JOURNAL OF WORLD SCIENCE
https://jws.rivierapublishing.id/index.php/jws
Volume 3 No. 12 December 2024
P-ISSN: 2828-8726
E-ISSN: 2828-9307

LEGAL UNCERTAINTY FOR POLICE MEMBERS IN THE LIMITS OF POSITIONS OUTSIDE THE POLICE

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ABSTRACT
This research examines the legal uncertainties surrounding restrictions on police officers holding positions outside the police institution, focusing on the analysis of Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police. Using a normative legal research method with legislative and conceptual approaches, the study reviews relevant legal provisions and principles of legal certainty and separation of powers. Key findings reveal significant regulatory ambiguities in defining permissible external roles, enforcement mechanisms, and conditions under which police officers may hold such positions. These gaps contribute to overlapping authorities, legal inconsistencies, and potential conflicts of interest. The study concludes by recommending specific policy revisions, including clarifying legal provisions, strengthening oversight mechanisms, and establishing clear criteria for permissible external roles. These measures aim to enhance legal certainty, maintain institutional integrity, and foster greater public trust in law enforcement.

Keywords: legal uncertainty, police officers, positions

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INTRODUCTION

Legal certainty is a fundamental pillar in law enforcement, especially in the police profession, which functions as the vanguard in maintaining public security and order (Endarto et al., 2025). Legal certainty provides clear guidance to police officers regarding the limitations, authorities, and obligations they must comply with in every action taken (Peirone, 2023; Tiller et al., 2022; Triyanti et al., 2023). Without legal certainty, police officers may face ambiguity in decision-making, which in turn has the potential to harm the public and damage the integrity of the police institution itself (Tiller et al., 2022). In the course of their duties, police officers often encounter complex and urgent situations, making legal certainty an essential foundation for ensuring that their actions remain within clearly defined legal parameters (Lee et al., 2024; Marotta et al., 2023; Truelove et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2024; Zhao & Zhang, 2022). This certainty directly influences public trust in law enforcement; when police officers operate within established legal boundaries, the public generally feels safer and more protected. In Indonesia, the role of police officers encompasses a range of functions, including crime prevention, law enforcement, maintaining public order, and safeguarding the community (Triyanti et al., 2023).

Moreover, the police play a crucial role in fostering a sense of security among citizens by providing effective protection services (Ferdik, 2023). As a direct embodiment of the state's legal institutions, the police are tasked with enforcing the law impartially, irrespective of the background or social status of either the perpetrators or the victims of crime. In this regard, the police serve not only as enforcers of the law but also as a vital link between the government and the community, working towards the establishment of a safe and orderly environment (Gaffar et al., 2021).

The primary responsibility of police officers is to enforce the law, ensure public safety, and protect citizens from various threats, whether internal or external (Ferdik et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Sheppard & Welsh, 2022). Officers must effectively navigate the complexities and tensions inherent in social dynamics while carrying out these duties (Rezmer & Szpak, 2024; Triyanti et al., 2023). In the realm of law enforcement, the police are tasked with managing criminal cases, which involve everything from investigations and arrests to the thorough examination of criminal acts (Quah, 2020). In addition to directly managing criminal cases, the police are also responsible for guiding the community through outreach programs designed to enhance legal awareness and encourage citizen compliance with relevant regulations. As law enforcers, police officers have both a moral and legal obligation to perform these duties with the utmost integrity. Their responsibilities include enforcing the law impartially, safeguarding human rights, and adhering to legal procedures in every action taken (Al Izzati et al., 2024).

In carrying out their duties, police officers must adhere to professional, ethical standards and uphold the principle of legality to prevent the misuse of authority. Police actions that are not based on the law or that violate the rights of the community will harm the reputation of the police institution and reduce its effectiveness in protecting the public. Therefore, this obligation is an integral part of efforts to build public trust, which is crucial for the success of law enforcement in a country.

In Indonesia, as a rule-of-law country that prioritizes principles of democracy and popular sovereignty, the separation of powers is a mandatory requirement enshrined in the constitution. This separation of powers is essential to ensure that each institution has limited authority and does not overlap, ultimately maintaining balance and preventing the abuse of power (Asshiddiqie, 2020; Biroli, 2015; Hadi et al., 2023; Suparto, 2021). According to Mahfud MD, the constitution should encompass several principles, including that public authority can only be granted through the constitution, the implementation of popular sovereignty with the principle of representation and the democratic election of the executive, the division of powers accompanied by clearly defined authority limits, the existence of an independent judicial system capable of ensuring justice, and effective oversight of police and military institutions. The constitution should also guarantee human rights to create a fair and balanced society. These principles are fundamental elements that ensure the rule of law in Indonesia functions by the constitution and the prevailing democratic principles (Kusumawati et al., 2023).

One form of authority limitation within the Indonesian constitutional system is the provision that restricts members of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) from holding positions outside the police institution unless they have received permission or a special assignment from the Chief of Police. This rule is outlined in Article 28, paragraph (3) of Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police. The article's explanation defines positions outside the police as those not directly related to police duties or not assigned officially by the Chief of Police. However, in practice, there have been instances where active police members occupy roles outside their institution, including various government agencies and national bodies. For example, Polri members have been assigned to significant positions such as the National Counterterrorism Agency, the National Narcotics Agency, and even as Indonesian Ambassadors in multiple countries. While some of these assignments may aim to leverage the technical expertise of police members, they can legally create uncertainty and raise concerns regarding the principle of police neutrality (Stoicescu et al., 2024).

This legal certainty is becoming increasingly important in order to maintain the independence and objectivity of the police institution. When police officers hold public positions outside of the police function, there is a risk of overlapping authority and potential conflicts of interest that can disrupt the performance and neutrality of the institution. Suppose a police officer is actively involved in policy-making or carrying out executive duties outside the scope of the police. In that case, the possibility of mismanagement and decisions that are not in line with their main jobs can increase (Martitah et al., 2024). This, in Fuller's view, is a form of failure to maintain consistency of regulations in the field, which ultimately threatens the integrity of the principle of legal certainty. The National Police Law explicitly requires active police officers to resign before accepting a position outside the police institution. This principle, which refers to the importance of clarity of duties and limits of authority, aims to ensure that every member of the National Police can remain focused on their primary function, namely serving, protecting, and enforcing the law neutrally and without conflict of interest. However, the reality in the field often shows a different situation, so the applicable regulations seem to be ignored.

Legal certainty serves as the foundation of effective law enforcement, ensuring that police officers operate within clearly defined legal boundaries. However, ambiguities in legal frameworks can hinder law enforcement agencies from performing their duties effectively. One critical issue concerns the appointment of police officers to positions outside the police institution, as regulated by Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police. Article 28, paragraph (3) of the law prohibits police officers from holding external positions unless formally assigned by the Chief of Police. Despite this provision, the lack of specific guidelines regarding permissible roles, criteria for appointments, and oversight mechanisms has led to inconsistent enforcement, legal uncertainty, and potential conflicts of interest.

This regulatory vagueness has resulted in various interpretations among legal practitioners and government officials. In practice, police officers have been appointed to strategic roles in other government agencies, such as the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT), or as Indonesian ambassadors, raising concerns about overlapping authority and the erosion of police neutrality. While such assignments may leverage police expertise in security and law enforcement, the absence of a clear legal framework creates risks of misuse of authority, blurred institutional roles, and diminished public trust in law enforcement agencies.

Given these challenges, this study examines the legal uncertainties surrounding police appointments outside the institution by identifying regulatory gaps, analyzing their implications for law enforcement integrity, and proposing legal reforms. It highlights the need for more precise definitions, strengthened oversight mechanisms, and legislative amendments to ensure the neutrality and professionalism of police officers. Addressing these issues through a more transparent legal framework will enhance public trust and institutional accountability in Indonesia's law enforcement system.

METHOD

The normative legal research method is an analytical approach that examines law from a regulatory or normative perspective. Its primary focus is on essential legal materials, including rules, regulations, and various legal documents, to comprehend, study, or interpret applicable provisions. In this study, the legislative approach is a key component, involving an examination of pertinent written rules to explain or analyze the legal issues at hand. This method enables researchers to

assess the alignment between laws and actual practices, as well as to identify potential legal ambiguities. Additionally, the conceptual approach is employed to delve deeper into legal concepts such as the principles of legal certainty, justice, and the separation of powers. This exploration helps researchers grasp the fundamental essence of existing rules and their application within the relevant legal context. The conceptual approach includes an investigation of relevant legal theories and doctrines, which can clarify and reinforce normative legal analysis, especially when developing arguments or solutions grounded in a theoretical understanding of the legal challenges being addressed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Legal Uncertainty in the Limits of Police Member Positions Outside the Police

The tasks of the police regulated in the Police Law include maintaining public security and order, law enforcement, and roles to protect, serve, and provide assistance to the community. From this primary responsibility, operational police tasks are divided into several aspects, including monitoring and controlling citizen and government activities, providing security escorts and protection, and traffic regulation to maintain order and smooth activities in the community. Additionally, the police also play a role in educating the public to enhance legal awareness and compliance with existing regulations. This responsibility also includes maintaining public stability and social order and involves the police's role in internal oversight within the authorities to prevent unlawful acts.

The police also must conduct investigations and inquiries into criminal acts based on the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) and other regulations. This task is expanded with identification functions in investigations, police psychology, and the management of forensic laboratories to support the investigative process. Furthermore, the police provide security protection to citizens and actively offer assistance and support in emergencies. Additionally, the police play a role in meeting public security needs within specific time frames, collaborating with relevant officials and agencies. This also includes services to communities needing police support following their primary duties and executing instructions or additional tasks based on existing regulations.

In carrying out these tasks, the Police Law provides extensive authority, such as receiving reports and complaints from the public, mediating disputes that threaten public security, and addressing potential disturbances that could jeopardize national unity. The police are also granted the right to create administrative regulations concerning police affairs and carry out preventive checks. Moreover, the police have the authority to take initial action at crime scenes (TKP), identify witnesses or suspects, and gather necessary evidence or statements for legal processes. This task includes maintaining security at trial locations, executing court decisions, managing seized items for a specific period, and ensuring that police functions in law and order can operate optimally.

Within the scope of criminal law, police authority is further expanded, including the right to detain, arrest, search, and seize evidence. The police can also restrict access to crime scenes to maintain the integrity of investigations, identify and examine suspects, and conduct document checks. Additionally, the police have the authority to summon witnesses or suspects for questioning, call experts to assist in investigations, and halt investigations if valid reasons are found. In this aspect of duties and authority, the term "related to the police" mentioned in Article 28, paragraph (3) of the Police Law becomes very important. The definition of these duties and authorities provides clear

parameters to evaluate whether positions or roles outside the police held by police members meet the valid criteria of connection or comply with the institutional mandate regulated by law.

Article 28, paragraph (3) of the Police Law states that police members are only allowed to hold other positions outside the police after retirement or resigning from police duties. The explanation of this article emphasizes that positions outside the police must not be related to the functions and responsibilities of an active police member and must receive approval from the Chief of the Indonesian National Police (Kapolri). If the position is not directly related to police functions, then the appointment violates legal provisions. Positions that align with police functions include the Head of the National Narcotics Agency or the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency, which are closely related to security and law enforcement. Conversely, a position like Acting Governor (Plt.) needs to be aligned with police duties and functions, making it inappropriate for a police member to fill that position. However, the position of the Chair of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) is considered more relevant because it often involves the role of the police in investigations.

Other opinions suggest that any police member wishing to occupy a position outside the police should first resign or retire, primarily if the position is not related to police functions. This means that positions unrelated to police functions, such as Acting Governor, require resignation from active service for the appointment to be considered valid and legal. According to this view, the position of the Chair of the KPK, which frequently involves police members in investigative teams, is still deemed relevant for an active police officer, provided there is permission from Kapolri. In this case, the legality of the appointment would become an issue if the occupied position is not in accordance with police functions and does not have official permission from Kapolri. Another opinion states that Article 28, paragraph (3) restricts police members from holding positions outside the police that do not have a direct connection to police duties and are not based on orders from Kapolri. For the position of Acting Governor, which is considered unrelated to police functions, the appointment of a police member to this position is deemed a violation of Article 28, paragraph (3). However, the Chair of the KPK position is viewed as an exception since police officers frequently serve as KPK investigators, which relates to police functions. Therefore, the legality of appointing a police member to this position is valid as long as permission is obtained from Kapolri.

Theoretically, authority in government positions can be obtained through attribution, delegation, or mandate. Attribution refers to the grant of authority by law to a government organ; delegation involves the transfer of authority from one organ to another, while mandate occurs when one government organ allows its jurisdiction to be exercised by another organ on its behalf. Regional heads in local government possess authority that includes attribution, delegation, and mandate under the prevailing regulations. In carrying out duties as a regional head or Acting (Plt.), the authority held tends to be limited. For example, in Government Regulation No. 49 of 2008 Article 132A, paragraph (1), the Acting Governor cannot transfer employees, revoke licenses from previous officials, issue permits that contradict previous policies, or create policies that conflict with prior government policies. This indicates that the authority of the Acting Governor is restricted in various matters that may intersect with police duties.

As long as someone holds a position granted through an official appointment process, they have the right to take action related to that position by prevailing legal regulations. An example of this application can be seen from the actions of the newly appointed Acting Governor of West Java, who immediately exercised his authority in discussing local political agendas and issued regulations such as Governor Regulation (Pergub) No. 54 of 2018 regarding the mechanism for determining the

Minimum Wage in West Java. A legal expert's theory states that authority is the right granted by law to produce legal consequences. However, in the context of the law governing the police, there are no provisions that explicitly grant police members the authority to hold positions as Acting Governors or other roles outside of police duties, which raises doubts about the legal status of such appointments.

In discussions regarding the legality of positions outside of the police, several constitutional law experts assert that appointing police members to specific positions outside the police is only lawful if the positions align with the functions and roles of the police, such as the leadership of the National Disaster Management Agency or the Corruption Eradication Commission. However, for positions like Acting Governor, as long as the court has not annulled the appointment decision, the execution of the duties carried out is considered legally valid. As long as the official appointment letter is still in force, the legal actions taken by the official will be recognized. Yet, due to the Acting Governor position not being related to police functions, there is uncertainty regarding the appropriateness of the role with legal provisions.

Other legal perspectives highlight this issue from a different angle, emphasizing that the appointment of police members to positions outside the police that do not relate to their functions is an illegal act. Appointments lacking a firm legal basis or violating regulations are deemed to result in formal defects, meaning that the actions of such officials need to meet the formal requirements stipulated. This legal uncertainty leads to any legal actions taken by the official in a position that does not comply with the law being regarded as a formal defect. Based on normative reviews and various expert opinions, the appointment of police members to positions that are not directly related to police duties and functions causes legal uncertainty. This uncertainty arises because such decisions need a solid foundation in legal regulations, potentially leading to various legal issues. Any legal action taken by officials in positions appointed contrary to the law risks being considered a formal defect, leading to legal uncertainty that could impact the stability and accountability of the governance system.

Efforts Can Be Made to Harmonize Legal Regulations Regarding Position Restrictions for Police Members Outside the Police Institution

The limitation on the positions held by police members outside their institution is a critical issue that demands serious attention, particularly in the context of law enforcement and the preservation of the police's integrity. Law Number 2 of 2002 regarding the Indonesian National Police explicitly outlines the authorities and restrictions placed on police members in their duties, including roles outside the police force. However, the legal ambiguities surrounding these position restrictions can lead to potential abuses of power and erode public trust in the police institution. Consequently, strategic efforts are necessary to harmonize existing legal regulations, ensuring they are more apparent, more consistent, and adhere to the principles of good governance.

Law Number 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police serves as the legal foundation that regulates the functions, tasks, and authorities of the police in Indonesia. In the context of police members' positions, this law provides a clear explanation of the limits that police members must follow while executing their duties. A critical article in this law is Article 28, paragraph (3), which stipulates that active police members are prohibited from holding positions outside the police, except under certain conditions, such as after retirement or resignation. This aims to maintain the integrity and independence of the police institution to prevent conflicts of interest that could

damage the image and trust of the public in law enforcement agencies. However, despite this law having a clear framework, its implementation in the field often faces various challenges that lead to confusion and legal uncertainty.

Article 28, paragraph (3) of the Police Law asserts that active police members are only allowed to hold positions outside the police if those positions are not related to police duties and functions and only after obtaining permission from the Kapolri (Chief of the National Police). This provision should provide legal certainty and avoid potential abuse of power. However, the assessment of this article reveals shortcomings in explaining the criteria and types of positions outside the police that are considered "unrelated." The lack of a more specific explanation regarding these boundaries makes interpretation subjective and may vary among law enforcement officials. Consequently, the potential for placing police members in positions that conflict with the integrity of the police remains, underscoring the urgent need for revision or further clarification of this article.

In practice, there are legal loopholes and inconsistencies in existing regulations related to the restrictions on police members' positions. One such loophole is the ambiguity surrounding the mechanisms for oversight and accountability in appointing police members to positions outside the institution. Although there are provisions for permission from the Kapolri, there are no clear guidelines or standards about how this permission process is conducted and under what conditions appointments can be accepted. Moreover, there are differing interpretations among law enforcement personnel concerning certain positions, such as those in other government agencies, which often lead to confusion in the field. This inconsistency in the application of the law creates uncertainty for police members wishing to transition to positions outside the police, potentially resulting in dissatisfaction and decreasing public trust in the institution. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and adjustment of existing regulations to ensure greater harmony and support for practical law enforcement goals.

It is critical to clarify and firmly establish the restrictions on positions for police members to maintain the integrity and professionalism of the institution. One practical step would be to develop clear guidelines or technical instructions outlining the types of external positions that active members are permitted to hold, as well as those that are prohibited. This document should delineate specific criteria for roles unrelated to police functions and identify those considered potentially conflict-ridden. Furthermore, a transparent and accountable evaluation mechanism should be established to assess each request from police members wishing to take positions outside the institution. By doing so, we can create consistent and easily understood standards, thereby preventing varying interpretations among law enforcement officials. Furthermore, training and socialization for police members regarding these position restrictions are also essential to ensure they understand the legal implications of appointments outside the institution.

To accommodate practical needs in managing police members' positions, amendments to Law Number 2 of 2002 on the Police should be considered. Proposed amendments could include adding specific articles regarding the types of positions that active members are allowed and not allowed to hold. For example, the law could establish particular categories of positions, such as those in government agencies, that active police members must avoid. Additionally, the article regulating the permission application process needs clarification, including assessment criteria, processing time, and the parties responsible for reviewing and granting permission. This will help ensure that the appointment of police members to positions outside the institution meets legal requirements and aligns with principles of justice and transparency. By carrying out comprehensive revisions, it is

hoped that these policies can create a more transparent legal environment that supports the police's duties in protecting the community as well as maintaining security and order.

CONCLUSION

Legal uncertainty regarding restrictions on police officers holding positions outside the police institution presents significant challenges, including potential abuses of power, conflicts of interest, and diminished public trust in law enforcement. While Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police provides a foundational legal framework, gaps and inconsistencies still need to be addressed, leading to varying interpretations and implementation issues.

Specific policy recommendations are proposed to address these challenges. First, legislators should amend the law by clearly defining which external positions police officers may hold, ensuring alignment with police functions and duties. Second, a transparent oversight mechanism should be established to regulate appointment processes, involving a multi-stakeholder review panel to reduce political interference. Third, the implementation of strict monitoring and reporting procedures is essential to ensure compliance with legal provisions and to manage cases of misconduct effectively.

Additionally, capacity-building programs should be developed to enhance police officers' understanding of legal boundaries and ethical responsibilities when engaging in external roles. Public participation mechanisms should also be strengthened, enabling citizens to voice concerns or report potential violations. These measures are expected to enhance institutional transparency, reinforce police neutrality, and build public confidence in law enforcement. Ultimately, these steps will contribute to a more accountable and legally sound police institution that operates with integrity and fairness.

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