**The Collapse of Law Enforcement in Indonesia: Perspectives on Morality and Religious Ethic**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The crisis in law enforcement in Indonesia highlights a profound moral decline among legal officials, evident in widespread corruption, abuse of power, and discriminatory legal practices. This deterioration has significantly eroded public trust in the legal system. This article seeks to examine the underlying causes of Indonesia’s law enforcement crisis through the lens of morality and religious ethics, while proposing solutions grounded in religious principles. Employing a normative legal research method that incorporates a religious morality approach, case studies, and conceptual analysis, this study reveals a decline in ethical and moral standards among law enforcement authorities, as reflected in contemporary legal issues. The lack of integration of religious values in the ethical development of legal practitioners is identified as a key factor contributing to this crisis. To address these challenges, this study advocates for the incorporation of faith-based moral education, legal policy reforms informed by religious values, and the empowerment of communities through ethical legal oversight. By emphasizing the role of morality and religious ethics as foundational elements in fostering a just legal system, this research aims to contribute to the realization of dignified law enforcement in Indonesia.*

Krisis penegakan hukum di Indonesia mencerminkan runtuhnya moralitas di kalangan aparat penegak hukum, ditandai oleh maraknya kasus korupsi, penyalahgunaan wewenang, dan diskriminasi hukum. Fenomena ini berdampak signifikan terhadap Erosi Moralitas Masyarakat, Normalisasi Perilaku Amoral dalam Aparat Penegak Hukum, Meningkatnya Ketidakadilan Sosial, Hilangnya Rasa Tanggung Jawab Kolektif masyarakat terhadap sistem hukum. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis akar penyebab krisis penegakan hukum di Indonesia melalui perspektif moralitas dan etika religius serta menawarkan solusi berbasis nilai-nilai religius. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode normatif dengan pendekatan moralitas religius, studi kasus dan analisis konseptual. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penegakan hukum di Indonesia mengalami dekadensi moralitas dan etika religius, sebagaimana tercermin dari berbagai permasalahan hukum yang terjadi saat ini. Ketiadaan integrasi nilai-nilai religius dalam pembentukan karakter aparat hukum diidentifikasi sebagai akar utama krisis ini. Solusi yang ditawarkan meliputi penerapan pendidikan moral berbasis agama, reformasi kebijakan hukum yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai religius, serta pemberdayaan masyarakat melalui pengawasan hukum yang beretika. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi dalam mewujudkan penegakan hukum yang bermartabat di Indonesia, dengan menekankan pentingnya moralitas dan etika religius sebagai fondasi untuk membangun sistem hukum yang berkeadilan.

**Keywords:** *Law Enforcement, Decadence, Morality, Religious Ethic.*

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Law enforcement refers to the implementation of legal norms by competent authorities to uphold justice, maintain order, and ensure legal certainty within society (Berk, 2021). According to Satjipto Rahardjo, law enforcement is an effort to translate the ideals of justice embedded in legal norms into practical reality (Romdoni et al., 2023). Despite various legal reforms in Indonesia, such as the establishment of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and improvements in the judicial system, structural and ethical challenges continue to hinder the effectiveness of law enforcement (Suwito et al., 2023).

Legal enforcement in Indonesia remains susceptible to external influences, including political dynamics, power struggles, and social inequalities (Kruis & Merlo, 2021). High-profile corruption cases and the widespread abuse of authority among law enforcement officials indicate a persistent integrity crisis within the legal system. Public perception of injustice in the enforcement of laws—whether within government institutions, the judiciary, or law enforcement agencies—has further strained the relationship between the legal system and society. Consequently, the erosion of public trust in law enforcement has emerged as a critical issue (Lankford et al., 2019).

Establishing an effective and credible legal system requires a deeper integration of moral and religious ethics (Marjuni, 2021). Morality in law enforcement can be understood as a framework of principles guiding human actions in social life, rooted in values of justice, integrity, and moral responsibility toward others (Rosenberg, 2024). These ethical foundations are crucial in shaping legal practitioners who go beyond the mere technical application of laws and instead adhere to higher principles of justice, as upheld in religious teachings and universal ethical norms (Pila, 2020).

The moral crisis in Indonesia's law enforcement sector is evident in the lack of integrity and ethical accountability among legal officials. The prevalence of corruption and the misuse of authority suggest that law enforcement is often disconnected from a genuine sense of moral duty. Therefore, fostering strong moral character—reflected in honesty, fairness, and responsibility—is essential for developing legal officers capable of enforcing the law impartially and without personal or political bias (Luo, 2023).

Religious ethics, derived from religious teachings, play a significant role in law enforcement. In Indonesia, where religion holds a central place in society, teachings that emphasize justice, honesty, and moral responsibility are highly relevant to both social life and the legal system. For instance, Islamic principles uphold justice and honesty as fundamental values that must be practiced by all individuals, including legal officials. Similarly, Christian teachings on "loving one's neighbor as oneself" promote fair treatment of others, which aligns closely with the principles of law enforcement (Fitri Yani et al., 2024).

The incorporation of religious ethics in Indonesia’s legal system is crucial, as these values hold great significance for the majority of the population. Religious ethics can help shape law enforcement officers into fair and transparent professionals, ensuring that the law is not merely a means of maintaining social order but also a tool for upholding justice based on universal moral and ethical principles (Yanita et al., 2022).

By integrating morality and religious ethics into Indonesia’s legal framework, the nation can establish a solid foundation for strengthening integrity and public trust in the legal system. Law enforcement guided by these values can serve as an effective solution to address the current crisis in Indonesia’s legal system. This article explores law enforcement in Indonesia from the perspective of morality and religious ethics while proposing solutions rooted in religious values to develop a fair and dignified legal system. The findings of this research are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by encouraging legal reforms that go beyond structural improvements, focusing instead on enhancing morality and ethical integrity.

1. **METHOD**

This study uses a normative-qualitative method with a morality and religious ethics approach. The purpose of this study is to analyse the crisis of law enforcement in Indonesia from the perspective of universal moral values and relevant religious ethical teachings. This method was chosen because it is able to increase understanding of how law, morality and religiosity interact in an effort to build a dignified and just legal system (Miswardi et al., 2021).

In addition, data collection was conducted through desk studies and case documentation. The desk study included analyses of relevant laws, such as the Criminal Code and laws governing law enforcement agencies, as well as literature on theories of morality, religious ethics, and the concept of justice. Case documentation was used to explore real cases of corruption, abuse of power, and legal discrimination that reflected the decadence of morality among law enforcement officials(Benuf et al., 2019).

Conceptual analysis is used to understand theories of morality and religious ethics in the legal context, as well as their relationship with law enforcement. Next, critical analysis was used to evaluate current legal policies and find reasons why law enforcement faces moral problems. Finally, quantitative interpretation is used to interpret the data according to the researcher's underlying morality and religious principles.

With this method, the research is expected to offer solutions based on morality and religious ethics to improve Indonesia's law enforcement system. These solutions include the implementation of faith-based moral education for legal officers, legal policy reforms that follow religious values, and community empowerment for ethical legal supervision. Therefore, this research can provide benefits both theoretically and practically in the process of building a legal system that is more just, dignified, and based on noble human values.

**III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Decadence of Law Enforcement in Indonesia**

The deterioration of Indonesia’s legal system is evident in both procedural shortcomings and deviations from fundamental principles of justice, which should serve as the foundation of law enforcement. This decline highlights the gap between public expectations and the reality of legal practice. Various structural, cultural, and moral issues contribute to this crisis within the Indonesian legal system (Chaturvedula, 2016).

A primary factor driving the decline of law enforcement is the widespread corruption involving legal officials. Cases implicating high-ranking state officials, legislators, and law enforcement authorities—such as police officers, prosecutors, and judges—underscore a systemic lack of integrity (Jhingan, 2024). Corruption, which has become entrenched in certain legal institutions, undermines judicial processes and prevents law enforcement from upholding justice and legal certainty. In many instances, the law is perceived as a commodity that can be manipulated through financial or political influence, thereby creating injustice for those without access to power or resources (Baker, 2009).

Beyond corruption, the abuse of power by law enforcement officials further exacerbates the decline of the legal system. This misconduct often manifests in coercion, intimidation, or manipulation of legal proceedings to serve personal or group interests. Instances of extortion (pungli) and the exploitation of authority for political, economic, or social gain weaken the credibility of legal institutions, erode public trust, and diminish the effectiveness of law enforcement (Fletcher, 1987).

In addition to corruption and abuse of power, legal injustice in Indonesia also plays a critical role in this decline (Durkheim, 2020). Discriminatory law enforcement practices, often influenced by race, religion, ethnicity, or social status, result in unequal treatment before the law. In many cases, legal decisions disproportionately favor powerful groups, leading to selective enforcement and inconsistent judicial outcomes. This not only delays or obstructs legal proceedings but also reinforces systemic inequalities within the justice system.

The moral crisis afflicting law enforcement is further reflected in various high-profile cases involving legal officials. One such case involved corruption within the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), an institution that should serve as the vanguard of anti-corruption efforts. Instead, its officials were implicated in corrupt practices, exposing a fundamental lack of integrity in key legal institutions (Rury Anjas Andita, n.d.).

Another notable example is the 2009 conflict between the KPK and the Indonesian National Police, known as the ‘Cicak vs Crocodile’ case. Rather than supporting anti-corruption efforts, police officials were involved in actions aimed at undermining the KPK, demonstrating ethical lapses and a lack of commitment to justice (Jeffrey Young, n.d.). Similarly, cases involving judicial corruption—where judges accept bribes to influence verdicts—further illustrate the erosion of judicial ethics. The prevalence of illegal levies (pungli) among police officers and their involvement in drug-related crimes further tarnishes the image of law enforcement in Indonesia (Hairi, 2022).

The 2022 murder case of *Brigadier J*, in which police officers were implicated, alongside subsequent attempts to conceal evidence, serves as yet another example of the moral and ethical failings within law enforcement institutions. Such incidents reinforce the ongoing integrity crisis in Indonesia’s legal system, underscoring the urgent need for reform to restore public trust (Rosmala & Thoyyibah, 2022).

At its core, the moral decay of law enforcement is a fundamental driver of this crisis. The lack of ethical integrity among legal officials—manifested in dishonesty, partiality, and unjust practices—has created an environment that obstructs genuine and fair law enforcement. Consequently, public confidence in the legal system continues to decline, further weakening the rule of law and the principles of justice.

**Root Causes of Law Enforcement Decadence in Indonesia**

The decline of law enforcement in Indonesia is not solely the result of structural and institutional deficiencies but is also deeply influenced by moral and religious ethical factors. The ongoing moral crisis among law enforcement officials—such as police officers, prosecutors, and judges—has compromised their ability to uphold justice and integrity in carrying out their duties. Consequently, law enforcement in Indonesia has become ineffective, often leading to widespread injustice in society (Hamzani et al., 2020).

From a moral standpoint, law enforcement should be guided by universal principles of justice, with legal officials demonstrating strong personal integrity and moral responsibility. Legal morality encompasses an individual’s awareness of their duty to uphold justice and resist the temptations of corruption, collusion, and nepotism (Matthews et al., 2022). However, in practice, moral considerations in Indonesian law enforcement are often neglected. Many legal officials prioritize personal or political interests over objective and impartial application of the law (Televantos, 2020).

One of the primary causes of this moral decay is the lack of character education and moral value inculcation among law enforcement officers from an early stage (van der Donk, 2022). While technical and professional training is emphasized, religious and ethics-based moral education is often overlooked. Yet, religious ethics plays a crucial role in shaping the moral integrity of legal officials. Religious values—such as honesty, justice, responsibility, and respect for human rights—can provide a strong foundation for addressing the moral decline in the legal system (Rohman & Ibrahim, 2022).

In the perspective of religious ethics, the Indonesian legal system should not only uphold positive law, but also reflect moral and ethical values derived from religious teachings (Aguilar, 2021). The various religions practiced by Indonesia’s majority population—including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—emphasize justice, honesty, and service to the community. These ethical foundations should serve as guiding principles for the character and professionalism of law enforcement officials (Karim Faiz et al., 2022).

The moral and ethical crisis is further exacerbated by the unequal application of the law, which enables corruption and abuse of power. Corruption cases involving high-ranking public officials—including those within law enforcement institutions—illustrate how legal authorities often stray from their moral responsibilities. The prevalence of judicial mafia practices and the abuse of power by law enforcement personnel have further deteriorated the credibility of the Indonesian legal system. As a result, public trust in the legal process has eroded, with the judiciary increasingly perceived as unfair and riddled with irregularities (Segev, 2021).

Ultimately, the decline of law enforcement in Indonesia can be attributed to a profound crisis of morality and religious ethics (Berkmann & Fries, 2021). The root of this problem lies in the insufficient emphasis on religion-based moral education in shaping the character of law enforcement officers, as well as the absence of religious values in legal reform efforts. Addressing this crisis requires a concerted effort to integrate morality and religious ethics into law enforcement practices. This can be achieved by strengthening character education rooted in religious principles, enhancing the oversight and accountability mechanisms for legal officials, and promoting legal reforms that align with fundamental and universal principles of justice (“Correction to: Indonesia’s Supreme Court Judgment on Religious Clothing: Failing Women and Girls in Public Schools?,” 2023).

**The Impact of Law Enforcement Decadence: A Religious Morality and Ethics Perspective**

Law enforcement serves as a fundamental pillar in maintaining order and justice within society. However, when law enforcement deteriorates, the consequences extend beyond legal and political realms, affecting moral and ethical foundations as well. The decline of law enforcement—often marked by corruption, nepotism, and a lack of integrity among legal officials—undermines the principles of fairness and justice that should be upheld (Bloch, 2021). From the perspective of morality and religious ethics, this situation presents a profound challenge to the values of honesty, integrity, and social responsibility.

One of the most significant consequences of weak law enforcement is the erosion of public morality(Setiyawan et al., 2024). When laws are not applied fairly and transparently, public trust in the legal system diminishes. As a result, individuals may begin to disregard moral principles in their daily lives. If people witness the law being manipulated by those with power and resources, the broader societal commitment to honesty and justice weakens. From a religious standpoint, such injustice contradicts fundamental teachings that emphasize truth and righteousness (Sakti Koeswanto et al., 2023).

Another troubling aspect of law enforcement decadence is the abuse of authority by legal officials. Corruption, bribery, and discriminatory practices become commonplace in a system where ethical standards are compromised. From a religious ethical perspective, such actions constitute a betrayal of the moral and legal responsibility entrusted to those in power. Instead of serving as guardians of justice, corrupt officials contribute to a culture where unethical behavior is normalized (Masferrer, 2020).

Social injustice is another direct outcome of a weakened legal system. In a corrupt framework, those with wealth and influence often receive preferential treatment, while marginalized communities struggle to obtain fair legal protection. The concepts of al-‘adl (justice) and ihsan (benevolence) emphasize that laws should be applied equitably, without bias based on social or economic status (Teubner, 2023). Yet, when legal systems fail to uphold these principles, societal divisions deepen, and faith in institutions erodes.

Furthermore, the breakdown of law enforcement weakens the collective sense of responsibility in upholding justice. When individuals see that legal mechanisms are ineffective or compromised, they may feel disengaged from the moral duty to maintain order and fairness. Religious teachings emphasize the necessity of standing against wrongdoing—such as the Islamic principle of amar ma’ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil). However, when the legal system no longer functions as a reliable instrument of justice, these ethical responsibilities are increasingly neglected, contributing to rising crime and societal instability (Fancourt & Hendek, 2022).

Ultimately, the decline of law enforcement has far-reaching moral and ethical implications. It weakens public trust, normalizes corruption, deepens social inequality, and diminishes the collective will to uphold justice (Sinaga et al., 2024). Addressing this crisis requires legal reforms grounded in moral integrity and ethical principles. To restore justice, honesty, transparency, and accountability must be prioritized in law enforcement institutions. A just and civilized legal system can only be achieved when the rule of law is upheld with fairness, and ethical values are deeply embedded within legal structures.

**The Synergy of Morality and Religious Ethics in Law Enforcement**

Law plays a crucial role in institutionalizing moral values and religious ethics, ensuring they are systematically applied within society (Cuypers, 2024). Hart, in his theory of law as a system of rules, explains that law consists of both primary rules, which regulate behavior, and secondary rules, which define how these primary rules are applied. Within this framework, morality and religious ethics can serve as the foundation for primary rules, while law functions as a mechanism to enforce compliance (Nayfeld, 2019).

However, the relationship between law, morality, and religious ethics is not always straightforward. In his famous debate with Lord Devlin, Hart argued that not all moral values should be enforced through law (Guillarme, 2023). He believed that law should only regulate behaviors that directly threaten public interest, whereas Lord Devlin contended that law must protect public morality to preserve social cohesion (Burry, 2024). This debate highlights the ongoing tension between legal enforcement and moral obligations.

From the perspective of natural law theory, as articulated by Thomas Aquinas, morality is a universal principle that forms the foundation of positive law. Aquinas asserted that just laws must be rooted in universal moral principles that aim to achieve the common good. In this view, morality serves as both a guide for legal formulation and a standard for evaluating the fairness of a legal system (Smith, 2019).

Building on this idea, John Finnis, a contemporary natural law theorist, argued that morality is essential for the sustainability of law. He introduced the concept of "basic human values," which include life, knowledge, play, aesthetics, friendship, religion, and practical reason. According to Finnis, these values should inform legal structures so that laws function not merely as tools for control but as instruments for achieving substantive justice (Tejeda, 2023).

Religious ethics further complement morality by offering normative guidance rooted in spiritual teachings. Max Weber’s theory of "Protestant ethics" illustrates how religious values influence legal and social order. He argued that principles such as honesty, hard work, and moral responsibility contribute to the development of a stable and trustworthy legal system. In this sense, religious ethics serve as a form of social control, limiting legal abuses while reinforcing moral integrity (Mehmood & Seror, 2023).

In Indonesia, morality and religious ethics play a fundamental role in shaping a just and inclusive legal system (Muniroh & Nasution, 2021). Pancasila, the nation's ideological foundation, integrates moral and religious values to promote social justice. It emphasizes that all individuals, particularly law enforcement officers, have a moral duty to serve society with fairness, integrity, and honesty.

To build a more just and dignified legal system, a synergy between morality and religious ethics is essential. While morality provides universal principles of justice and integrity, religious ethics reinforce these values with spiritual and cultural depth. This combination not only strengthens the moral character of individual law enforcement officers but also fosters a legal system that upholds human dignity and true justice (Hill, 2020).

**Law Enforcement Solutions Based on Morality and Religious Ethic**

Ensuring fair law enforcement with integrity requires more than just structural improvements to the legal system. Addressing the deterioration of law enforcement in Indonesia demands solutions rooted in morality and religious ethics. This approach can enhance the quality of law enforcement, strengthen the integrity of law officers, and rebuild public trust in the legal system (Widyawati et al., 2022). In this context, three key solutions can be implemented: faith-based moral education, legal policy reform, and community empowerment through ethical value-based legal oversight (Fadli & Juliandi, 2021).

First, one of the most effective ways to improve law enforcement in Indonesia is by incorporating religious values into moral education. This approach can be integrated into the training curriculum for future judges, prosecutors, police officers, and advocates. The curriculum should emphasize personal integrity, justice, and moral responsibility in carrying out legal duties. A faith-based education provides a spiritual foundation that reinforces an officer’s understanding of their role—not only as enforcers of state law but also as individuals accountable to moral and religious principles.

This approach can draw upon the core values of Indonesia’s major religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. For example, Islamic teachings highlight the principles of justice (‘*adl*) and trust (*amanah*), which can serve as foundational values in shaping the ethical character of law enforcement officials. By internalizing these values, law officers will not only enforce the law effectively but also uphold it with a strong moral conscience, fostering a legal system that is both fair and honorable.

Second, in addition to education, legal policy reform that integrates moral and religious principles is crucial. Reform should go beyond regulatory changes and structural improvements; it must also ensure that legal principles reflect ethical and religious values. This alignment strengthens the law’s fundamental purpose: to uphold justice and promote the well-being of all people.

One way to achieve this is by ensuring that laws and policies incorporate the ethical and religious principles that are deeply embedded in society. For instance, criminal law, family law, and labor law should take into account values such as social justice, equality, and respect for human dignity. This integration fosters harmony between state law and the moral values that shape community life, ultimately enhancing both public confidence in the legal system and the moral integrity of law enforcement.

Moreover, law enforcement officers should be given the flexibility to interpret regulations while considering the religious and ethical values prevalent in society. This approach not only strengthens law enforcement but also deepens officers’ understanding of their moral duty in serving the public.

Third, community empowerment through ethical value-based legal oversight is crucial for ensuring law enforcement. Since communities are directly affected by legal policies, they play a vital role in ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in law enforcement. Therefore, empowering communities to take part in ethical value-based legal oversight is essential. One way to achieve this is through independent watchdog organizations and community forums dedicated to monitoring legal processes. These groups should be guided by ethical and religious principles such as honesty, justice, and transparency. Their role would be to ensure that law enforcement officers not only adhere to legal standards but also consider moral and ethical dimensions in their decisions.

Additionally, public education on legal rights and procedures is key to fostering community involvement. When people are aware of their rights, they are better equipped to demand justice and hold legal authorities accountable. An informed and engaged society can help create a legal system that is more responsive, impartial, and aligned with the principles of fairness and integrity.

By implementing these three strategies—faith-based moral education, legal policy reform, and community empowerment—Indonesia can build a legal system that is not only effective but also deeply rooted in ethical and religious values. This holistic approach ensures that law enforcement operates with integrity, fairness, and a strong moral foundation, ultimately fostering a just and dignified society.

1. **CONCLUSION**

The decadence of law enforcement in Indonesia is an important issue caused by various factors including rampant corruption, abuse of power, and unfairness in the application of the law. Corruption, which is often perceived as a culture within legal institutions, undermines the credibility of the legal system and creates injustice. Abuse of power, whether in the form of coercion, intimidation or manipulation, also contributes to this deterioration. Unfairness in the application of the law, often based on discrimination against certain groups, further exacerbates the problem.

Moral decadence among law enforcement officers is another pressing concern, as evidenced by cases of high-ranking officials involved in corruption, abuse of authority, and illegal activities. The 2022 murder case involving police officers against *Brigadier* *J* is a stark example of the declining morality and ethics among those entrusted with upholding the law. This crisis stems from a lack of moral education, insufficient character development, and the neglect of religious ethics in the training and professional lives of law enforcement officers.

The impact of this moral decadence is far-reaching, including the erosion of community morality, the normalisation of immoral behaviour among law enforcement officers, social injustice, and the loss of collective responsibility in upholding goodness. Therefore, legal reform based on moral values and religious ethics is needed to create a more just and civilised legal system.

The synergy between morality and religious ethics in law enforcement is very important. Law serves to institutionalise moral values and religious ethics, and although the relationship between the three is not always harmonious, they can complement each other in creating a more just and dignified legal system. To improve law enforcement in Indonesia, solutions based on morality and religious ethics are needed. These solutions include faith-based moral education, legal policy reform, and community empowerment through ethical value-based legal supervision. By implementing these solutions, the quality of law enforcement can be improved, the integrity of law enforcement officers increased, and public trust in the legal system can be restored.

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