Renewing the Paradigm of Police Science in the Era of Plural Policing

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Abstract

This conceptual article examines the renewal of police science in Indonesia in response to the rise of plural policing and the gradual softening of the state's monopoly on legitimate force. Drawing on Weber, Loader, Jones and Newburn, Johnston and Shearing, as well as recent Indonesian scholarship, the paper first maps the configuration of plural policing and the fragmentation of security actors involving Polri, the armed forces, local government units, private security providers, and community-based organisations. It then analyses the implications of this fragmentation for legitimacy, accountability, and public trust in Polri, using empirical evidence from Jakarta and related Indonesian studies. The article argues for a paradigm shift that repositions Polri as a network manager within a framework of democratic security governance and outlines key implications for regulation, oversight, professional education, and future police science research.

Keywords: plural policing, police science, public trust, security governance, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, global and national security landscapes have undergone profound change. The modern state, as formulated by Weber, is defined inter alia by its capacity to monopolise the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Weber, 1978). In contemporary practice, however, policing functions are no longer carried out exclusively by a single state police organisation, but by a range of actors who jointly produce security. This condition is widely described in the literature as plural policing (Loader, 2000; Jones & Newburn, 2006).

Globally, debates about policing have been shaped by repeated controversies over excessive use of force, racially biased practices, and declining public confidence in police institutions. Comparative studies in North America and Europe document how incidents such as deaths in police custody, large-scale protests, and corruption scandals have triggered successive waves of reform—from the adoption of community and problem-oriented policing to experiments with civilian oversight and independent complaints mechanisms (Bayley, 1994; Reiner, 2010; Walker & Archbold, 2014). At the same time, the growth of private security, transnational policing arrangements, and digital surveillance has produced what Brodeur (2010) calls a "policing web", in which public police are only one node in a much more complex network of security provision. These developments provide an important comparative backdrop for understanding plural policing in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, plural policing is reflected in a particularly diverse configuration of security actors. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 2 of 2002 affirms that the Indonesian National Police (Polri) is a state apparatus mandated to maintain public security and order, enforce the law, and provide protection, guidance, and services to the community. At the same time, the legal framework recognises the existence of special police, civil servant investigators (PPNS), and community-based security units as holders of policing functions outside Polri. In everyday practice, the security field also involves the armed forces (TNI) in military operations other than war, municipal police (Satpol PP), private security companies, in-house security guards, customary institutions, religious organisations, and civil society groups in maintaining order and resolving conflicts (Gaussyah, 2014; Bahan Ajar Ilmu Kepolisian, n.d.; Panggabean, 2015).

Earlier Indonesian studies have already shown how security provision is shaped by tensions between national and local interests, overlapping mandates, and evolving democratic norms. Analyses of Satpol PP and local government security provision indicate that security sector reform and decentralisation have created ambiguous divisions of labour and contested authority between Polri, local governments, and other actors (Poerba & Wahyurudhanto, 2010; Wahyurudhanto, 2011a, 2011b, 2014). Debates about the role of local government security units, the quality of security services, and the politicisation of security provision provide an important empirical and conceptual backdrop for the present discussion of plural policing.

The pluralisation of security actors generates both opportunities and vulnerabilities. On the one hand, the presence of multiple actors allows security services to reach wider areas, operate closer to communities, and respond more sensitively to local contexts. On the other hand, the distribution of policing functions to actors whose regulation, capacity, and accountability mechanisms vary considerably risks producing overlapping mandates, double standards, and human rights violations that are difficult to trace and to hold accountable (UNODC, 2011). In a democratic rule-of-law state, these issues are not merely matters of technical coordination; they go to the heart of the state's claim to a monopoly on legitimate force and the quality of security governance more broadly.

Empirical research in Indonesia indicates that public trust in the police is strongly influenced by perceptions of accountability, performance, and moral alignment with societal values, with accountability emerging as the strongest predictor in recent survey-based studies (Wahyurudhanto, 2022). Related conceptual work on legitimacy, police discretion, and police culture similarly emphasises that everyday exercises of authority and the internal norms that guide them are central to how communities evaluate the police (Tyler, 2006; Tankebe, 2014; Wahyurudhanto & Pratistha, 2025). In short, debates about plural policing cannot be separated from broader questions of democratic legitimacy, public trust, and the moral foundations of security provision in Indonesia.

Within this global and national context, Indonesia faces its own distinctive challenges. Rapid urbanisation, persistent inequality, social media–driven mobilisation, and localised communal tensions all place pressure on existing policing arrangements. For Polri, responding to these pressures involves not only improving operational performance, but also strengthening legitimacy through procedural justice and respect for human rights (Tyler, 1990; Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012). The benefits of the present study are therefore twofold. Conceptually, it seeks to enrich police science by bringing insights from plural policing and security governance debates into dialogue with Indonesian experiences. Practically, it aims to inform ongoing reform initiatives within Polri—such as efforts to build a "precision" policing model and enhance transparency—by clarifying the role of the police within a plural security ecosystem.

More specifically, this article pursues three interrelated objectives. First, it maps key conceptual developments in the international literature on plural policing, democratic policing, and the governance of security, and identifies their relevance for police science in Indonesia. Second, it describes and analyses the configuration of security actors in Indonesia, highlighting patterns of overlap, co-operation, and tension between Polri, other state agencies, private security providers, and community-based organisations. Third, it proposes directions for renewing the paradigm of police science so that it can better support democratic security governance, with particular attention to issues of legitimacy, accountability, and public trust in the context of plural policing. In doing so, it builds on the author's previous work on security sector reform, local security provision, and policing in the midst of democratisation, as well as more recent analyses of community and participatory

policing in digital environments (Poerba & Wahyurudhanto, 2010; Wahyurudhanto, 2011a, 2011b, 2014; Wahyurudhanto, Pratistha, & Lindrianasari, 2025).

Methodologically, the article employs a qualitative, conceptual approach in the form of an integrative literature review. The "data" for the study consist of three main sources: international theoretical and empirical works on policing and security governance; Indonesian regulations and policy documents concerning Polri and other security actors; and previous empirical research on police performance, accountability, and public trust, including survey-based work in Jakarta (Wahyurudhanto, 2022) and analyses of multi-agency policing in religious conflict (Panggabean, 2015). These materials are analysed thematically to identify recurring concepts, tensions, and gaps. The problem-solving plan is to synthesise these insights into a conceptual framework that clarifies how Polri can exercise normative leadership and network management functions in a plural policing environment while upholding democratic rule-of-law principles.

At the same time, existing debates on plural policing and security governance have largely been developed in Western contexts, where historical trajectories of state formation, welfare provision, and civil–military relations differ in important ways from those of post-authoritarian and post-colonial countries. This creates a distinctive research gap that the present article seeks to address. By bringing Indonesian empirical experiences and conceptual debates into dialogue with global theoretical work, it aims to show how plural policing unfolds in a setting marked by democratic transition, security sector reform, and decentralisation. In doing so, the article argues that Indonesian police science can make a substantive contribution to wider discussions about democratic security governance in the Global South, rather than merely importing models and concepts developed elsewhere.

DISCUSSION
Police Science, Plural Policing, and the Governance of Security

Police science initially developed as a body of practical knowledge related to technical police tasks such as investigation, inquiry, patrol, and protection. As demands for democratisation and the rule of law have intensified, police science has increasingly been positioned as an applied social science that examines the functions, organisation, practices, and governance of policing in its relationship with society and the state (Bahan Ajar Ilmu Kepolisian, n.d.; Greene, 2014). In international literature, the term police science reflects efforts to situate the study of policing within a multidisciplinary, empirical, and comparative research tradition that intersects with criminology, sociology, political science, public policy, and legal studies (CEPOL, 2020).

Historically, the evolution of police science has closely followed changes in dominant policing models. Early professional models emphasised centralised command, rapid response, and crime control, reflecting a bureaucratic and state-centred understanding of policing (Reiner, 2010). Subsequent developments such as problem-oriented policing shifted attention to the systematic analysis of underlying conditions that generate crime and disorder, calling for tailored interventions and inter-agency collaboration (Goldstein, 1979; Braga, 2014). Community policing, in turn, foregrounded partnership with citizens and local institutions as a key strategy for enhancing both legitimacy and effectiveness (Cordner, 2014). These shifts illustrate how police science has gradually moved from a narrow organisational focus to broader concerns with governance, partnership, and problem-solving.

Bayley and Shearing (2001) argue that the new structure of policing is characterised by the rise of non-state providers and the blurring of boundaries between public and private, national and transnational forms of security provision. In their view, the central analytical challenge is to understand how authority, resources, and responsibilities are distributed across different nodes within a security network. Loader and Walker (2007) similarly contend that security should be seen as a public good that must be civilised through democratic regulation and deliberation, rather than left to market forces or state coercion alone. For police science, these arguments imply the need to analyse how public police interact with other security actors, how governance arrangements allocate responsibilities, and how accountability can be ensured across institutional and jurisdictional boundaries.

In this sense, plural policing is not merely an empirical description, but a lens that reshapes core questions of police science. Rather than asking only how to reform the police organisation, scholars and practitioners must also ask how security is produced across networks, what roles public police should play within these networks,

and how citizens experience and evaluate the conduct of multiple security providers. The Indonesian case offers an opportunity to test and refine these theoretical propositions by examining how plural policing unfolds in a legal and political context marked by democratic transition, decentralisation, and ongoing debates about the proper boundaries between police, military, and civilian authorities.

From the perspective of democratic policing, the central question is therefore not simply who produces security, but how policing processes take place in accordance with democratic principles, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Johnston and Shearing (2003) introduce the notion of the governance of security to explain how security is generated through interactions between government, markets, and civil society across diverse institutional configurations. Within this framework, the role of the state shifts from direct provider to a combination of steering, regulation, and oversight in relation to the various actors involved in the production of security. UNODC (2011) emphasises that police accountability in democratic societies emerges from a constellation of internal and external mechanisms involving codes of ethics, hierarchical supervision, independent oversight bodies, courts, media, and public participation. Under plural policing, these accountability principles are normatively relevant not only for the police, but also for non-police security providers.

European experience, for example, illustrates how supranational governance arrangements can reshape national policing fields. The development of common training standards, shared databases, and joint operations through bodies such as Europol and CEPOL is gradually producing a more integrated, though still uneven, landscape of security provision across member states (CEPOL, 2020). At the same time, the growth of cross-border private security industries and multinational technology firms supplying surveillance, data analytics, and predictive policing tools has further complicated questions of accountability and democratic control. These trends underline the importance of treating plural policing not only as a domestic institutional issue, but also as part of broader transformations in regional and global security governance.

The Configuration of Plural Policing and the Fragmentation of Actors in Indonesia

The configuration of plural policing in Indonesia can be mapped along at least three broad axes. First, state security actors include Polri, TNI in its support roles, the public prosecutor's office, the correctional system, and other law-enforcement agencies with sectoral mandates. Second, local government security actors such as municipal police units (Satpol PP) exercise regulatory and enforcement powers in relation to public order, local regulations, and local revenue (Gaussyah, 2014; Poerba & Wahyurudhanto, 2010; Wahyurudhanto, 2011a, 2011b; Bahan Ajar Ilmu Kepolisian, n.d.). Third, non-state formal actors such as private security companies, in-house security units, and corporate risk management departments operate alongside community-based organisations, religious groups, and informal neighbourhood networks, often in close partnership with local government and civil society organisations (Panggabean, 2015).

Closer examination of this configuration reveals several patterned dynamics. In urban commercial and industrial zones, for example, private security and in-house security units frequently serve as the first visible line of security, while Polri units are mobilised mainly for serious incidents or when formal legal action is required. In many residential areas, neighbourhood security posts, informal organisations, and religious groups play significant roles in preventing and resolving minor conflicts. In conflict-prone regions, multi-agency arrangements involving Polri, TNI, local government, and community leaders are regularly deployed to manage demonstrations, land disputes, and inter-group tensions. These empirical patterns underscore the extent to which everyday security in Indonesia is co-produced by a plurality of actors, even though Polri remains the institution most closely associated with formal law enforcement.

At the same time, regulatory and capacity gaps persist. The licensing, training, and oversight of private security providers, for instance, are not yet governed by a comprehensive framework that fully integrates them into national security governance while safeguarding human rights and labour standards. Community-based security initiatives likewise vary in their adherence to legal norms and in their sensitivity to vulnerable groups. Studies of community-led responses to security problems in other jurisdictions warn that, without clear safeguards, such arrangements can reproduce local power imbalances, exclude minorities, or normalise informal coercion (Brogden & Nijhar, 2005; Moore, 2021). Indonesian debates on security sector reform and the politicisation of security provision similarly highlight how incomplete reforms, overlapping regulations,

and elite interests can slow the consolidation of democratic security governance (Wahyurudhanto, 2014; Darmono et al., 2010). These comparative and national insights point to the need for policymakers and scholars to pay close attention to how plural policing arrangements affect equality before the law and access to justice.

From a governance perspective, a key question is how Polri can exercise leadership within this plural landscape without reverting to an overly centralised or monopolistic posture. Consistent with Bayley and Shearing's (2001) analysis, one option is to conceptualise Polri as a meta-regulator that sets standards, coordinates information flows, and ensures accountability across the network of security providers. This would require institutional mechanisms for accrediting and supervising private security, formalising co-operation with community organisations, and clarifying the respective mandates of Polri, TNI, and other state actors. It would also require investment in data systems capable of capturing incidents and performance indicators across different types of security actors—something that is still at an early stage of development in Indonesia.

In practical terms, experimenting with new forms of coordination can already be observed in a number of Indonesian cities. Joint command posts during large public events, integrated crisis centres, and multi-agency task forces on issues such as terrorism, narcotics, or cybercrime illustrate attempts to move beyond simply dividing territorial jurisdiction and toward more problem-focused and information-driven collaboration. However, these initiatives often remain ad hoc or heavily dependent on the personal relationships of local leaders. From the standpoint of police science, documenting and analysing these experiments in greater depth would provide valuable insights into how plural policing arrangements can be institutionalised without undermining legal safeguards or democratic oversight.

The fragmentation of security actors has direct implications for public trust. When citizens' encounters with different security providers are marked by inconsistent service standards and procedures, feelings of uncertainty, arbitrariness, and injustice arise. Wahyurudhanto's (2022) study shows that accountability, performance, and cooperative culture are important predictors of public satisfaction with and trust in the police. Under conditions of plural policing, this trust depends not only on the behaviour of individual officers, but also on the institutional capacity of Polri to embed ethical norms and accountability standards across the wider family of security actors with whom citizens interact.

Renewing the Paradigm of Police Science in Indonesia

The foregoing analysis suggests that police science in Indonesia must be renewed along three main lines. First, it needs to take seriously the pluralisation of security provision and move beyond a narrow conception of policing as the monopoly of a single state agency. Instead, police science should be reoriented toward analysing how authority, resources, and responsibilities are distributed across networks of security actors, and how Polri can provide democratic leadership within these networks while respecting constitutional limits on its mandate (Bayley & Shearing, 2001; Loader & Walker, 2007; Poerba & Wahyurudhanto, 2010; Wahyurudhanto, 2011a, 2011b, 2014). This reconceptualisation preserves the distinctive focus of police science on policing institutions and practices, but situates these within a wider ecosystem of security governance and a broader understanding of the state's responsibility to govern all uses of coercion within its jurisdiction.

Second, a shift is needed from an organisational focus to a governance-oriented perspective that places questions of legitimacy, accountability, and public trust at the centre of analysis. This involves treating citizens not merely as clients or recipients of police services, but as co-producers of security whose perceptions and participation shape the effectiveness and acceptability of policing practices. Studies of legitimacy policing, discretionary decision-making, and police culture in Indonesia demonstrate that reforms focused solely on organisational charts or procedures are unlikely to succeed unless they also transform the everyday exercise of authority in encounters between police and citizens (Tyler, 2006; Tankebe, 2014; Wahyurudhanto & Pratistha, 2025).

Third, the ethical, moral, and human rights dimensions of policing need to be strengthened within a good governance framework, alongside a critical engagement with technology. Contemporary debates on predictive

policing, artificial intelligence, and social media–mediated forms of community surveillance underscore both the potential and the risks of technologically mediated policing (McDaniel & Pease, 2021; Narayan, 2023; Wahyurudhanto, Pratistha, & Lindrianasari, 2025). At the same time, work on morality, virtue, and professional ethics in Indonesian public service and policing emphasises the importance of cultivating internalised values and ethical dispositions that can guide officers in complex situations where formal rules provide only limited direction (Wahyurudhanto, 2023). A renewed police science must therefore combine critical scrutiny of new technologies with sustained reflection on the moral foundations of policing, ensuring that innovations in practice remain contestable and consistent with democratic rule-of-law principles.

For police education and training institutions, these shifts imply the need to redesign curricula so that future officers and police managers are equipped not only with operational skills but also with the conceptual tools to navigate complex governance environments. Courses on public administration, human rights law, ethics, data analysis, and community engagement need to be integrated more systematically into basic training, specialist education, and leadership programmes. In addition, closer collaboration between police academies, universities, and research institutes can help to ensure that teaching materials reflect up-to-date empirical findings and expose practitioners to comparative experiences from other jurisdictions. Such efforts would strengthen the capacity of Indonesian police science to function as a reflexive, knowledge-based foundation for democratic policing reforms.

Towards a Conceptual Framework for Democratic Security Governance in Indonesia
Building on the foregoing analysis, this article proposes a conceptual framework for democratic security governance in Indonesia centred on three interlocking pillars. The first pillar is normative. The constitutional commitment to a democratic state based on the rule of law and respect for human rights provides the ultimate benchmark against which all security practices, whether carried out by Polri, other state agencies, private providers, or community groups, must be assessed. This implies that plural policing arrangements cannot be justified solely on grounds of efficiency or expediency; they must also be compatible with principles of legality, accountability, non-discrimination, and proportionality (UNODC, 2011; Walker & Archbold, 2014).

The second pillar is institutional and concerns the role of Polri as a network manager within the broader security ecosystem. In this capacity, Polri is expected to exercise strategic steering rather than direct control over all security activities. Concretely, this involves developing regulatory frameworks for private and community-based security, designing formal partnership mechanisms, and strengthening internal and external oversight bodies that can monitor the conduct of both police and non-police actors (Johnston & Shearing, 2003; Loader & Walker, 2007). It also entails fostering a professional culture that values collaboration, transparency, and reflexive learning rather than a narrow focus on hierarchical authority. Such a role is particularly important in a decentralised polity where local governments and communities have significant influence over how security is organised in practice.

The third pillar is epistemic and relates to the knowledge base required for effective and accountable security governance. A renewed paradigm of police science must be able to generate robust empirical evidence on citizens' experiences of policing and security, the performance of different security providers, and the differential impacts of policing practices across social groups. This calls for investment in interdisciplinary research, improved data collection and analysis capacities within Polri, and stronger linkages between police education institutions, universities, and civil society research centres (CEPOL, 2020; Brodeur, 2010). In this regard, studies of public trust, procedural justice, and perceptions of legitimacy in Indonesia, such as Wahyurudhanto's (2022) work on accountability and cooperative culture, provide important building blocks for a more evidence-informed approach to security governance.

Importantly, the framework also draws attention to the potential tensions and trade-offs between its three pillars. Strengthening legal and human rights safeguards, for example, may initially constrain certain policing tactics or require greater investments in training and oversight. Building more participatory and transparent institutional arrangements can slow down decision-making in the short term, even as it enhances legitimacy and resilience in the long term. Developing robust knowledge infrastructures may reveal uncomfortable evidence about past abuses or institutional weaknesses. Rather than viewing these tensions as obstacles, a

democratic security governance perspective treats them as productive pressures that can drive continuous learning and adaptation within Polri and across the wider security network.

These three pillars can be represented schematically as a triangle in which constitutional–legal principles, institutional arrangements, and knowledge infrastructures mutually reinforce one another. Within this triangle, Polri occupies a central but not exclusive position, acting both as a provider of security and as a guarantor of standards across the plural policing landscape. While the framework offered here is conceptual, it generates a number of concrete research questions and policy implications. for example, how to design accreditation systems for private security, how to measure accountability across different security actors, and how to incorporate plural policing themes into police and postgraduate curricula. Addressing these questions will require sustained collaboration between scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in Indonesia's police science community.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that plural policing is a defining feature of the contemporary security landscape in Indonesia. Policing functions are performed by interconnected networks of state and non-state actors, such that the classical concept of the state's monopoly on legitimate force must be re-interpreted as a monopoly of normative authority and ultimate responsibility rather than a monopoly of day-to-day implementation. Within this configuration, Polri remains the central actor, but operates within a complex and plural security ecosystem.

From a scholarly perspective, the discussion developed here underscores the importance of treating Indonesian experiences not as marginal or exceptional, but as sites from which to rethink taken-for-granted assumptions in the wider policing literature. The coexistence of strong central institutions with far-reaching decentralisation, the historical involvement of the military in internal security, and the rapid penetration of digital technologies into everyday life all make Indonesia a particularly rich laboratory for studying how plural policing and democratic security governance interact. Future research could build on this article by conducting comparative studies across provinces, tracing the evolution of specific multi-agency initiatives over time, or examining how citizens in different social positions experience and interpret interactions with diverse security actors.

Plural policing opens up opportunities to extend the reach of security services and to strengthen partnerships with communities. At the same time, it generates risks of fragmented authority, double standards, and human rights violations when not accompanied by robust regulatory and accountability frameworks. Citizens' experiences in interacting with various security actors—whether state or non-state—shape their perceptions of the state and of Polri. Empirical research in Jakarta underscores that accountability, performance, and moral alignment with societal values are key factors in building public trust in the police (Wahyurudhanto, 2022). In this sense, the legitimacy of Polri depends both on its own conduct and on its ability to shape the broader field of security provision.

Renewing the paradigm of police science in Indonesia is therefore a strategic necessity. The new paradigm calls for a shift from an inward-looking organisational focus to a broader focus on security governance; from viewing Polri as the sole executor of policing to positioning it as a manager of security networks; and for affirming strong ethical, moral, and human rights commitments in the midst of increasingly intensive use of policing technologies. Strengthening the regulatory framework for plural policing, developing oversight mechanisms that encompass non-police security actors, reforming curricula in police and graduate education, and expanding empirical research agendas in police science are crucial prerequisites if Polri and the wider family of security actors are to perform policing functions in ways that are legitimate, accountable, and consistent with democratic rule-of-law principles.

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