Implementing the De-escalation Paradigm to Prevent Violence in the Policing of Public Demonstrations within the Jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police

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Abstract

Public demonstrations constitute a constitutional right guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In practice, however, demonstrations are frequently accompanied by violence involving law enforcement officers. The de-escalation paradigm offers an alternative approach that prioritizes the prevention of physical conflict through communication, negotiation, and humane crowd management. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the de-escalation paradigm in policing public demonstrations within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police and to formulate a model for strengthening its application. This study employs a normative juridical method incorporating statutory, conceptual, and case approaches. Legal materials were collected through a literature review and analyzed using a prescriptive-analytical method. The findings demonstrate that, although the regulatory framework governing de-escalation has been established under Chief of the Indonesian National Police Regulation Number 1 of 2009 and Number 16 of 2006, its implementation in practice remains suboptimal due to limited personnel training, inadequate coordination, and resistance within the organizational culture. The recommended strengthening model encompasses the development of a simulation-based training system, reinforcement of the field command structure, and integration of effective external oversight mechanisms. This study concludes that strengthening the de-escalation paradigm requires comprehensive institutional reform to ensure the effective protection of human rights in the context of public demonstrations.

Keywords: De-escalation; Policing of Public Demonstrations; Police; Human Rights; North Sumatra Regional Police

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Introduction

Freedom of expression in public constitutes a fundamental right explicitly recognized under Article 28 and Article 28E paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which affirm that every person has the right to freedom of association, assembly, and expression. This constitutional recognition was subsequently elaborated through Law Number 9 of 1998 concerning Freedom of Expression in Public, which regulates the mechanisms and limitations governing the orderly and responsible exercise of public demonstrations. Within a democratic state, demonstrations are not merely a form of political expression but also constitute one of the most tangible instruments of social control over the exercise of public authority [1]. Nevertheless, this normative ideal is frequently at odds with realities on the ground.

Data from the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) indicate that violence in the policing of public demonstrations remains a recurring phenomenon in Indonesia. Between 2019 and 2023, dozens of incidents involving the excessive use of force by police officers in handling demonstrations were recorded, including the deployment of tear gas, rubber bullets, and, in several extreme cases, live ammunition [2]. In North Sumatra, the escalation of violence during demonstrations has also attracted public attention in several student and labor protests, resulting in injuries and mass arrests. This situation reveals a serious disparity between *das sollen*, namely the normative expectation that demonstrations be policed in a humane and proportionate manner, and *das sein*, namely the reality that policing practices continue to be frequently characterized by violence [3].

The paradox between legal mandates and field practices is by no means a new phenomenon. The conventional policing paradigm, which relies heavily on physical force (*force-based approach*), remains deeply embedded in the organizational culture of police institutions across many regions, including within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police. This approach is premised on the assumption that public order can be achieved through domination and intimidation rather than dialogue and de-escalation [4]. Comparative studies conducted in various countries, however, demonstrate that de-escalation approaches are more effective in preventing violence and preserving the legitimacy of police institutions in the eyes of the public [5]. This irony becomes even more pronounced considering that the internal regulatory framework of the Indonesian National Police already incorporates elements of de-escalation, although their practical implementation remains far from adequate.

In the context of law enforcement, the de-escalation paradigm refers to a set of strategies, techniques, and procedures designed to reduce the intensity of conflict before it reaches the point at which force becomes necessary [6]. This paradigm is consistent with the principles established under Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 1 of 2009 concerning the Use of Force in Police Actions, which requires proportionality and adherence to the principle that force must be used only as a last resort. Furthermore, Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 16 of 2006 concerning Guidelines for Crowd Control expressly regulates negotiation and communication procedures with demonstrators before any physical measures are undertaken [7]. Nevertheless, the existence of these regulations has not automatically resulted in behavioral changes at the operational level.

Despite this regulatory framework, its implementation continues to encounter complex structural and cultural barriers. Several previous studies have examined the policing of public demonstrations from the perspectives of criminal law and human rights [8]. However, studies specifically analyzing the implementation of the de-escalation paradigm within the North Sumatra Regional Police through a comprehensive normative juridical approach remain limited. This research gap provides an important foundation for the present study. The novelty of this research lies in its analytical focus on the specific jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police and its effort to formulate an operational and context-sensitive model for strengthening de-escalation practices [9].

The complex geographical and demographic characteristics of North Sumatra, marked by ethnic and cultural diversity as well as highly dynamic student and labor movements, make the region a particularly rich and relevant context for further investigation. Several incidents involving the policing of demonstrations in Medan and its surrounding areas over recent years have revealed a troubling pattern of violent escalation that could arguably have been prevented [10]. This situation is especially concerning given that the North Sumatra Regional Police have already established internal regulations and training programs concerning crowd control, yet their implementation has not adequately addressed the actual challenges encountered in the field [11]. Against this background, the present study formulates two principal research questions: (1) How is the de-escalation paradigm implemented in the policing of public demonstrations within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police? and (2) What model can be developed to strengthen the de-escalation paradigm in preventing violence during the policing of public demonstrations within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police?

Literature Review

2.1 Use of Force Theory in Law Enforcement

Use of force theory in the context of law enforcement has undergone significant development since the late twentieth century. Fundamentally, this theory examines when, how, and to what extent law enforcement officers are permitted to employ physical force in performing their duties [12]. Comparative policing literature identifies two principal approaches: the escalatory force continuum model and the de-escalation model, which prioritizes the prevention of physical conflict. The force continuum model describes a graduated spectrum of responses, ranging from verbal communication to lethal force, in which the level of force is increased according to the degree of resistance exhibited by the subject [13]. For several decades, this model served as the operational standard for numerous police departments across different countries.

The force continuum model, however, has been strongly criticized for its tendency to normalize the escalation of force. Waddington et al. argue that the force continuum approach is often used as a *post hoc* justification for violent conduct by police officers rather than as a genuinely pre-emptive operational guideline [14]. In response to these shortcomings, the de-escalation paradigm emerged as a more humane and effective alternative for managing large crowds. Studies conducted across various police departments in the United States demonstrate that de-escalation training significantly reduces incidents of injury among both police officers and civilians compared with conventional approaches [15]. This paradigmatic shift did not occur overnight; rather, it resulted from the accumulation of empirical research and sustained pressure for police reform over many years.

This theory is highly relevant to the first research question. In analyzing the implementation of the de-escalation paradigm within the North Sumatra Regional Police, it is necessary to understand the theoretical foundations underlying how tactical decisions concerning the use of force are shaped by institutional values and organizational culture. If police culture remains oriented toward the force continuum, de-escalation will continue to be treated merely as an ancillary option that is frequently disregarded. For this reason, paradigmatic reform is not simply a procedural adjustment but an institutional necessity [16]. Within the Indonesian legal context, Article 45 of Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 1 of 2009 expressly requires police officers to consider proportionality before employing force, thereby reflecting an element of de-escalation within the broader use-of-force framework.

Furthermore, Sumarno et al., in their study of law enforcement and human rights in Indonesia, emphasize that the inconsistent application of the proportionality principle in the use

of force by police officers is often rooted in the inadequate internalization of human rights values within police training systems [17]. This finding reinforces the argument that difficulties in implementing de-escalation are not merely technical but systemic problems requiring a comprehensive legal approach. The principles of necessity and proportionality, which constitute the central pillars of use of force theory, are also consistent with the international legal doctrine embodied in the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990). These principles provide an indispensable evaluative standard in the context of police reform in Indonesia.

2.2 Crowd Management Theory

Crowd management is an interdisciplinary field of study that combines social psychology, sociology, and police science to understand and manage crowd dynamics in various contexts [18]. Classical crowd theory was long dominated by Le Bon's conception of crowds as irrational entities susceptible to emotional contagion and aggressive behavior. Contemporary scholarship, however, has largely abandoned this perspective in favor of a more nuanced understanding. Reicher and Stott developed the Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM), which explains how a shared social identity shapes collective behavior within crowds [19]. This model provides a strong scientific foundation for understanding why de-escalation strategies that acknowledge and respect the collective identity of demonstrators are more effective than approaches that treat crowds as homogeneous entities.

ESIM has important implications for public-order policing strategies. Crowd violence is neither inherent nor inevitable; rather, it frequently arises in response to police actions perceived as illegitimate or unjust. When police officers treat an entire crowd as a homogeneous threat, such treatment may consolidate group identity and provoke an escalation that could otherwise have been avoided [20]. Conversely, approaches that distinguish peaceful demonstrators from provocateurs and establish communication with protest leaders have proven more effective in preventing violence. This perspective provides the scientific foundation for dialogue-based crowd management, which has been adopted by numerous European police institutions and has produced measurable reductions in violent incidents.

In relation to the second research question, crowd management theory provides an essential foundation for formulating a model to strengthen de-escalation practices. In her study of social conflict management in Indonesia, Rahmayanti highlights that Indonesian police officers frequently lack an adequate understanding of the psychosocial dynamics of crowds, resulting in responses that tend to be reactive and counterproductive [21]. An ideal strengthening model should therefore incorporate ESIM-based training to equip officers with the capacity to interpret and respond appropriately to crowd dynamics. Such responses should be grounded in empirical evidence concerning collective behavior rather than solely in intuition or unstructured operational experience.

The relevance of this theory is also evident from a legal perspective. Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 16 of 2006 concerning Guidelines for Crowd Control contains provisions concerning the establishment of negotiation units responsible for communicating with protest leaders. These provisions effectively embody the principle of dialogue-based crowd management, although their implementation remains partial and unsystematic [22]. In their research on the application of ESIM within British policing, Stott et al. found that the success of this approach depends heavily on the quality of training, responsive field leadership, and strong institutional support. These three elements constitute key variables in analyzing the implementation of de-escalation within the North Sumatra Regional Police and simultaneously serve as design parameters for the proposed strengthening model.

2.3 Human Rights Theory in Law Enforcement

Human rights in the context of law enforcement constitute an evolving field, both within the international normative framework and in the dynamics of national implementation. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Indonesia through

Law Number 12 of 2005, expressly guarantees the right of peaceful assembly under Article 21 and prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment under Article 7 [23]. From a human rights perspective, any use of force by state authorities against demonstrators must be assessed against the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality. Collectively, these three principles establish an international standard that is binding upon Indonesia as a State Party to the Covenant.

In her study of the protection of freedom of assembly in Indonesia, Fitri Rafianti asserts that the national legal framework is, in principle, sufficiently comprehensive to protect participants in public demonstrations. Nevertheless, a substantial implementation gap remains a serious concern requiring targeted institutional intervention [24]. This problem is not merely technical but also concerns the legal culture that has developed within police institutions. Unless police personnel fully internalize human rights values as an integral component of professional policing, the tendency to disregard de-escalation procedures will persist regardless of how comprehensively the governing regulations are formulated.

Human rights theory in law enforcement also introduces the concepts of vertical and horizontal accountability, both of which are relevant to the present analysis. Vertical accountability refers to mechanisms through which officers are answerable to their superiors and internal oversight bodies, whereas horizontal accountability encompasses scrutiny by external institutions such as the National Commission on Human Rights, the Ombudsman, and civil society organizations [25]. Both forms of accountability are particularly relevant to the second research question because an effective model for strengthening de-escalation must incorporate robust accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance with humane policing procedures. Without meaningful accountability, regulations will remain merely normative declarations with limited practical effect.

Furthermore, the doctrine of human rights-based policing developed by Bayley and Perito emphasizes that human rights-oriented police reform cannot be separated from reforms in organizational management and institutional culture [26]. In this context, Ismaidar highlights the importance of transformational leadership in promoting cultural change within police institutions toward more humane and democratic approaches [27]. This finding provides a clear direction for strengthening the de-escalation paradigm within the North Sumatra Regional Police. Such reform requires leadership commitment extending from the Chief of the North Sumatra Regional Police to unit commanders in the field, supported by a consistent reward-and-sanction system that encourages compliance with de-escalation procedures and imposes meaningful consequences for violations.

2.4 Organizational Theory and Institutional Police Reform

Institutional reform within police organizations is a complex and multidimensional process that cannot be adequately understood through a purely legal approach without considering organizational dynamics. Organizational change theory provides a useful analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of and barriers to institutional transformation within police organizations [28]. One of the most relevant frameworks is Kurt Lewin's three-stage model of change *unfreezing, moving,* and *refreezing* which explains how established values and practices must first be destabilized before new values can be permanently institutionalized. In the policing context, the unfreezing stage is often the most difficult because it confronts deeply entrenched resistance within the organizational culture.

In his study of the institutional reform of the Indonesian National Police in the post-Reform era, Arif Sahlepi identifies several principal structural barriers to organizational change, including the persistence of a militaristic culture within police institutions, recruitment and promotion systems that have not consistently applied merit-based principles, and weak human rights-oriented performance evaluation mechanisms [29]. These findings are highly relevant to understanding why the implementation of the de-escalation paradigm continues to face substantial obstacles despite the existence of a supportive regulatory framework. Genuine

institutional reform requires more than the promulgation of new regulations; it demands fundamental changes to organizational values, incentive structures, and operational procedures that mutually reinforce one another.

The perspective of new institutionalism provides an additional and particularly useful dimension to this analysis. From this perspective, institutional change is not determined solely by technocratic rationality but is also strongly influenced by normative, mimetic, and coercive isomorphic pressures arising from the broader institutional environment [30]. Pressure exerted by the National Commission on Human Rights, the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), and the international community through the United Nations Universal Periodic Review mechanism constitutes a form of coercive isomorphic pressure that should accelerate police reform. Mimetic pressure, meanwhile, may arise from adopting best practices developed by police institutions in democratic countries that have successfully implemented the de-escalation paradigm in a consistent manner.

This theory is closely and inseparably connected to both research questions. In addressing the first research question, the analysis of implementation must consider the structural and cultural factors that shape the organizational conduct of the North Sumatra Regional Police in every public-demonstration policing operation. In addressing the second research question, the design of a model for strengthening de-escalation must recognize the complexity of institutional change and formulate strategies that realistically account for existing barriers. A purely top-down model that fails to foster ownership at lower organizational levels is highly likely to be unsustainable in the long term, as demonstrated by numerous experiences of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia [31].

Research Methodology

This study employs normative legal research, an approach that treats law as a body of norms or rules to be analyzed systematically and logically. Soekanto and Mamudji define normative legal research as research conducted using library materials or secondary data comprising primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials [32]. This method was selected because the study primarily focuses on analyzing the conformity between the legal norms governing the de-escalation paradigm and their implementation, as well as formulating a strengthening model consistent with the applicable legal system. Accordingly, the study relies primarily on the analysis of legal texts rather than the direct collection of field data, although empirical data obtained from oversight institutions' reports are used as supporting materials.

This study employs three methodologically complementary approaches. First, the statutory approach is used to systematically examine all regulations concerning the policing of public demonstrations and the de-escalation paradigm. These regulations include Law Number 9 of 1998 concerning Freedom of Expression in Public, Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police, Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 1 of 2009 concerning the Use of Force in Police Actions, and Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 16 of 2006 concerning Guidelines for Crowd Control [33]. This approach facilitates a systematic analysis of the consistency and coherence of the applicable legal norms while identifying gaps between regulatory provisions and the practical requirements of implementation in the field.

Second, the conceptual approach is employed to examine relevant legal concepts, including de-escalation, use of force, crowd management, and police accountability. This approach is essential for establishing a robust conceptual framework through which valid legal arguments can be analyzed and formulated [34]. Third, the case approach is employed on a limited basis to examine relevant and documented incidents involving the policing of public demonstrations within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police. These incidents are examined through reports issued by the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), the Medan Legal Aid Institute (LBH Medan), and verifiable media documentation.

Marzuki emphasizes that the case approach in normative legal research seeks to understand the *ratio decidendi* underlying existing legal practices, thereby providing an empirical context that enriches the normative analysis [35].

The legal materials used in this study are classified into three hierarchical categories. Primary legal materials comprise the aforementioned laws and regulations, presidential decrees, regulations issued by the Chief of the Indonesian National Police, and ratified international legal instruments. Secondary legal materials include legal textbooks, indexed peer-reviewed scholarly journals, relevant previous research, and reports published by official institutions such as Komnas HAM and the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI). Tertiary legal materials consist of legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference sources used to clarify technical terminology employed in the analysis.

The legal materials were collected through a systematic and structured literature review. This process involved searching various academic databases, including Google Scholar, the Science and Technology Index (SINTA), Scopus, and Indonesia's national digital library. Laws and regulations were retrieved through the national Legal Documentation and Information Networks (JDIH) maintained by the Indonesian National Police and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. Reports issued by independent oversight institutions were also purposively selected to provide an empirical perspective on implementation in the field, with the verifiability of every data source being ensured.

The legal materials were analyzed using a prescriptive-analytical method. Under this method, the collected materials were not merely described but also critically evaluated to generate constructive and practically applicable legal propositions. The analytical stages comprised: inventorying and systematizing the relevant regulations; identifying the legal principles applicable to the policing of public demonstrations; critically examining the gap between normative provisions and their implementation based on the available empirical data; comparing relevant international best practices; and formulating recommendations in the form of an operational strengthening model adapted to the Indonesian context. This analytical framework enables the study to move beyond merely diagnosing the problem and to contribute practical and implementable legal solutions.

Results

4.1 Implementation of the De-escalation Paradigm in the Policing of Public Demonstrations within the Jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police

The regulatory framework governing the implementation of the de-escalation paradigm in the policing of public demonstrations in Indonesia is normatively adequate. Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 16 of 2006 concerning Guidelines for Crowd Control stipulates that every public-demonstration policing operation must begin with negotiation and communication, the issuance of clear warnings audible to the crowd, and a graduated response proportionate to the level of threat encountered [1]. From a normative perspective, this regulation reflects the principles of de-escalation because each stage prioritizes persuasive measures before physical action is taken. Similarly, Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 1 of 2009 concerning the Use of Force in Police Actions establishes proportionality and necessity as mandatory principles governing every use of force, accompanied by a hierarchy of measures conceptually consistent with the de-escalation paradigm [7].

The realities of implementation within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police, however, remain considerably removed from this normative ideal. Documentation compiled by the Medan Legal Aid Institute (LBH Medan) between 2019 and 2023 identifies several incidents involving the policing of public demonstrations that reveal patterns of disproportionate escalation by police officers and departures from established procedures [10]. During several student demonstrations in Medan, tear gas was reportedly deployed before the

verbal-warning procedure had been fully completed. Moreover, the negotiation units mandated under Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 16 of 2006 were not consistently activated during every crowd-control operation [22]. The disparity between regulatory provisions and operational practices indicates a systemic implementation problem rather than isolated instances of individual negligence.

From an organizational perspective, several structural factors contribute to the inadequate implementation of de-escalation. First, training related to the de-escalation paradigm has not been systematically integrated into police education and training curricula at the North Sumatra Regional Police. Police education in Indonesia generally allocates greater emphasis to tactical and physical competencies than to the social psychology, communication, and conflict-management skills required for effective de-escalation [16]. Consequently, officers deployed in the field frequently lack an adequate repertoire of skills to implement de-escalation effectively when confronted with increasingly agitated crowds and high-pressure situations.

Second, field command and coordination structures also contribute significantly to implementation difficulties. In many public-demonstration policing operations, ambiguity within the chain of command impedes rapid and appropriate de-escalation decisions. When field commanders vested with decision-making authority are not physically present at the location, operational personnel frequently act on their own initiative, and such actions do not always comply with applicable de-escalation procedures [28]. This situation is compounded by weaknesses in real-time field communication systems, which prevent timely information concerning changes in crowd dynamics from reaching authorized decision-makers responsible for issuing appropriate instructions.

Third, organizational culture constitutes another factor that cannot be overlooked. A force-oriented police culture tends to perceive demonstrations as threats to public order that must be suppressed rather than as expressions of democratic rights that should be safely facilitated. Arif Sahlepi's research on the organizational culture of the Indonesian National Police indicates that the persistent influence of militaristic values within Indonesian policing frequently conflicts with the humane approach required under the de-escalation paradigm [29]. This tension between established values and contemporary reform imperatives constitutes one of the deepest and most difficult implementation problems to address because it concerns a professional identity that has developed over many years.

Oversight and accountability also constitute important dimensions shaping existing implementation patterns. The internal mechanisms of the Indonesian National Police for overseeing compliance with de-escalation procedures during the policing of public demonstrations have not yet operated effectively. The Professional and Security Division (*Bidang Profesi dan Pengamanan* or Bid Propam) at the regional police level does not yet have a regular and systematic procedural-audit mechanism for reviewing every crowd-control operation [25]. Without a robust evaluation system and clearly defined consequences for violations, field personnel have insufficient incentives to apply de-escalation procedures consistently in every situation. This condition ultimately perpetuates a recurring cycle: violence occurs, meaningful accountability does not follow, and the same pattern is repeated during subsequent demonstrations.

4.2 A Model for Strengthening the De-escalation Paradigm to Prevent Violence in the Policing of Public Demonstrations within the Jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police

Formulating an effective model for strengthening the de-escalation paradigm requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach because the identified implementation problems are simultaneously structural, cultural, and technical. The model proposed in this study is founded on three mutually reinforcing pillars: institutional capacity reform, strengthened accountability mechanisms, and the development of strategic partnerships. These pillars cannot operate independently; they must be implemented synergistically to produce

meaningful and sustainable changes in the policing of public demonstrations within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police.

The first pillar is institutional capacity reform through the systematic improvement of training and human-resource development. An ideal de-escalation training system should satisfy several complementary criteria: it should employ realistic simulations reflecting actual field conditions, be conducted continuously rather than as a one-time activity, and be evaluated through measurable and clearly defined performance indicators. In her study of human-resource capacity building within police institutions, Rahmayanti emphasizes that scenario-based training is substantially more effective in developing de-escalation competencies than conventional training delivered through one-way lectures [21]. The recommended training program should include modules on ESIM-based social psychology of crowds, communication and negotiation techniques for engaging protest leaders, emotional regulation under high-pressure conditions, and simulated demonstration scenarios of progressively increasing complexity.

Regarding the structural dimension of command, the proposed model recommends establishing a specialized De-escalation Unit (*Unit Khusus Deeskalasi* or UKD) in every Territorial Unit (*Satuan Wilayah* or Satwil) under the North Sumatra Regional Police. Each unit would consist of specially trained personnel assigned to serve as the first line of engagement in every public-demonstration policing operation, with a primary mandate to negotiate and communicate with demonstrators before escalation occurs. This concept is consistent with practices adopted by several European police institutions that have established Liaison Officer Units comprising trained officers tasked with professionally facilitating communication between the police and groups of demonstrators [20]. Establishing the UKD should be accompanied by clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing its authority, operational measures, reporting mechanisms, and coordination with other units throughout an operation.

The second pillar concerns strengthening accountability mechanisms across both internal and external dimensions. Regarding internal oversight within the North Sumatra Regional Police, Bid Propam should be granted the authority and institutional capacity to conduct a post-operational procedural review of every incident involving the policing of public demonstrations. Such reviews should include an in-depth assessment of whether the measures taken complied with applicable de-escalation procedures [17]. The audit findings should be directly connected to a transparent and consistently applied system of incentives and sanctions. Personnel shown to have complied with de-escalation procedures should receive formal recognition, whereas personnel who violate those procedures should be subjected to proportionate, documented, and publicly accessible sanctions. This mechanism would transform de-escalation from a mere recommendation into an enforceable behavioral standard with tangible consequences.

At the external level, the proposed strengthening model calls for an enhanced role for the North Sumatra Representative Office of the National Commission on Human Rights as an independent oversight institution with regular access to data concerning crowd-control operations. Fitri Rafianti emphasizes that effective external oversight depends substantially on the availability of transparent data and mechanisms that enable oversight institutions to issue recommendations carrying legal force [24]. The involvement of civil society organizations, including LBH Medan, in independent monitoring mechanisms should also be formalized through a memorandum of understanding that provides a clear legal basis for their role as officially recognized independent monitors. Transparency concerning the use of force including statistics on incidents, the types of force employed, and subsequent accountability measures should become a mandatory and non-negotiable operational standard.

The third pillar is the development of strategic partnerships involving key stakeholders within North Sumatra's public-demonstration management ecosystem. The first category

comprises partnerships with student organizations, labor unions, and civil society groups, which are among the actors most frequently involved in public demonstrations. These partnerships should be implemented through pre-event coordination mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of information, clarification of demands, and mutual agreement regarding the policing procedures to be applied [18]. The second category comprises partnerships with academics and legal research institutions to develop evidence-based policies for policing public demonstrations. Implementing this three-pillar model requires a phased five-year roadmap supported by leadership commitment extending from the Chief of the North Sumatra Regional Police to field commanders, adequate budgetary allocations, and measurable periodic evaluations, as mandated by the principles of good governance and the rule of law within the Indonesian legal system [35].

Conclusion

The implementation of the de-escalation paradigm in the policing of public demonstrations within the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Regional Police remains partial and inconsistent. Although Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 16 of 2006 and Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 1 of 2009 provide an adequate normative framework, their implementation in practice is constrained by the absence of a de-escalation-oriented training system, ambiguity within the command structure, the persistence of a force-oriented organizational culture, and weak accountability mechanisms. The gap between *das sollen* and *das sein* in the implementation of de-escalation reflects a systemic problem that requires a comprehensive and well-planned institutional response rather than partial and reactive procedural improvements.

The proposed model for strengthening the de-escalation paradigm rests on three mutually reinforcing pillars: institutional capacity reform through simulation-based training and the establishment of a specialized de-escalation unit within every Territorial Unit (Satwil); strengthened accountability mechanisms through systematic post-operational audits conducted by the Professional and Security Division (Bid Propam) and institutionalized external oversight involving the National Commission on Human Rights and civil society; and the development of strategic partnerships with demonstrator groups and academic institutions. As a practical recommendation, the North Sumatra Regional Police should promptly issue an internal regional police regulation that translates the de-escalation paradigm into concrete and measurable operational procedures. This measure should be followed by reforms to the police education and training curriculum and the establishment of specialized de-escalation units as short-term priorities to be initiated within the first twelve months.

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