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# THE INFLUENCE OF ICONIC AND CULTURALLY ROOTED POLICE BUILDINGS ON PUBLIC TRUST: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT THE TANJUNG BATU POLICE SECTOR

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## Abstract

Public trust in the police institution is a crucial element in maintaining social order and institutional legitimacy. In recent years, efforts to humanize public services through architectural design have gained increasing attention, particularly amid growing public skepticism toward the Indonesian National Police (Polri). This study aims to explore how iconic police building designs rooted in local culture influence public trust through symbolic and cultural representation. A qualitative approach with a single-case study design was employed, focusing on the Integrated Police Service Center (SPKT) of the Tanjung Batu Police Sector, which features distinctive architectural elements such as traditional roof structures, local wood materials, and regional cultural ornaments. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and visual documentation. The findings reveal that these architectural elements foster emotional connection, a sense of comfort, and public perceptions of openness and professionalism within the police institution. These results highlight the importance of integrating local identity into public service infrastructure design as a strategic effort to build public trust and strengthen institutional credibility.

**Keywords:** *Public Trust, Police Architecture, Local Identity, Public Service, Qualitative Study.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Public trust in the police institution is one of the main foundations for realizing effective, fair, and dignified law enforcement. The existence of the Polri institution is not merely that of a law enforcement agency, but also as a public service provider tasked with ensuring a sense of security, comfort, and justice in a comprehensive manner (Malone, 2021; Mawby, 2022; Mourtgos, 2020). In this regard, the visual and spatial features of police buildings have become increasingly relevant in shaping how the public perceives the institution's legitimacy and intent. In an ever-evolving social reality especially in the modern era, which is marked by high public expectations for transparency and accountability among state institutions public trust has become a non-negotiable element (Kochel, 2021; Loader & Walker, 2020).

In recent years, challenges to public trust have become increasingly complex. The public evaluates police performance not only based on formal outcomes but also through daily interactions, symbolic representations, and the approach to service delivery (Perry, 2020; Pryce, 2022). Symbolism embedded in physical spaces plays a crucial role in shaping this perception, particularly when architectural elements reflect openness, professionalism, and cultural relevance. Therefore, the presence of the police must be understood as more than just a legal authority; it should be seen as an integral part of the social order one that is communicative, humanistic, and aligned with the cultural values of the local community.

In addition, within the context of public services, the availability of facilities and infrastructure plays a crucial role in shaping community experiences and perceptions. Public services consist of four main elements: service providers, service recipients, types of services, and customer satisfaction. Service providers must be able to deliver service processes that

effectively and efficiently meet user needs (Atep Adya Bharata, 2003). When public buildings are designed with cultural identity in mind, they not only serve administrative functions but also signal institutional values that resonate with the public.

Meanwhile, according to Kasmir (2006), quality public services must fulfill several characteristics, including the availability of competent human resources, adequate facilities and infrastructure, the ability to provide fast and accurate service, effective communication, confidentiality, understanding of user needs, and the ability to foster public trust. In policing contexts, these characteristics must also be reflected spatially through the layout, aesthetics, and symbolic features of service spaces.

In the context of police services, these principles must be realized not only through the behavior of officers but also through the physical design of service spaces that are friendly, inclusive, and reflect values of openness. Thus, the design of public service buildings such as the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu serves not only as an administrative space, but also as a visual medium for cultivating trust, security, and comfort within the community. This architectural representation becomes particularly important in contexts where rebuilding public trust is a pressing concern.

One approach that is gaining increased attention in the effort to strengthen institutional image and trust is the symbolic and visual approach. In this regard, the design of public service buildings becomes a critical element that not only represents physical structure but also conveys institutional values, identity, and modes of public engagement. Architecture is not merely about form and function; it is also a message it can express openness, warmth, professionalism, and even a connection to local cultural roots (Hodos, 2010). This study adopts this perspective, positioning police architecture as a symbolic interface that bridges institutional identity with community values.

The Tanjung Batu Police Station in Ogan Ilir Regency serves as a concrete example of how this approach has been implemented. The Integrated Police Service Center (SPKT) building at this location features an iconic design that incorporates local architectural elements, such as traditional roof shapes, the use of natural materials, and regional cultural ornaments. This building not only enhances the appearance of the institution but also creates a more inclusive, welcoming, and non-intimidating atmosphere. In the eyes of the public, building designs that reflect local characteristics are often more readily accepted emotionally, as they foster a sense of connection and pride in regional identity (Richards, 2007).

**Table 1. Number of Public Visits in 2024**

<b>Report Types</b>	<b>Number</b>
LP-B (Police Report Category B)	98
LP-C (Police Report Category C)	450
<b>Total</b>	<b>548</b>

Source: Tanjung Batu Police (2024)

However, there are relatively few studies that examine in depth how buildings like this are interpreted by the community, and to what extent the presence of iconic and local designs impacts public trust in the police institution. This research addresses this gap by investigating how local architectural symbolism influences the perceived legitimacy and approachability of police services. In the context of bureaucratic reform and the strengthening of services based on integrity zones, it is important to recognize that the visual and physical aspects of public service environments also influence the social psychology of citizens as service recipients.

This study aims to explore how the local architectural elements of the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu building shape public perceptions of institutional trust and symbolic legitimacy. The primary questions addressed in this study are: How do people interpret the presence of the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu building, and does its iconic and locally-based design contribute to building public trust in the police institution?

Additionally, this study aims to examine how public service design can help eliminate negative stigma within the community, specifically the assumption that reporting to the police station is ineffective or will only be addressed after going viral on social media. By presenting a representative, welcoming service space that reflects local values, it is hoped that the community will feel more comfortable, accepted, and confident in approaching the police station without fear or doubt. Ultimately, this research highlights the relevance of culturally sensitive infrastructure in reinforcing institutional reform and enhancing community engagement. Thus, the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu can serve as an example in rebuilding a positive image of the police through a culture-based and humanistic public service approach.

The results of this study are expected to offer a new perspective on developing a more humanistic police public service strategy, one that is adaptive to local contexts and rooted in cultural values. Thus, the public service building not only serves an administrative function but also acts as a symbolic bridge between state institutions and the communities they serve.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a single-case study strategy, focusing on the phenomenon of iconic and locally distinctive police building design in the context of building public trust (Dewi, 2019). This methodological choice is grounded in the study's objective to deeply understand how architectural forms convey symbolic meaning and influence institutional perception. This approach was selected because it aligns with the study's purpose: to explore the meaning and subjective perceptions of the community regarding the visual symbols represented by public service architecture. Qualitative methods enable researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, interpretations, and social relations between the community and police institutions insights that cannot be obtained through a quantitative approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 2009).

This research was conducted at the Integrated Police Service Center (SPKT) of Tanjung Batu Police, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, selected due to its regional architectural characteristics and the positive response it has elicited from the local community. Therefore, the case study approach is deemed appropriate, as it allows for the contextual exploration of real phenomena within their natural environment, as suggested by Rusandi & Rusli (2021). The SPKT building offers a unique setting to observe how spatial and symbolic elements influence public attitudes, making it a suitable site for exploring trust-building dynamics through design.

To obtain relevant data, this study employed three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and visual documentation. Each method was selected to capture the symbolic and emotional dimensions embedded in public service environments. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to maintain flexibility while still providing direction, allowing informants to freely and reflectively convey their experiences and perceptions (Poltak & Widjaja, 2024). The research subjects were purposively selected, including members of the community utilizing SPKT services, local community leaders, and National Police personnel serving in the service unit. Participant observation was conducted by directly observing interactions between the community and the SPKT service environment, focusing on their gestures, expressions, and comfort while engaging in public spaces. Visual documentation, in the form of photographs and field notes, was used to capture the symbolic aspects of the architecture and the service activities. These methods provided complementary insights, enabling the researcher to triangulate visual, behavioral, and narrative data to reveal how physical design fosters public trust.

In analyzing the data, this study employs a Thematic Analysis approach based on the model outlined by Miles (2014), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. Additionally, the Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework is used to capture the emotional and symbolic dimensions of meaning in people's experiences of the building (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). This dual-analytic approach ensures coherence between the data collection and the core research aim, which centers on symbolic communication and institutional trust.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the researcher applied the source triangulation technique comparing the results of interviews from various informants member checking, which involves confirming the results of the interpretation with the interview subjects, and researcher reflection (reflexivity) at each stage of the research, as suggested by Epedal, Smith, & Thomas (2022). This approach is crucial to minimize researcher bias and enhance the credibility of the findings. Participant selection criteria were based on their direct engagement with the SPKT building and services, ensuring that data reflect authentic community experiences.

Although the qualitative approach has limitations in terms of the generalization of findings, this case study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of local dynamics, which is important in the context of public service reform based on local wisdom. Therefore, the results of this study are not intended to be generalized, but rather to expand conceptual understanding and offer empirical contributions to the development of visual and cultural-based trust-building strategies in police institutions. The study's findings may inform future design policies that emphasize cultural sensitivity as a pathway to institutional credibility and effective public engagement.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Public Visual Perception of SPKT Buildings with Local Architecture

The visual appearance of public service buildings plays an important role in shaping community perception. In this case, the SPKT building incorporates elements of local architectural identity to create cultural familiarity and strengthen its presence in the community. The application of these elements can be seen in the structure shown below:



**Figure 1. SPKT Building of TJ Batu Police Station**

The physical appearance of a building serves as the initial point of contact that shapes public impressions and perceptions of the police institution. At the Tanjung Batu Police Station, the presence of the SPKT building with its local architectural style creates a strong and distinctive first impression, setting it apart from most conventional police stations. Residents consistently associate the building's visual form with familiarity, comfort, and cultural belonging, directly linking architecture to their emotional response to the institution.

*"When I first came to the SPKT Building of the Tanjung Batu Police, I felt like I was entering my own home. The design resembled our traditional house in the Tanjung Batu sub-*

*district. Maybe this is the first police station in South Sumatra that uses a traditional house design for its public service building,"* said Alkhozin bin Rosyidi, a resident who once filed a report at the Tanjung Batu Police, during an interview. This testimonial demonstrates how architectural aesthetics can transform institutional imagery from intimidating to approachable, reinforcing the symbolic shift in how authority is perceived.

This quote illustrates how the visual form of a building can have a direct psychological and emotional impact on the community. Many informants highlighted specific elements such as the pyramid-shaped roof, the dominant use of wood, and the inclusion of local ornaments as features that made the building feel more humanistic and familiar. Key elements mentioned by informants function not merely as decoration but as culturally embedded symbols of inclusion and warmth. Field observations further revealed that the SPKT building blends harmoniously with the surrounding cultural landscape, creating a sense of unity between state institutions and local identity.

This finding can be interpreted through the lens of Symbolic Interactionism, which posits that symbols within social interactions help shape perceptions and meanings (Carey, 2004; Snow, 2001; Xinjian & Yao, 2024). Here, architecture becomes a semiotic device that communicates institutional openness, signaling a more humanistic approach to policing. In this case, architectural design infused with local cultural symbols functions as a visual language, communicating the message: *"We are part of this society, not apart from it."* Thus, architecture serves as a non-verbal medium of communication that influences public perception through symbolic and emotional associations (Dovey, 2010).

One of the local community leaders, H. Hidayat, remarked, *"When I first saw this building, I thought it wasn't a police station. It looked like a traditional house. There was a sense of comfort, not the usual tension that comes with visiting a police station."* This statement reflects how the building's visual representation functions as an integrative symbol, reducing the psychological distance between the community and the authorities. The architectural elements serve not only aesthetic purposes but also carry social significance where the use of local wood, regional carvings, and traditional architectural forms becomes a medium for expressing collective identity (Jencks, 2005).

Comparisons with other police stations further reinforce these findings. Several residents described the SPKT Tanjung Batu building as more "down to earth" and "non-intimidating," in contrast to other police stations that tend to feel rigid and overly formal. One resident, Alkhozin bin Rosyidi, who had used the SPKT service, stated: *"Usually, police stations are cold, the walls are high, and they make you scared. But this one is different. The wood color is warm, the roof is like our old house. It feels like being welcomed, not judged."* Such perceptions highlight how architectural choices can shape emotional responses and foster a more approachable, human-centered public service environment.

In a symbolic framework, this change in visual form signifies a transformation of meaning from "law enforcement authority" to "public service institution." Thus, the use of local architecture not only addresses aesthetic aspects but also reinforces the perception that the police institution is present with a more inclusive, open, and culturally adaptive face (Marques et al., 2015).

## **2. Buildings as Representations of Local Culture and Identity**

Architecture serves not only as a functional space for activities but also as a symbolic statement that embodies the values, identity, and character of a community (Chen, 2004). The SPKT building acts as an institutional emissary, visually asserting the state's alignment with local customs and traditions. In the case of the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu, the building's local design demonstrates how state institutions can adapt to and merge with the cultural identity of

the community. This architectural representation forms a symbolic bridge, connecting state structures with local wisdom.

One of the traditional figures, Mr. H. Hakimi, stated: *“We feel proud because this Police Station feels like a part of our own culture, not an external institution. The design is very good in terms of serving the community, making residents not hesitate or fear coming to the Police office, the INTEGRATED POLICE SERVICE CENTER (SPKT).”* This statement highlights how the community no longer sees the Police as a distant or foreign authority, but as an integral part of their social structure. Architecture here functions as a connector of social identity and institutional legitimacy. The presence of architectural elements reflecting local culture such as pyramid roofs, regional motif carvings, and open spatial arrangements reinforces the emotional connection between the residents and the institution.

This aligns with the Place Identity Theory proposed by Proshansky, which suggests that a person's emotional and psychological attachment to a place can become an integral part of their self-identity and collective identity (Hedges, 2020; Skandalis et al., 2017). In other words, when public buildings incorporate local cultural values and symbols, people feel 'represented,' fostering a stronger emotional connection to the place. The popularity of the SPKT building as a photo spot among youth symbolizes its transformation into a civic icon.

The head of RT 10, Asrul Nizar, also stated: *“Young people here are no longer afraid to come to the police station. They often take pictures in front of the SPKT building because it resembles our proud traditional house.”* This phenomenon illustrates how architecture can serve as a social bridge between the state and society, softening the symbolic boundaries between authority and citizens. Buildings are no longer perceived as intimidating symbols of power, but as public spaces that welcome and affirm local identity.

Within the framework of cultural symbolism, the SPKT building can be seen as a narrative representation of how state institutions integrate cultural values into their structures. Cultural symbols not only enhance the physical appearance but also communicate that the state respects and acknowledges local identity (Fernback, 2019). This is crucial in building social legitimacy, as communities are more receptive to institutions that demonstrate respect for their cultural heritage.

A religious leader from a nearby village, H. Abu Sopian, expressed: *“The Polsek building is now an example. When the state adapts to our culture, we feel appreciated. There is a sense of mutual respect.”* This statement reinforces the idea that cultural integration within state institutions not only fosters trust but also strengthens social bonds. The SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu serves as a model for how state infrastructure need not be culturally neutral, but can instead become a medium through which local plurality and identity are respected.

### **3. The Influence of Design on Comfort and Accessibility of Services**

The physical aspects of a public service building such as layout, lighting, ventilation, and interior design play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of comfort and influencing social behavior within the space. In the case of the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu, the open, bright, and locally inspired design not only creates an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere but also impacts how the public engages with police services. Design choices such as open layouts, warm lighting, and transparent materials were consistently cited as factors contributing to a less intimidating experience.

Based on observations and interviews, the majority of residents reported feeling more comfortable accessing services in the new SPKT building. One resident shared: *“Usually, when I go to the police station, I feel tense, afraid of being suspected of doing something wrong. But here it's different; the room is bright, the officers don't sit stiffly. So, we feel calmer.”* This statement highlights how a welcoming physical environment featuring adequate natural lighting, a spacious waiting area, and warm wood interior materials can alleviate anxiety and

enhance residents' psychological comfort when interacting with authorities. This aligns with Environmental Psychology principles, where well-designed physical space reduces stress and fosters prosocial behavior. Environmental Psychology theory (Gifford, 2014) supports this finding, emphasizing that a well-designed physical environment can foster social engagement, reduce stress, and promote cooperative behavior.

The open and minimally partitioned space design also plays a significant role in fostering more fluid two-way communication between the public and officers. A member of the Indonesian National Police serving in the SPKT shared: *"The SPKT building has been in use since March 17, 2025. With a more open and bright design, residents can communicate more easily, and it's not as tense as before."* According to the officer, the welcoming physical atmosphere also contributes to a sense of hospitality that was absent in previous conventional buildings. This illustrates a reciprocal relationship where spatial design impacts both service delivery and public receptivity. This illustrates that public service interactions are deeply influenced by environmental design, as space has the ability to shape attitudes, emotions, and even beliefs.

In addition to comfort, accessibility is also a key aspect that receives significant attention. Several residents noted that the building's layout, which emphasizes ease of navigation with clear signage, a nearby parking area, and a waiting room separate from the examination room made them feel neither "lost" socially nor spatially. A female resident who came to report a lost item shared: *"I came alone, but I wasn't confused. The layout is clear, and the officers greeted me quickly. So I wasn't afraid."*

From the officers' perspective, a comfortable working environment also enhances service quality. One SPKT officer noted: *"Because the air is good and natural light comes in through the windows, we don't get tired easily. So we can be friendlier when serving residents."* This statement illustrates the link between environmental comfort and the officers' increased empathy and positive attitude. It reinforces the argument in environmental-behavioral theory that well-designed spaces not only improve physical comfort but also enhance the quality of social interactions (Evans & McCoy, 1998).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that the physical design of service buildings emphasizing openness, comfort, and local wisdom not only creates an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere but also plays a strategic role in strengthening social relations between the state and its citizens. The comfort experienced by the community ultimately fosters a cooperative attitude, trust, and openness in their interactions with the Polri institution.

#### **4. Architecture as Communication of Openness and Professionalism**

Public service buildings are not merely functional infrastructure; they also serve as symbolic media that communicate institutional values to the public. In the context of Polri's bureaucratic reform, the architecture of the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu building functions as a visual communication tool, intentionally designed to reflect the values of transparency, openness, and professionalism. In the case of the SPKT, design elements serve as strategic messages that communicate transparency, reform, and professionalism.

Elements such as the use of transparent glass at the front of the building, an open waiting room without high partitions, and the inclusion of both digital and manual information boards indicate a shift toward a more participatory paradigm of public service. The Tanjung Batu Police Chief stated: *"We want the public to feel safe and comfortable from the moment they enter. We designed the architecture of this building as a symbol of openness, and we hope that the presence of this iconic SPKT building will attract public interest in POLRI services, so that people no longer view the police station as a frightening place and know that our services are free of charge."* This represents an institutional rebranding effort through architecture.

This statement conveys the idea that architecture is not merely about physical form, but also reflects the institution's intentions and orientation. According to Institutional Trust Theory (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), trust in institutions is built through perceptions of competence, integrity, and goodwill (benevolence). In this context, architectural design serves as a visual manifestation of all three dimensions.

The presence of transparent glass allows the public to "see" what is happening inside, creating the impression that nothing is being covered up. This strengthens the perception of accountability, as reflected in the words of one resident who said: *"Before, it felt like the police station was closed and a bit scary. Now it is visible from the outside, and we can see the officers working. It makes us feel relieved."*

In addition, clearly displayed information boards educate residents about service procedures, important contact lists, and the transparency of service hours. This intentional messaging reflects a focus on bureaucratic order and openness. SPKT officers also noted that the open design makes them feel more accountable because their activities are visible to the public. One officer said: *"Now we feel we have to be more disciplined because the public can see it directly from the outside. So, this design also shapes our attitudes."* This shows that architecture not only influences public perception but also encourages internal behavioral transformation. This shows that architecture not only influences public perception but also encourages internal behavioral transformation. The design of the space indirectly fosters institutional self-awareness collective awareness of the need to maintain the image and credibility of the institution.

From a symbolic perspective, the SPKT building represents a "new face" of the spirit of Polri reform one that is more humanistic, modern, and accountable. It functions as a visual representation of the evolving values within the police force. This aligns with the idea that public space reflects the ideology and social values of an institution (Dovey, 2010). As a symbol of reform, this architecture dismantles the old image often associated with closed power, rigid hierarchy, and procedural uncertainty. In contrast, the design of the new building conveys a narrative of openness, an inclusive service approach, and genuine institutional modernization.

Thus, the architectural design of the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu serves as an effective means of visual communication in building public trust. It acts as a bridge between public expectations and institutional commitment, while strengthening the symbolic legitimacy of the police as a transparent and professional public service entity.

##### **5. Local Architecture as an Institutional Trust Building Strategy**

The findings of this study indicate that architecture is not merely a matter of aesthetics or building functionality, but rather an integral part of an institutional strategy for building public trust. In the case of SPKT Tanjung Batu, design choices were found to directly influence public attitudes toward the police and their willingness to engage. In the context of SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu, the local architecture used has become an effective symbolic medium for establishing emotional closeness, demonstrating commitment to reform, and strengthening the legitimacy of the Polri institution in the eyes of the public (Lewicki & Tomlinson, 2003).

From the results of interviews with residents, community leaders, and police officers, a common thread emerges, indicating that locally inspired designs form a symbolic bond between institutions and communities. Mr. H. Hidayat, a community leader, said: *"When the building reflects our culture, it feels like the police are part of us, not outsiders."* This statement confirms the process of social integration that occurs through the visual symbols of buildings. This reflects Legitimacy Theory, where congruence between institutional symbols and community values enhances perceived legitimacy. As explained in Legitimacy Theory (Vitolla & Rubino, 2017), an institution is more likely to gain social legitimacy when its values align

with those held by the community. In this case, the building's use of local ornaments, traditional roof structures, and natural materials has created a strong symbolic resonance between the Polri institution and the residents of Tanjung Batu.

Not only does this architecture reflect cultural identity, but it also presents a more humanistic and professional face of public service. An SPKT officer explained, *"The spacious service area and welcoming design bring us closer to the residents, making it easier to engage in dialogue and gain their trust quickly."* Community policing principles were operationalized spatially, with design features that encourage dialogue. This statement reinforces the idea that the physical environment significantly influences behavior, both from the perspective of the service provider and the service recipient. In the context of Community Policing, this approach embodies the core principle of a partnership-based model, where the community is viewed not as an object of law enforcement, but as a partner in fostering security.

Building designs that reflect local wisdom also demonstrate how the state can present itself in a contextual and inclusive manner. It is not perceived as a foreign and intimidating power, but rather as the people's home a space where law, culture, and service come together in social harmony. From an institutional standpoint, this approach can be seen as an innovation in long-term trust-building. When architectural design is aligned with local identity and cultural values, it acts as a symbolic link between the state and society, enhancing perceptions of legitimacy and fostering a sense of belonging.

The implications of these findings are highly relevant for the development of SPKT in other regions. A design approach that incorporates local architecture can serve as a replicable model for fostering healthy social relations between the police and the community. Furthermore, in the context of Indonesia, which is rich in cultural diversity, this strategy presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen culturally-based community policing. This strategy presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen culturally-based community policing.

As one resident stated in an interview: *"If all police stations were like this, perhaps the relationship between the community and the police would be more harmonious."* This statement suggests that buildings are not just spaces for delivering services, but integral parts of a broader narrative on institutional reform. Architecture, in this sense, becomes a medium for conveying messages of goodwill, inclusivity, and respect for local values.

Thus, this study confirms that integrating local architectural design in public service buildings such as SPKT is a strategic step in strengthening institutional legitimacy through symbolic and cultural approaches. Architecture not only reflects the physical form of the institution, but also embodies the social values that resonate within the community.

This study demonstrates that the architectural design of the SPKT Polsek Tanjung Batu, which incorporates local cultural elements, plays a significant role in building public trust in the Polri institution. Visually, the design of the building creates a more friendly and welcoming atmosphere, distinguishing it from the typical impression conveyed by traditional police buildings. The use of local cultural elements, such as traditional roofs, regional ornaments, and indigenous wood materials, fosters a sense of closeness and connection to the surrounding community's culture. This approach strengthens the emotional bond between the community and the Polri, enhancing the institution's positive perception.

In addition, the building design serves as a symbol of openness and transparency. The open space layout, featuring elements like transparent glass and easily accessible areas, reinforces the public's perception that the National Police are committed to the principles of reform rooted in openness and accountability. Architecture that prioritizes comfort such as thoughtful spatial planning, ample lighting, and proper ventilation also contributes to a more pleasant and cooperative service experience for the public.

These elements work together as part of an institutional strategy to build trust and social legitimacy for the Police. This study also shows that architectural designs based on local

wisdom not only shape public perceptions of the Police, but can also enhance the overall effectiveness of public services. These elements collectively form a strategic, culturally embedded approach to public service delivery.

#### D. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the symbolic architectural design of the SPKT Tanjung Batu Police Station featuring traditional roofs, natural materials, and cultural ornaments significantly contributes to building public trust in the police institution. These local design elements foster emotional connection, comfort, and perceptions of transparency and professionalism, thereby enhancing institutional legitimacy and improving the relationship between the police and the community.

The findings affirm that culturally embedded infrastructure can serve as an effective trust-building strategy, particularly in policing contexts where public skepticism persists. Incorporating local identity into public service architecture humanizes state institutions and strengthens community engagement. Going forward, adopting community-oriented design principles in police infrastructure development offers a practical pathway to reinforce institutional credibility and support ongoing public service reform. In this regard, architecture should be viewed not merely as a physical structure, but as a communicative tool that bridges institutional values with the lived experiences of the people.

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