

Combating Motorcycle Theft: A Criminological Study in Sidoarjo Regional Police

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ABSTRACT

Motorcycle theft is one of the most persistent crimes in Indonesia, including within the jurisdiction of the Sidoarjo Regional Police. This study aims to analyze the law enforcement process regarding motor vehicle theft and identify the underlying criminological factors. The study uses an empirical legal approach, collecting data through in-depth interviews with criminal investigators from the Sidoarjo Regional Police and field observations. These are supported by relevant laws and legal literature. The results indicate that law enforcement carries out investigations and inquiries based on Articles 362, 363, and 365 of the Criminal Code (KUHP). The main obstacles are the lack of initial evidence and limited CCTV coverage. From a criminological perspective, internal factors, such as unstable economic conditions and perpetrators' low educational levels, along with external factors, including the influence of social circles, organized networks of receivers, and situational vulnerabilities, serve as the dominant triggers for this crime. The Sidoarjo Regional Police have implemented preventive measures, such as patrols, coordination with neighborhood watch groups, and community outreach, to reduce motorcycle theft.

Keywords: *Law Enforcement, Theft Crime, Criminology Perspective*

Penegakan Hukum dalam Tindak Pidana Pencurian Kendaraan Bermotor dalam Perspektif Kriminologi di Wilayah Hukum Polresta Sidoarjo

ABSTRAK

Pencurian kendaraan bermotor merupakan salah satu tindak pidana terhadap harta benda yang paling persisten di Indonesia, termasuk di wilayah hukum Polresta Sidoarjo sebagai kawasan dengan mobilitas tinggi yang berbatasan langsung dengan metropolitan Surabaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis proses penegakan hukum terhadap tindak pidana curanmor sekaligus mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor kriminologis yang melatarbelakanginya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan hukum empiris, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan penyidik reserse kriminal Polresta Sidoarjo dan observasi lapangan, didukung peraturan perundang-undangan dan literatur hukum yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penegakan hukum dilaksanakan melalui tahap penyelidikan dan penyidikan berdasarkan Pasal 362, 363, dan 365 KUHP, dengan hambatan utama berupa minimnya alat bukti awal dan keterbatasan cakupan CCTV. Secara kriminologis, faktor internal berupa kondisi ekonomi tidak stabil dan rendahnya tingkat pendidikan pelaku, serta faktor eksternal berupa pengaruh lingkungan pergaulan, jaringan penadah terorganisir, dan kelemahan situasional menjadi faktor dominan pemicu kejahatan ini. Polresta Sidoarjo telah menjalankan upaya preventif melalui patroli, koordinasi siskamling, dan sosialisasi masyarakat sebagai upaya pencegahan pencurian motor.

Kata kunci: *Penegakan Hukum, Tindak Pidana Pencurian, Perspektif Kriminologi*

INTRODUCTION

Crime is a societal phenomenon that is difficult to eliminate, despite the ongoing work of different groups to stop and fight it. From a sociological perspective, crime encompasses not only violations of written law but also all actions, speech, and behavior that cause economic, political, or socio-psychological harm and violate the prevailing moral norms within society.¹ The impact of crime on the public is often felt most acutely in the form of property crime, which includes theft and robbery. Motor vehicle theft, also known as *curanmor*, is a particularly prevalent and persistent concern for law enforcement agencies.²

Motor vehicle theft remains one of the most common crime. This is particularly true in urban areas with high levels of mobility and population density. Surabaya, the largest metropolitan center in East Java, has recorded a significant number of motor vehicle thefts. Data from 2023 shows that 544 cases were reported. This situation reflects public concern and requires a serious response from law enforcement authorities.³ Sidoarjo Regency, which borders Surabaya, also faces similar potential risks due to the high intensity of population movement and inter-regional economic flows, which contribute to this criminal activity. Therefore, ensuring public safety and order in the region requires effective law enforcement at the Sidoarjo Regional Police level.

Several previous studies have examined the issue of motorcycle theft in different regions. Andarwati analyzed law enforcement's response to motorcycle theft in the Semarang District Court. She identified various challenges faced by law enforcement officers, ranging from insufficient evidence to the public's lack of active participation as witnesses.⁴ Mahinano, Adam, and Lewerissa conducted a criminological study of the theft of two-wheeled motor vehicles. They found that social and economic factors, as well as the social environment, are the dominant variables that drive individuals to

¹ H. Djanggih and N Qamar, "Penerapan Teori-Teori Kriminologi Dalam Penanggulangan Kejahatan Siber (Cyber Crime)," *Pandecta: Research Law Journal* 13, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/pandecta.v13i1.14020>.

² R. Safira, H. Irianto, and I. Ismail, "Strategi Kepolisian Dalam Rangka Mengantisipasi Terjadinya Tindak Pidana Pencurian Kendaraan Bermotor Roda Dua (Studi Kasus: Polsek Waru Sidoarjo-Jawa Timur)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, Dan Humaniora* 8, no. 4 (2024), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31604/jim.v8i4.2024.1621-1630>.

³ Helena Fiorentina, "Efforts to Improve the Performance of Rapid Response Patrols by the Samapta Unit in Preventing Motorcycle Theft in the Jurisdiction of Surabaya Police Headquarters," *Tanggon Kosala* 12, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.70526/tk.v12i2.1359>.

⁴ E. Andarwati, "Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Tindak Pidana Pencurian Sepeda Motor Di Semarang (Studi Di Pengadilan Negeri Semarang)," *COMSERVA Indonesian Journal of Community Services and Development* 2, no. 10 (2023), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59141/comserva.v2i10.626>.

commit motor vehicle theft.⁵ Renaldy and Kartadinata, examining the criminological aspects of motor vehicle theft committed by minors, found that this criminal act is closely linked to family dysfunction, peer influence, and a lack of parental supervision.⁶

The research mentioned above has generally been conducted in the Semarang area and eastern Indonesia. Consequently, no specific studies are yet available within the jurisdiction of the Sidoarjo Regional Police. Furthermore, most studies use a single-approach methodology that examines either law enforcement or criminological aspects in isolation without integrating them within a comprehensive analytical framework. Studies that posit the investigators at the police station as the primary unit of analysis are also still very limited. The effectiveness of investigations at the police level is the initial key to the success of law enforcement. This study aims to analyze the law enforcement process and identify criminological factors that cause motor vehicle theft within the Sidoarjo Regional Police's jurisdiction. This study will provide theoretical and practical contributions to developing more effective, contextually appropriate crime prevention strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Law Enforcement Theory

Law enforcement is the process of applying legal norms within society to achieve order, justice, and legal certainty. According to Soerjono Soekanto, the effectiveness of law enforcement is influenced by five interrelated factors: the law itself, Law Enforcement Officers, resources and facilities, public awareness, and culture. Failure in any one of these factors will have a direct impact on the overall effectiveness of law enforcement.⁷ Law enforcement can be carried out in two ways: reactively through a repressive approach, or proactively through a preventive approach. This study used Soerjono Soekanto's theoretical framework to analyze the effectiveness of these five factors in prosecuting vehicle theft cases within Sidoarjo City. It also identified structural barriers that hindered the investigation.

Criminological Theory

⁵ R. Mahinano, S. Adam, and Y. Lewerissa, "Kajian Kriminologi Terhadap Aksi Pencurian Kendaraan Bermotor Roda Dua," *TATOHI: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 3, no. 12 (2024), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47268/tatohi.v3i12.2113>.

⁶ R. Renaldy and A. Kartadinata, "ASPEK KRIMINOLOGI PENCURIAN KENDARAAN BERMOTOR YANG DILAKUKAN OLEH ANAK," *Audi Et AP: Jurnal Penelitian Hukum* 3, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24967/jaeap.v3i02.3319>.

⁷ Soerjono Soekanto, *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1986).

Criminology is the systematic study of crime, criminal behavior, offenders, and their motives. The term "criminology" was first established by P. Topinard, who derived it from the Latin words "crimen" and "logos".⁸ One of the most relevant theories in explaining the phenomenon of motor vehicle theft is Robert K. Merton's Anomie Theory, which posits that crime arises from the gap between the social goals desired by society and the legitimate ways to achieve them.⁹ Individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are vulnerable to social frustration. They lack access to education and decent employment. They may resort to illegal means, including motor vehicle theft, as a way to overcome such pressures. In addition to economic factors, the social environment, peer influence, and weak social control contribute to the emergence of such criminal behavior.¹⁰ This study employs a criminological approach to identify the factors underlying the high rate of motor vehicle theft in the Sidoarjo Regional Police District. This information will enable the formulation of more targeted and sustainable countermeasures.

Prevention Theory

The crime of motor vehicle theft must be tackled through coordinated efforts by law enforcement agencies, involving community organizations at every level both in urban and rural areas. This crime causes financial loss to the public and has the potential to result in loss of life.¹¹

One crime prevention strategy is the situational approach, which manipulates and shapes the environment to increase the risk for potential offenders. This approach aims to prevent individuals from committing crimes, particularly motor vehicle theft, by reducing opportunities and making it more difficult to commit such crimes. The prevention of motorcycle theft requires the establishment of effective collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the public.¹² Police officers, especially unit commanders and heads of criminal investigation units, must act decisively within their authority to eradicate this crime. They must directly supervise investigators and assistant investigators and take full responsibility for the operations of the criminal

⁸ Mahinano, Adam, and Lewerissa, "Kajian Kriminologi Terhadap Aksi Pencurian Kendaraan Bermotor Roda Dua."

⁹ I.P Siregar, "Analisis Yuridis Terhadap Sanksi Pelaku Tindak Pidana Pencurian Dengan Pemberatan Dalam Perspektif Kriminologi Dan Teori Anomie Dari Robert King Merton," *ACADEMIA: Jurnal Inovasi Riset Akademik*. 3, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51878/academia.v3i3.2475>.

¹⁰ Renaldy and Kartadinata, "ASPEK KRIMINOLOGI PENCURIAN KENDARAAN BERMOTOR YANG DILAKUKAN OLEH ANAK."

¹¹ G Masekan, "Performance Analysis of the General Criminal Investigation Directorate in Revealing the Crime of Theft," *Estudiante Law Journal.*, ahead of print, 2021, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33756/eslaj.v0i0.15030>.

¹² Michael Farrell, "Understanding Situational Crime Prevention," in *Homicide and Severe Mental Disorder* (Routledge, 2021), 15.

investigation unit. The public also plays a vital role in maintaining neighborhood security by increasing vigilance, immediately reporting suspicious activity, and fostering good communication with the police.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs an empirical legal approach. This approach examines how the law is implemented and applied within society.¹³ Data were collected through in-depth interviews with investigators from the Sidoarjo Regional Police Criminal Investigation Unit and field observations as primary data, as well as legislation, court rulings and legal literature as secondary data. A qualitative-descriptive method was used to conduct the data analysis. This method was used because the researcher was the primary instrument in collecting and interpreting data.¹⁴ The data were presented systematically to address issues of law enforcement and criminological factors relating to vehicle theft in the Sidoarjo Regional Police jurisdiction.¹⁵

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Law Enforcement Procedures for Motor Vehicle Theft at Sidoarjo Regional Police

Law enforcement regarding vehicle theft offenses within the jurisdiction of the Sidoarjo Regional Police is carried out in accordance with the provisions of Articles 362, 363, and 365 of the Criminal Code, taking into account the elements of the offense satisfied in each case. Article 362 covers ordinary theft, which is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. Article 363 covers aggravated theft, which is punishable by up to nine years' imprisonment. Article 365 covers theft accompanied by violence, which is punishable by a heavier sentence. The applicable article depends on the *modus operandi*, the number of perpetrators, and whether violence was involved in committing the offense.¹⁶

Prosecuting motorcycle theft at the Sidoarjo Regional Police Station involves two main, interlinked stages: the preliminary inquiry and the formal investigation. The preliminary inquiry determines whether an incident constitutes a criminal offense that warrants progression to the formal investigation stage. In practice, the investigation usually begins after a public report or complaint from the victim. Investigators seek to

¹³ Soejono Soekanto, *Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Penegakan Hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2005).

¹⁴ J.W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, (4th ed) (SAGE Publications, 2018).

¹⁵ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2018).

¹⁶ *Wawancara Saiful Arief, S.H., Kaur Binops Polresta Sidoarjo* (2025).

identify the alleged criminal offense by collecting initial statements, examining the crime scene, and tracing digital and physical evidence left by the perpetrator. Frequent challenges at this stage include a lack of initial evidence and limited CCTV coverage at certain crime scenes, which hinders the early identification of the perpetrator.¹⁷

Once the preliminary investigation yields sufficient evidence, the process moves to the investigative phase, as stipulated in Article 6(1) of the Criminal Procedure Code. This phase consists of a series of actions taken by investigators to seek and gather evidence to clarify the details of the crime and identify the perpetrator. Investigators from the Sidoarjo Regional Police employ various methods when handling vehicle theft cases, including questioning witnesses and victims, searching locations suspected to be linked to the perpetrators, seizing evidence such as vehicles and tools used in the crime, and coordinating with intelligence networks to track the whereabouts of stolen vehicles and the networks of receivers operating in the area. The entire process is carried out in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code provisions to ensure transparency, accountability, and fairness in every stage of law enforcement for all parties.

Criminological factors of motor vehicle theft in the Sidoarjo Regional Police District

The high rate of motor vehicle theft in the jurisdiction of the Sidoarjo Regional Police is a complex issue that cannot be explained by a single factor. According to the research findings, the contributing factors can be categorized into two groups: internal factors stemming from the perpetrators themselves and external factors arising from their social environment.

The most significant internal factor is the unstable economic situation of the perpetrators. Most motorcycle thieves in the Sidoarjo area come from groups that don't have steady jobs, have low incomes, or have no legitimate source of income at all. These conditions create immense social pressure, particularly in an urban environment that demands constant fulfillment of consumerist needs. This aligns with Robert K. Merton's Theory of Anomie, which explains that crime arises from a mismatch between the social goals society aspires to and the legitimate means available to achieve them.¹⁸ Individuals may experience deep social frustration who are unable to access quality education or decent employment, and at a certain point, illegal means may be resorted to as an escape from this pressure, including motor vehicle theft. In addition to economic factors, the perpetrators low level of education contributes to the problem by

¹⁷ *Wawancara Saiful Arief, S.H., Kaur Binops Polresta Sidoarjo.*

¹⁸ Siregar, "Analisis Yuridis Terhadap Sanksi Pelaku Tindak Pidana Pencurian Dengan Pemberatan Dalam Perspektif Kriminologi Dan Teori Anomie Dari Robert King Merton."

limiting their understanding of the legal consequences of their actions. This results in an insufficient deterrent effect before they carry out their crimes.¹⁹

External factors are significant in shaping the criminal behavior of motorcycle thieves. Social circles and peer pressure are among the variables frequently identified in motorcycle theft cases in the Sidoarjo region. Individuals who socialize in environments that are permissive toward crime or actively encourage criminal behavior are far more likely to engage in criminal acts than those who grow up in supportive social environments. Furthermore, organized networks of receivers exacerbate the situation by making it facilitated the distribution of stolen goods, which reduces the perceived risk for perpetrators and encourages more individuals to engage in this crime.²⁰

Structural factors contribute to creating an environment conducive to vehicle theft. These factors include weak surveillance in parking areas, insufficient lighting at key locations, and low public awareness of the need to secure personal vehicles. These factors create opportunities for perpetrators to carry out their crimes. Andarwati's research revealed that most vehicle thefts occur in areas with minimal physical surveillance, including open parking lots, secluded roadsides, and densely populated residential areas without adequate security systems.²¹ These conditions demonstrate that negligence on the part of victims and weak neighborhood security systems are situational factors that directly increase the likelihood of crime.

Crime Prevention Efforts Regarding Motor Vehicle Theft

Recognizing that a repressive approach insufficient to sustainably reduce vehicle theft rates, the Sidoarjo Regional Police Department is also implementing a series of preventive measures as part of a more comprehensive strategy. These measures encompass physical, educational, and social dimensions that complement one another.

From a physical and operational standpoint, the Sidoarjo Regional Police regularly conduct area patrols at locations identified as high risk areas for vehicle theft. These patrols function not only as an early detection mechanism but also as a psychological deterrent effect on potential offenders by increasing their perception of the risk of being caught. This approach aligns with the concept of Situational Crime Prevention developed by Clarke, which emphasizes that reducing opportunities through increased surveillance and risk for offenders is one of the most effective crime

¹⁹ *Wawancara Saiful Arief, S.H., Kaur Binops Polresta Sidoarjo.*

²⁰ *Wawancara Saiful Arief, S.H., Kaur Binops Polresta Sidoarjo.*

²¹ Andarwati, "Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Tindak Pidana Pencurian Sepeda Motor Di Semarang (Studi Di Pengadilan Negeri Semarang)."

prevention strategies.²² In addition to patrols, coordination with neighborhood watch (*siskamling*) systems at the sub district and village levels has also been strengthened as an extension of police surveillance at the community level.²³

From an educational perspective, raising public awareness regarding vehicle security measures is also a priority. The public is encouraged to use double locks, install vehicle alarms, utilize GPS tracking technology, and choose parking areas with adequate surveillance. These educational efforts are crucial, given that the majority of vehicle theft cases occur due to the negligence of the vehicle owners themselves. As emphasized by Fazlina, situational prevention strategies that involve the active participation of the public have proven effective in significantly reducing vehicle theft rates when implemented consistently and well coordinated between law enforcement and all segments of society.²⁴

The effectiveness of these various efforts has yet to reach its full potential. The relatively high rate of vehicle theft in the Sidoarjo region indicates gaps in the implementation of prevention strategies that need to be evaluated and addressed immediately. A more integrated approach is needed not only in terms of law enforcement and situational prevention but also in addressing the underlying socio-economic issues that serve as the primary drivers of this crime, such as expanding access to employment opportunities, improving the quality of education, and strengthening community economic empowerment programs in areas identified as having high vulnerability to crime.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that law enforcement regarding vehicle theft in the jurisdiction of the Sidoarjo Regional Police is carried out through preliminary and formal investigations based on Articles 362, 363, or 365 of the Criminal Code, depending on the modus operandi, the number of perpetrators, and the presence or absence of violence, although the process is still constrained by limited initial evidence and inadequate CCTV coverage. From a criminological perspective, internal factors such as unstable economic conditions and low levels of education among perpetrators, as well as external factors such as the influence of social circles, organized networks of receivers, and weak situational supervision, are the dominant variables driving this crime. Preventive efforts undertaken by the Sidoarjo Regional Police through routine

²² R. V. Clarke, *Situational Crime Prevention: Theory and Practice* (Albany: NY: Harrow and Heston., 1980).

²³ Wawancara Saiful Arief, S.H., Kaur Binops Polresta Sidoarjo.

²⁴ Nadila Fazlina Wati, "Strategi Pencegahan Kejahatan Pencurian Kendaraan Bermotor Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 (Studi Pada Polsek Tampan Kota Pekanbaru)" (Universitas Islam Riau, 2022).

patrols, neighborhood watch coordination, and public awareness campaigns on vehicle security have not been fully effective; therefore, a more integrated approach is needed that also addresses the underlying socio-economic issues as the primary triggers of motor vehicle theft in the region.

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