

Forging an Elite Force: Capacity Building in the Mobile Brigade (Brimob) of the South Sulawesi Regional Police

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HOW TO CITE:

Arief Doddy Suryawan, Muh.
Akmal Ibrahim, Hasniati (2026).
Forging an Elite Force: Capacity
Building in the Mobile Brigade
(Brimob) of the South
Sulawesi Regional Police.
International Journal of Special
Education, 41(11s), 904-910

ABSTRACT:

This study analyses capacity building in the Mobile Brigade (Brimob) of the South Sulawesi Regional Police using Grindle and Serrill's (1997) framework, which conceptualises capacity development across three dimensions: human resource development, organisational strengthening, and institutional reform. As an elite, semi-military police unit charged with high-intensity tasks ranging from social-conflict management and counter-terrorism to disaster response, Brimob requires robust and sustainable organisational capacity. A qualitative case-study design was employed, with purposively selected informants comprising unit commanders, operational and high-achieving members, human resource and finance officials, the regional police human resource bureau, and an external organisational partner. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document study, and were analysed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings show that human resource development is comparatively strong, supported by a structured architecture of operational and specialist training and expanding educational pathways, though hampered by under-strength personnel and scarce scientific specialists. Organisational strengthening exhibits clear command structures, timely budgeting, and layered supervision, yet is constrained by inadequate housing and infrastructure that impede rapid mobilisation. Institutional reform reveals a measure of regulatory autonomy—including locally grounded internal rules—and progressively favourable central policies, while a dedicated career and welfare regime commensurate with operational risk remains absent. The study concludes that the three dimensions are interdependent and that the binding constraints lie in personnel strength, infrastructure, and a risk-adjusted institutional framework. Recommendations include closing the personnel gap, investing in housing and mobilisation infrastructure, and establishing a specialised recruitment and career architecture for the corps.

Keywords: capacity building; human resource development; organisational strengthening; institutional reform; Mobile Brigade (Brimob).

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Introduction. The evolving security landscape demands a fundamental transformation in how police organisations—particularly elite units such as the Mobile Brigade (Brimob)—are managed. As an integral component of the national security system, the Mobile Brigade of the South Sulawesi Regional Police confronts increasingly complex challenges, from social-conflict management and terrorism to natural-disaster response, all of which require rapid and professional responses (Harris, 2006; Ford, 2007). In this context, capacity building has become a strategic imperative that can no longer be deferred.

Capacity building is widely understood as the process of enhancing the abilities of individuals, organisations, and systems to perform core functions, solve problems, and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner (Grindle & Hilderbrand,

1995; Grindle, 1997). It encompasses more than training activities, extending to organisational and institutional development (UNESCO, 2010; Danquah et al., 2023). For a unit defined by operational readiness, adequate organisational capacity determines the ability to discharge high-risk tasks effectively (Brown et al., 2001).

Empirical data illustrate the demographic profile that conditions capacity development in Brimob. As shown in Table 1, of 1,890 personnel distributed across six units, the majority are below thirty-five years of age, indicating a productive workforce with substantial development potential but also a pronounced need for knowledge transfer from senior to junior personnel (Horton et al., 2003). Such intergenerational gaps must be bridged through systematic capacity-building programmes.

Table 1. Age Composition of Personnel of the Mobile Brigade, South Sulawesi Regional Police

No	Unit	Personnel	Age < 35	Age > 35
1	Makosat Brimob	242	127	115
2	Gegana Detachment	195	125	70
3	A Pelopor Battalion	527	388	139
4	B Pelopor Battalion	354	189	165
5	C Pelopor Battalion	303	251	52
6	D Pelopor Battalion	269	198	71
	Total	1,890	1,278 (67.6%)	612 (32.4%)

Source: Mobile Brigade, South Sulawesi Regional Police, 2025.

The intensity of personnel deployment further reflects the complexity of organisational demands. Between 2022 and 2025, Brimob personnel were involved in numerous centralised and regional operations, including out-of-province reinforcement and large-scale electoral-security operations engaging hundreds of personnel. This high deployment volume demands a solid organisational capacity to ensure readiness and professionalism in every mission (Ford, 2007).

Theoretically, Grindle and Serrill (1997) argue that capacity is built through the integration of three dimensions—human resource development, organisational strengthening, and institutional reform—each producing a distinct

form of capital: human, structural, and institutional. The framework was developed for developing-country contexts and is therefore highly relevant to Indonesia (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995). North (1990) complements this view by emphasising that institutions, as the “rules of the game,” shape the incentives and constraints that govern organisational behaviour.

Prior research demonstrates that capacity building is central to the transformation of police organisations into learning organisations capable of continuous adaptation (Ford, 2007; Harris, 2006). Recent scholarship further clarifies that capacity development and human resource development are complementary concepts that must be integrated through multi-level approaches spanning the individual, organisational, and systemic levels (Danquah et

al., 2023). These insights underscore the need to examine all three dimensions simultaneously rather than in isolation.

Despite the breadth of capacity-building scholarship in public administration, its application to semi-military police organisations in Indonesia remains limited (Sugiyono, 2021). The distinctive features of Brimob—strong hierarchy, paramilitary discipline, high operational-readiness requirements, and a public-security orientation—make it a compelling case for testing the applicability of the three dimensions of capacity building in a context that diverges from conventional civilian bureaucracies (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Accordingly, this study analyses the condition of capacity building in the Mobile Brigade of the South Sulawesi Regional Police across the three dimensions of Grindle and Serrill (1997), identifying enabling and constraining factors and generating practical recommendations. The novelty of the study lies in its contextual application of the framework to an Indonesian elite police unit through a dyadic qualitative case-study design (Creswell, 2007), offering evidence to inform police reform discourse and the strengthening of organisational capacity nationwide.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative case-study design (Creswell, 2007) to obtain an in-depth understanding of capacity building in the Mobile Brigade of the South Sulawesi Regional Police, located in Makassar. The qualitative approach was selected because capacity building is a complex, multidimensional process that cannot be captured through quantitative measurement alone (Grindle & Serrill, 1997).

Informants were chosen purposively to represent multiple stakeholder perspectives and comprised unit commanders, operational and high-achieving members, officials of the human resource and finance divisions, an official of the regional police human resource bureau, and an external

organisational partner that uses Brimob services, thereby enabling triangulation across roles.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews lasting 60–90 minutes per informant, which were recorded and transcribed; direct observation of organisational dynamics; and document study of regulations, deployment records, and personnel data.

Interview protocols were developed from the three dimensions of capacity building. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014)—data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing—conducted iteratively through thematic coding. Source triangulation was applied to ensure the credibility of the interpretation, and findings were situated within the theoretical framework of Grindle and Serrill (1997).

Results

Human Resource Development

Human resource development constitutes the most developed dimension of capacity building in Brimob. The corps operates a structured architecture of operational and specialist training aligned with its core functions, delivered both through independent unit drills and through centrally budgeted programmes. This dual mechanism ensures that skills are continuously renewed in line with the demands of high-intensity tasks.

Educational pathways reinforce human-resource development. Recruitment has evolved from a generalised police intake—after which members were selected into Brimob—towards a dedicated Brimob admission track, while serving personnel are encouraged to pursue higher education through recognition-of-prior-learning and online classes.

Participation data, summarised in Table 2, nonetheless reveal that access to officer-formation and specialist education remains modest relative to total strength.

Table 2. Participation in Personnel Development Programmes, Mobile Brigade, South Sulawesi (2025)

Programme Type	Course	Participants
Officer formation (Dikbang)	Sepimma	9
Officer formation (Dikbang)	PAG	23
Officer formation (Dikbang)	SIP	77
Officer formation (Dikbang)	SBP	73
Specialist (Dikbangspes)	Basic Brimob	87
Specialist (Dikbangspes)	Jungle Warfare	36
Specialist (Dikbangspes)	PKSSH	38
Specialist (Dikbangspes)	Urban Warfare	12

Source: Mobile Brigade, South Sulawesi Regional Police, 2025.

A persistent constraint, however, is the gap between actual and authorised strength and the scarcity of scientific specialists. Real strength of roughly 1,800 personnel falls well short of the ideal establishment of around 3,000, and CBRN functions in particular require chemistry and biology graduates who remain in short supply. Human-resource capacity is thus strong in operational skills but thin in advanced technical expertise. Interpreted through Grindle and Serrill (1997), Brimob's human-resource development effectively produces the human capital needed to operate the corps' systems, fulfilling the dimension's emphasis on structured education, training, and career development. The under-strength establishment and specialist scarcity, however, limit the depth of this capital, consistent with evidence that human-resource capacity is the foundation upon which organisational performance is built (Brown et al., 2001; Danquah et al., 2023). It is therefore recommended that the corps close the personnel gap through expanded dedicated recruitment and establish specialist-officer pathways and higher-

education quotas, thereby integrating capacity development with human-resource development as a multi-level strategy (Danquah et al., 2023).

2. Organisational Strengthening

Organisational strengthening in Brimob is evident in clear command structures, disciplined administrative systems, and reliable financial management. Salaries are disbursed directly and punctually through the state treasury, performance and operational allowances are administered alongside basic pay, and facility maintenance is funded according to a prioritisation scheme. These arrangements provide the structural capital that enables personnel to perform effectively. Layered supervision and partnership management further strengthen the organisation. The command chain is exceptionally robust, with assigned supervisory officers monitoring deployed teams and a monthly rotation system maintaining standardised service quality across partner sites. Performance appraisal has shifted towards self-reported workload analysis cross-checked against attendance records, indicating a maturing management system.

Table 3. Indicators of Organisational Strengthening, Mobile Brigade, South Sulawesi

Organisational Indicator	Condition	Finding
Command structure	Strong	Clear hierarchy across six units and battalions
Financial management	Adequate	Timely salary and allowance disbursement
Supervision (Propam)	Functioning	Layered, per sub-unit; attendance-based appraisal
Personnel strength vs. establishment	Under-strength	≈ 1,890 of ≈ 3,000 authorised
Housing & mobilisation infrastructure	Inadequate	Insufficient barracks; dispersed residence slows mobilisation

Source: Compiled from field data and document study, 2024–2025.

Within Grindle and Serrill's (1997) framework, these findings indicate that Brimob possesses considerable structural capital in command, finance, and supervision, yet faces a binding infrastructural constraint: inadequate barracks and dispersed residence undermine the rapid mobilisation that defines an elite unit. Personnel scattered across private housing are difficult to assemble quickly, weakening operational readiness. This accords with the proposition that organisational strengthening requires not only systems and processes but also adequate infrastructure and resources (Horton et al., 2003). It is therefore recommended that the corps prioritise investment in housing and mobilisation infrastructure and consolidate its management-information systems, so that structural capital fully supports the human capital developed under the first dimension (Brown et al., 2001).

3. Institutional Reform

Institutional reform concerns the rules, policies, and external relations that shape organisational performance. Brimob exercises a measure of

regulatory autonomy, issuing internal rules within its remit—including locally grounded arrangements such as unit nomenclature drawn from Bugis cultural heritage—while remaining anchored to national standards. This capacity to embed local wisdom within a national framework reflects a constructive form of institutional adaptation.

Successive changes in central policy and police-chief regulations are progressively favourable, expanding personnel quotas, promotion opportunities, and educational access over time. Central policies are implemented consistently at the unit level, even as greater budgetary allocation and personnel strength remain necessary conditions for enhanced capacity.

A recurring theme, however, is the absence of a dedicated institutional regime commensurate with the corps' elevated operational risk. Given Brimob's higher-risk mandate, a distinct career architecture and welfare framework—including dedicated officer-formation pathways and risk-adjusted compensation—would better sustain motivation and retention, since base pay currently does not differ from that of general police units.

Table 4. Indicators of Institutional Reform, Mobile Brigade, South Sulawesi

Institutional Indicator	Condition	Finding
Internal rule-making authority	Available	Operational rules within national standards; local-wisdom nomenclature
Trend of central policy	Improving	Expanding quotas, posts, and educational access
Inter-institutional partnership	Constructive	Smooth coordination with partner organisations
Dedicated career architecture	Absent	No specialised officer-formation pathway for the corps
Risk-adjusted compensation regime	Absent	Base pay equal to general police despite higher risk

Source: Compiled from field data and document study, 2024–2025.

Read through Grindle and Serrill (1997) and North (1990), Brimob's institutional capital is partially developed: regulatory autonomy and improving central policy provide enabling rules, yet the absence of a risk-adjusted career and

welfare regime represents a critical institutional gap that constrains the corps' ability to convert human and structural capital into sustained capacity. This is consistent with the argument that institutional reform supplies the incentives and accountability that govern organisational behaviour, and that capacity is sustainable only

when individual, organisational, and institutional levels are addressed together (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995; North, 1990). It is therefore recommended that policymakers establish a dedicated institutional framework for the corps—comprising specialised recruitment, distinct career pathways, and risk-adjusted compensation—so that institutional reform reinforces rather than constrains the other two dimensions of capacity building (Danquah et al., 2023).

5. Conclusion

Capacity building in the Mobile Brigade of the South Sulawesi Regional Police is advancing unevenly across the three dimensions of Grindle and Serrill (1997). Human resource development is the strongest dimension, supported by a structured architecture of operational and specialist training and expanding educational pathways, though limited by an under-strength establishment and a scarcity of scientific

specialists. Organisational strengthening demonstrates robust command structures, timely financial management, and layered supervision, yet is constrained by inadequate housing and mobilisation infrastructure. Institutional reform displays a measure of regulatory autonomy and progressively favourable central policy, but lacks a dedicated career and welfare regime commensurate with the corps' operational risk. Because the three dimensions are interdependent, the study concludes that the binding constraints lie in personnel strength, infrastructure, and a risk-adjusted institutional framework; strengthening Brimob's capacity therefore requires closing the personnel gap, investing in housing and mobilisation infrastructure, and establishing a specialised recruitment, career, and compensation architecture, so that human, structural, and institutional capital combine to produce effective, efficient, and sustainable organisational capacity.

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