Analysis of Cultural Dimensions in Career Development of West Java Police Personnel

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the cultural dimensions of West Java Police personnel, focusing on their career development, with particular attention to the influence of masculine-feminine cultural dimensions on the career orientations of male and female officers.

Research Methodology: A qualitative research approach was employed, utilizing ethnographic methods. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. This study focused on the personnel of Polda Jawa Barat, examining the cultural dimension of masculine-feminine through both primary and secondary data.

Results: The findings revealed that male officers exhibited a feminine cultural orientation, while female officers demonstrated a masculine cultural orientation. Masculine culture is characterized by assertiveness, competitiveness, ambition, and power, whereas feminine culture emphasizes relationships and quality of life.

Conclusions: The study concludes that cultural dimensions significantly impact career development in the police force. Male officers tend to be more career-driven, while female officers often face external cultural barriers despite having a strong masculine orientation.

Limitations: The study was limited by time constraints and the vast geographical area of Polda Jawa Barat, which affected the data collection scope. Additionally, this study focused primarily on career-oriented dimensions, excluding other aspects of police personnel culture.

Contributions: This research contributes to the understanding of the role of cultural dimensions in career development, particularly in the context of gender within the police force. This study provides insights into improving career development programs for female officers.

Keywords: *Career Development, Cultural Dimensions, Masculine-Feminine Culture, Police Personnel, West Java Police.*

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1. Introduction

The National Police is responsible for maintaining public security and order (Scheu, 2022). As an organization, the police force is tasked with formulating goals, developing the environment, and optimizing the potential of its members, who come from diverse racial, gender, and ethnic backgrounds to achieve its vision and mission. An organization is intentionally established for a long period, consisting of two or more members who work together, coordinated under a structured work pattern, to produce superior human resources. The members of the National Police include male and female officers and civil servants (Oktarendah, Tunut, Nadea, & Bangsawan; Prakoso & Budiono, 2025).

The presence of female police officers has become increasingly essential, as handling cases involving women as perpetrators and victims requires specialized attention from female officers. In addition, female officers play crucial roles in the police force, interacting directly with the community in executing their duties. Despite this importance, female law enforcement officers continue to face barriers. According to Archbold, Gaub, and Drew (2024) in their work Police Women: Life with the Badge, female officers often face the challenge of asserting their strength and independence in a profession traditionally dominated by men. This highlights that there is no reason to marginalize the potential contributions of female officers.

However, Female officers face various challenges and dynamics in their work environment that affect their career advancement, a situation that deserves further exploration. To further understand the dynamics of gender in the police force, especially regarding career advancement and organizational culture, it is necessary to examine the current situation of female officers within the institution (Bakar, Rahmat, & Anwar, 2025; Mepri, Akbar, & Matin, 2021). Despite their contributions, there is a notable gap in career opportunities for female officers, as reflected in the underrepresentation of women in senior positions and the structural barriers they encounter.

This study aims to investigate the role of gender dynamics, particularly the challenges faced by female officers in the career development process within the National Police. This study explores how the masculine and feminine cultural dimensions, as described by Hofstede (2016), influence career orientation and organizational culture in the police force. Specifically, this study seeks to understand the cultural and institutional factors that contribute to the professional growth or limitations of female officers.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Masculine vs Feminine Cultural Dimension
The cultural dimension is a cultural comparison that assumes that there is something that must be compared, that each culture is not so unique, and that every culture that exists in parallel with other cultures does not have such a meaningful meaning. There are six cultural dimensions according to Hofstede (2016), but the author will use one of the dimensions of *masculine vs. feminine culture*. Masculinity refers to a society in which gender roles are clearly differentiated: men are expected to be firm, resilient, and focused on material achievements, whereas women are expected to be humble, gentle, and prioritize quality of life.

In contrast, femininity refers to a society where gender roles overlap, and both men and women are encouraged to embody simplicity, gentleness, and a concern for quality of life (Hofstede, 2011; Simonovska & Vasev, 2023). Masculinity is related to the value of gender differences in society or the distribution of emotional roles between different genders. The masculine dimension contains the values of competitiveness, assertiveness, materialism, ambition, and power. In contrast, femininity values relationships, quality of life, and social harmony over material success (Olayemi, 2020).

Several studies have explored the intersection of gender and organizational culture in institutions such as the police. Bohrer (2021) emphasized that masculine traits in law enforcement cultures, such as assertiveness and toughness, often marginalize women and hinder their career advancement. Additionally, Brown, Fleming, and Silvestri (2020) note that female officers face cultural barriers that prevent them from fully participating in career development, often due to traditional gender roles embedded within police culture. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory presents a framework for understanding how masculinity and femininity influence professional environments; however, it requires contextual adaptation to analyze its implications within specific institutions, such as the National Police (Harahap & Yosepha, 2025).

This is especially true in Indonesia, where gendered expectations shape both female officers' career trajectories and the broader organizational culture within law enforcement. Siregar, Nurdin, and Rivai (2024) highlight how the police forces in Indonesia continue to struggle to balance traditional masculine values while incorporating policies that promote gender equality. This dual struggle often leads to

tensions between the need for a gender-equal environment and ingrained norms that prioritize male-dominated leadership and roles.

Table 1. Presents the contrasting characteristics of masculine and feminine cultures based on hofstede's framework

No	Femininity	Masculinity
1.	Work for a living	Live to work
2.	Meaning of work for workers: relationships and working conditions	Meaning of work for workers: security, salary, and interesting jobs
3.	Emphasizes equality, solidarity, and quality of work life	Emphasizes fairness, competition, and performance
4.	Management as managing	Management as leading
5.	Managers are seen as colleagues	Managers are cultural heroes
6.	Managers are expected to use intuition, handle feelings, and seek consensus	Managers are expected to be decisive, tough, aggressive, competitive, and fair
7.	Successful managers are seen as having both masculine and feminine characteristics	Successful managers are seen as having only masculine characteristics
8.	More women in management	Fewer women in management
9.	The gender wage gap is smaller	The gender wage gap is larger
10.	Women prefer female bosses	Women prefer male bosses
11.	Career ambition is optional for both men and women	Career ambition is mandatory for men, optional for women
12.	Managers hold simple career aspirations	Managers hold ambitious career aspirations
13.	Managers are less willing to leave family for career reasons	Managers are more willing to leave family for career reasons
14.	Women in management view family as a priority and adjust their careers	Women in management view careers as normal and adjust their families
15.	Job applicants tend to humble themselves	Job applicants tend to boast
16.	Humanizing work through creating work groups	Humanizing work through task challenges
17.	Conflict resolution through problem-solving, compromise, and negotiation	Conflict resolution through rejection or fighting until the "best" wins
18.	Fewer sick absences	Fewer sick absences
19.	Lower work stress: fewer burnout symptoms among healthy workers	Higher work stress: more symptoms of errors among healthy workers
20.	Preference for smaller companies	Preference for larger companies
21.	Preference for fewer companies	Preference for larger companies
22.	Competitive advantage in service industries, consulting, life products, and biochemistry	Competitive advantage in manufacturing industries, price competition, heavy products, and bulk chemicals

Table 1 shows that the current study intends to build on Hofstede's framework by critically examining how these cultural dimensions manifest within the Indonesian National Police (Polri), with a particular focus on the impact of gender roles and career development for female officers. Bailey, Birdsall, Hulley, and Kingston (2025) seek to address a gap in the literature by considering the intersection of gender and career progression in Indonesian law enforcement agencies, which remains an underexplored area in police culture studies.

2.2 Police Organizational Culture as a Gendered Institution
Modern organizational studies emphasize that organizations are not gender-neutral entities; rather, their structures, work practices, and decision-making logic are often built upon specific gendered assumptions (Fotaki & Pullen, 2024). Within the framework of gendered organizations, power relations, task allocation, promotion procedures, and definitions of "ideal" competence frequently embed biases

that favor the dominant groups. In policing institutions, such bias is closely intertwined with the historical character of the profession, which emphasizes physical toughness, authority, courage in confronting risk, and rigid hierarchical discipline attributes that are socially associated with masculinity (Silvestri, 2017). Consequently, the police institution can be conceptualized as a gendered institution that normalizes masculine behavioral standards and leadership styles as benchmarks of professionalism.

Within Hofstede's masculine–feminine cultural dimension, masculine cultures prioritize competition, assertiveness, achievement orientation, and career ambition, whereas feminine cultures emphasize social relationships, quality of life, and harmony (Hofstede, 2011). However, in organizations such as the police, masculinity should not be understood merely as an individual trait but rather as an organizational cultural regime that shapes what is rewarded, promoted, and valued. Therefore, analyses of policewomen's careers cannot rely solely on individual-level explanations but must also examine how organizational structures and cultural norms determine career opportunities and constraints in the police force.

2.3 Tokenism, Minority Representation, and Career Barriers
Classic literature on minority representation in organizations highlights that when women constitute a numerical minority, they are vulnerable to tokenism, whereby they are symbolically included but are substantively marginalized. Tokenism does not always manifest as explicit discrimination; rather, it often appears in subtle forms, such as excessive performance scrutiny, heightened expectations, role stereotyping, and restricted access to informal networks that significantly influence promotion decisions. In hierarchical organizations, these effects tend to be more pronounced, as career advancement heavily depends on supervisors' evaluations and on cultural legitimacy. Within police organizations, tokenism helps explain why an increase in the number of policewomen does not automatically translate into greater representation in strategic leadership positions in the police.

Empirical studies suggest that police culture continues to preserve a "cult of masculinity" that confines women to particular roles or frames female leadership as an exception rather than the norm (Silvestri, 2017). Research on policewomen's perceptions of occupational culture further reveals a structural ambivalence: while institutions publicly endorse modernization and gender inclusion, everyday practices often perpetuate traditional norms that hinder women's career progression (Brown et al., 2020). These dynamics are consistent with the findings of the present study, which indicate that policewomen demonstrate strong masculine orientations, such as ambition and career motivation, yet face predominantly external and structural barriers to advancement. Such patterns align with the logic of tokenism: high individual motivation does not necessarily result in upward mobility when opportunities are constrained by power relations, informal networks and institutionalized norms.

2.4 Masculinity Contest Culture and the Normalization of Leadership Standards
Recent scholarship has introduced the concept of masculinity contest cultures (MCC), referring to work environments in which status and legitimacy are achieved through demonstrations of masculinity, including dominance, emotional suppression, extreme resilience, and prioritization of work over personal and family life. In policing contexts, the MCC reinforces promotion systems that reward those who conform most closely to hegemonic masculine norms (Workman-Stark, 2021). Consequently, individuals, particularly women, who do not or cannot perform these norms are disadvantaged in career evaluations.

The MCC provides a useful framework for understanding the paradox observed in many policing studies: women who adopt assertive, ambitious, and competitive behaviors do not necessarily receive equal recognition. Instead, they may face resistance for violating traditional gender expectations, while men exhibiting identical behaviors are regarded as exemplary leaders. This reflects the existence of a gendered substructure of unwritten organizational rules that silently determine who is perceived as suitable for leadership roles.

2.5 Informal Networks, Social Capital, and Promotion Politics

Career development literature consistently demonstrates that vertical mobility is shaped not only by formal performance metrics but also by social capital, including access to informal networks, mentors and symbolic legitimacy among decision-makers. In police organizations, such networks often operate through unit affiliations, seniority cultures, and reputational dynamics developed in the field. Women frequently encounter restricted access to these informal networks because of gendered task allocation, social exclusion, or norms regulating cross-gender interactions (Worden, McLean, & Fiegl, 2025). The barriers identified in this study, such as the limited implementation of gender equality, persistent stereotypes, and unequal access to promotion opportunities, can therefore be interpreted as manifestations of organizational mechanisms that filter promotion candidates through masculine cultural standards and network-based politics. From this perspective, the career challenges faced by policewomen are not merely human resource issues but are deeply rooted in the organizational culture and governance systems.

2.6 Theoretical Synthesis and Research Gap

The integration of Hofstede's masculine feminine cultural framework, Acker's gendered organization theory, and Kanter's tokenism perspective provides a robust analytical lens for examining policewomen's career development (Kusa & Danladi, 2024). Hofstede elucidates value orientations related to achievement and relational priorities; Acker explains how organizations systematically reproduce inequality through formal and informal rules; and Kanter highlights the consequences of minority status on career experiences. In policing studies, scholars such as Silvestri (2017) and Brown et al. (2020) have emphasized that policy reforms alone are insufficient to transform entrenched occupational cultures.

3. Research Methodology

The research approach used in this study was qualitative, employing an ethnographic method (Harwati, 2019; Mannay & Morgan, 2015). The ethnographic method is used to describe and analyze the life and behavior patterns of a group or community in their social and cultural context (Ananda & Albina, 2025). The main objective of this approach is to understand the life experiences, social interactions, and cultural dynamics that occur within an organization, in this case, the Indonesian National Police (Polri) organization.

This study is descriptive-analytical in nature, focusing on an in-depth understanding of the masculine and feminine cultural dimensions in Polri, particularly in relation to the career development of female police officers. This approach was chosen to explore and comprehensively analyze the challenges and barriers faced by female officers in their career development within an environment dominated by masculine norms (Hergianasari, Koks, & Yanuartha, 2025; Khalid & Othman, 2024). The population in this study consisted of all personnel at the West Java Regional Police (Polda Jawa Barat), including male police officers (Polki), female police officers, and civil servants within the police force. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, meaning that the sample was chosen based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. The data collection techniques used by the researcher were as follows:

1. Interview Technique
   An interview is a conversation with a specific purpose, which in this research is to obtain the necessary data and information from informants for research purposes. The conversation involves two parties: the interviewer who asks the questions and the interviewee who provides answers to the questions.
2. Survey
   A survey is a type of research technique where information is collected from a sample of people through questionnaires or interviews. Surveys are a research technique in which information is collected from a sample of people through questionnaires or interviews.
3. Document Study
   Document study is a qualitative data collection method that involves reviewing and analyzing documents created by the subject or by others about the subject.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Cultural Dimensions of West Java Police Personnel in Masculine-Feminine Culture

Based on the results of the digital survey and interviews conducted by the researcher, the analysis based on the masculine-feminine cultural dimension theory shows that it is not related to gender but rather to social functions. The data analysis indicates that male police officers (Polki) at the West Java Police (Polda Jawa Barat) tend to have a feminine cultural dimension, while female police officers tend to have a masculine dimension. The table below displays the cultural dimensions of the West Java Police personnel.

Table 2. Cultural dimensions of west java police personnel

No	Gender	Total	Culture			Persentase		
			Masculine	Neutral	Feminine	MAS (%)	Neutral (%)	FEM (%)
1	Male	810	78	578	154	9,63	71,36	19,01
2	Female	69	8	50	11	11,59	72,46	15,94
	Total	879	86	628	165			

Table 2 shows that the cultural dimension of Polki at Polda Jawa Barat tends to be Feminine, while Female officers tend to be masculine. The Neutral category refers to personnel who cannot determine whether they are Feminine or Masculine. The data show that female officers have higher scores in the masculine dimension than Polki (male police officers) in terms of career orientation and ambition. This reflects that, despite working in a predominantly masculine environment, female officers possess a strong drive to pursue higher career goals (Adelina & Han, 2025; Elvianti & Rusli, 2021; Hakim & Kurnia, 2023).

4.2 Career Orientation Differences Between Masculine-Feminine Culture

The difference in career orientation among Polda Jawa Barat personnel based on the Masculine-Feminine cultural dimension is summarized from the field findings according to the theory: masculine orientation tends to have a high career orientation, while feminine orientation tends to have a lower career orientation (Tao, Glosenberg, Tracey, Blustein, & Foster, 2022). Respondents were given the following choices:

1. Very Prosperous (colloquially "fluid") → Material
2. Has great power → Power
3. My childhood dream
4. No specific reason → Tends toward Feminine
5. It's just a regular job; the important thing is being close to family → Strong Feminine
6. Other reasons.

Table 3 shows the findings for masculine culture, which tends to have gender differences in society that include values such as competitiveness, decisiveness, materialism, ambition, and power.

Table 3. Masculine cultural orientation towards material/power

No	Respondent	Rank	Score	Dream Position	Motivation
1	Polki / Sukabumi Police	Second Brigadier	+280	Police Commissioner	Very prosperous (colloquially "fluid")
2	Polki / West Java Police	Second Brigadier	+70	CEO	Has great power
3	Polki / Sukabumi Police	Second Brigadier	+70	Police Commissioner	Has great power
4	Polki / Subang Police	First Inspector	+35	Traffic Unit Head	Very prosperous (colloquially "fluid")
5	Female officers / Purwakarta Police	First Inspector	+35	Unit Head	Very prosperous (colloquially "fluid")

Table 4. Feminine cultural orientation towards material/power

No	Respondent	Rank	Score	Dream Position	Motivation
1	Polki / West Java Police	Second Brigadier	-105	Subdistrict Head	Want to be closer to the community and help in my leadership area
2	Polki / West Java Police	First Brigadier	-105	Crime Unit Head	No specific reason
3	Polki / Bandung Police	Second Inspector	-105	Subdistrict Head	It's just a regular job, the important thing is being close to family
4	Polki / Bandung Police	First Brigadier	-70	Traffic Unit	It's just a regular job, the important thing is being close to family
5	Female officers / Bandung Police	First Brigadier	-70	Member	It's just a regular job, the important thing is being close to family

Table 4 shows the results of the research and surveys, indicating that the masculine culture is more oriented towards material and power, while the feminine culture is less interested in those aspects and focuses more on family. This study supports the findings of Brown et al. (2020), who showed that in many police forces, masculine culture still dominates and impacts women's careers. Their research revealed that although women in the police force may have a more masculine orientation in terms of ambition and careers, they are often confronted with cultural barriers caused by traditional gender norms.

4.3 Female officers Career Development at West Java Police in Relation to Masculine vs Feminine Culture

Based on the survey and interviews conducted by the researcher at the West Java Police, related to the Masculine vs Feminine cultural dimensions, the general cultural dimension of personnel at Polda Jawa Barat is more Feminine. Ideally, based only on culture, female officers should attain their dream positions; however, other factors act as barriers to female officers' career development, as indicated by the survey results.

1. Gender equality has not yet been implemented in this work unit; career development is discriminated against due to cultural, religious, and other norms, where men's positions are not equal to women's positions.
2. There is a fear of leaving their current comfort zones (family, work environment and home environment).

Table 5. Factors hindering female officers' career development

No	Assumptions of Female officers About Career Barriers	Total
1	Actually, there are no barriers; all barriers are just excuses for Female officers who lack strong ambition	30
2	Gender equality has not been implemented in this unit	20
3	Environmental stereotypes that women should be at home, taking care of the husband, children, and house	12
4	Fear of leaving the current comfort zone (family, work, home environment, etc.)	9
5	Fear of becoming too successful or having a high-ranking position that might make a potential husband feel inferior	6
6	Lack of skills in lobbying / networking like Polki	5
7	Not really pursuing a career, focused on taking care of family	5
8	Cultural / religious norms that place women not equal to men	4
9	Lack of confidence due to lack of competence compared to Polki	3
10	Career development discrimination	2
11	Lack of confidence due to coming from a lower social class	2

12	No Female officers in the unit who can be a role model	2
13	Does not want to work hard like men, in the heat	2
14	Not supported by husband / family	1

Table 5 shows the barriers to female officers' career development in detail.
1. Female officers do not pursue a career internally.
2. They are not given opportunities by external authorities (superiors who manage their positions).
3. Many still perceive women as the weaker sex, incapable of working in all situations and under all conditions.
4. To attain a position, one must have an external background that supports their career.

The results of the interviews and surveys show that female officers at the West Java Police exhibit a stronger masculine culture compared to Polki (male police officers). Although Female officers have a strong career orientation, external factors such as social norms and gender discrimination still pose significant barriers to achieving higher positions within the police institution (Lado, Prasojo, & Jannah, 2025). This indicates that they do not face many internal obstacles in pursuing their careers, but they tend to feel hindered by external factors that are beyond their control. Bohrer (2021)also noted that although women in the police force have the potential to advance, they are often restricted by an organizational structure that predominates masculine norms. This study reinforces the understanding that, despite changes in some policy aspects, the gender gap in the police force remains significant.

4.4 Practical Implications for the Career Development of Female officers
Based on the findings of this study, it is important for the Indonesian National Police (Polri) to develop policies that better support gender equality in the career development of female officers (female police officers). This includes:
1. The implementation of more effective gender equality policies in career development, so that female officers can achieve important positions without being hindered by social norms that limit them.
2. Training and cultural awareness programs that educate police personnel about the importance of gender equality and provide equal opportunities for female officers to develop.
3. It is recommended that Polri ensure that female officer candidates with a more masculine cultural orientation (as found in this study) are given greater opportunities for career development, especially in higher structural positions.

5. Conclusions
5.1 Conclusion
The cultural dimension of personnel at West Java Police (Polda Jawa Barat) tends to be Feminine, with the Feminine culture prioritizing the comfort of relationships at the workplace and within the family. The analysis shows an alignment between theory and the actual conditions on the ground, where personnel with a masculine culture tend to have high career orientation and are more interested in pursuing wealth. Feminine culture, on the other hand, exhibits opposite characteristics. Finding 1 reveals that female officers at Polda Jawa Barat exhibit a stronger masculine dimension than Polki (male police officers). This aligns with the general view of female officers at Polda Jawa Barat that they do not face significant internal obstacles in pursuing their careers (a characteristic of masculine culture) but feel more hindered by external factors.

5.2 Research Limitations
This study had several limitations. First, the research is limited to the West Java Regional Police (Polda Jawa Barat), which has a large geographic scope with 29,796 personnel and thus may not fully represent conditions across Indonesia. Second, this study focuses solely on the masculine-feminine cultural dimension in the context of career development, without considering other cultural factors that may influence the career progression of police personnel. Additionally, the limited research time affected the scope of data collection, which could only cover a limited sample size.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research is recommended to expand the scope of the study beyond the West Java Regional Police to other regional police units in Indonesia to obtain a more comprehensive and comparative understanding of the cultural dimensions within the police organization. Additionally, future studies should examine other cultural dimensions beyond the masculine-feminine dimension and employ mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches to better capture the dynamics of organizational culture and career development over time. Special attention should also be given to gender-related factors, particularly the finding that female officers exhibit stronger masculine cultural characteristics, to further explore the internal and external influences affecting their career progression.

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