

## **Law Enforcement and Social Conflict Detection: A Study of Jürgen Moltmann's Public Theology in the Indonesian Context**

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### **Abstract**

Social conflict in Indonesia is no longer merely incidental but rather systemic and recurrent, rooted in structural inequality, social exclusion, and weak institutional capacity to detect potential conflicts at an early stage. Under these conditions, law enforcement which remains legally formalistic and reactive has not yet been optimized as a mechanism for the early detection of social conflict. Although various studies have examined the relationship between law and conflict, existing approaches tend to be partial and have not been able to integrate legal, moral, and social dimensions simultaneously. This study aims to analyze the limitations of law enforcement in the early detection of social conflict and to reconstruct its function through the perspective of Jürgen Moltmann's public theology, specifically the concept of the Theology of Hope. This study employs a qualitative approach with a normative-conceptual design within a socio-legal framework through systematic literature review. The findings indicate that the limitations of law enforcement lie in the dominance of a reactive paradigm, a weak orientation toward substantive justice, and the absence of mechanisms sensitive to structural injustice. This study offers an integrative model that positions law as a preventive, responsive, and transformative instrument in the prevention of social conflict, while also providing a theoretical contribution to the development of public theology in the Indonesian context.

**Keyword:** law enforcement; social conflict; early conflict detection; public theology; Jürgen Moltmann

### **Abstrak**

*Konflik sosial di Indonesia tidak lagi sekadar bersifat insidental, melainkan sistemik dan berulang, yang berakar pada ketimpangan struktural, eksklusi sosial, dan lemahnya kapasitas institusional dalam mendeteksi potensi konflik sejak dini. Dalam kondisi ini, penegakan hukum yang masih berorientasi legal-formal dan reaktif belum mampu dioptimalkan sebagai mekanisme deteksi dini konflik sosial. Meskipun berbagai studi telah mengkaji hubungan antara hukum dan konflik, pendekatan yang ada cenderung parsial dan belum mampu mengintegrasikan dimensi hukum, moral, dan sosial secara simultan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis keterbatasan penegakan hukum dalam deteksi dini konflik sosial serta merekonstruksi fungsinya melalui perspektif teologi publik Jürgen Moltmann, khususnya konsep Theology of Hope. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain normatif-konseptual dalam kerangka socio-legal melalui studi pustaka sistematis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterbatasan penegakan hukum terletak pada dominasi paradigma reaktif, lemahnya orientasi pada keadilan substantif, serta absennya mekanisme yang sensitif terhadap ketidakadilan struktural. Penelitian ini menawarkan model integratif yang menempatkan hukum sebagai instrumen preventif, responsif, dan transformatif dalam pencegahan konflik sosial, sekaligus memberikan kontribusi teoritis bagi pengembangan teologi publik dalam konteks Indonesia.*

**Kata Kunci:** Penegakan Hukum; Konflik Sosial; Deteksi Dini Konflik; Teologi Publik; Jürgen Moltmann

## INTRODUCTION

Social conflict in Indonesia constitutes a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, characterized by a persistent tendency toward cyclical reproduction. This dynamic not only reflects the diversity of Indonesian society but also indicates the presence of unresolved structural problems. Recent studies suggest that social conflict in developing countries, including Indonesia, is no longer incidental in nature, but increasingly systemic. Such conditions are rooted in unequal resource distribution, social exclusion, and weak institutional responses.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, the primary issue lies not in the existence of conflict itself, but in the failure of the legal system to identify and respond to early signs of conflict. Horizontal inequalities among social groups particularly in terms of economic, political, and social access have been identified as key determinants of conflict in plural societies. Stewart argues that violent conflict in multiethnic societies tends to emerge when intergroup inequalities are left unaddressed by adequate institutional intervention.<sup>2</sup>

In the Indonesian context, this condition is further exacerbated by low levels of public trust in legal institutions and the persistent perception of injustice. As a result, law is no longer viewed as a mechanism for conflict resolution, but rather as part of the problem itself. This situation reflects a fundamental tension between legal certainty and substantive justice in the practice of law enforcement in Indonesia. A predominantly legal-formalistic and reactive approach to law enforcement not only fails to identify the root causes of conflict, but also risks reinforcing the structural inequalities that serve as primary drivers of social conflict. Mahfud MD argues that the configuration of legal politics in Indonesia often positions law as an instrument of power, thereby undermining its critical function as a vehicle for justice.<sup>3</sup> In such circumstances, law no longer functions as a tool of social stabilization, but instead risks becoming a source of delegitimization that exacerbates the potential for conflict.

The urgency of this issue becomes even more apparent when linked to the need for preventive approaches in managing social conflict. The *Pathways for Peace* report emphasizes that the failure to conduct early detection of inequality and social exclusion is a key factor contributing to the escalation of conflict into open violence.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, law enforcement must transform from a reactive approach to a preventive one, functioning as an early warning system capable of interpreting social dynamics. However, in practice, this preventive orientation has not yet been systematically internalized within Indonesia's law enforcement framework.

A number of studies have examined the relationship between law enforcement and social conflict from various perspectives. Arifianto et al. highlight the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin et al., "Inequality and Violent Conflict: New Evidence from Selected Provinces in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 26, no. 3 (2021): 555.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Stewart, ed., *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 18, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230582729>.

<sup>3</sup> M M M D and P D M Mahfud, *Politik Hukum Di Indonesia* (Rajawali Pers, 2009), 23.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict" (World Bank Washington, DC, 2018), 3.

strengthening pluralism as a means of maintaining social integration.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Rellang et al. emphasize the role of human rights based approaches in resolving religious conflicts. On the other hand, restorative justice has also demonstrated potential in reducing conflict through the restoration of social relationships.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, these studies tend to remain sectoral and partial in nature, as they often separate the legal dimension from the moral foundations underlying conflict itself.

These limitations indicate a significant conceptual gap, namely the absence of an analytical framework capable of integrating legal, moral, and social dimensions simultaneously in understanding and preventing social conflict. In particular, existing approaches have not adequately explained how law can function as an early detection mechanism that is not merely procedural, but also sensitive to injustice as the root cause of conflict. In other words, the core problem lies not simply in the lack of a multidisciplinary approach, but in the failure to articulate a normative foundation capable of directing the transformative function of law.

In response to the need for a more integrative approach, public theology offers a relevant perspective for bridging the gap between legal and moral dimensions within the public sphere. Public theology is not intended as an exclusive normative project, but as an ethical reflection that contributes to public discourse on justice, social responsibility, and communal life. In a plural society such as Indonesia, this approach derives its legitimacy not merely from its theological basis, but from its capacity to articulate universal values such as justice, peace, and human dignity that transcend religious and cultural boundaries.

Thinkers such as Miroslav Volf emphasize the importance of reconciliation in addressing identity-based conflicts, while John Howard Yoder highlights nonviolence as an ethical response to social conflict. Gustavo Gutiérrez, through liberation theology, underscores that social conflict is rooted in structural injustice that marginalizes vulnerable groups. Among these perspectives,<sup>7</sup> Jürgen Moltmann offers a more integrative framework through his concept of the *Theology of Hope*, which situates social transformation as part of the realization of eschatological hope within history.<sup>8</sup> In Moltmann's framework, law is not merely understood as a neutral normative system, but as an ethical instrument responsible for promoting justice and preventing injustice that may give rise to conflict. Eschatological hope is not passive; rather, it functions as a practical force that drives the transformation of unjust social structures. Accordingly, law is called not only to maintain order, but also to function as an early detection mechanism for injustice as a primary source of social conflict.

Nevertheless, studies that systematically integrate Jürgen Moltmann's public theology into the framework of law enforcement as a mechanism for early conflict detection remain limited, particularly within the Indonesian context. This limitation reflects not only a gap in the

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<sup>5</sup> Yonatan Alex Arifianto, Andreas Fernando, and Reni Triposa, "Sosiologi Pluralisme Dalam Pendidikan Agama Kristen: Upaya Membangun Kesatuan Bangsa," *Jurnal Shanan* 5, no. 2 (2021): 95–110.

<sup>6</sup> John Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice & Responsive Regulation* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 30.

<sup>7</sup> Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics* (Orbis Books, 2023), 45.

<sup>8</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (Fortress Press, 1993), 16–18.

literature, but also the absence of a well-developed approach capable of bridging legal normativity and public ethics within a coherent analytical framework.

Based on this framework, this seeks to critically examine the limitations of law enforcement in Indonesia in detecting social conflict at an early stage, and to explore how Jürgen Moltmann's public theology particularly through the concept of the *Theology of Hope* can reconstruct the function of law enforcement as a preventive instrument oriented toward substantive justice. Furthermore, this study aims to formulate an integrative conceptual model that brings together law and public theology in a manner relevant to the Indonesian context, so that law enforcement functions not only as a mechanism of social control, but also as a transformative instrument capable of preventing social conflict in a sustainable manner.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a normative-conceptual design within a socio-legal framework, aimed at analyzing and reconstructing the concept of law enforcement in early conflict detection through the perspective of Jürgen Moltmann's public theology. This approach was selected because the study was not merely focused on the description of legal norms, but also explores the value dimensions and ethical orientations underlying law enforcement practices within a social context. Accordingly, this research is situated within a socio-legal framework that views law as a social practice embedded with moral and power dimensions.<sup>9</sup> This perspective aligns with contemporary developments in socio-legal studies, which emphasize that law cannot be separated from the contexts of power, culture, and social relations in which it operates.<sup>10</sup>

Methodologically, this study integrates three approaches: theological, normative legal, and conceptual. The theological approach is employed to interpret biblical texts (Romans 13:1–7; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8) within Moltmann's public theology framework through a hermeneutical analysis that emphasizes the relationship between text, context, and social praxis.<sup>11</sup> The normative legal approach is used to analyze principles of law enforcement, particularly those related to substantive justice, legitimacy, and the preventive function of law in democratic societies.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is utilized to synthesize these perspectives into an integrative theoretical model.<sup>13</sup> The research materials consist of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include biblical texts and Moltmann's major works, particularly *Theology of Hope*. Secondary sources comprise reputable academic journals and recent scholarly literature relevant to social conflict, law enforcement, and public theology. Sources are selected purposively based on relevance, credibility, and recency

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<sup>9</sup> Reza Banakar, *Normativity in Legal Sociology* (Springer, 2014), 12–15.

<sup>10</sup> Naomi Creutzfeldt, Marc Mason, and Kirsten McConnachie, *Routledge Handbook of Socio-Legal Theory and Methods* (Routledge New York, 2020), 5.

<sup>11</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, 23–25.

<sup>12</sup> Philippe Nonet, Philip Selznick, and Robert A Kagan, *Law and Society in Transition: Toward Responsive Law* (Routledge, 2017), 73.

<sup>13</sup> Tom R Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law* (Princeton university press, 2006), 163.

Data were collected through a systematic and critical literature review.<sup>14</sup> Data analysis employed content analysis to identify key themes related to justice, legitimacy, and social conflict.<sup>15</sup> followed by conceptual analysis to construct a theoretical synthesis. To ensure coherence, the analysis is conducted in three stages: (1) identifying the limitations of law enforcement in addressing social conflict; (2) conducting a normative-theological analysis of the concepts of justice and hope in Moltmann's thought; and (3) constructing an integrative model between law and public theology for early conflict detection.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Law Enforcement and Conflict Detection

Law enforcement in modern societies can no longer be reduced to a merely repressive instrument that functions solely to address violations after conflicts occur. Rather, it must be understood as a strategic mechanism with preventive capacity to detect potential conflicts at their latent stage. From a socio-legal perspective, law operates not only as a normative system but also as an instrument that reflects social dynamics, thereby playing a crucial role in identifying symptoms of injustice that may escalate into open conflict.<sup>16</sup> However, the reality of law enforcement in Indonesia reveals significant structural dysfunction. Law enforcement practices remain largely dominated by legal-formalistic and reactive approaches, in which state intervention typically occurs only after conflicts have reached a manifest stage. This approach not only reflects limitations in institutional capacity, but also indicates an epistemological failure to understand law as a mechanism for early conflict detection. As a consequence, law loses its preventive dimension and becomes trapped in a residual logic of enforcement that is primarily reactive in nature.

This failure cannot be separated from the nature of social conflict in Indonesia, which is generally cumulative and rooted in long-standing structural injustice. Tadjoeeddin et al. demonstrate that collective violence in Indonesia is often driven by horizontal inequalities among groups that are not addressed at an early stage.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Stewart emphasizes that intergroup inequality in access to resources constitutes a primary determinant of conflict in multiethnic societies.<sup>18</sup> In essence, social conflict does not emerge spontaneously, but rather develops through identifiable stages, thereby allowing for more effective preventive intervention.<sup>19</sup> Within this framework, conflict should not be understood as an isolated or sudden event, but as the consequence of institutional failure including that of the legal system in systematically detecting and responding to injustice.

From the perspective of a democratic rule-of-law state, this condition reflects a gap between legal certainty and substantive justice. Law enforcement that is predominantly

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<sup>14</sup> Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2014), 24.

<sup>15</sup> Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2019), 24, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781>.

<sup>16</sup> Banakar, *Normativity in Legal Sociology*, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Tadjoeeddin et al., "Inequality and Violent Conflict: New Evidence from Selected Provinces in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," 556.

<sup>18</sup> Stewart, *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict*, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Tobias Ide, "The Impact of Environmental Cooperation on Peacemaking: Definitions, Mechanisms, and Empirical Evidence," *International Studies Review* 21, no. 3 (2019): 540.

oriented toward formal procedures often neglects the dimension of justice as perceived by society, thereby weakening the legitimacy of the law itself. Asshiddiqie argues that law which loses its substantive justice dimension will consequently lose its social legitimacy.<sup>20</sup> This finding is reinforced by Tyler, who demonstrates that public compliance with the law is more strongly influenced by perceptions of fairness than by the coercive power of the state.<sup>21</sup>

This crisis of legal legitimacy has direct implications for the increasing potential of social conflict. Jackson and Bradford demonstrate that the legitimacy of legal institutions is a key factor in maintaining social order, as compliance based on trust is far more stable than compliance based on coercion.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, when law is perceived as unjust, it not only loses its effectiveness but also risks becoming a catalyst for the escalation of conflict.

In this context, a repressive approach to law enforcement is not only insufficient, but in many cases counterproductive. Enforcement measures that ignore the root causes of injustice tend to reinforce social grievances, thereby prolonging cycles of conflict. Therefore, a paradigmatic reorientation of law enforcement is necessary from a reactive approach towards a preventive one that positions law as an early warning system sensitive to indicators of social injustice, such as discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.

Within this framework, the function of law enforcement must be expanded beyond its role as an instrument of social control to become an ethical and institutional mechanism capable of identifying and responding to potential conflicts before they escalate into open violence. This requires a fundamental transformation in the understanding of law from a purely normative instrument to a socially embedded mechanism that is adaptive, responsive, and oriented towards substantive justice. Without such transformation, law enforcement will remain confined to a reactive posture and will continue to lose its capacity to function as an effective mechanism for early conflict detection.

### **Jürgen Moltmann's Public Theology**

In seeking to understand the limitations of law enforcement that tend to be reactive and insufficiently sensitive to the root causes of social conflict, a normative framework is required that is not only legal in nature, but also ethical and transformative. In this context, public theology offers a perspective that broadens the understanding of law not merely as an instrument of power, but as part of a moral responsibility within communal life. Public theology operates within the plural public sphere by articulating universal values such as justice, human dignity, and peace as the basis for shared reflection. Among the various approaches within public theology, the thought of Jürgen Moltmann holds particular relevance due to its emphasis on social transformation as the core of theological reflection.<sup>23</sup> Through the

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<sup>20</sup> J Asshiddiqie and Z A M Husein, *Hukum Tata Negara Dan Pilar-Pilar Demokrasi: Serpihan Pemikiran Hukum, Media, Dan HAM* (Konstitusi Press, 2005), 45.

<sup>21</sup> Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law*, 163.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Jackson and Ben Bradford, "Blurring the Distinction between Empirical and Normative Legitimacy? A Methodological Commentary on 'Police Legitimacy and Citizen Cooperation in China,'" *Asian Journal of Criminology* 14, no. 4 (2019): 270.

<sup>23</sup> E Harold Breitenberg Jr, "To Tell the Truth: Will the Real Public Theology Please Stand Up?," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 2003, 66.

concept of the *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann asserts that social reality is not static, but open to transformation driven by eschatological hope. Hope, in this sense, is not a passive attitude or an escape from reality, but a critical and dynamic force that encourages active engagement in transforming unjust social structures.<sup>24</sup>

Within this framework, law cannot be understood as a neutral system standing apart from the moral dynamics of society. Rather, it constitutes part of the social structure that must be critically evaluated based on its capacity to realize justice. Moltmann argues that public institutions, including law, bear the responsibility to participate in manifesting signs of the Kingdom of God within history, particularly through the liberation from injustice and the restoration of social relationships.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, the failure of law to respond to injustice is not merely an institutional deficiency, but also a moral failure that hinders social transformation.

This perspective becomes highly relevant when related to the problem of law enforcement in Indonesia, which remains confined within a legal-formalistic paradigm. In many cases, law operates without sufficient sensitivity to social context, rendering it incapable of recognizing inequality as an early indicator of conflict. In light of Moltmann's thought, this condition suggests that law has lost its prophetic dimension namely, its capacity to critique injustice and to stimulate transformation.<sup>26</sup> Yet, within the theological tradition, the prophetic dimension constitutes a crucial element in ensuring that power remains oriented toward justice and does not become detached from its moral responsibility.

Furthermore, the concept of hope in Moltmann's theology has direct implications for understanding the function of law. Eschatological hope is not oriented solely toward the future, but also shapes ethical action in the present. In this context, law is called not merely to maintain order, but also to anticipate and prevent injustice that may give rise to conflict. In other words, law must move from a reactive posture toward an anticipatory one, aligned with its function as a mechanism for early conflict detection. This dimension is further deepened through the concept of justice in the biblical tradition that underpins Moltmann's thought. Texts such as Amos 5:24 and Micah 6:8 affirm that justice (*mishpat*) and righteousness (*tsedaqah*) are not merely moral norms, but the foundational pillars of a just and stable social order.

In this context, justice cannot be reduced to mere legal procedures, but must be understood as a relational condition that reflects balance and respect for human dignity.<sup>27</sup> Building on this understanding, Moltmann's public theology also rejects approaches that focus solely on interpersonal reconciliation without addressing the structural roots of conflict. In contrast to reconciliation-centered approaches that emphasize harmony, Moltmann insists that structural justice is a fundamental prerequisite for the realization of sustainable peace. This

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<sup>24</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, 16.

<sup>25</sup> J Moltmann and M Kohl, *Ethics of Hope* (SCM Press, 2012), 114.

<sup>26</sup> Joshua Cockayne, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and Jonathan C Rutledge, "United in Love: Essays on Justice, Art, and Liturgy" (ISD, 2023), 73.

<sup>27</sup> Bruce C. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 210, <https://www.amazon.com/Let-Justice-Roll-Down-Testament/dp/0664240267>.

perspective resonates with contemporary theories of justice, which emphasize the importance of addressing structural injustice as a foundational strategy for conflict prevention.<sup>28</sup>

In the context of a plural society, public theology is not intended as an exclusive religious expression, but as an ethical reflection that contributes to the public sphere through universal values such as justice, peace, and the common good.<sup>29</sup> These values possess cross-religious and cross-cultural relevance, enabling public theology to play a constructive role in legal and public policy discourse without losing its social significance.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, Moltmann's public theology provides a normative framework that expands the understanding of the function of law. Law is no longer positioned as a neutral instrument of power, but as a means of social transformation that must remain sensitive to injustice as the root cause of conflict. Within this perspective, law enforcement that fails to detect injustice at an early stage not only loses its effectiveness, but also forfeits its moral legitimacy within society.

### **Integration of Public Theology and Law in Early Conflict Detection**

The integration of public theology and law opens new possibilities for understanding the function of law enforcement, particularly in the context of early conflict detection. Thus far, law has often been narrowly understood as a normative system that operates only after violations occur, rendering its role predominantly reactive rather than preventive. Such an approach is no longer adequate for addressing the complexity of social conflict, which is generally rooted in structural injustice that develops gradually and is not always immediately visible. Therefore, a framework is needed that expands the function of law not merely as an instrument for enforcing norms, but as a mechanism that is sensitive to social dynamics with the potential to generate conflict.

Jürgen Moltmann's thought offers a significant contribution, particularly through the concept of the Theology of Hope, which positions hope as a transformative force within history. In Moltmann's framework, hope is not a passive attitude, but an ethical impetus that drives social change toward greater justice. When applied to the legal sphere, this perspective demands that law move beyond its function of maintaining order and assume an active role in anticipating injustice that may develop into conflict. Accordingly, law can no longer be regarded as a neutral system, but rather as part of an ongoing social process that must be continuously evaluated based on its capacity to realize justice.

Within this framework, law enforcement can be understood as a process that begins with the capacity to critically interpret social reality. Social conflict does not arise spontaneously; rather, it is the accumulation of unmanaged tensions such as economic inequality, discrimination, or the marginalization of certain groups. When these symptoms are not identified at an early stage, law loses its opportunity to perform its preventive function. It

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<sup>28</sup> Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*, vol. 31 (Columbia University Press, 2009), 27.

<sup>29</sup> Minseok Kim, *Public Theology in Korea?: Rereading John Calvin*, vol. 13 (LIT Verlag Münster, 2021), 125.

<sup>30</sup> Dion A Forster, "African Public Theology? A Conceptual Engagement to Keep the Conversation Alive," *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 56, no. 1 (2022): 12.

is precisely in this context that law must be positioned as a system endowed with diagnostic sensitivity namely, the capacity to identify injustice as an early signal of potential conflict.

However, the capacity for detection alone is insufficient if it is not grounded in a strong normative foundation. Law that relies solely on formal procedures often fails to address the public's sense of justice, thereby weakening its own legitimacy. Within Moltmann's public theology, law should be grounded in substantive justice justice that is not only procedurally valid, but also experienced as fair by society. In this sense, justice carries a relational dimension that emphasizes balance, recognition, and respect for human dignity. Without such a foundation, law risks becoming a mechanism that maintains superficial order while failing to resolve the underlying causes of conflict.

Furthermore, once law is capable of recognizing injustice and is oriented toward substantive justice, the next step concerns how it responds appropriately to such conditions. In many practices, law enforcement remains dominated by a retributive approach that focuses on punishment. This approach often arrives too late when conflict has already escalated into an open stage. In contrast, within this integrative framework, law enforcement is directed toward a more preventive and restorative orientation, emphasizing efforts such as prevention, dialogue, and the restoration of social relationships. This approach is not only more aligned with the dynamics of social conflict, but also consistent with principles of justice that prioritize restoration over mere retribution.

Ultimately, the entire process converges on the need for broader social transformation. The recurrence of conflict indicates that short-term solutions are insufficient, as the root causes often lie within unjust social structures. In this regard, law cannot remain confined to a stabilizing function; rather, it must act as an agent of change that promotes systemic reform. Moltmann's perspective provides a strong foundation for this transformation by framing it as part of the realization of hope within history. Accordingly, law enforcement is not merely aimed at suppressing conflict, but at creating more just social conditions in which the potential for conflict can be sustainably minimized.

### **Application in the Context of Law Enforcement in Indonesia**

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of an integrative model between public theology and law enforcement in the early detection of social conflict faces significant challenges, yet simultaneously opens strategic opportunities. The complexity of Indonesian society characterized by ethnic, religious, and socio-economic diversity renders conflict not merely a possibility, but a recurring reality in various forms. Therefore, the need for a model of law enforcement that is not only reactive, but also capable of identifying potential conflict at an early stage, becomes increasingly urgent.

One of the primary issues in the practice of law enforcement in Indonesia is the persistent tendency toward approaches that remain oriented toward enforcement only after conflict has already occurred. In many cases, law enforcement agencies only intervene once conflicts have escalated into open phases, such as in communal conflicts or identity-based disputes. In fact, numerous studies indicate that such conflicts are typically preceded by early

warning signs, including social tensions, discrimination, or unaddressed inequalities.<sup>31</sup> This condition suggests that the core issue lies not only in weak law enforcement, but also in the failure of early detection mechanisms within the legal system itself.

In this context, an approach that positions law as an instrument sensitive to injustice becomes highly relevant. Law enforcement must act earlier not through repressive means, but through the capacity to more carefully interpret social dynamics. For instance, rising intolerance, discriminatory practices against minority groups, or unequal access to resources can be understood as early indicators requiring appropriate legal responses. Reports from the World Bank and the United Nations emphasize that conflict prevention is far more effective when undertaken at an early stage through interventions that are responsive to social injustice.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, the issue of legal legitimacy constitutes a critical factor in the Indonesian context. When law is perceived as unjust or applied inconsistently, public trust tends to decline, which in the long term can increase the potential for conflict. Tyler's study demonstrates that compliance with the law is shaped more by perceptions of fairness than by coercive power.<sup>33</sup> This finding resonates with the Indonesian reality, where distrust toward legal institutions often underlies the emergence of social conflict. Therefore, strengthening substantive justice in law enforcement becomes an imperative that cannot be overlooked.

On the other hand, preventive and restorative approaches also hold strong relevance within the Indonesian context, which culturally embraces traditions of conflict resolution based on deliberation (*musyawarah*). This approach can serve as a bridge between the formal legal system and the living social values within society. Within this framework, law enforcement functions not merely to punish, but also to restore disrupted social relationships. Such an approach has been shown to be more effective in reducing recurring conflicts compared to approaches that are purely repressive.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the implementation of this integrative model also requires the courage to promote change at the structural level. Many conflicts in Indonesia are rooted in systemic issues, such as economic inequality, unjust distribution of resources, and social exclusion. In this context, law cannot merely function as a guardian of order, but must also play a role in advancing more equitable public policies. This perspective aligns with the concept of structural justice, which emphasizes that conflict prevention cannot be separated from efforts to reform the social structures that give rise to it.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the application of an integrative model between public theology and law within the Indonesian context is not utopian; rather, it rests on a strong empirical and normative foundation. This approach enables law to function more holistically not merely as a mechanism of enforcement, but as a system capable of identifying, responding to, and

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<sup>31</sup> Tadjoeeddin et al., "Inequality and Violent Conflict: New Evidence from Selected Provinces in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," 558.

<sup>32</sup> United Nations, "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict," 3.

<sup>33</sup> Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law*, 163.

<sup>34</sup> Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice & Responsive Regulation*, 30.

<sup>35</sup> Fraser, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*, 31:29.

mitigating conflict at its earliest stages. Within this framework, law enforcement no longer operates behind conflict, but instead stands at the forefront of its prevention.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the primary limitation of law enforcement in Indonesia lies in its predominantly reactive and legal-formal orientation, which constrains its capacity to function effectively as a mechanism for the early detection of social conflict. Law tends to operate only after conflicts have occurred, while structural root causes such as inequality, discrimination, and social exclusion are often inadequately addressed within existing legal frameworks. Through the perspective of Jürgen Moltmann's public theology, particularly the concept of *Theology of Hope*, this study argues that law should not be understood as a neutral normative system, but as an ethical instrument responsible for promoting justice and anticipating injustice as a source of conflict. Within this framework, the function of law enforcement expands from mere enforcement toward a more preventive, responsive, and transformative role.

Furthermore, this study formulates an integrative model that positions law enforcement as a process encompassing the capacity to identify social injustice, grounded in substantive justice, oriented toward preventive and restorative approaches, and committed to structural transformation.

This model suggests that the effectiveness of law in preventing conflict is determined not only by institutional strength, but also by its moral legitimacy and sensitivity to social dynamics. In the Indonesian context, this approach is particularly relevant given the high level of social complexity and the recurring nature of conflict. Therefore, strengthening the preventive function of law enforcement is an urgent necessity not only to respond to conflict, but to prevent it from emerging at its earliest stages. Ultimately, the integration of law and public theology offers not only a conceptual contribution, but also practical direction for strengthening law enforcement in the prevention of social conflict.

## Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

During the preparation of this work, the author used AI tools based on GPT models in order to improve language quality, grammar, and clarity of writing. After using these tools, the author carefully reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication. All substantive content, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this article are entirely the author's own work. AI tools were not used to generate scholarly content, arguments, or research findings.

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