




ORIGINAL

## Police Human Resource Reform for Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Indonesia

### Reforma de los recursos humanos de la policía para una buena gobernanza y el desarrollo sostenible en Indonesia

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#### ABSTRACT

The reform of the human resources of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) is a strategic step to realize good governance and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions. The quality of Polri human resources, who are professional, accountable, and have integrity, is a key factor in building public trust and increasing the effectiveness of police services. This research is motivated by the ongoing gap between normative policies and practices in the field, as reflected in the many complaints against Polri members, inconsistencies in enforcing the code of ethics, and the weak merit system in job promotions. This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Polri's human resource reform in building professionalism, integrity, and institutional transparency to strengthen good governance and support equitable and sustainable development. This research uses normative legal methods with a juridical-normative and qualitative descriptive approach, with data sources in the form of laws and relevant literature that are analyzed in depth. The research findings show that implementing a merit system, digitizing public services, and strengthening the code of ethics within the Polri have positively impacted increasing professionalism and public trust. However, further strengthening is needed in oversight, organizational ethics, and consistency in policy implementation. In conclusion, Polri's human resource reform has effectively enhanced professionalism and institutional accountability. However, it needs to be strengthened by developing a culture of ethics, transparency, and ongoing public oversight, in which the audience has a significant role, to become an instrument for a just, humanistic, and sustainable development-oriented police force.

**Keywords:** Polri; Human Resource Reform; Good Governance; Accountability; SDGs.

#### RESUMEN

La reforma de los recursos humanos de la Policía Nacional de Indonesia (Polri) constituye un paso estratégico para lograr una buena gobernanza y contribuir al logro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), en particular el Objetivo 16 sobre paz, justicia e instituciones sólidas. La calidad de los recursos humanos de la Polri, que son profesionales, responsables e íntegros, es un factor clave para generar confianza pública y aumentar la eficacia de los servicios policiales. Esta investigación se basa en la brecha existente entre las políticas normativas y las prácticas en este campo, como se refleja en las numerosas quejas contra miembros de la Polri, las inconsistencias en la aplicación del código de ética y el deficiente sistema de méritos en los ascensos laborales. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo evaluar la eficacia de la reforma de los

recursos humanos de la Polri para fomentar el profesionalismo, la integridad y la transparencia institucional, fortalecer la buena gobernanza y apoyar un desarrollo equitativo y sostenible. Esta investigación utiliza métodos jurídicos normativos con un enfoque jurídico-normativo y descriptivo cualitativo, con fuentes de datos en forma de leyes y literatura relevante que se analizan en profundidad. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que la implementación de un sistema de méritos, la digitalización de los servicios públicos y el fortalecimiento del código de ética en la Policía Nacional han tenido un impacto positivo en el aumento del profesionalismo y la confianza pública. Sin embargo, se requiere un mayor fortalecimiento de la supervisión, la ética organizacional y la coherencia en la implementación de políticas. En conclusión, la reforma de recursos humanos de la Policía Nacional ha mejorado eficazmente el profesionalismo y la rendición de cuentas institucional. Sin embargo, es necesario fortalecerla mediante el desarrollo de una cultura de ética, transparencia y supervisión pública continua, en la que la audiencia tenga un papel importante, para convertirse en un instrumento para una fuerza policial justa, humanista y orientada al desarrollo sostenible.

**Palabras clave:** Policía Nacional; Reforma de Recursos Humanos; Buena Gobernanza; Rendición de Cuentas; ODS.

## INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is a national strategic agenda to enhance government performance and foster credible and integrity-based public institutions.<sup>(1)</sup> In this context, the Police's role is paramount, as they are directly responsible for law enforcement, public protection, and maintaining order. However, it is concerning that public trust in the Indonesian National Police (Polri) remains inconsistent, as indicated by various surveys. The Indonesian Political Indicators Survey Institute recorded public trust in the Polri at approximately 54, 2 %, a significant drop from the previous figure of over 70 %.<sup>(2)</sup> This figure underscores the serious challenges of internal Polri reform, particularly in human resources.

The legal framework has provided a foundation for the development of Polri personnel. Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police emphasizes the importance of a transparent and merit-based recruitment, education, and promotion system. However, practice often demonstrates a gap between normative regulations and implementation. Cases of ethical code violations, abuse of authority, and excessive violence continue to plague the Polri. Data from the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) in 2021 shows that the Police consistently became the institution most frequently reported to Komnas HAM, namely 661 complaints. If we look at 2020, there were 785 complaints received by Komnas HAM related to the Police. This illustrates an alarming increase in complaints after 2019, when Komnas HAM received only 60 complaints about the Police.<sup>(3)</sup> In 2024,<sup>(4)</sup> The Police again became the state institution most frequently reported, namely 751 times, ranging from physical violence, torture, to abuse of authority.

This phenomenon demonstrates that the National Police bureaucratic reform involves improving the organizational structure and a paradigm shift in human resource management. Professionalism, accountability, and integrity of personnel must be prioritized, as the quality of police human resources will significantly determine the success of the reform. Within the framework of good governance, the National Police must uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and justice in every aspect of its duties. Furthermore, this issue is directly linked to the Sustainable Development Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), emphasize that sustainable development can only be achieved if the nation has effective, accountable, and transparent public institutions, including the national police. This means that the success of the National Police human resource reform is not merely an internal institutional interest but also a significant part of Indonesia's commitment to achieving the global sustainable development agenda.

Previous academic studies have also confirmed this. Supriyanto et al.<sup>(5)</sup> stated that Polri reforms have focused more on structural changes, while cultural aspects concerning the mentality of officers have received less attention. Maulitya et al. emphasized that recruitment and promotion mechanisms within the Polri are still vulnerable to interference, making it challenging to implement a merit system fully.<sup>(6)</sup> Research by Yosarie et al. even added that the inconsistent implementation of the professional code of ethics significantly influences low accountability within the Polri.<sup>(7)</sup> This study underscores the urgent need to broaden the scope of research on Polri reform, extending beyond the institution's internal context to include its relevance to the sustainable development agenda.

Theoretically, this research relies on Lawrence Friedman's legal system framework, which emphasizes the interrelationship between structure, substance, and legal culture as factors for reform success. This framework is particularly relevant to the Polri reform as it helps understand the need for structural changes and the importance of the officers' mentality in the reform process. Max Weber's rational bureaucracy theory is also

relevant in explaining the significance of a merit system, a clear hierarchy, and written rules in building a professional bureaucracy, a key aspect of the Polri reform.

Furthermore, the principles of good governance as formulated by the UNDP, which encompass accountability, transparency, participation, and effectiveness,<sup>(8)</sup> serve as a normative basis for assessing the success of Polri's human resource reform. This theoretical framework also strengthens the research's position in determining regulatory implementation and practical challenges in the field. Thus, Polri's human resource development reform can be viewed as a key prerequisite for achieving good governance and Indonesia's real contribution to achieving the SDGs. The key challenges that need to be addressed are aligning the existing legal framework with practices on the ground and building an organizational culture that supports professionalism and integrity within the Polri. Furthermore, this research offers an integrative model for Polri's human resource reform, which relies on regulatory improvements and emphasizes institutional and cultural transformation as prerequisites for achieving good governance and sustainable development.

## METHOD

This research is classified as a descriptive qualitative study using a normative-juridical approach.<sup>(9)</sup> The study was conducted from January to September 2024, representing Central Java and Jakarta. The population included regulations and policies on human resource development within the Polri. The main variables analyzed consisted of three aspects: the legal framework for Polri human resource reform, the effectiveness of policy implementation, and the impact on professionalism and institutional accountability. This novel approach provides a unique angle from which to understand the complexities of the Polri human resource reform. The research instrument was a document review sheet compiled to analyze primary legal materials, such as Law Number 2 of 2002 and Regulation of the Chief of Police Number 7 of 2022, as well as secondary legal materials in the form of the 2022 National Human Rights Commission annual report, the Indonesian Political Indicators survey, scientific articles, and internal Polri documents.

The data was collected through a comprehensive literature review and content analysis of official documents and relevant scientific publications. The data were then rigorously analyzed using a qualitative-descriptive method through the reduction stages, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis results were interpreted in depth to assess the alignment between legal norms and the implementation practices of the Indonesian National Police's human resource reforms, and to measure their contribution to the realization of professional and equitable police governance. Research ethics were maintained by ensuring that all data were sourced from legitimate and open publications, without involving confidential institutional information or personal data, and that all citations were accurate. This research is independent and does not receive funding from any party to maintain objectivity and academic integrity.

## RESULTS

The Indonesian National Police (Polri) urgently needs to transform its organizational culture and strengthen its ethical standards. This is a crucial step in addressing the challenges of good governance and building public trust. The ongoing bureaucratic reforms, which commenced in 2004, necessitate fundamental changes in the paradigm and practices of the Indonesian police force. These reforms are being implemented through legal instruments such as Presidential Regulation No. 81 of 2010 concerning the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010-2025 and the Polri Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap 2020-2024. The focus is developing a professional, integrity-driven, and humane human resources pool.

Empirical data reveal a significant and concerning trend of disciplinary and ethical violations within the Polri.<sup>(10)</sup> Instances of absence from duty, abuse of authority, and behavior that undermines the dignity of the police are alarmingly high, with non-commissioned officers (NCOs) being the most frequent group of violators. Issues such as violence against the community and internal corruption demand immediate attention.<sup>(11,12)</sup> Serious violations like firearms abuse and falsification of motor vehicle documents persist, with strict sanctions ranging from transfers to dishonorable discharges.<sup>(13)</sup> This trend underscores a weak internalization of ethical values and discipline, despite the detailed legal instruments and codes of ethics stipulated in Government Regulation No. 2 of 2003 and Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police (Perkap) No. 2 of 2016.

Research indicates that organizational culture transformation has not been as effective as desired, primarily due to resistance to change and the absence of a robust meritocratic system in human resource management. The continued dominance of a hierarchical and patronage culture also hampers progress. In this context, Lawrence M. Friedman's legal system theory underscores three main elements: Legal structure (organization and apparatus), legal substance (rules and policies), and legal culture (attitudes, values, and perceptions of members and the public).<sup>(14)</sup> The failure of reform often stems from the elements of legal culture not evolving in line with structural and substantive updates. Despite the establishment of regulations, there is still a gap between ideals and the reality of implementation due to resistance to change, a weak meritocracy-based human resources system, and a bureaucratic culture that tends to be hierarchical and personalistic.

Furthermore, Max Weber's theory of ideal bureaucracy highlights the need for human resources effectiveness and professionalism through a recruitment, placement, and promotion system based on meritocracy, a clear division of labor, and fair supervision, not patronage or personal connections.<sup>(15)</sup> In practice, recruitment and transfers are sometimes still influenced by non-procedural practices.

Efforts to strengthen police ethics are also a demand of modern society.<sup>(16)</sup> The police professional code of ethics is stipulated in Regulation No. 14 of 2011, which emphasizes the importance of integrity, service, courage, and justice. However, data shows that ethics enforcement still faces obstacles in consistency and accountability due to weak internal oversight and a lack of exemplary behavior at the leadership level.<sup>(17)</sup> Within the framework of good governance, accountability and transparency must be upheld in handling ethical and disciplinary violations as a form of moral and legal responsibility to the public. The primary cause of the failure to strengthen ethical culture is the lack of character education and internalization of the values of Pancasila, *Tribhata*, and *Catur Prasetya* in all levels of education and human resource development within the Polri. In addition to accountability and transparency, member integrity is significantly influenced by social motives, family background, and experiences in the workplace.<sup>(18)</sup> Therefore, reforms should not be confined to procedural matters; they must also target mindset changes, internalize a positive legal culture, strengthen technology-based oversight (big data), and encourage community involvement. Digitalizing the human resource management system, through developing the Polri Personnel Information System and implementing talent management, is a key breakthrough in strengthening organizational governance. Transparent performance evaluations, ongoing ethics training, and implementing a fair reward and punishment system support this step. This combination of structural and technological reforms is expected to build a Polri that is technically professional and morally sound, thereby sustainably restoring public trust.

Effective and sustainable bureaucratic reform within the Polri can only be realized if changes are implemented systematically: restructuring structures, updating policies, and building an ethical and adaptive organizational culture. Strengthening character education, ethics-based training, and enforcing a transparent and accountable code of ethics are the main foundations for ensuring every member of the Polri understands their moral-professional responsibilities. Thus, the Polri can uphold their functions of protection, service, and security in line with the ideals of good governance and the demands of a democratic society in the modern era.

The following table illustrates the key improvements needed to transform organizational culture and strengthen police ethics in the era of bureaucratic reform:

**Table 1.** Organizational Culture Transformation and Strengthening of Police Ethics

Aspects That Need Improvement	Main Issues	Recommended Improvements
Recruitment and Promotion System	Non-meritocratic practices, nepotism, and a lack of transparency persist.	Implement a competency-based merit system, digitize the selection process, and implement external oversight.
Ethics Education & Training	Internalization of ethical values is not optimal, and ethics training is not sustainable.	Integrate character education, ethics, and human rights training periodically at all career levels.
Supervision & Discipline Enforcement	Weak internal oversight, inconsistent sanctions, and impunity	Strengthen the role of the Professional and Security Division, transparency of the disciplinary enforcement process, and community involvement in supervision.
Organizational Culture	Hierarchical culture remains dominant, resistant to change, and lacking adaptability.	Encourage a collaborative, innovative, and adaptive culture through transformational leadership and a reward system.
Digitizing Human Resource Management	Human resource data is not yet integrated, and administrative processes remain slow.	Develop an integrated human resource information system, accelerate administrative service processes, and increase the use of digital technology.

This table maps several key aspects that remain challenges and are primary targets for improving organizational culture and strengthening ethics within the police institution. By addressing issues such as unfair selection processes and the persistence of nepotism through implementing a competency-based merit system, digitalization of the selection process, and stricter external oversight, we can pave the way for a more transparent and fair recruitment and promotion system. Similarly, by innovating to integrate ethics and human rights training at every career level, we can ensure a more ethical and professional police force.

Regarding supervision and disciplinary enforcement, the urgency of strengthening internal oversight and consistent implementation of sanctions cannot be overstated. The Division of Profession and Security role, transparency in the disciplinary process, and community involvement in oversight are all crucial elements that



must be implemented as soon as possible. Similarly, the need for innovation in transformational leadership and enforcing a fair reward and punishment system to create a collaborative and adaptive work pattern is pressing.

Furthermore, regarding the digitalization of human resources management, the goal is to rebuild public trust in the Polri. By addressing issues such as unintegrated data recording through the development of an integrated human resources information system and the acceleration of administrative services through digital technology, we can improve the effectiveness, sustainability, and transparency of police services. These improvements are expected to support a more inclusive, adaptive bureaucratic reform process based on strong professional and ethical values, thereby rebuilding public trust in the Polri.

## DISCUSSION

The research findings demonstrate that strengthening professionalism and accountability are at the heart of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) human resource reform efforts within the good governance framework. Both are key pillars in building public trust in the police institution, which is responsible for ensuring that all public service processes, law enforcement, and internal development are carried out in accordance with the principles of good governance, which include accountability, transparency, effectiveness, participation, and the rule of law. From a legal systems theory perspective, the success of law enforcement is determined by three elements: structure, substance, and legal culture. Structure refers to the institutions and working mechanisms of the Polri, and substance relates to regulations and professional ethical standards. At the same time, culture reflects officers' values, attitudes, and behavior. Polri reform must address these three dimensions so that professionalism and accountability do not stop at administrative formalities.

Within the institutional framework (structure), the Polri has developed several systems to strengthen performance oversight and evaluation. For example, establishing the General Supervision Inspectorate and the Professional and Security Division serves as internal oversight of member behavior. There is a public oversight mechanism through the National Police Commission. However, the effectiveness of these institutions is often questioned due to limited authority and the lack of transparency in oversight results. Many reports of ethical violations are not disclosed publicly, giving rise to the perception that the oversight process is not fully accountable.

Regarding legal substance, Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police and Regulation of the Chief of Police Number 14 of 2011 concerning the Police Professional Code of Ethics have been the normative basis for fostering professionalism. This code of ethics emphasizes core values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, and public service. However, implementation is often hampered by bureaucratic interests, a culture of seniority, and a weak reward and sanction system—inconsistent disciplinary enforcement results in a low sense of justice among members and the public.

From a legal culture perspective, professionalism is not just a goal, but a continuous journey of transformation within the Polri. The old command-centric and highly hierarchical orientation often hampers initiative and reduces the space for transparency and participation. To change this, consistent internalization of professional ethics values through ongoing education and training is not just necessary, but vital. Capacity building through continuous professional development, human rights-based training, and integrating the *Tribrata* and *Catur Prasetya* values are not just essential, but the very foundations for building the professional character of police officers.

In the context of the Polri, professionalism and accountability are not just measures, but the essence of good governance.<sup>(19)</sup> The Polri's role in good governance can be measured through three leading indicators: transparency in decision-making, fairness in public services, and consistent law enforcement for internal officers. The following is a conceptual illustration of the relationship between professionalism, accountability, and good governance in the context of the Polri. It is not just a theoretical concept, but a practical reality that the Polri must embody in every action.

**Table 2.** The Relationship Between Professionalism, Accountability, and Good Governance

Dimensions of Police Human Resources Reform	Main Objectives	Practical Implementation	Performance Indicators
Professionalism	Improving personnel competence and integrity	Training in ethics, human rights, leadership, and skills certification	Reducing disciplinary violations; increasing public satisfaction
Accountability	Increasing institutional responsibility and transparency	Strengthening the functions of the Inspectorate General of Supervision, the Division of Professional and Security Affairs, and the National Police Commission	Number of internal cases handled openly and thoroughly.
Good Governance	Upholding the principles of transparency, fairness, and effectiveness	Digitalization of public reports, public participation, and merit-based performance evaluation	Public trust index and institutional integrity scores

The table illustrates that the interdependence of professionalism and accountability is crucial for good police governance. Professionalism without accountability can lead to a closed and elitist bureaucracy, while accountability without professionalism can result in ineffective task execution. Both elements must be present to ensure effective police governance.

From a sustainable development perspective, strengthening the professionalism and accountability of the Polri directly correlates with SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. A professional, transparent, and accountable police institution creates social justice, political stability, and a sense of security, which are prerequisites for inclusive economic and social development. Therefore, Polri's human resource reform is internal and part of a national commitment to building clean and just governance.

Strengthening Polri's professionalism and accountability must improve regulations, implement effective oversight, and change organizational culture. The synergy between structural reforms, clear legal substance, and a strong ethical culture is key to establishing a police institution trusted by the public. Only with true professionalism and accountability can Polri become a key pillar of good governance and contribute significantly to the realization of sustainable development in Indonesia.

Thus, strengthening professionalism and accountability should not only focus on formal regulations, but must also include transparency in the publication of evaluation and supervision results, public participation in complaints, and a credible external monitoring system. Fair internal policy components (merit systems), ongoing training, and the use of information technology for reporting and oversight are also important factors in supporting good governance.

However, the reform of the Indonesian National Police's human resources is not limited to the application of technology. The most fundamental aspect is a shift in the institutional paradigm from a traditional command model to a trust-based public service model. According to the New Public Management theory developed by Osborne and Gaebler, public sector reform emphasizes the transformation of the bureaucracy into a more flexible, responsive, and results-oriented organization.<sup>(20)</sup> In the context of the Polri, this means shifting its focus from merely enforcing the law to serving and protecting the public.

In Lawrence M. Friedman's analysis of legal systems theory, Polri's human resource reform addresses three crucial aspects: structure, substance, and legal culture. From a structural perspective, organizational reform through merit-based recruitment and character education is key.<sup>(21)</sup> Polri has implemented a proactive recruitment system that provides greater opportunities for prospective members from remote areas and minority groups to achieve equitable distribution of human resources. In terms of substance, reforms are realized through the development of internal regulations, such as National Police Chief Regulation Number 7 of 2022 concerning the Code of Professional Ethics and the National Police Code of Ethics Commission, which strengthen the integrity and moral responsibility of National Police members. Meanwhile, in terms of legal culture, changes are being implemented through continuous professional development and the integration of the *Tribrata* and *Catur Prasetya* values into every level of training.

Thus, the role of Polri human resource reform is fundamental in supporting sustainable development goals. A professional and integrity-based police institution maintains security and ensures justice and public trust in the state. In the long term, this reform will not only catalyze but also necessitate a strong governance ecosystem, where the law is enforced without discrimination, human rights are respected, and the public enjoys a sense of security as a fundamental right. Therefore, strengthening Polri human resources must continue to be directed towards increasing capacity, transparency, and ethical public service so that they can contribute significantly to achieving the SDGs in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

The human resource reform of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) is a strategic element in strengthening good governance and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. This reform demonstrates significant progress through implementing a merit system, competency-based recruitment, continuing education, and digitalizing public services that strengthen professionalism and institutional accountability. These improvements have positively impacted public trust and institutional effectiveness, while affirming the crucial role of the Polri as the vanguard of just law enforcement. However, challenges remain in organizational culture, such as unequal distribution of human resources and consistent enforcement of the code of ethics. Therefore, Polri human resource reform needs to be directed at integrating character development based on ethics and human rights, increasing transparency in public oversight, and consistent implementation of internal policies so that the institutional transformation of the Polri is in line with the principles of good governance and contributes significantly to sustainable development in Indonesia.

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