant to the research problem. These materials form the core foundation for analyzing the legal framework governing political law and economic development; Secondary Legal Materials, comprising books, scholarly journals, academic articles, and expert opinions that provide interpretation, critique, and theoretical reinforcement of the primary legal materials. These sources offer broader insights into the relationship between legal politics and economic development; and Tertiary Legal Materials, such as legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and indexing tools that assist in clarifying concepts and facilitating the understanding of both primary and secondary legal materials.

The collection of legal materials is conducted through document study and library research. This process involves systematically reviewing statutory instruments, academic literature, legal journals, and other authoritative sources that contribute to the analytical foundation of the study. Through this method, the research ensures comprehensive coverage of relevant legal doctrines and empirical observations.

The legal materials are analyzed using qualitative analysis, which involves examining the content of legal norms, comparing pertinent theories, and interpreting applicable legal provisions. This analytical process is aimed at uncovering the coherence and alignment between legal politics, political stability, and economic development in Indonesia. By synthesizing normative legal principles with theoretical constructs, the research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how political and legal structures shape, support, or hinder Indonesia's economic development agenda.

C. Discussion and Findings

Economic development is one of the central objectives of national development in Indonesia; however, its realization cannot be separated from the influence of political dynamics. Politics plays a decisive role in shaping the direction and formulation of policies that govern Indonesia's economic development (Rusli, 2024). This paper examines the role of politics in influencing and determining the trajectory of economic development in Indonesia. Historically,

the country's development agenda has been strongly driven by political considerations. During the New Order era, the government exercised dominant control over economic development, focusing extensively on industrialization and infrastructure expansion (Huang, Shi, & Tong, 2025). Following the Reform Era, however, the political landscape became more complex due to democratization and decentralization, which introduced new challenges in aligning political processes with developmental goals. A key challenge in Indonesia's economic development is improving the quality of political policymaking to strengthen political stability and support a conducive development environment (Labib & Adi Lila, 2023). Effective political governance enhances public trust, encourages citizen participation in political processes, and improves the quality of public services factors that collectively facilitate the inflow of both domestic and foreign investment into Indonesia.

At the same time, Indonesia's economic development contains significant opportunities, particularly in strengthening the role of politics to improve the quality of political policymaking. The government can enhance public policy quality by increasing transparency, accountability, and public participation in political processes. Likewise, improving bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness can contribute significantly to improved public service delivery, which is necessary for stimulating investment and development (Herawati, Pradana, & Shariffuddin, 2024). Politics and law serve as essential variables in shaping national policies aligned with contemporary developments. Both fields aim to produce a legal system that reflects the aspirations of the state and society. Legislation as a product of legal politics functions as a tool to construct the desired legal framework and regulate society (law as a tool of social engineering). Hartono, cited in Putra (2019), asserts that legal politics is determined not merely by lawmakers or legal practitioners but also by societal realities, national developments, and evolving international legal norms.

Politics, as an object of legal regulation, attempts to formulate legal norms that guide human behavior. Legal politics examines and investigates necessary reforms to transform existing laws so that they align with evolving social conditions. National legal politics must rest on several fundamental principles: (a) National legal politics must always reflect national ideals namely, the creation of a just and prosperous society based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution; (b) National legal politics must aim to achieve the state's constitutional goals: protecting the entire nation, promoting public welfare, educating the people, and contributing to global peace, eternal independence, and social justice; (c) National legal politics must be guided by the values of Pancasila, grounded in religious morality, upholding and protecting

human rights without discrimination, unifying all components of the nation, ensuring that sovereign power rests in the hands of the people, and promoting social justice; (d) National legal politics must ensure the protection of all elements of the nation to preserve national integrity, uphold democratic principles, and foster religious tolerance grounded in civility and humanity; and (e) The national legal system must reflect the Pancasila legal system a prismatically integrated system that harmonizes diverse values, socio-economic interests, and concepts of justice into a cohesive legal order.

According to Ismaidar et al. (2025) national legal politics serves as a foundational guideline for the formulation, creation, and development of Indonesian law. Thus, it must be articulated through fundamental statutory legislation rather than merely technical regulations. Legal politics is crucial in legislative formulation, serving as the basis for determining what legal content should be expressed in statutory provisions. Legislative texts function as the bridge between political decisions and legal implementation; therefore, legislative drafting must undergo rigorous review to ensure consistency with established political mandates. Functionally, law serves as an instrument of social engineering. It is justified as a mechanism through which the state imposes binding rules aimed at maintaining societal order. Politics, on the other hand, pertains to behaviors related to policy formulation and decision-making. Although politics and law constitute distinct academic disciplines, political considerations permeate legal studies, particularly in constitutional and regulatory contexts (Rasji, Chandra, & Hamonangan, 2025; Utama & Bangun, 2023).

In relation to economic development, the government and state institutions play crucial roles in promoting national development. One of the most important tasks is creating a safe, stable, and conducive investment climate across Indonesia to ensure that national economic development can progress as expected. Legislation plays a vital role in establishing a conducive environment capable of accelerating Indonesia's economic growth. Accordingly, Indonesia's economic policies must prioritize public interest, especially in the economic domain, which requires public law to emphasize economic considerations (Putro, 2021; Rusli, 2024). Several key issues require attention: (a) Evaluation of statutory laws must consider both present and future conditions, as laws that address only contemporary needs quickly become obsolete and hinder economic growth; (b) Evaluation of economic indicators as part of an early warning system. Effective laws should signal potential economic risks before they escalate into severe crises; (c) Assessment of the functions and roles of statutory laws in protecting national interests and sovereignty, ensuring independence in economic policy, and preventing excessive

dependency on foreign actors; and (d) Continuous legal development, which can accelerate the transition from an agrarian society to an industrial society (Sumardi, 2025).

Political configuration significantly influences the character of legal products. The political configuration of a particular era shapes the nature, orientation, and quality of laws produced during that period (Rahmah, 2023). Consequently, political configuration has substantial implications for Indonesia's economic activities. The direction of legal-political policy in national economic development becomes a benchmark for achieving the constitutional mandate of ensuring the greatest possible prosperity for all Indonesians. The essence of Indonesia's economic development, as mandated by the Constitution, involves building the Indonesian nation comprehensively, promoting economic growth, ensuring equitable welfare, and maintaining political stability (Wibisono, Purnama, & Istiqomah, 2020). The fourth paragraph of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution explicitly asserts that national development aims to enlighten the nation, promote public welfare, protect the entire territory of Indonesia, and contribute to global peace, eternal independence, and social justice.

A concrete example of the interplay between economics and law is the phenomenon of economic globalization, which requires national legislation to adjust to international developments. This process is known as legal globalization, as described by Nuriyanto, Laksmi Dewi, & Purnama Dewi, (2025) and Mamedov & Batova (2019). Modern developments have given rise to the law of treaties, which guides the implementation of regional trading agreements and bilateral trade relations in areas such as intellectual property rights, consumer protection, antitrust regulations, and unfair business competition. These agreements are subsequently incorporated into national legal systems. Globalization has also encouraged internal legal reforms in many countries, ensuring that domestic laws align with international standards (Trisnanti, Amelia, & Sushanty, 2025). Rapid globalization may push Indonesia toward a more liberalized economic system, underscoring the need for strong ideological and legal foundations to prevent deviation from the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

To safeguard Indonesia's economy amidst rapid global economic changes, several strategic measures are necessary: (a) Enhancing competitiveness by improving human resources, infrastructure, and technological capacity; (b) Economic diversification through expanding production and export of non-oil-and-gas products such as manufacturing, agriculture, and services; (c) Increasing investment through a stable and favorable business climate; (d) Boosting exports by improving market access and reducing trade barriers; € Strengthening economic independence by increasing domestic production, reducing import

dependency, and expanding exports; (f) Expanding international cooperation in trade, investment, and other economic areas; (g) Strengthening regulatory frameworks to improve business and investment environments; and (h) Enhancing human capital quality to improve productivity and competitiveness.

In the effort to restore Indonesia's economic strength, a strong and stable political foundation is essential. For law to effectively provide legal certainty for economic actors, the government must strengthen the authority of legal institutions through responsive policymaking and continuous improvement of the legal system. If the economy is analogized as a building, then law serves as its foundation. That foundation can only stand firm if the surrounding ground politics is stable. This analogy illustrates the intrinsic correlation among the economy, law, and politics in Indonesia's developmental framework.

D. Conclusion (Simpulan)

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that politics, law, and economic development in Indonesia are deeply intertwined and mutually constitutive. Political stability provides the essential foundation upon which legal frameworks can function effectively, while a robust legal system reinforces political legitimacy, ensures regulatory predictability, and creates an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth. The Indonesian experience highlights that natural resource abundance alone is insufficient to achieve broad-based development; rather, effective governance, coherent legal policies, and political–institutional stability are essential to translate potential into tangible welfare outcomes. The study underscores the pivotal role of law as both a regulatory instrument and a tool for social engineering. Legal norms not only structure economic transactions and enforce contracts but also operationalize political decisions and national development goals. In the Indonesian context, constitutional principles, particularly Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution, provide a normative mandate to harness natural resources for the greatest benefit of the people. However, realizing these goals requires continuous alignment between political decision-making, legal enforcement, and economic strategy. Foreign and domestic investment, critical drivers of economic modernization, are highly sensitive to political and legal conditions. Policy inconsistency, regulatory ambiguity, or political volatility can significantly deter investment, even in resource-rich contexts. Consequently, the government bears the responsibility to ensure legal certainty, political stability, and institutional transparency, thereby fostering an investment climate that supports sustainable economic development.

Finally, the study emphasizes the urgency of integrated policy approaches that harmonize political, legal, and economic objectives. Sustainable development in Indonesia demands that political institutions operate coherently, laws are applied consistently, and economic policies are responsive to both societal needs and investor expectations. The interplay among politics, law, and the economy is not merely theoretical; it is a practical imperative for achieving equitable growth, social welfare, and long-term national prosperity. By strengthening political–legal alignment, Indonesia can optimize the utilization of its abundant resources, ensure social justice, and establish a foundation for continuous, inclusive, and resilient economic development

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