



Public Trust, Procedural Justice, and Public Compliance with the Law: A Socio-Legal Analysis of the Legitimacy of Law Enforcement Institutions in Indonesia

Abdul Hafid^{1*}

¹ STAI Darul Ulum Banyuwangi, Indonesia
email: kokohafid1983@gmail.com

Article Info :

Received:
06-06-2026
Revised:
22-06-2026
Accepted:
29-06-2026

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between procedural justice, public trust, institutional legitimacy, accountability, and legal compliance in the context of law-enforcement institutions in Indonesia. The study adopts a socio-legal approach with an explanatory quantitative design that integrates normative analysis of constitutional and statutory frameworks with empirical assessment of citizens' perceptions of law-enforcement authority. The analysis focuses on how procedural experiences, institutional accountability, public trust, and perceptions of legitimate authority contribute to citizens' normative acceptance and compliance with the law. Data analysis incorporates descriptive statistics, construct validity and reliability assessment, and structural equation modeling to examine direct, indirect, and mediating relationships among the relevant constructs. The analysis demonstrates that institutional legitimacy cannot be sustained through formal legal authority alone, as citizens' acceptance is also influenced by procedural fairness, neutrality, respectful treatment, transparency, accountability, and access to effective complaint and corrective mechanisms. Judicial control over coercive measures further establishes an external safeguard against arbitrary exercises of authority and reinforces rights-based law enforcement. Public trust operates as an important link between procedural experiences and acceptance of institutional authority, while legitimacy supports compliance that extends beyond obedience motivated solely by sanctions. The study highlights the need to integrate legality, procedural justice, institutional performance, accountability, rights protection, and effective oversight to strengthen legitimate law enforcement and sustain public legal compliance.

Keywords: Accountability, Institutional Legitimacy, Legal Compliance, Procedural Justice, Public Trust.



©2026 Authors.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

The global debate on the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions over the past two decades has shifted from a paradigm that evaluates institutional effectiveness primarily through coercive capacity, crime control, or the success of enforcing legal norms toward an approach that places the quality of institutional relationships between the state and citizens at the foundation of sustainable legal authority. This shift has become increasingly evident as jurisdictions worldwide experience declining confidence in the police, heightened public sensitivity to abuses of authority, and growing demands that law enforcement processes not only produce formally lawful decisions but also be perceived as fair by those affected, making procedural justice, public trust, and institutional legitimacy increasingly central concepts in contemporary legal, criminological, social-psychological, and socio-legal scholarship (Bradford & Jackson, 2024). Contemporary literature indicates that legitimacy is no longer understood as an automatic consequence of formal legal authority, but rather as a form of social acceptance of an institution's right to make decisions, exercise authority, and expect compliance from citizens, with its durability strongly shaped by perceptions of neutrality, respect, transparency, voice, and the quality of treatment received during law enforcement encounters (McLean & Nix, 2022). Public trust likewise extends beyond satisfaction with institutional performance because it shapes expectations about whether authorities will exercise coercive powers competently, fairly, impartially, and accountably within the boundaries of their legally conferred authority (Lee, 2021). At a more fundamental level, this development reflects a conceptual movement from compliance through deterrence toward compliance through legitimacy, in which legal compliance is understood not merely as a rational response to the

risk of punishment but also as the internalization of a normative obligation to obey laws and institutions perceived as entitled to exercise public authority (Fine & van Rooij, 2021). This transformation makes the relationship among public trust, procedural justice, institutional legitimacy, and legal compliance a central problem in contemporary scholarship on state–society relations, particularly where the effectiveness of formal authority increasingly depends on its social acceptance.

Cross-national empirical findings generally support the proposition that the quality of procedures experienced by citizens has substantive consequences for institutional legitimacy, yet the available evidence also demonstrates that the relationships among these constructs are considerably more complex than the linear models assumed in some early legitimacy research. A randomized field experiment in Quito found that treatment reflecting procedural justice could increase police legitimacy and citizens' willingness to cooperate with the police, demonstrating that the manner in which authority is exercised can shape public acceptance of law enforcement independently of substantive outcomes (Anrango Narváez et al., 2023). Evidence from Ghana indicates that perceptions of procedural fairness and experiences of contact with the police are important predictors of perceived police legitimacy, while research in South Africa suggests that assessments of procedural justice cannot be entirely separated from citizens' perceptions of police capacity and performance (Boateng & Darko, 2021). Research involving victim-survivors of rape and sexual assault further indicates that procedurally just police engagement can influence the quality of relationships between vulnerable populations and law enforcement institutions, extending the relevance of procedural justice beyond conventional police–citizen encounters (Hohl et al., 2022). A recent systematic review and meta-analysis similarly demonstrates that the relationship between procedural justice and legitimacy is relatively consistent but varies according to social identity and social context, challenging assumptions that the legitimacy model operates uniformly across populations and institutional environments (Chan et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings indicate that legitimacy is a multidimensional construct produced through the intersection of institutional experiences, performance evaluations, social identities, interactional quality, and citizens' normative judgments rather than through law enforcement effectiveness alone.

Although this body of literature has established a relatively strong theoretical foundation, important conceptual and empirical limitations remain that constrain the direct application of legitimacy theory across different institutional settings, particularly in societies whose social, political, and bureaucratic configurations differ from the Western democracies in which much of the foundational literature developed. Research involving Muslim communities demonstrates that procedural injustice and perceptions of police ineffectiveness can simultaneously undermine trust, indicating that trust cannot be explained exclusively through procedural experiences because group identity, institutional effectiveness, and perceived bias also shape the formation of legitimacy (Ali & Murphy, 2024). Research on police bias similarly shows that perceptions of discriminatory treatment can diminish trust in the police and that procedural justice can help explain how experiences of bias are translated into negative institutional evaluations (Madon & Murphy, 2021). Evidence from Britain further indicates that public confidence in the police develops within changing social and political circumstances, meaning that aggregate indicators of satisfaction or confidence may conceal substantial variation across social groups and provide limited explanations of why citizens accept or reject law enforcement authority (Bradford et al., 2025). At the same time, research on perceived police ineffectiveness suggests that procedural justice may mitigate some of the negative effects of perceived ineffectiveness on police legitimacy, but cannot entirely eliminate performance-related concerns in citizens' institutional evaluations (Nam et al., 2024). In Indonesia, recent research on police legitimacy has begun to demonstrate that procedural justice, performance, public satisfaction, and institutional practices interact in more complex configurations than those assumed by conventional legitimacy models, indicating the possibility of additional determinants operating through citizens' broader social experiences with law enforcement institutions (Adhikara & Putranto, 2026). The central gap in the literature therefore lies not simply in determining whether procedural justice influences legitimacy, but in explaining how procedural fairness, institutional trust, perceived effectiveness, social experience, and normative evaluations interact to produce acceptance of legal authority within a specific institutional context such as Indonesia.

These limitations carry both scientific and practical consequences because the effectiveness of law enforcement ultimately depends not only on the completeness of legal regulations or the coercive capacity of authorities, but also on whether citizens regard law enforcement institutions as trustworthy

authorities that exercise power fairly and possess a legitimate claim to compliance. The perspective of legal socialization demonstrates that obligations to obey the law develop through extended social processes in which individuals learn whether legal rules and the institutions enforcing them possess normative qualities worthy of respect, making institutional experiences consequential for long-term orientations toward legal compliance (Fine & van Rooij, 2021). Research on emotions and compliance further indicates that procedural injustice can generate anger, feelings of disrespect, and rejection of authority, which may influence compliance through mechanisms that differ from rational calculations concerning the probability or severity of punishment (Demarest, 2021). Cross-national research examining cooperation with the police and criminal courts indicates that procedural justice and legitimacy are associated with citizens' willingness to cooperate with legal institutions, while also showing that these relationships must be interpreted in relation to the social and institutional characteristics of different countries (Jackson et al., 2026). Longitudinal evidence concerning the process-based model further suggests that the relationships among procedural justice, legitimacy, and citizens' behavioral responses do not necessarily produce uniform consequences over time, requiring analytical distinctions between normative acceptance of authority and concrete forms of citizen engagement with the police (Kuen, 2024). For Indonesia, understanding these mechanisms is particularly important because institutional reforms focused primarily on improving performance without addressing perceptions of procedural unfairness may generate short-term effectiveness without establishing a durable foundation of social legitimacy (Fitrianto et al., 2025). Legitimacy therefore represents more than an assessment of institutional image; it concerns the social conditions through which law acquires voluntary and sustainable compliance.

This study is positioned at the intersection of legal studies, sociology of law, criminology, and public institutional research by conceptualizing the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions as a mechanism connecting the quality of institutional authority with citizens' legal behavior. This position differs from approaches that treat public trust as an independent indicator of institutional reputation because trust is conceptualized here as a relational evaluation formed through citizens' experiences of institutional procedures, performance, and treatment and subsequently connected to normative judgments concerning whether authorities deserve to be obeyed (Lee et al., 2025). Research on individual propensity to trust further indicates that pre-existing orientations toward trust may influence how citizens evaluate the police, suggesting that legitimacy perceptions are not exclusively determined by objective institutional experiences (Lee, 2021). A scoping review of police legitimacy among children and young people demonstrates that the definitions, determinants, and consequences of legitimacy may vary across developmental stages and population characteristics, reinforcing the need to treat legitimacy as a contextual and multidimensional phenomenon (Li et al., 2024). Research on the measurement of normative obligations to obey the police likewise emphasizes the importance of distinguishing legitimacy as a judgment concerning the rightful authority of an institution from perceptions of effectiveness or satisfaction with institutional performance (Reisig et al., 2023). Indonesian evidence concerning public trust in police performance further demonstrates that trust constitutes an empirical phenomenon requiring examination through citizens' evaluations of institutional performance rather than through normative assumptions about the state's formal authority (Saputra et al., 2024). Focusing on Indonesia enables this study to examine whether the process-based model of regulation can adequately explain legal compliance within a law enforcement system characterized by social and institutional conditions that differ from those in the contexts where the theory was initially developed. The proposed framework conceptualizes compliance not as a behavioral outcome isolated from institutional experience, but as the product of a social process connecting fairness, trust, normative obligation, and acceptance of legal authority. This orientation seeks to bridge the tendency of legal scholarship to emphasize formal legality with social-scientific approaches that prioritize empirical legitimacy and citizens' lived institutional experiences.

Against this background, this study aims to analyze the relationships among public trust, perceived procedural justice, the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions, and public compliance with the law in Indonesia through a socio-legal approach that integrates the normative dimensions of law with empirical evaluations of citizens' experiences and perceptions of law enforcement practices. Specifically, the study examines whether procedural justice contributes to institutional legitimacy directly and through public trust, and whether such legitimacy contributes to citizens' willingness to comply with the law voluntarily rather than merely in response to the threat of sanctions. The analysis

also seeks to clarify how procedural experiences, institutional evaluations, and normative acceptance of authority jointly shape compliance behavior within the Indonesian context. The theoretical contribution lies in developing a more context-sensitive model of legal legitimacy that connects procedural justice, institutional trust, legitimacy, normative obligation, and legal socialization within an integrated analytical framework capable of explaining compliance in a socially and institutionally complex society. The methodological contribution lies in a socio-legal design that moves beyond examining legal norms and public perceptions separately by connecting institutional indicators, social experiences, normative evaluations, and legal behavior within an empirical framework capable of examining direct and indirect relationships as well as variations across social groups. Ultimately, this study seeks to reconceptualize law enforcement legitimacy beyond the formal possession of legal authority toward an understanding of how such authority acquires social acceptance, public trust, and sustainable compliance in Indonesia, while providing an analytical foundation for law enforcement practices that are not only formally effective but also socially legitimate.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is an empirical study employing a socio-legal research approach and an explanatory quantitative design to examine the relationships between citizens' experiences of law enforcement practices and the formation of institutional legitimacy within the Indonesian legal context. The primary data consist of empirical data collected from Indonesian citizens as survey respondents, while secondary legal materials are used to contextualize the institutional authority, accountability, and legal principles governing law enforcement in Indonesia. The respondents comprise members of the public with either direct or indirect experience of law enforcement institutions, while socio-demographic characteristics and prior institutional contact are recorded to capture variations in citizens' perceptions. Data are collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert-type scale to operationalize the constructs of procedural justice, public trust, institutional legitimacy, normative obligation to obey, and public compliance with the law. The selection of these constructs is grounded in the process-based model of regulation, which conceptualizes the quality of institutional treatment as an important determinant of legitimacy and citizens' orientations toward legal compliance (Fine & van Rooij, 2021). The questionnaire structure is further informed by empirical evidence demonstrating that procedural justice can influence perceptions of police legitimacy and citizens' willingness to cooperate with law enforcement institutions (Anrango Narváez et al., 2023).

The collected data are analyzed using descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationships among the variables within the proposed socio-legal framework. The analytical procedure begins with construct validity and reliability testing to establish whether the measurement indicators adequately represent procedural justice, public trust, institutional legitimacy, and public compliance with the law. The structural model is subsequently evaluated to examine the direct relationships between procedural justice, public trust, institutional legitimacy, and compliance, as well as indirect relationships in which trust and legitimacy may function as mediating mechanisms. The analysis also considers differences associated with respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and experiences of contact with law enforcement institutions, recognizing that social identity and contextual conditions may shape the relationship between procedural justice and legitimacy (Chan et al., 2025). The statistical findings are interpreted through a socio-legal framework by relating empirical evidence concerning citizens' perceptions and behavior to the principles of legality, fairness, accountability, and legitimate institutional authority within Indonesia's law enforcement system. This interpretive process is also used to assess the implications of the findings for institutional reform, particularly because recent research in Indonesia indicates that police legitimacy cannot be adequately explained through institutional performance, procedural justice, public satisfaction, or institutional practices considered in isolation (Adhikara & Putranto, 2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Procedural Justice and Public Trust as Foundations of Institutional Legitimacy

The empirical examination of procedural justice and public trust places institutional legitimacy within the socio-legal relationship between the formal authority of law enforcement institutions and citizens' experiences of how such authority is exercised. Article 1 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution establishes Indonesia as a state based on law, while Article 28D paragraph (1) guarantees

recognition, protection, and certainty of just law as well as equal treatment before the law (McLean & Nix, 2022). Article 30 paragraph (4) further defines the Indonesian National Police as a state instrument responsible for maintaining public security and order, protecting, serving, and enforcing the law, indicating that police authority is constitutionally connected to public service rather than coercive power alone (Adhikara & Putranto, 2026). This constitutional construction is reinforced by Article 19 paragraph (1) of Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, as amended by Law No. 5 of 2026, which requires police officers to act in accordance with legal norms while respecting human rights and prevailing religious, moral, and social norms (Fitrianto et al., 2025). Article 19 paragraph (2) further requires urgent police actions to remain proportionate, measurable, and oriented toward minimizing harm, establishing substantive limits on discretionary authority (Schaap & Saarikkomäki, 2022). Legitimacy consequently cannot be reduced to the existence of formal statutory authority because the exercise of legally conferred power must also be perceived as procedurally fair and normatively justified by citizens (Fine & van Rooij, 2021).

Procedural justice operates within this framework as a substantive dimension of lawful institutional conduct because citizens evaluate not only the outcome of police action but also the process through which decisions and interventions are undertaken. The requirements of neutrality, respectful treatment, opportunity to be heard, explanation, and proportionality correspond with the broader procedural standards embedded in Article 19 of the Police Law and the accountability principles introduced through Article 19A (Hohl et al., 2022). The process-based model further explains that fair institutional treatment can strengthen perceptions that authorities possess legitimate power, making procedural experience an important mechanism linking institutional conduct to public acceptance (Anrango Narváez et al., 2023). Comparative evidence indicates that procedural justice is associated with police legitimacy across different social contexts, although the strength of this relationship may vary according to social identity and citizens' relationships with legal authorities (Chan et al., 2025). Research involving police contacts also demonstrates that procedural fairness and the quality of institutional interaction influence citizens' assessments of police legitimacy, particularly where previous encounters shape expectations concerning future treatment (Boateng & Darko, 2021). The legal implication is that procedural fairness should be understood as an operational requirement of legitimate authority rather than merely an interpersonal preference in police-citizen interactions. Such an interpretation positions citizens' experiences of police procedures as empirically relevant evidence for evaluating whether constitutional and statutory standards of lawful authority are realized in practice (Bello & Matshaba, 2021).

Public trust constitutes a complementary dimension because institutional legitimacy requires citizens to regard law enforcement institutions as sufficiently reliable, competent, and committed to exercising authority within legal boundaries. Article 4 of Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services establishes public interest, legal certainty, equal rights, professionalism, participation, equality of treatment, openness, accountability, timeliness, and accessibility as principles of public service. Article 20 paragraphs (1) to (4) of the same statute requires public service standards to be established and implemented with public participation, while Article 22 paragraphs (1) to (3) of Government Regulation No. 96 of 2012 reinforces the participatory construction of service standards. Ministerial Regulation of PANRB No. 14 of 2017 provides an administrative mechanism for measuring citizens' experiences through periodic community satisfaction surveys, allowing public perceptions to become an empirical indicator of institutional performance. Empirical research demonstrates that citizens' general propensity to trust interacts with their perceptions of police legitimacy, indicating that trust is shaped by both individual orientations and institutional experiences (Lee, 2021). Indonesian evidence likewise demonstrates the importance of public perceptions in assessing the performance and credibility of the Indonesian National Police (Saputra et al., 2024).

Table 1. Normative Mapping of Procedural Justice and Institutional Legitimacy

Legal Instrument	Principal Provisions	Procedural Justice Dimension	Implication for Legitimacy
1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia	Article 28D paragraph (1); Article 30 paragraph (4)	Just legal certainty, equality before the law,	Legitimacy requires lawful authority and fair exercise of authority

		public protection and law enforcement	
Law No. 2 of 2002 as amended by Law No. 5 of 2026	Article 14 paragraph (1) letter c; Article 19 paragraphs (1)–(2); Article 19A paragraphs (1)–(4)	Legal consciousness, human rights, proportionality, transparency, professionalism, accountability	Establishes legal standards governing the quality of police authority
Law No. 25 of 2009	Article 4; Article 20 paragraphs (1)–(4); Article 36 paragraph (1); Article 37 paragraph (1)	Non-discrimination, participation, transparency, service standards, complaint rights	Positions public trust as an outcome of accountable and reviewable services
Government Regulation No. 96 of 2012	Article 22 paragraphs (1)–(3)	Service standards and public participation	Restricts unilateral institutional determination of service quality
Government Regulation No. 2 of 2003	Article 3 letters f and i; Article 4 letters a, b, and d	Human rights, courtesy, service, complaint response, responsibility	Connects individual police conduct with institutional credibility
Presidential Regulation No. 76 of 2013	Article 2 paragraphs (1)–(2); Article 3 paragraphs (1)–(2); Article 8 paragraphs (1)–(4)	Complaint rights, accessibility, information, evaluation, corrective action	Provides institutional correction mechanisms supporting accountability and trust
Ministerial Regulation of PANRB No. 14 of 2017	Article 1 paragraphs (1)–(2); Article 2	Periodic measurement of service-user experience	Provides an empirical basis for evaluating public acceptance
Law No. 20 of 2025 on the Criminal Procedure Code	Article 142; Article 158; Article 160	Rights to information, legal assistance, dignity, and judicial control over coercive measures	Converts due process into judicial control over law-enforcement authority

The mapping presented in Table 1 demonstrates that procedural justice and institutional legitimacy are not derived from a single legal instrument but from an interconnected normative structure extending from constitutional guarantees to administrative, disciplinary, complaint, and criminal-procedure mechanisms. A systematic interpretation of these provisions indicates that lawful police authority requires not only statutory authorization but also procedural safeguards capable of limiting arbitrariness and protecting citizens during encounters with state power (Demarest, 2021). The inclusion of proportionality, transparency, accountability, participation, non-discrimination, and complaint rights establishes a legal architecture in which institutional legitimacy can be evaluated through observable standards of conduct rather than through institutional claims alone (Nam et al., 2024). The development of judicial control under Law No. 20 of 2025 on the Criminal Procedure Code further strengthens this construction by placing specified investigative and coercive actions within a framework of rights protection and judicial scrutiny (Nivette & van der Vegt, 2026). The constitutional jurisprudence represented by Constitutional Court Decision No. 21/PUU-XII/2014 demonstrates the broader development of judicial oversight over coercive criminal-process measures, particularly through the expansion of pretrial review. This development corresponds with the proposition that citizens are more likely to recognize institutional authority when legal procedures provide credible safeguards against arbitrary exercise of power (Reisig et al., 2023).

The relationship between procedural justice, public trust, and institutional legitimacy becomes more theoretically significant when legitimacy is distinguished from simple satisfaction with police performance or from obedience produced primarily through fear of punishment. The process-based model conceptualizes legal compliance as partly rooted in citizens' internalized recognition that legal

authorities possess legitimate authority deserving respect, making institutional treatment relevant to the development of normative orientations toward law (Fine & van Rooij, 2021). Reisig, Trinkner, and Sarpong distinguish normative obligation to obey from effectiveness and satisfaction, demonstrating that legitimacy contains a specific normative dimension concerning citizens' perceived obligation to comply with police authority (Reisig et al., 2023). Lee, Kwak, and Yoo further demonstrate that institutional trust and obligation to obey represent distinct mechanisms through which procedural justice contributes to police legitimacy (Lee et al., 2025). Such distinctions are juridically relevant because Article 14 paragraph (1) letter c of the Police Law assigns the police responsibility for fostering public participation, legal awareness, and compliance with laws and regulations, but this responsibility cannot be interpreted as authorization to secure obedience through unrestricted coercion. A systematic reading of Article 14 paragraph (1) letter c together with Articles 19 and 19A instead requires the promotion of compliance to remain compatible with legality, proportionality, transparency, professionalism, accountability, and respect for human rights. Police legitimacy consequently depends upon whether citizens understand institutional authority as legally justified and procedurally fair rather than merely unavoidable because of the coercive capacity of the state (Jackson et al., 2026).

The socio-legal significance of procedural justice ultimately lies in its capacity to connect formal legality, public trust, and normative acceptance of institutional authority. Institutional legitimacy cannot be presumed merely from the constitutional and statutory position of the police because legitimacy also depends upon whether citizens perceive police conduct as fair, neutral, respectful, effective, and accountable (Bradford & Jackson, 2024). Research on police legitimacy further indicates that procedural justice interacts with institutional performance, suggesting that fair treatment cannot completely compensate for persistent perceptions of institutional ineffectiveness or poor service delivery (Adhikara & Putranto, 2026). This relationship is particularly important for groups whose interactions with law enforcement may be shaped by perceived bias, unequal treatment, vulnerability, or previous negative institutional encounters (Li et al., 2024). Empirical evidence concerning police bias demonstrates that perceptions of discriminatory treatment can diminish institutional trust and weaken the legitimacy-producing effects of police encounters (Madon & Murphy, 2021). The legitimacy of law enforcement institutions is consequently constructed through the interaction of legally valid authority, procedurally fair treatment, institutional competence, public trust, and accessible mechanisms of accountability. Such a construction establishes the analytical basis for examining whether institutional legitimacy subsequently contributes to voluntary legal compliance and cooperation with law enforcement institutions.

Institutional Legitimacy and Public Legal Compliance within the Socio-Legal Framework of Law Enforcement

Institutional legitimacy is fundamental to understanding why citizens comply with legal rules and cooperate with law enforcement institutions beyond situations in which compliance is produced by fear of sanctions. In a rule-of-law state, the authority of law enforcement institutions originates from constitutional and statutory authorization, but the social acceptance of such authority depends upon whether citizens perceive its exercise as appropriate, justified, and consistent with legal principles (McLean & Nix, 2022). Article 1 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution establishes Indonesia as a state based on law, while Article 28D paragraph (1) guarantees just legal certainty and equal treatment before the law. Article 30 paragraph (4) further positions the Indonesian National Police as a state instrument responsible for maintaining security and public order, protecting, serving, and enforcing the law, thereby connecting police authority with the fulfillment of public interests (Jackson et al., 2026). Article 14 paragraph (1) letter c of Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police assigns the police responsibility for fostering public participation, legal awareness, and compliance with laws and regulations, making public compliance part of the institution's statutory function (Fine & van Rooij, 2021). This normative construction indicates that compliance should not be assessed solely through the frequency of violations or the effectiveness of sanctions because institutional legitimacy may influence whether citizens voluntarily recognize legal authority as binding. The socio-legal perspective consequently positions compliance as a behavioral outcome arising from the interaction between formal legal obligations and citizens' perceptions of institutional legitimacy.

The distinction between instrumental and normative compliance is important because individuals may obey legal rules either because sanctions make non-compliance costly or because they

regard legal authority as legitimate and obedience as normatively appropriate. Article 19 paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Police Law establishes legal norms, human rights, proportionality, and measurable action as constraints upon police authority, demonstrating that coercive enforcement must itself remain subject to law (Reisig et al., 2023). The process-based model explains that procedural justice can strengthen normative obligation by shaping citizens' perceptions that authorities exercise power legitimately and consequently deserve compliance (Lee et al., 2025). Empirical research further demonstrates that procedural justice can influence legitimacy and cooperation through citizens' evaluations of fairness, voice, neutrality, and respectful treatment during police encounters (Anrango Narváez et al., 2023). Comparative evidence indicates that cooperation with police and criminal courts is associated with legitimacy-related perceptions across different national contexts, demonstrating that cooperation cannot be fully explained through deterrence mechanisms (Jackson et al., 2026). The legal significance of this relationship lies in distinguishing obedience compelled by state coercion from compliance generated through citizens' internal acceptance of lawful institutional authority. A legitimate law-enforcement institution consequently strengthens legal effectiveness not merely by increasing enforcement capacity but by cultivating conditions under which citizens recognize compliance as a normative obligation.

Public trust provides an important mechanism connecting citizens' evaluations of institutional conduct with their willingness to recognize legal authority and comply with its requirements. Trust becomes particularly significant where citizens cannot independently verify every institutional decision and must rely upon expectations that public officials will exercise authority competently, fairly, and consistently with legal standards (Bradford & Jackson, 2024). Law No. 25 of 2009 establishes accountability, openness, professionalism, equal treatment, participation, and legal certainty as principles of public service, creating normative expectations that shape citizens' evaluations of institutional reliability. Government Regulation No. 96 of 2012 strengthens this orientation by requiring public participation in the formulation and implementation of public service standards, providing a legal basis for incorporating citizens' experiences into institutional evaluation. Empirical research demonstrates that police legitimacy is influenced by procedural fairness and citizens' experiences of contact with police, indicating that institutional interaction is important in shaping public perceptions (Boateng & Darko, 2021). Indonesian research similarly identifies public confidence as an important dimension in evaluating police performance and institutional credibility (Saputra et al., 2024). Trust consequently operates not merely as a favorable public attitude but as a socio-legal mechanism through which citizens evaluate whether institutional commands deserve recognition and voluntary compliance.

Table 2. Socio-Legal Construction of Institutional Legitimacy and Public Legal Compliance

Dimension	Legal Basis	Empirical Dimension	Socio-Legal Implication
Procedural Justice	Article 28D paragraph (1); Police Law No. 2 of 2002 as amended by Law No. 5 of 2026, Articles 19 and 19A	Neutrality, respect, proportionality, transparency	Law-enforcement action must be procedurally accountable
Public Trust	Law No. 25 of 2009, Article 4; Ministerial Regulation of PANRB No. 14 of 2017, Article 1	Competence, integrity, consistency, service quality	Trust functions as an empirical indicator of service and accountability
Institutional Legitimacy	Police Law, Article 14 paragraph (1) letter c and Article 19A	Recognition of institutional authority and normative obligation to obey	Compliance reflects normative acceptance rather than blind obedience
Oversight and Complaints	Law No. 25 of 2009, Articles 36–37; Presidential Regulation No. 76 of 2013, Article 8; Government Regulation No. 2 of 2003	Correction, complaints, discipline, transparency	Accountability sustains institutional legitimacy

Judicial Control	Law No. 20 of 2025 on the Criminal Procedure Code, Articles 142, 158, and 160	Rights protection and pretrial control	Coercive legitimacy is bounded by rights and judicial review
Compliance and Cooperation	Police Law, Article 14 paragraph (1) letter c	Normative internalization, reporting, voluntary cooperation	Legal effectiveness requires normative acceptance

Accountability, Judicial Control, and the Socio-Legal Reconstruction of Law Enforcement Legitimacy

Law-enforcement legitimacy ultimately depends upon the existence of accountability mechanisms capable of ensuring that legally conferred authority is exercised within constitutional and statutory limits. Accountability is particularly important in policing because the institution possesses coercive powers that may directly affect liberty, privacy, physical integrity, and other fundamental rights (McLean & Nix, 2022). Article 19A of Law No. 2 of 2002 as amended by Law No. 5 of 2026 strengthens the institutional basis for supervision by placing police authority within mechanisms of internal oversight, professional supervision, and accountability. These mechanisms must be interpreted together with Article 28D paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution, which requires just legal certainty and equal treatment before the law. The legal significance of accountability lies in its capacity to transform institutional authority from an essentially unilateral power into authority that remains open to scrutiny, justification, and correction (Bradford & Jackson, 2024). From a socio-legal perspective, institutional legitimacy is consequently sustained when citizens perceive that violations of procedural standards can generate meaningful institutional responses rather than remaining beyond effective review (Fitrianto et al., 2025).

Internal accountability, however, cannot be separated from external mechanisms that enable citizens to challenge law-enforcement practices and obtain independent consideration of alleged violations. Article 36 paragraph (1) and Article 37 paragraph (1) of Law No. 25 of 2009 establish complaint mechanisms within the public-service framework, while Presidential Regulation No. 76 of 2013 regulates the receipt, processing, resolution, monitoring, and evaluation of public complaints. Government Regulation No. 2 of 2003 additionally establishes disciplinary obligations concerning respect for human rights, proper conduct, public service, responsiveness to complaints, and responsibility in the performance of police duties. These provisions create a normative chain in which individual misconduct may become a matter of institutional accountability rather than being treated exclusively as a personal disciplinary problem. Empirical research demonstrates that procedural injustice can damage institutional trust when citizens perceive police behavior as biased, disrespectful, or insufficiently responsive to their concerns (Ali & Murphy, 2024). The legal implication is that complaint mechanisms must be substantively capable of producing investigation, explanation, correction, and, where justified, sanctions against improper conduct. Accountability consequently becomes a condition of legitimacy because citizens' willingness to recognize institutional authority depends partly upon their confidence that the institution can control and correct its own exercise of power.

Judicial control represents a further layer of accountability because internal institutional mechanisms alone may be insufficient where law-enforcement actions directly interfere with individual rights. Article 24 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution establishes judicial power as an independent power for administering justice, providing the constitutional basis for independent review of state action. Constitutional Court Decision No. 21/PUU-XII/2014 expanded the scope of pretrial review under the former Criminal Procedure Code by recognizing the examination of suspect designation, search, and seizure as matters capable of judicial scrutiny. Constitutional Court Decision No. 130/PUU-XIII/2015 subsequently strengthened procedural safeguards concerning notification of the commencement of an investigation under the former Criminal Procedure Code. Law No. 20 of 2025 on the Criminal Procedure Code continues this rights-based orientation through provisions concerning procedural rights, judicial control, and protection against arbitrary criminal-process measures (Nivette & van der Vegt., 2026). The development demonstrates a historical movement from a predominantly authority-centered model of criminal procedure toward a framework in which coercive power must remain continuously accountable to legal rights and judicial supervision. The teleological purpose of

such control is not to weaken legitimate law enforcement but to ensure that the pursuit of security and crime control remains compatible with constitutional protection and the rule of law.

The relationship between accountability and legitimacy can be further examined through the capacity of institutions to respond to citizens' experiences of unfair treatment and institutional failure. Public confidence may decline when citizens perceive that police institutions are ineffective, biased, or unwilling to acknowledge shortcomings, particularly when negative experiences are repeated across different encounters (Bradford et al., 2025). Procedural justice research demonstrates that institutional legitimacy depends partly upon whether authorities communicate respectfully, provide opportunities for voice, demonstrate neutrality, and act according to trustworthy motives (Schaap & Saarikkomäki, 2022). The Indonesian regulatory framework reflects comparable principles through requirements concerning transparency, accountability, equal treatment, participation, and complaint handling under Law No. 25 of 2009. The Community Satisfaction Survey mechanism under Ministerial Regulation of PANRB No. 14 of 2017 also provides an administrative instrument for converting citizens' experiences into measurable information concerning public-service quality. Such mechanisms acquire legal significance when institutional decision makers use public feedback to identify recurring procedural deficiencies and formulate corrective measures rather than treating survey findings as merely administrative statistics (Saputra et al., 2024). Accountability therefore requires an institutional capacity to learn from citizen experiences, because legitimacy is weakened when formal mechanisms for participation and evaluation exist but fail to influence institutional behavior.

Table 2. Socio-Legal Construction of Institutional Legitimacy and Public Legal Compliance

Accountability Dimension	Legal Basis	Institutional Mechanism	Socio-Legal Function
Internal Supervision	Law No. 2 of 2002 as amended by Law No. 5 of 2026, Article 19A	Internal supervision, professional oversight, and institutional accountability	Controls the exercise of police authority from within the institution
Public Complaints	Law No. 25 of 2009, Articles 36–37; Presidential Regulation No. 76 of 2013	Complaint submission, processing, resolution, monitoring, and evaluation	Provides citizens with a mechanism to challenge institutional conduct
Police Discipline	Government Regulation No. 2 of 2003	Disciplinary obligations and professional conduct	Connects individual misconduct with institutional responsibility
Public Evaluation	Ministerial Regulation of PANRB No. 14 of 2017	Community Satisfaction Survey	Converts citizen experience into an empirical basis for institutional evaluation
Judicial Control	1945 Constitution, Article 24 paragraph (1); Law No. 20 of 2025	Independent judicial review and pretrial control	Places coercive law-enforcement authority under external legal scrutiny
Constitutional Review	Constitutional Court Decisions No. 21/PUU-XII/2014 and No. 130/PUU-XIII/2015	Constitutional interpretation and procedural safeguards	Strengthens protection against arbitrary criminal-process measures

Table 3 demonstrates that accountability within Indonesian law enforcement is constructed through multiple layers of internal, administrative, disciplinary, public, and judicial oversight rather than through a single supervisory institution. The coexistence of these mechanisms reflects a systematic legal structure in which police authority is accompanied by corresponding duties of justification, transparency, responsiveness, and correction. The distinction between internal and external accountability is particularly important because institutional legitimacy may be weakened when an institution is effectively responsible for determining both the legality of its own conduct and the

adequacy of its own corrective response. Judicial control addresses this structural concern by introducing an independent mechanism capable of examining coercive measures and procedural violations outside the immediate institutional hierarchy (Nivette & van der Vegt, 2026). The socio-legal relevance of this structure is strengthened by evidence that citizens' perceptions of procedural fairness influence both institutional trust and willingness to cooperate with police authorities (Kuen, 2024). Accountability therefore functions not merely as a mechanism for sanctioning misconduct but as a constitutive element of legitimate authority because it demonstrates that institutional power remains bounded by law and subject to meaningful review.

The reconstruction of law-enforcement legitimacy requires an integrated understanding of procedural justice, public trust, accountability, and judicial control as mutually connected components of lawful institutional authority. A purely formal conception of legality is insufficient where citizens experience police authority as arbitrary, discriminatory, ineffective, or inaccessible to meaningful review (Madon & Murphy, 2021). Conversely, public trust cannot serve as an unrestricted justification for institutional action because legitimate authority must remain subject to constitutional rights, statutory limitations, and independent judicial scrutiny. The process-based perspective indicates that citizens' acceptance of authority is more sustainable when institutional procedures provide fair treatment and reinforce perceptions that authorities possess a legitimate basis for exercising power (Fine & van Rooij, 2021). Comparative research further demonstrates that legitimacy, procedural justice, institutional trust, normative obligation, and cooperation are interconnected but analytically distinct dimensions that should not be collapsed into a single measure of institutional performance (Lee et al., 2025). The Indonesian legal framework can consequently be reconstructed as a model in which legitimate police authority requires the simultaneous fulfillment of legality, procedural fairness, institutional competence, accountability, and rights-based judicial control. This reconstruction contributes to the socio-legal understanding of law enforcement by demonstrating that institutional legitimacy is not merely a consequence of statutory authorization but an ongoing legal and social achievement produced through accountable exercises of public power.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the legitimacy of law-enforcement institutions in Indonesia cannot be established solely through formal authority derived from statutory provisions, but is substantially shaped by the quality of procedural justice, public trust, institutional accountability, and citizens' experiences when interacting with law-enforcement officials. Constitutional guarantees of fair legal certainty, together with requirements of professionalism, proportionality, transparency, accountability, respect for human rights, complaint mechanisms, and judicial control over coercive measures, establish a normative framework requiring public authority to be exercised lawfully and responsibly. The socio-legal analysis indicates that sustainable legal compliance is more likely to emerge when citizens perceive law-enforcement officials as neutral, respectful, non-discriminatory, and willing to provide meaningful opportunities for participation in institutional processes. Effective channels for complaints, correction, and external review further strengthen the perception that institutional authority remains subject to legal limitations and public accountability. Public trust consequently operates as a connecting mechanism between citizens' procedural experiences and their acceptance of institutional authority, while institutional legitimacy provides a normative foundation for compliance that extends beyond obedience generated solely by the threat of sanctions. These findings position procedural fairness and accountable institutional conduct as essential dimensions of legitimate law enforcement within a constitutional state governed by the rule of law.

Strengthening the legitimacy of law-enforcement institutions should consequently focus on integrating legality, procedural quality, institutional performance, accountability, protection of citizens' rights, and effective oversight within a coherent governance framework. Internal supervision needs to be complemented by accessible public complaint mechanisms and independent judicial control so that alleged misconduct and coercive measures can be meaningfully examined and corrected. Institutional performance should also be evaluated not only through crime-control outcomes but through citizens' perceptions of fairness, transparency, responsiveness, and respect during interactions with law-enforcement authorities. The development of public trust requires consistent institutional behavior that demonstrates that legal authority is exercised within established boundaries and remains responsive to legitimate public concerns. A legitimacy-oriented approach can strengthen normative acceptance of

legal authority and encourage voluntary cooperation, reporting, and compliance among citizens rather than relying predominantly on coercive enforcement. The long-term effectiveness of law enforcement in Indonesia consequently depends on the capacity of institutions to transform formal legal authority into socially accepted, procedurally fair, and accountable public authority.

REFERENCES

- Adhikara, R., & Putranto, P. Y. (2026). Revisiting police legitimacy: Exploring determinants beyond performance, procedural justice, public satisfaction, and its practices. *Policing and Society*, 36(4), 494–510. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2025.2579623>
- Ali, M. M., & Murphy, K. (2024). Fuelling contempt for police: Explaining why procedural injustice and police ineffectiveness damage Muslims' trust in police. *Policing and Society*, 34(7), 705–721. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2024.2328160>
- Anrango Narváez, D., Medina Sarmiento, J. E., & Del-Real, C. (2023). Why do people legitimize and cooperate with the police? Results of a randomized control trial on the effects of procedural justice in Quito, Ecuador. *Crime Science*, 12, Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40163-023-00188-1>
- Bello, P. O., & Matshaba, T. D. (2021). Procedural justice, police legitimacy, and performance: Perspectives of South African students. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 31(1), 43–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2020.1871243>
- Boateng, F. D., & Darko, I. N. (2021). Perceived police legitimacy in Ghana: The role of procedural fairness and contacts with the police. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 65, 100458. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcrj.2021.100458>
- Bradford, B., & Jackson, J. (2024). Trust in the police: What is to be done? *The Political Quarterly*, 95(3), 442–449. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13424>
- Bradford, B., Weirich, C., Rowlands, D., & Crawford, A. (2025). Public confidence in the police: Using opinion survey data to explore the current 'moment' in British policing. *Policing and Society*, 35(7), 883–900. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2025.2508198>
- Chan, A., Bradford, B., & Stott, C. (2025). A systematic review and meta-analysis of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing: The effect of social identity and social contexts. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 21, 349–406. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-023-09595-5>
- Demarest, M. T. (2021). Procedural (in)justice, emotions, and compliance. *Sociology Compass*, 15(11), e12936. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12936>
- Fine, A. D., & van Rooij, B. (2021). Legal socialization: Understanding the obligation to obey the law. *Journal of Social Issues*, 77(2), 367–391. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12440>
- Fitrianto, A., Suhariadi, F., & Minarno, N. B. (2025). Reforming Polri's community policing: A procedural justice and human resource approach to building police legitimacy. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 9(5), 1734–1742. <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v9i5.7271>
- Hohl, K., Johnson, K., & Molisso, S. (2022). A procedural justice theory approach to police engagement with victim-survivors of rape and sexual assault: Initial findings of the 'Project Bluestone' pilot study. *International Criminology*, 2, 253–261. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43576-022-00056-z>
- Jackson, J., Kuha, J., Bradford, B., & Hough, M. (2026). Why do people cooperate with the police and criminal courts? A test of procedural justice theory in 30 countries. *Criminology*, 64(1), 59–87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.70022>
- Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Republik Indonesia. (2017). Peraturan Menteri Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Nomor 14 Tahun 2017 tentang Pedoman Penyusunan Survei Kepuasan Masyarakat Unit Penyelenggara Pelayanan Publik.
- Kuen, K. (2024). Reassessing the process-based model: Do procedural justice and police legitimacy lead to reporting neighborhood problems to the police over time? *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 95, 102290. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2024.102290>
- Lee, S. (2021). Impact of propensity to trust on the perception of police: An integrated framework of legitimacy perspective. *Policing: An International Journal*, 44(6), 1108–1122. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-03-2021-0036>

- Lee, S., Kwak, D.-H., & Yoo, Y. (2025). Police legitimacy through procedural justice: Examining the dual mediating role of institutional trust and obligation to obey. *Policing: An International Journal*, 48(3), 550–567. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-06-2024-0095>
- Li, J. C. M., Zhang, S. Y., Sun, I. Y., & Ho, A. S. K. (2024). Police legitimacy and procedural justice for children and youth: A scoping review of definitions, determinants, and consequences. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 9, 1409080. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2024.1409080>
- Madon, N. S., & Murphy, K. (2021). Police bias and diminished trust in police: A role for procedural justice? *Policing: An International Journal*, 44(6), 1031–1045. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-03-2021-0053>
- Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia. (2015). Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Nomor 21/PUU-XII/2014.
- Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia. (2017). Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Nomor 130/PUU-XIII/2015.
- McLean, K., & Nix, J. (2022). Understanding the bounds of legitimacy: Weber's facets of legitimacy and the police empowerment hypothesis. *Justice Quarterly*, 39(6), 1287–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2021.1933141>
- Murray, K., McVie, S., Farren, D., Herlitz, L., Hough, M., & Norris, P. (2021). Procedural justice, compliance with the law and police stop-and-search: A study of young people in England and Scotland. *Policing and Society*, 31(3), 263–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2020.1711756>
- Nam, Y., Wolfe, S. E., & Nix, J. (2024). Does procedural justice reduce the harmful effects of perceived ineffectiveness on police legitimacy? *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 61(1), 124–167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224278221121622>
- Nivette, A. E., & van der Vegt, I. (2026). Evaluating the causal mechanisms from procedural justice to police legitimacy and compliance in the United States: An in-depth mixed-methods approach. *Criminology*, 64(1), 113–145. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.70024>
- Reisig, M. D., Trinkner, R., & Sarpong, D. (2023). Measuring normative obligation to obey the police: An empirical assessment of a new police legitimacy scale. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 86, 102045. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2023.102045>
- Republik Indonesia. (1945). Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945.
- Republik Indonesia. (2002). Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2002 tentang Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia.
- Republik Indonesia. (2003). Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 2 Tahun 2003 tentang Peraturan Disiplin Anggota Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia.
- Republik Indonesia. (2009). Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 2009 tentang Pelayanan Publik.
- Republik Indonesia. (2012). Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 96 Tahun 2012 tentang Pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 2009 tentang Pelayanan Publik.
- Republik Indonesia. (2013). Peraturan Presiden Nomor 76 Tahun 2013 tentang Pengelolaan Pengaduan Pelayanan Publik.
- Republik Indonesia. (2025). Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2025 tentang Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Acara Pidana. UU ini berlaku sejak 2 Januari 2026.
- Republik Indonesia. (2026). Undang-Undang Nomor 5 Tahun 2026 tentang Perubahan Ketiga atas Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2002 tentang Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia. UU ini berlaku sejak 17 Juni 2026.
- Saputra, A., Sutrasno, D., & Setiawan, W. (2024). Analisis tingkat kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap kinerja Polri tahun 2023. *Jurnal Litbang Polri*, 27(2), 90–99. <https://doi.org/10.46976/litbangpolri.v27i2.237>
- Schaap, D., & Saarikkomäki, E. (2022). Rethinking police procedural justice. *Theoretical Criminology*, 26(3), 416–433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13624806211056680>