

Criminological Analysis of Ethical Code Violations Committed by Indonesian National Police Officers and Their Implications for Public Trust (A Study at the North Sumatra Regional Police)

Ridha Novita Sari, Henry Aspan, Mhd. Azhali Siregar

Abstract

The increasing number of ethical violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police has become a serious concern in the context of law enforcement and public institutional accountability. This study aims to analyze criminologically the factors causing violations of the police code of ethics within the North Sumatra Regional Police and to examine their implications for public trust in the police institution. The research employed normative juridical methods supported by empirical data through a statute approach, conceptual approach, and case approach. The findings indicate that ethical violations committed by police officers are not merely individual deviations but are also influenced by weak supervision, abuse of authority, organizational culture, pressure within law enforcement practices, and inconsistencies in disciplinary enforcement. In several cases handled by the North Sumatra Regional Police between 2021 and 2025, violations involving extortion, narcotics abuse, abuse of authority, and acts of violence significantly affected public perception of the police institution. The gap between normative legal ideals and practical implementation demonstrates that ethical regulations within the police institution have not been optimally enforced. This condition contributes to declining public confidence and weakens the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions. Therefore, strengthening internal supervision, enhancing transparency in ethical proceedings, improving professionalism, and reformulating ethics-based law enforcement policies are necessary to restore public trust and institutional integrity.

Keywords: *Criminology, Police Code Of Ethics, Public Trust, Ethical Violations, North Sumatra Regional Police*

Ridha Novita Sari¹

¹Law, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

e-mail: daulaynovita@gmail.com¹

Henry Aspan², Mhd. Azhali Siregar³

^{2,3}Law, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

e-mail: henryaspan@yahoo.com², azhalisiregar@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id³

3rd International Conference Epicentrum of Economic Global Framework (ICEEGLOF)

Theme: Cross-Sector and Cross-Disciplinary Strategies for Achieving the SDGS

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICEEGLOF>

Introduction

The Indonesian National Police is a state institution that plays a strategic role in maintaining public security and order, enforcing the law, and providing protection, guidance, and public services, as stipulated in Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police [1]. In a state governed by the rule of law, the authority exercised by police officers must not only be carried out in accordance with legal provisions but must also be grounded in professional ethics and respect for human rights. This is particularly important because police officers represent the state and interact directly with society in the process of law enforcement.

In practice, the professional code of ethics of the Indonesian National Police serves as an essential instrument for maintaining the professionalism and integrity of police officers. The code of ethics is not merely understood as an internal guideline governing institutional conduct, but also as a moral standard that determines the social legitimacy of the police before the public. When members of the police institution commit ethical violations, the consequences are not limited to administrative sanctions against individual officers, but also contribute to a broader crisis of public trust in the police institution as a whole [2]. Therefore, violations of the police code of ethics cannot simply be viewed as internal disciplinary matters, but rather as criminological issues closely related to legal culture, abuse of power, and weak institutional oversight mechanisms.

In recent years, ethical violations committed by police officers have demonstrated an alarming trend. Various cases involving abuse of authority, violence, illegal levies, narcotics involvement, and unprofessional conduct in criminal case handling continue to emerge in different regions of Indonesia, including within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police. Based on data published by the Professional and Security Division (Propam) of the Indonesian National Police and several national media outlets, reports concerning disciplinary and ethical violations by police officers increased significantly between 2021 and 2025 [3]. In North Sumatra, a number of cases involving police personnel attracted widespread public attention because they were perceived as undermining justice and damaging the institutional image of the police.

In 2021, the North Sumatra Regional Police handled various public complaints concerning alleged abuses of authority by police officers, including acts of violence and illegal levies during law enforcement processes [4]. Subsequently, in 2022, a case involving police officers in narcotics abuse received extensive national media attention because it contradicted the role of the police as law enforcement officials [5]. During 2023 and 2024, ethical proceedings were also initiated against police personnel for unprofessional conduct in handling criminal cases, disciplinary misconduct, and allegations of intimidation against members of the public [6]. Meanwhile, by early 2025, the Professional and Security Division of the North Sumatra Regional Police continued to receive reports dominated by abuse of authority, disciplinary violations, and unprofessional behavior by police officers [7].

These realities demonstrate a clear gap between *das sollen* and *das sein* in the enforcement of police ethics. Normatively, internal police regulations comprehensively regulate standards of conduct through Regulation of the Indonesian National Police Number 7 of 2022 concerning the Professional Code of Ethics and the Police Ethics Commission [2]. However, in practice, the implementation of these regulations continues to encounter various obstacles, including excessive internal solidarity, weak supervision, inconsistent sanctions, and a lack of transparency in handling ethical cases. Consequently, the public often perceives that ethical enforcement within the police institution has not fully reflected the principles of accountability and justice.

From a criminological perspective, ethical violations committed by law enforcement officers may be understood as forms of deviant behavior influenced by both internal and external factors. Edwin H. Sutherland's differential association theory explains that deviant behavior can be learned through social interaction within certain environments [8]. Within the police institution, an organizational culture that tolerates misconduct may encourage officers to

perceive ethical violations as acceptable practices. Furthermore, social control theory suggests that weak institutional supervision and ineffective control mechanisms may increase the likelihood of deviant conduct among law enforcement officials [9].

Research concerning ethical violations committed by police officers has been widely conducted. However, most previous studies have primarily focused on disciplinary enforcement and administrative sanction mechanisms. Aspan's study highlighted the importance of law enforcement discretion within the criminal justice system but did not specifically examine the criminological implications of ethical violations on public trust [10]. Another study conducted by Fatmawati, Fikri, and Siregar emphasized restorative approaches in law enforcement but did not directly connect police ethical violations with crises of institutional legitimacy [11]. Consequently, there remains a significant research gap concerning the comprehensive relationship between criminological factors underlying police ethical violations and their implications for public trust, particularly within the context of the North Sumatra Regional Police.

The urgency of this research becomes increasingly relevant considering that public trust in the police institution serves as a crucial indicator of effective law enforcement. Various national surveys indicate that public trust in the Indonesian National Police has fluctuated due to the increasing number of ethical violations and criminal acts involving police officers [12]. In democratic societies, the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions depends heavily on the integrity of law enforcement personnel and public perceptions regarding institutional professionalism. Therefore, analyzing the causes of ethical violations and their implications for public trust is essential in formulating strategies for institutional reform within the police organization.

Furthermore, this research is important in the broader context of strengthening police institutional reform. Police reform initiatives that primarily focus on institutional modernization have not entirely succeeded in eliminating deviant conduct among officers in the field. In fact, successful legal reform is determined not only by regulatory changes but also by transformations in legal culture and the integrity of law enforcement personnel [13]. Accordingly, a criminological approach is necessary to understand the root causes of the problem in greater depth so that the solutions offered are not merely formalistic in nature. Based on the foregoing discussion, the research questions in this study are as follows:

1. How can the ethical code violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police within the North Sumatra Regional Police be analyzed from a criminological perspective?
2. What are the implications of police ethical code violations for public trust, and how can ethical supervision mechanisms within the North Sumatra Regional Police be strengthened?

Literature Review

1. Criminological Theory

Criminology is a branch of science that examines crime, deviant behavior, the factors contributing to criminal acts, and societal reactions toward legal violations [14]. In the development of modern legal scholarship, criminology no longer focuses solely on conventional criminal offenders, but also on deviant conduct committed by law enforcement officers. This issue is particularly significant because law enforcement personnel are state instruments entrusted with authority to maintain public order and enforce the law. When law enforcement officials themselves engage in misconduct, the consequences extend beyond harm to individual victims and may trigger a broader crisis of legitimacy within the legal system as a whole.

Conceptually, criminology views crime as a social phenomenon influenced by individual, environmental, cultural, economic, and structural factors. This perspective differs from criminal law, which primarily emphasizes prohibited acts and legal sanctions. Criminology seeks to understand why individuals engage in deviant behavior and how social conditions shape such

conduct [15]. Within the context of police institutions, a criminological approach is essential for understanding the factors contributing to ethical violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police.

One of the theories relevant to this study is Edwin H. Sutherland's differential association theory. According to this theory, deviant behavior is learned through social interaction within particular groups [15]. Individuals acquire techniques, values, motives, and rationalizations for deviant conduct from dominant social environments. Within police institutions, organizational cultures that tolerate misconduct may influence officers to perceive ethical violations as ordinary or acceptable practices.

The strong esprit de corps often found within police institutions may create a culture of tolerance toward deviant conduct. Numerous cases involving ethical violations committed by police officers are not addressed promptly due to tendencies to protect fellow officers. This condition demonstrates that deviant conduct among law enforcement personnel is influenced not only by individual factors but also by the organizational culture prevailing within the institution.

In addition to differential association theory, Travis Hirschi's social control theory is also relevant in explaining ethical violations committed by police officers. Hirschi argues that individuals are more likely to engage in deviant conduct when their social bonds with norms and institutions weaken [9]. Within police environments, weak internal supervision and inconsistent sanction enforcement may create opportunities for officers to commit misconduct.

Social control theory emphasizes the importance of supervision and the internalization of moral values in preventing deviant behavior. In the context of the Indonesian National Police, internal oversight conducted through the Professional and Security Division should function as an instrument for controlling officers' conduct. However, in practice, supervisory mechanisms often fail to operate effectively due to limited transparency and the persistence of hierarchical organizational culture.

Modern criminological approaches also recognize the theory of abuse of power. This theory explains that individuals possessing substantial authority are more likely to engage in misconduct when effective control mechanisms are absent [16]. As an institution vested with coercive authority, the police are highly vulnerable to abuses of power, particularly when both internal and external oversight mechanisms fail to function effectively.

Abuses of authority within police institutions may include illegal levies, intimidation, excessive use of force, manipulation of legal processes, and involvement in criminal activities. Such phenomena demonstrate that ethical violations committed by law enforcement personnel are not merely administrative matters but are also closely related to moral issues and legal culture.

From the perspective of critical criminology, deviant conduct among law enforcement officers is also shaped by power structures and institutional social relations. Officers possessing broad authority may perceive themselves as being above the law, thereby increasing the likelihood of abusing their powers. Therefore, police institutional reform cannot rely solely on regulatory changes but must also involve transformation of organizational culture and strengthening of oversight systems.

Siregar explains that Indonesia's criminal justice system continues to face challenges related to the integrity of law enforcement personnel and weak legal culture oriented toward accountability [17]. This condition demonstrates that legal reform cannot be separated from efforts to improve the quality and integrity of law enforcement human resources.

Within the context of this study, criminological theory is employed to analyze the factors contributing to ethical violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police within the North Sumatra Regional Police. A criminological approach enables this research to examine ethical violations not merely as individual misconduct but also as consequences of structural and organizational cultural problems within police institutions.

2. Law Enforcement Theory

Law enforcement is the process of transforming legal norms into concrete realities within society. From the perspective of a state governed by the rule of law, law enforcement is not merely understood as the imposition of sanctions against violations, but also as an effort to maintain order, justice, and legal certainty [18]. Consequently, the effectiveness of law enforcement largely depends on the quality and integrity of law enforcement officials as the primary executors of legal norms.

Soerjono Soekanto explains that there are five factors influencing the effectiveness of law enforcement, namely legal substance, law enforcement officials, facilities and infrastructure, society, and legal culture [18]. These factors are interconnected and collectively determine the success or failure of law enforcement processes. In the context of ethical violations committed by police officers, the most dominant factors are the conduct of law enforcement personnel and the prevailing legal culture. Police officers, as law enforcement agents, bear significant responsibility for maintaining public trust in the law. The police are not merely executors of legal rules, but also represent the state in preserving social order. Consequently, every action undertaken by police officers influences public perceptions regarding the legitimacy of the legal system.

Through the concept of progressive law, Satjipto Rahardjo argues that law must be understood as an instrument for achieving substantive justice rather than merely a collection of formal regulations [19]. Within the context of enforcing the police code of ethics, a progressive legal approach requires ethical enforcement processes to be conducted transparently, fairly, and with the objective of restoring public trust.

One recurring problem in the enforcement of the police code of ethics is the tendency toward procedural formalism without addressing the root causes of misconduct. In many cases, serious ethical violations are resolved merely through light administrative sanctions despite their significant impact on the institutional image of the police. Such conditions lead the public to perceive that ethical enforcement within the Indonesian National Police has not fully reflected principles of justice.

Aspan explains that the discretion exercised by law enforcement officers must be implemented based on the principles of accountability, proportionality, and professionalism [10]. Discretion is fundamentally necessary to enable law enforcement personnel to respond effectively to particular situations. However, when discretion is exercised without adequate control mechanisms, it may lead to abuses of authority.

In the practice of law enforcement in Indonesia, abuses of police discretion frequently become the starting point for ethical violations. Several cases have revealed practices involving illegal levies, intimidation, manipulation of legal proceedings, and excessive use of force by police officers. Such conditions indicate that oversight regarding the exercise of police discretion remains weak.

Law enforcement against members of the Indonesian National Police is not limited to criminal law but also includes disciplinary and ethical enforcement. The professional code of ethics of the Indonesian National Police constitutes a moral framework regulating the conduct of police officers in performing their duties [2]. Violations of the code of ethics may result in ethical sanctions as well as administrative penalties depending on the severity of the misconduct. From the perspective of modern law enforcement, ethical enforcement should not merely focus on punishment but must also emphasize preventive and rehabilitative aspects. Professional ethics education and integrity development constitute essential measures for preventing deviant conduct among police personnel.

Moreover, transparency in ethical enforcement plays a significant role in strengthening institutional legitimacy. The public has the right to know how police institutions handle officers who commit ethical violations. A lack of transparency in ethical proceedings only reinforces public distrust toward law enforcement institutions. Accordingly, law enforcement theory in this study is employed to analyze the effectiveness of implementing the professional code of

ethics within the North Sumatra Regional Police and to examine the obstacles preventing ethical enforcement from functioning optimally.

3. Public Trust Theory

Public trust constitutes a fundamental element in the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions. In democratic societies, the success of law enforcement agencies is highly dependent upon the level of public confidence in legal institutions [20]. As an institution responsible for maintaining public security and order, the police require social legitimacy in order to perform their duties effectively. Theoretically, public trust is formed through public perceptions concerning the integrity, professionalism, and transparency of law enforcement officers. When police officers act fairly and respect citizens' rights, public trust increases. Conversely, repressive conduct and abuses of authority generate distrust toward police institutions.

Through the theory of legitimacy, Max Weber argues that state authority can only be accepted by society when it is exercised lawfully and gains social recognition [21]. Within the policing context, legitimacy is established through professional, accountable, and law-abiding conduct by police officers. One major issue in Indonesia is the persistence of ethical violations and criminal acts involving police personnel. Such conditions have contributed to a decline in the legitimacy of police institutions. Society often perceives that law enforcement officers fail to perform their duties objectively and professionally.

Tyler explains that the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions is strongly influenced by procedural justice [22]. The public is more likely to trust legal institutions when law enforcement processes are carried out fairly, transparently, and with respect for citizens' rights. In the context of ethical violations committed by police officers, procedural justice is crucial because the public evaluates not only the final outcomes of ethical proceedings but also the processes through which investigations and sanctions are conducted. When ethical enforcement processes are closed and non-transparent, the public may perceive that police institutions are not genuinely committed to reform.

Public trust in the police is also closely related to the effectiveness of law enforcement. Communities that trust the police are generally more cooperative in providing information and assisting criminal investigations. Conversely, declining public trust may lead to apathy and reduced compliance with legal norms. In recent years, various national surveys have demonstrated fluctuations in public trust toward the Indonesian National Police due to the increasing number of ethical violations and criminal offenses involving police officers [12]. This indicates that the behavior of police personnel significantly influences the institutional image of the police as a whole.

Apart from officers' conduct, institutional transparency and accountability also affect public trust. Society is more likely to trust police institutions when independent and transparent oversight mechanisms exist. Therefore, strengthening both internal and external supervisory systems is essential for enhancing police legitimacy. From the perspective of modern legal theory, public trust is not merely a matter of institutional image but constitutes an essential component of successful law enforcement. Without public confidence, law enforcement processes may encounter substantial obstacles due to limited societal participation. Accordingly, public trust theory in this study is utilized to analyze the impact of ethical violations committed by police officers on the legitimacy of police institutions and the relationship between society and law enforcement authorities.

4. The Concept of the Professional Code of Ethics of the Indonesian National Police

The professional code of ethics of the Indonesian National Police constitutes a set of moral norms and behavioral guidelines that must be obeyed by every police officer in carrying out official duties and exercising institutional authority [2]. The code of ethics not only

regulates internal relations among police personnel but also governs how officers interact with the public.

Conceptually, the professional code of ethics possesses both preventive and repressive functions. Its preventive function aims to deter misconduct through moral guidance, integrity reinforcement, and professional education. Meanwhile, its repressive function is implemented through investigative mechanisms and sanctions against officers who violate ethical standards [23].

Within police institutions, the code of ethics serves as an essential instrument for preserving professional honor and institutional legitimacy. Police officers, as law enforcement personnel, are required to maintain higher moral standards than many other professions because their authority directly relates to the rights and freedoms of citizens.

Regulation of the Indonesian National Police Number 7 of 2022 emphasizes that police officers are obligated to uphold integrity, professionalism, and respect for human rights [2]. Violations of the code of ethics may result in sanctions ranging from warnings and transfers to demotions and dishonorable discharge.

In practice, ethical violations committed by police officers may include abuses of authority, unprofessional conduct, illegal levies, excessive use of force, involvement in criminal activities, and behavior that damages the institutional image of the police [24]. These phenomena indicate that ethical problems within police institutions remain serious challenges in the broader process of law enforcement reform.

Fundamentally, the professional code of ethics is intended to strengthen police professionalism. Professionalism is not measured solely by technical competence in law enforcement but also by the moral integrity of officers in exercising their authority. Therefore, ethical enforcement constitutes an important aspect of institutional reform within the Indonesian National Police.

Siregar explains that reform within the criminal justice system must be accompanied by strengthening the integrity of law enforcement personnel so that the law may be enforced fairly and in accordance with public interests [25]. Within the policing context, strengthening integrity cannot rely solely on formal regulations but must also involve the development of organizational culture emphasizing professionalism and accountability.

One recurring problem in enforcing the police code of ethics is the inconsistency of sanctions. In several cases, officers committing serious violations have received only minor administrative penalties, thereby generating public perceptions of injustice. This condition demonstrates that the effectiveness of the code of ethics largely depends on institutional commitment to applying ethical standards objectively.

Furthermore, supervisory mechanisms over police conduct must be strengthened. Internal supervision through the Professional and Security Division should be supported by external oversight involving the public and independent institutions. Transparency in ethical proceedings is essential to ensure public confidence in disciplinary enforcement mechanisms within the police institution.

From the perspective of legal ethics and professional responsibility, the existence of a code of ethics is not solely intended to punish officers committing violations but also to preserve the dignity and legitimacy of police institutions. Therefore, ethical violations committed by police officers must be regarded as serious issues requiring comprehensive handling. Accordingly, the concept of the professional code of ethics of the Indonesian National Police in this study is utilized to analyze how ethical regulations are implemented in practice and to assess the effectiveness of ethical enforcement in maintaining police professionalism.

Research Methodology

This study employs normative legal research supported by empirical data [17]. Normative legal research is conducted through the examination of statutory regulations, legal principles, legal theories, and legal concepts related to violations of the professional code of ethics of the

Indonesian National Police and their implications for public trust. The normative approach was selected because this research primarily focuses on analyzing legal norms and their implementation within the practice of ethical enforcement in the North Sumatra Regional Police.

The research applies several approaches, namely the statute approach, conceptual approach, and case approach [18]. The statute approach is conducted by examining various regulations concerning the duties and authority of the police, the professional code of ethics of the Indonesian National Police, and internal supervisory mechanisms within police institutions. The primary regulations analyzed in this study include Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police [1] and Regulation of the Indonesian National Police Number 7 of 2022 concerning the Professional Code of Ethics and the Police Ethics Commission [2].

The conceptual approach is undertaken through the examination of criminological theories, law enforcement theories, legitimacy theories, and concepts of public trust relevant to the focus of this research [13]. This approach is essential for constructing academic arguments in analyzing the factors contributing to ethical violations committed by police officers and their impact on the legitimacy of police institutions.

In addition, this study also utilizes a case approach through the analysis of several ethical violation cases occurring within the North Sumatra Regional Police between 2021 and 2025 [3]. The case approach is conducted by examining legal facts published through ethical decisions, official reports, national media coverage, and internal police oversight data. This approach aims to provide an empirical overview concerning the forms of violations, patterns of misconduct, and institutional responses toward ethical violations committed by police personnel.

The legal materials used in this research consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include statutory regulations, internal police regulations, and official decisions or documents relating to the enforcement of the police professional code of ethics. Secondary legal materials comprise books, scientific journals, academic articles, previous research findings, and other scholarly publications relevant to the research topic. Meanwhile, tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and supporting references that assist in clarifying legal concepts.

The technique for collecting legal materials is conducted through library research [18]. The researcher gathers relevant literature and legal documents related to the object of the study through libraries as well as digital access to academic journals and official government sources. Furthermore, this research also utilizes empirical data in the form of reports and media publications concerning ethical violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police within the North Sumatra region.

The legal materials are analyzed qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method [18]. All collected legal materials are systematically analyzed to identify the relationship between legal norms, criminological theories, and the practice of ethical enforcement within police institutions. The analysis is conducted through legal interpretation, data classification, and deductive conclusion drawing.

In legal research, qualitative analysis is essential for understanding the substantive meaning of legal norms and their implementation within social practice. Therefore, this study does not merely focus on formal normative aspects but also examines empirical realities demonstrating the gap between legal regulations and the actual implementation of ethical enforcement within the Indonesian National Police

Results

1. Criminological Analysis of Ethical Code Violations Committed by Members of the Indonesian National Police within the North Sumatra Regional Police

Ethical code violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police fundamentally constitute a form of deviant behavior by law enforcement officers that

contradicts legal norms, professional morality, and principles of public service. Within the context of the North Sumatra Regional Police, various ethical violation cases occurring between 2021 and 2025 indicate that police misconduct is not merely individual in nature, but is also closely related to structural factors and organizational culture within the institution.

From a criminological perspective, one of the primary factors contributing to ethical code violations is an organizational culture that tends to tolerate misconduct. Differential association theory explains that individuals learn deviant behavior through social interaction within particular environments [15]. Within police institutions, excessive esprit de corps often creates tolerance toward deviant conduct. Officers committing violations frequently receive informal protection from fellow personnel, thereby weakening the effectiveness of ethical enforcement mechanisms.

In addition to organizational culture, weak internal supervision also constitutes a significant factor contributing to ethical violations. In several cases occurring in North Sumatra, internal oversight mechanisms only operated effectively after the cases attracted public attention and became viral on social media platforms. This condition demonstrates that preventive supervisory systems have not functioned optimally. In fact, internal supervision represents an essential mechanism for preventing abuses of authority by law enforcement officers.

Based on social control theory, weak institutional control enables individuals to engage more easily in deviant conduct due to the low risk of social or administrative sanctions [9]. Within the North Sumatra Regional Police, several ethical violation cases reveal inconsistencies in the imposition of sanctions against police personnel. Differences in the treatment of similar cases have generated public perceptions that ethical enforcement remains influenced by subjectivity and structural proximity within the institution.

Another factor contributing to ethical violations is work-related pressure and the misuse of police discretion. Police officers possess extensive authority in investigative processes, criminal inquiries, and other law enforcement activities. Such authority is fundamentally necessary for effective law enforcement; however, in practice, it may lead to abuse of power when not accompanied by strict supervisory mechanisms.

Aspan argues that law enforcement discretion must be exercised professionally and accountably in order to prevent deviations of authority [10]. Nevertheless, in practice, certain police officers have utilized such authority for personal interests, including illegal levies, intimidation, and abuse of office. This condition demonstrates that issues concerning individual integrity remain a major challenge in the reform of police institutions.

From the perspective of modern criminology, ethical violations committed by police officers may also be influenced by social and economic factors. Economic pressures, consumptive lifestyles, and materialistic culture may encourage officers to misuse their authority for personal gain. However, economic factors cannot justify deviant conduct because police officers are bound by professional oaths and ethical codes requiring them to preserve institutional integrity.

Cases of ethical violations within the North Sumatra Regional Police also demonstrate problems relating to professionalism in law enforcement practices. Several police officers have been proven to engage in excessive repressive actions against civilians, narcotics abuse, and involvement in ordinary criminal offenses. Such conditions indicate that moral guidance and professional ethics development within police institutions have not yet operated effectively.

From the perspective of progressive law, enforcement of the police code of ethics should not merely focus on administrative punishment but must also emphasize integrity development and organizational cultural transformation [19]. Police reform cannot be achieved solely through regulatory amendments but must also involve changes in the mindset of police officers so that they become more oriented toward public service and respect for human rights.

Accordingly, the criminological analysis of ethical code violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police demonstrates that police misconduct is influenced

by a combination of individual factors, organizational culture, weak supervision, abuse of discretion, and low institutional integrity. Therefore, efforts to address such problems cannot be undertaken partially but must instead involve comprehensive institutional reform.

2. The Implications of Ethical Code Violations on Public Trust and the Formulation of Strengthened Ethical Oversight

Ethical code violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police have significant implications for the level of public trust in police institutions. In a democratic state governed by the rule of law, the legitimacy of the police largely depends upon public perceptions regarding the professionalism and integrity of law enforcement officers. When police personnel engage in deviant conduct, society tends to perceive that the police institution has failed to implement effective internal supervision.

Public trust constitutes an essential form of social capital within the law enforcement process. Communities that trust police institutions are generally more cooperative in reporting criminal offenses, providing information, and supporting law enforcement policies. Conversely, low levels of public trust may generate apathy and resistance toward law enforcement authorities. Based on legitimacy theory, an institution can effectively perform its functions only when it obtains social recognition from society [21]. Within the policing context, such legitimacy is established through professional, transparent, and accountable conduct by police officers. When officers themselves engage in ethical violations, institutional legitimacy becomes disrupted.

Various ethical violation cases occurring within the North Sumatra Regional Police have generated negative public perceptions toward police institutions. The public frequently perceives that the handling of ethical violations is conducted in a closed and non-transparent manner. In several cases, the sanctions imposed upon police personnel have been considered disproportionate to the severity and consequences of the misconduct committed.

This condition demonstrates that ethical enforcement has not fully reflected the principles of procedural justice. According to Tyler, society tends to regard an institution as legitimate when its law enforcement processes are conducted fairly and transparently [22]. Therefore, transparency in ethical examination procedures is essential for rebuilding public confidence. Furthermore, declining public trust in police institutions also affects the effectiveness of law enforcement. Communities lacking confidence in the police are generally reluctant to cooperate during investigations or criminal disclosure processes. Consequently, the social legitimacy of police institutions continues to decline.

To address these problems, a comprehensive formulation for strengthening ethical oversight within police institutions is required. First, internal supervision must be reinforced through the optimization of the Professional and Security Division and the implementation of layered supervisory mechanisms. Oversight should not merely be repressive after violations occur but must also function preventively through integrity development and behavioral monitoring of police personnel.

Second, transparency in handling ethical cases must be improved. The public should have access to information regarding investigative processes and sanctions imposed upon officers committing ethical violations. Transparency is essential for establishing public perceptions that police institutions are genuinely committed to legal reform. Third, reform of police organizational culture must be implemented seriously and consistently. *Esprit de corps* should not be used as a justification for protecting officers engaged in misconduct. Professionalism and accountability must become the primary values within police institutions.

Fourth, strengthening professional ethics and human rights education for police officers constitutes an important step in preventing deviant conduct among law enforcement personnel. Ethical education should not merely be delivered formally but must also be internalized within the working culture of police institutions. Fifth, the involvement of civil society in supervising police institutions should be expanded. External supervision may be carried out through

independent oversight bodies, mass media, and public participation in evaluating police services. Accordingly, strengthening ethical oversight and reforming organizational culture constitute essential measures for restoring public trust in police institutions. The success of police reform should not be measured solely by institutional modernization but also by the institution's ability to maintain officer integrity and secure public legitimacy.

Conclusion

1. Ethical code violations committed by members of the Indonesian National Police within the North Sumatra Regional Police are influenced by various criminological factors, including an organizational culture that tends to tolerate misconduct, weak internal supervision, abuse of discretion, workplace pressures, and the low level of integrity among certain police personnel. From a criminological perspective, ethical violations are not merely individual problems but are also closely related to weak institutional control and deficiencies in the legal culture within police organizations. Therefore, efforts to address ethical violations must be carried out through comprehensive institutional reform encompassing supervisory mechanisms, moral development, and transformation of organizational culture.
2. Ethical violations committed by police officers have significantly contributed to the decline of public trust in police institutions. The lack of transparency in handling ethical cases and inconsistencies in the imposition of sanctions have reinforced negative public perceptions regarding the professionalism of law enforcement personnel. In order to restore the legitimacy of police institutions, it is necessary to strengthen both internal and external oversight mechanisms, enhance transparency in ethical enforcement processes, reform organizational culture, and improve professional ethics and human rights education for members of the Indonesian National Police.

References

- [1] Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2002 tentang Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia.
- [2] Peraturan Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 7 Tahun 2022 tentang Kode Etik Profesi dan Komisi Kode Etik Polri.
- [3] Divisi Profesi dan Pengamanan Polri, "Laporan Penanganan Pelanggaran Kode Etik Anggota Polri Tahun 2021–2025," Jakarta, 2025.
- [4] Kompas, "Polda Sumut Tangani Sejumlah Kasus Pelanggaran Oknum Polisi," 2021.
- [5] CNN Indonesia, "Kasus Penyalahgunaan Narkotika oleh Oknum Polisi di Sumatera Utara," 2022.
- [6] Tempo, "Pelanggaran Etik Anggota Polri dan Evaluasi Pengawasan Internal," 2024.
- [7] Bidang Propam Polda Sumatera Utara, "Data Pengaduan Masyarakat Tahun 2025," Medan, 2025.
- [8] E. H. Sutherland, *Principles of Criminology*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1947.
- [9] T. Hirschi, *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- [10] H. Aspan, "Diskresi Aparat Penegak Hukum dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana," *Jurnal Hukum*, 2021.
- [11] I.Fatmawati, R. A. Fikri, and M. A. Siregar, *Peradilan Adat dan Restoratif dalam Penegakan Hukum di Indonesia*. Tahta Media, 2023.
- [12] Lembaga Survei Indonesia, "Tingkat Kepercayaan Publik terhadap Polri Tahun 2024," Jakarta, 2024.
- [13] S. Rahardjo, *Hukum Progresif: Sebuah Sintesa Hukum Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Genta Publishing, 2009.
- [14] B. Simandjuntak, *Pengantar Kriminologi dan Patologi Sosial*. Bandung: Tarsito, 1981.
- [15] E. H. Sutherland and D. R. Cressey, *Criminology*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1974.

- [16] J. Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- [17] M. A. Siregar, R. F. Adrian, and M. J. Rambe, *Menelusuri Perjalanan Lahirnya Konsep Sistem Hukum Pidana di Indonesia*. Tahta Media, 2023.
- [18] S. Soekanto, *Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Penegakan Hukum*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2014.
- [19] S. Rahardjo, *Penegakan Hukum Progresif*. Jakarta: Kompas, 2010.
- [20] T. R. Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- [21] M. Weber, *Economy and Society*. California: University of California Press, 1978.
- [22] T. R. Tyler, *Procedural Justice and the Courts*. New York: Court Review Press, 2007.
- [23] A. Hamzah, *Etika Profesi Hukum*. Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2018.
- [24] M. Fuady, *Etika dan Tanggung Jawab Profesi Hukum di Indonesia*. Bandung: Citra Aditya Bakti, 2019.
- [25] M. A. Siregar, *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Sistem Hukum Indonesia*. Medan: Pustaka Prima, 2024.