

## Ethical-Visionary Leadership as the Key to Police Reform

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### ABSTRACT

Police reform is a critical issue in modern law enforcement as it relates to the legitimacy of police institutions. In hierarchical organizations such as the Indonesian National Police (Polri), leadership plays a strategic role in shaping reform outcomes. This study examines the role of ethical and visionary leadership in fostering internal procedural justice, officers' self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy. Using a qualitative approach with document analysis, data were drawn from international journals, policy documents, and oversight reports. The findings show that ethical leadership strengthens organizational fairness and transparency, which enhances internal legitimacy and public trust. The study concludes that sustainable police reform requires leadership transformation alongside structural changes

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Literature on police reform demonstrates that sustainable institutional change cannot be achieved solely through regulatory changes or organizational restructuring. It is, however, highly dependent on the quality of leadership that is capable of guiding organizational transformation. Bayley (2001) explains that police reform in a democratic system must be driven by leadership that upholds accountability, professionalism, and political neutrality as the basis for institutional legitimacy. In a hierarchical police organization, (Weber et al., 1947) states that the influence of leadership becomes even more significant because the values, decisions, and policies established by top leadership are replicated vertically through the organization's command system. Manning (2010) has the opinion that modern police organizations have a semi-military character that emphasizes vertical discipline and obedience, so that the quality of leadership has a systemic impact on overall organizational behaviour.

In the Indonesian context, the dynamics of Polri reforms over the past three years demonstrate that institutional legitimacy is heavily influenced by the quality of leadership and the organization's response to crises. Several high-profile cases occurring between 2002 and 2024 sparked public criticism of the integrity of the police institution and prompted demands for deeper reforms to Polri organizational system and leadership. A national survey on public trust in state institutions showed significant fluctuations in trust in the police during this period, indicating that public legitimacy is highly sensitive to the perceptions of leadership accountability and transparency (Indikator Politik Indonesia, 2024). Related to this, (Tyler, 2006) explains that the legitimacy of police authority depends heavily on the public perception that officers act fairly, transparently, and consistently in law enforcement.

Experiences in police reform from various countries demonstrate a relatively similar pattern regarding the importance of leadership in restoring institutional legitimacy. In the United Kingdom, police reform following the Macpherson Inquiry report into the Stephen Lawrence case demonstrated that failures in senior leadership and weak organizational accountability can lead to a serious crisis of institutional legitimacy (Macpherson, 1999). Research, conducted by (Bradford & Quinton, 2014), indicates that police perceptions of organizational justice implemented by leaders directly influence officer self-legitimacy and support for democratic policing practices. These findings confirm that police reform requires not only policy changes but also changes in leadership practices and organizational management.

Several studies in the United States also show that procedural justice-oriented leadership can improve relations between police and the community following a legitimacy crisis. Experimental studies on procedural justice training demonstrate that leadership interventions emphasizing procedural justice significantly alter patterns of interaction between officers and the community (Canales, 2025). Furthermore, research on the police literature indicates that experiences of internal justice within an organization influence officer behaviour in providing services to the community (Colquitt, 2001). Therefore, police reform

must begin with the establishment of a just and transparent organizational system within the institution.

In addition to internal procedural justice factors, police literature also emphasizes the importance of the concept of self-legitimacy in explaining police officer behaviour. Self-legitimacy refers to officers' belief that the authority they exercise has a legitimate moral and professional basis. Bradford & Quinton (2014) demonstrate that police self-legitimacy is closely related to members' identification with their institution and the perception that the organization is fairly managed by its leadership. Officers with high self-legitimacy are more likely to support policing practices that respect citizen rights and democratic values. Therefore, ethical and visionary leadership plays a crucial role in building internal organizational legitimacy while strengthening public trust in the police force.

Thus, various literature and international experiences demonstrate that the success of police reform depends heavily on the leadership's ability to build a fair, transparent, and accountable organizational system. In a police organization with a strong hierarchical structure like Polri, the influence of leadership is even greater because the values, policies, and moral standards established by top leadership will influence the behaviour of the organization as a whole. Therefore, ethical and visionary leadership can be seen as a key factor in driving sustainable Polri reform and rebuilding public legitimacy for the police institution.

Although numerous studies on police reform have demonstrated that leadership is a critical factor in determining the legitimacy and effectiveness of police institutions, most of the literature focuses on the relationship between procedural justice, police legitimacy, and public trust without specifically explaining how organizational leadership within a hierarchical police system simultaneously influences the formation of internal and external legitimacy. Studies conducted by (Bayley, 2001) and (Manning, 2010) emphasize the importance of leadership in police reform. However, these studies primarily focus on institutional reform in general and have not specifically examined the mechanisms by which leadership shapes organizational justice and police culture.

Conversely, other studies by (Tyler, 2006) and (Colquitt, 2001) explain the relationship between procedural justice and the legitimacy of authority. These studies are primarily conducted in the context of police-community relations and have not explored how internal procedural justice within police organizations is shaped through leadership practices. Bradford & Quinton (2014) begin to link internal procedural justice with police self-legitimacy. However, this study was conducted in the context of the British police force and has not been widely applied to police forces in developing countries with highly hierarchical organizational structures like Polri. Therefore, there remains a research gap regarding how ethical and visionary leadership within hierarchical police organizations influences the formation of internal procedural justice, officer self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy in the police reform process, which is the primary focus of this research.

Based on a synthesis of thirty recent studies in the international policing literature, it is found that most studies still focus on the relationship between procedural justice, police legitimacy, and public trust, and on how community experiences of interactions with the police influence institutional legitimacy (Kuen, 2024) (Reisig & Trinkner, 2024; Tyler, 2025). Other research also highlights the importance of internal procedural justice and organizational justice in shaping police officer behaviour in public service (Wolfe & Nix, 2023; Yesberg & Bradford, 2024). Furthermore, several recent studies have begun to examine the role of police officer self-legitimacy in supporting more democratic and community-oriented policing practices (Meško, 2025; Tankebe, 2022). However, most of this research still positions police legitimacy primarily as a result of interactions between police and the community, while studies explaining how leadership within a hierarchical police organization simultaneously generates internal and external legitimacy are still very limited.

In line with the research gap description that has been presented previously, therefore, this study examines the role of ethical and visionary leadership in fostering internal procedural justice, officers' self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy. The novelty of this research lies in the development of a conceptual model of police reform that positions ethical and visionary leadership as the primary mechanism linking the hierarchical police organizational system to the formation of internal procedural justice, officer self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy. This provides a new theoretical contribution in explaining how police reform can take place systematically within a national police organization like Polri.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Police Reform and the Central Role of Leadership**

Scholarly literature consistently emphasizes that police reform is not merely a structural or regulatory process but fundamentally a leadership-driven transformation. Early work by Bayley (2001) highlights that democratic policing requires leadership committed to accountability, professionalism, and political neutrality. Without these elements, institutional legitimacy cannot be sustained.

From an organizational perspective, Weber et al. (1947) explain that hierarchical bureaucracies – such as police institutions – are highly dependent on leadership authority, where norms, values, and decisions cascade vertically throughout the organization. This argument is reinforced by Manning (2010), who characterizes modern police organizations as semi-military systems in which leadership has a systemic influence on discipline, culture, and operational behavior.

Comparative reform experiences further demonstrate this pattern. The Macpherson Report (1999) in the United Kingdom revealed how leadership failures and weak accountability mechanisms contributed to institutional racism and legitimacy crises. Similarly, global policing studies show that leadership reform is often the starting point for restoring public trust and institutional credibility.

Thus, existing literature establishes leadership as a primary driver of police reform, particularly in hierarchical organizations where leadership influence is structurally amplified.

### **Procedural Justice as the Foundation of Police Legitimacy**

The concept of procedural justice has become central in explaining police legitimacy. Tyler (2006) argues that public compliance with law enforcement is strongly influenced by perceptions of fairness, transparency, and respectful treatment rather than coercive power alone. This perspective shifts the focus of policing from enforcement effectiveness to legitimacy-based governance.

At the organizational level, Colquitt (2001) expands this framework by conceptualizing organizational justice as a multidimensional construct, including procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and interactional justice. These dimensions influence employee attitudes, trust, and behavior within institutions.

Recent empirical studies reinforce the importance of procedural justice in policing contexts. For example, Yesberg and Bradford (2024) demonstrate that officers who experience fairness within their organization are more likely to apply fair procedures in their interactions with the public. Similarly, Wolfe and Nix (2023) show that leadership practices promoting organizational justice directly enhance institutional legitimacy.

Experimental research also supports these findings. Canales (2025) provides evidence that procedural justice training can significantly reshape police officer behavior, improving interactions with communities and strengthening public trust. Overall, the literature indicates that procedural justice operates both internally and externally, linking organizational practices to public perceptions of legitimacy.

### **Internal Procedural Justice and Organizational Dynamics**

While early studies focused primarily on police–community interactions, recent scholarship highlights the importance of internal procedural justice within police organizations. Internal justice refers to how fairly officers perceive decision-making processes related to promotion, discipline, and leadership practices.

Research shows that internal procedural justice has a profound effect on organizational outcomes. Officers who perceive fairness are more likely to demonstrate commitment, ethical behavior, and support for institutional goals (Colquitt, 2001). Conversely, perceived injustice can lead to cynicism, misconduct, and reduced organizational trust.

Bowen (2009) and Denzin & Lincoln (2018) emphasize that institutional practices, including leadership decisions, can be effectively analyzed through document-based approaches, revealing patterns of organizational justice or injustice over time.

In policing specifically, internal procedural justice is increasingly recognized as a precursor to external legitimacy, as it shapes how officers interpret and exercise their authority.

### **Police Self-Legitimacy**

The concept of self-legitimacy has emerged as a critical extension of procedural justice theory. Self-legitimacy refers to officers' belief that their authority is morally justified and socially acceptable. Bradford and Quinton (2014) demonstrate that self-legitimacy is strongly influenced by internal organizational experiences, particularly perceptions of fairness and leadership integrity. Officers who identify positively with their institution are more likely to support democratic policing practices.

Further studies strengthen this relationship. Tankebe (2022) argues that self-legitimacy is closely linked to accountability and ethical conduct within police organizations. Meško (2025) finds that officers with higher self-legitimacy are more supportive of community-oriented policing and citizen rights.

These findings suggest that self-legitimacy serves as a mediating variable between internal organizational conditions and external policing behavior. In other words, how officers are treated internally shapes how they treat the public.

### **Public Legitimacy and Trust in Police Institutions**

Public legitimacy is widely recognized as a key indicator of successful policing. Tyler (2006) asserts that legitimacy is built when the public perceives police actions as fair, transparent, and consistent with legal and moral norms. Recent studies confirm that legitimacy has tangible effects on public behavior. Kuen (2024) shows that higher police legitimacy increases public willingness to cooperate, report crimes, and comply with the law. Similarly, Chan (2025), through meta-analysis, identifies procedural justice as one of the most consistent predictors of police legitimacy across different countries.

In the Indonesian context, survey data from Indikator Politik Indonesia (2022, 2024) reveal fluctuations in public trust toward the police, indicating that legitimacy is highly sensitive to leadership performance and institutional responses to crises. Reports from oversight institutions such as Kompolnas (2023) and the Ombudsman (2023), as well as civil society organizations like Indonesia Corruption Watch (2023) and SETARA Institute (2023), further highlight persistent issues related to accountability, abuse of authority, and transparency. These findings suggest that public legitimacy is deeply intertwined with leadership quality and internal organizational conditions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Type of Research**

This study employs a qualitative approach with document analysis to analyse the leadership dynamics in the reform of Polri. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the relationship between organizational leadership, internal procedural justice, officer self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy within the hierarchical police institution. Qualitative research allows researchers to understand social phenomena contextually through the interpretation of various available data sources (Creswell, 2014). In public policy and organizational research, document studies are often used to examine institutional practices through various written sources

that record policies, organizational decisions, and institutional dynamics (Bowen, 2009).

### **Research Data Sources**

Research data is taken from various documents relevant to the research topic. The documents analysed in this study fall into four main categories: (1) reputable international journal articles indexed by Scopus that discuss police leadership, procedural justice, self-legitimacy, and police legitimacy; (2) organizational policy and regulatory documents related to Polri reform, such as police regulations, internal policies, and institutional evaluation reports; (3) research reports and surveys from institutions concerned with the police, such as the National Police Commission (Kompolnas), the Indonesian Ombudsman, and national survey institutions regarding public trust in the police; and (4) reports from civil society organizations and academic research examining police performance, institutional accountability, and the dynamics of police reform in Indonesia. The use of documents as a secondary data source in social research is considered important because they can represent policy practices and organizational dynamics both historically and empirically (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

### **Unit of Analysis and Document Selection Criteria**

The unit of analysis in this study is the practice of police organizational leadership as reflected in policies, reports, and research findings related to Polri reform. The documents analysed were selected based on three main criteria: (1) the relevance of the documents to the topic of police leadership and police institutional reform; (2) the credibility of the document sources, which came from reputable scientific journals, state institutions, or research institutions with academic credentials; and (3) the recency of the documents, prioritized as publications within the last ten years. These document selection criteria are important to ensure that the document analysis is conducted systematically and produces scientifically sound findings (Bowen, 2009).

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data analysis in this study employs thematic analysis to identify the main themes emerging from the analysed documents. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis method widely used in social research to identify patterns or themes in textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process was carried out through several stages: (1) collecting documents relevant to the research topic; (2) in-depth reading of documents to identify key concepts such as ethical leadership, procedural justice, self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy; (3) coding of data to group information into analytical categories; and (4) interpreting the relationship between organizational leadership and the police reform process. The thematic analysis approach allows researchers to develop conceptual interpretations from a variety of different data sources (Guest et al., 2012).

### **Operational Analysis Procedures**

Operationally, document analysis is conducted through several systematic stages. The first stage is document identification, which involves collecting documents relevant to the research topic from scientific journals, police oversight agency reports, and Polri policy documents. The second stage is data reduction, which involves selecting portions of the documents related to the themes of organizational leadership and police reform. The third stage is thematic coding, which involves classifying the information found in the documents into analytical categories such as ethical leadership, internal procedural justice, officer self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy. The fourth stage is data interpretation, which involves connecting the findings to the research's theoretical framework to explain the role of leadership in Polri reform. Miles et al. (2014) explain that the qualitative data analysis process involves iterative stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

### **Data Validity and Reliability**

To maintain the validity of the research, document analysis was conducted through data source triangulation, which involves comparing information from various types of documents, such as scientific articles, police oversight agency reports, and organizational policy documents. Triangulation is an important strategy in qualitative research to increase the credibility of research findings (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, this study employs a document cross-checking approach, comparing information obtained from one document with another to ensure data consistency. The research is expected to provide a comprehensive analysis of how ethical and visionary leadership can drive Polri reform and build the legitimacy of the police institution in the eyes of the public.

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

Findings from various oversight agencies indicate that leadership within the Polri organization has a direct influence on public legitimacy and the quality of police services. A national survey, conducted by Indikator Politik Indonesia, indicates that public trust in the Polri has fluctuated significantly in recent years. In 2022, public trust in the Indonesian National Police (Polri) dropped to around 54.2%, one of the lowest compared to other law enforcement agencies (Indikator Politik Indonesia, 2022). This decline occurred after several cases involving police officers gained public attention and sparked criticism of the police institution's leadership and internal oversight systems. Tyler explains that a decline in police legitimacy typically occurs when the public perceives law enforcement authorities as not acting fairly and transparently (Tyler, 2006).

Monitoring data from Kompolnas also shows that the number of public complaints against Polri remains quite high each year. Kompolnas report noted that throughout 2023, there were more than 4,000 public complaints regarding police services; the majority of which related to alleged abuse of authority, unprofessional service, and slow case handling (Komisi Kepolisian Nasional, 2023). This data indicates that problems within the police organization are not only related to the behaviour of individual officers, but also to the organization's leadership and internal oversight systems. In a hierarchical bureaucratic

organization like Polri, leadership decisions and policies have a direct influence on the behaviour of its members (Weber et al., 1947).

Findings from the Indonesian Ombudsman also show that the police sector remains among the institutions frequently receiving reports of maladministration from the public. The Ombudsman's annual report indicates that the police are among the institutions with a relatively high number of public service complaints, particularly regarding delays in service delivery, abuse of authority, and non-transparent service procedures (Ombudsman Republik Indonesia, 2023). From an organizational theory perspective, this situation indicates a gap between the service standards expected by the public and the service practices carried out by police officers in the field.

In addition to the state oversight bodies, various civil society organizations are also paying attention to the dynamics of police reform in Indonesia. Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW), for example, noted that in recent years, various cases of abuse of authority and corrupt practices involving police officers have been discovered, including in case handling and recruitment processes (Indonesia Corruption Watch, 2023). ICW believes that one of the factors contributing to these problems is a weak internal oversight system and suboptimal leadership in upholding the organizational integrity standards. Research on bureaucratic corruption also shows that a non-transparent leadership system can open up space for transactional practices within public organizations (Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

Other findings from the SETARA Institute indicate that the use of force by police remains an issue that frequently draws criticism from civil society. In its security sector monitoring report, the SETARA Institute noted that several cases of violence by police officers have occurred in recent years, particularly in handling demonstrations and social conflicts (SETARA Institute, 2023). These findings indicate that police reform is not only related to changes in organizational structure, but also to the transformation of organizational culture and leadership that are capable of upholding the principles of accountability and respect for human rights.

Overall, the various findings from these oversight institutions and civil society organizations indicate that the main challenge to Polri reform lies not only in regulatory aspects or organizational structure, but also in the quality of leadership that is capable of building a fair, transparent, and accountable organizational system. In police organizations with a strong hierarchical structure, leadership has a systemic influence on the formation of organizational culture, internal oversight mechanisms, and public legitimacy of the police institution. Therefore, various studies in the police literature emphasize that ethical and visionary leadership are key factors in driving sustainable police reform and restoring public trust in the police institution (Bayley, 2001; Manning, 2010).

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Leadership in a Hierarchical Police Organization**

Police reform literature demonstrates that leadership plays a strategic role in determining the direction of police organizational change. According to (Weber et al., 1947), in a police organization employing a hierarchical structure, the influence of leadership becomes increasingly significant because the command system allows policies and values established by the leadership to be replicated vertically throughout the organization. Moreover, (Bayley, 2001) explains that the success of police reform in various countries is highly dependent on leadership that is able to build accountability, professionalism, and integrity of the police institution. Furthermore, (Manning, 2010) also emphasizes that modern police organizations have a semi-military character that makes leadership a major factor in shaping organizational culture and operational practices of the police.

The findings of this study indicate that, in the context of Polri, leadership has a systemic influence on the legitimacy of the police institution. The highly hierarchical organizational structure of Polri means that leadership policies and decisions have a direct impact on the behaviour of members. In certain situations, strong leadership can accelerate the process of organizational reform because the command system allows policy changes to be implemented quickly throughout the organization. Conversely, when organizational leadership fails to maintain consistency in the institution's values and integrity, it can exacerbate the organization's legitimacy crisis.

These findings align with recent research in the policing literature, which demonstrates that organizational leadership has a direct influence on the legitimacy of police institutions. Research by (Wolfe & Nix, 2023) indicates that officers' perceptions of organizational justice implemented by leaders influence the internal legitimacy of police organizations. Research, done by (Yesberg & Bradford, 2024), also indicates that experiences of organizational justice provided by leaders influence officers' behaviour in interacting with the public. Thus, organizational leadership can be understood as a crucial mechanism linking police organizational structure to institutional legitimacy.

### **Leadership and Internal Procedural Justice in Polri Organization**

Modern policing literature shows that police legitimacy is built not only through the relationship between police and the community, but also through the experiences of justice experienced by officers within the organization. The concept of internal procedural justice explains how fair treatment within an organization influences the attitudes and behaviour of organizational members. Tyler (2006) explains that procedural justice within an organization has a strong influence on the legitimacy of authority and compliance with organizational rules. Colquitt (2001) also shows that perceptions of procedural justice within an organization – such as promotion, recruitment, and disciplinary systems – have a significant impact on the commitment and behaviour of organizational members.

In the context of police organizations, recent research indicates that experiences of organizational justice influence officers' behaviour in providing

services to the community. Research, conducted by (Yesberg & Bradford, 2024), indicates that officers who perceive fair treatment by their organization are more likely to implement procedural justice in their interactions with the community. These findings suggest that police reform must begin with reforming internal leadership practices that uphold organizational justice. The findings of this study demonstrate that organizational leadership within Polri plays a crucial role in establishing a system of organizational justice that influences the behaviour of police officers. Leadership practices that emphasize transparency, accountability, and organizational integrity can strengthen members' trust in the institution. Conversely, leadership practices that lack transparency can potentially create perceptions of organizational injustice, which can undermine the internal legitimacy of the police organization.

### **Police Officer Self-Legitimacy and Police Behaviour**

The concept of self-legitimacy is one of the most important concepts in modern policing literature, explaining how police officers perceive the legitimacy of their authority. Self-legitimacy refers to officers' belief that the authority they exercise has a legitimate moral and professional basis. Bradford & Quinton (2014) demonstrate that police officer self-legitimacy is closely related to officers' perceptions of organizational justice and their identification with the police institution.

Recent research indicates that officers with high self-legitimacy tend to be more supportive of democratic policing practices and have better relationships with the community. Meško (2025) demonstrates that police self-legitimacy is related to officers' support for community policing and public service-oriented policing practices. Furthermore, (Tankebe, 2022) research shows that internal legitimacy within the police force influences their attitudes toward organizational accountability and transparency. The findings of the studies indicate that police officers' self-legitimacy within Polri is influenced by their experiences with organizational leadership practices. When officers perceive that the organization is managed fairly and transparently, they tend to have stronger confidence in the legitimacy of the police institution. Conversely, experiences of organizational injustice can weaken officers' self-legitimacy and potentially influence how they use their authority in law enforcement.

### **Leadership and Public Legitimacy of Polri**

One key indicator of the success of police reform is the level of public trust in the police institution. Research on police legitimacy shows that public trust in the police is strongly influenced by public perceptions of their fairness, transparency, and accountability. Tyler (2006) explains that the legitimacy of police authority is built through public perceptions that officers act fairly and respect citizens' rights.

Recent research in the police literature also shows that police legitimacy is directly related to the public's willingness to cooperate with police officers in maintaining neighbourhood security. Recent longitudinal research indicates that police legitimacy increases the public's willingness to report crimes and cooperate with police officers (Kuen, 2024). Furthermore, a recent meta-analysis

indicates that perceptions of procedural justice are one of the most consistent factors influencing police legitimacy across countries (Chan, 2025).

In the context of Polri, research findings indicate that public legitimacy toward the police is highly sensitive to the quality of organizational leadership. Various national surveys indicate that public trust in Polri has fluctuated in recent years, influenced by the organization's response to various cases involving police officers. These findings suggest that ethical and visionary leadership plays a crucial role in restoring public legitimacy toward the police institution.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that ethical and visionary leadership plays a central role in Polri reform process. Leadership not only influences organizational structure but also shapes organizational justice, internal legitimacy of officers, and public legitimacy of the police institution. In a hierarchical police organization like Polri, leadership has a systemic influence on organizational behaviour, so that police reform ultimately depends heavily on the quality of organizational leadership.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

This paper demonstrates that leadership plays a strategic role in determining the success of police organizational reform, particularly in institutions with a hierarchical structure like Polri. In a command-based police organization, decisions and values established by the leadership have a systemic influence on the behaviour of organizational members and the overall organizational culture. The findings of this study demonstrate that ethical and visionary leadership plays a role not only in determining the direction of organizational policy but also in shaping organizational justice (internal procedural justice), which influences the internal legitimacy of police officers.

The results also indicate that internal procedural justice within police organizations has a significant influence on the formation of police self-legitimacy. Officers who perceive fairness within the organizational system, such as in promotion, recruitment, and disciplinary enforcement mechanisms, tend to have a stronger belief in the legitimacy of their authority. This self-legitimacy then influences officer behaviour in carrying out police functions, particularly in applying procedural justice principles in interactions with the public. Thus, public legitimacy for the police institution is built not only through interactions between the police and the public but also through the dynamics of organizational justice that occur within the police institution.

The findings of this study also indicate that public legitimacy of Polri is significantly influenced by the quality of organizational leadership in responding to various social dynamics and institutional crises. In recent years, the level of public trust in Polri has fluctuated significantly, reflecting that the legitimacy of the police institution is highly sensitive to public perceptions of the integrity and accountability of organizational leadership. Therefore, Polri reform requires not only changes in policy or organizational structure but also leadership capable of building a transparent, accountable, and service-oriented organizational system.

Overall, this study confirms that ethical and visionary leadership is a key factor in driving sustainable Polri reform. Such leadership serves as the primary

mechanism linking the police organizational structure to the formation of internal procedural justice, officer self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy of the police institution.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

This study offers integrated theoretical, practical, and policy implications for police reform by positioning organizational leadership as the central mechanism linking internal and external police legitimacy. Theoretically, it advances police science by combining organizational leadership, procedural justice, self-legitimacy, and police legitimacy into a unified framework, extending prior studies that primarily focus on police–community interactions by demonstrating the crucial role of internal organizational justice. Practically, the findings highlight the need for Polri to strengthen leadership grounded in ethics, transparency, and accountability, particularly by ensuring fair and transparent human resource management systems, including recruitment, promotion, and disciplinary processes, to build internal trust and reinforce officers' legitimacy in exercising authority. At the policy level, police reform should not rely solely on regulatory adjustments or structural changes but must prioritize leadership capacity building through systematic development programs that emphasize integrity, transparency, and public service values. Therefore, it is recommended that leadership development be institutionalized as a core reform agenda, as strengthened organizational leadership is essential for ensuring sustainable reform and rebuilding public trust and legitimacy in the police institution.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

### **Research Limitations**

Although this study makes an important contribution to explaining the relationship between organizational leadership, internal procedural justice, officer self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy of the police institution, it has several limitations that should be noted. First, this study uses a document study approach that relies on various secondary data sources such as journal articles, oversight agency reports, and organizational policy documents. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of police reform, but does not directly explore the empirical experiences of police officers or public perceptions through interviews or field surveys. Therefore, the findings of this study are more conceptual and interpretative of the documents analysed.

Second, this study focuses on leadership analysis within the institutional context of Polri, thus not fully describing the variation in leadership practices at smaller organizational levels such as regional police units or specific work units. However, within a large and complex police organization, leadership practices can vary from region to region. Third, this study places more emphasis on the organizational and leadership dimensions of police reform, and therefore does not fully address other factors that may also influence police legitimacy, such as political dynamics, the media, or the relationship between the police and civil society.

### **Further Research Agenda**

Based on these limitations, further research could be developed in several more in-depth directions. First, further research could use an empirical approach through survey methods or in-depth interviews to more directly understand how police officers view organizational leadership, organizational justice, and the legitimacy of their authority. This empirical approach could provide a more detailed picture of how the concept of police self-legitimacy is formed in police organizational practices.

Second, further research could also examine variations in leadership practices within the National Police organization at the regional or specific work unit levels, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational leadership influences police performance at various organizational levels. This kind of research can help explain how leadership policies at the central level are translated into organizational practices at the operational level.

Third, further research can also develop empirical models of the relationship between leadership, internal procedural justice, self-legitimacy, and public legitimacy through quantitative or mixed-methods approaches. With this approach, the relationships between the variables in the police reform model can be tested more systematically through statistical analysis. This kind of research is expected to enrich the study of police science and make a stronger contribution to the development of police reform policies in Indonesia.

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