

Law Enforcement Effectiveness Against Motor Vehicle Theft at Surabaya Metropolitan Police

Ari Setiawan^{1*}, Noenik Soekorini², Renda Aranggraeni³

Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Surabaya, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

ari.setiawan18071986@gmail.com^{1*}



Article History

Received on 2 May 2026

1st Revision on 16 May 2026

2nd Revision on 4 June 2026

Accepted on 02 July 2026

Abstract

Purpose: This study analyzes the effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft within the jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police, identifies the factors influencing such effectiveness, and examines efforts to combat the crime.

Research Methodology: An empirical legal research method with a sociological juridical approach was employed. Data were collected through document analysis of statutory regulations, official police reports, court decisions, and relevant scientific journals.

Results: Law enforcement effectiveness is shaped by five interrelated factors: legal structure, officer capacity, facilities and infrastructure, community participation, and legal culture. Organized fencing networks and increasingly sophisticated offender methods remain the most significant obstacles. Available data indicate an overall crime rate reduction of approximately 4% between 2022 and 2023, with a case clearance rate of 78.9%, though curam-mor-specific performance indicators remain largely undisclosed.

Conclusions: Improving law enforcement quality, optimizing technology use, and strengthening community participation are essential to reduce motor vehicle theft. Repressive measures under Article 363 of the Criminal Code are the primary legal instrument but require complementary preventive strategies to be fully effective.

Limitations: This study is confined to the Surabaya Metropolitan Police jurisdiction and relies primarily on secondary qualitative data, which may restrict the generalizability of findings.

Contributions: This study contributes to criminal law scholarship by integrating criminological theory with empirical legal analysis, offering evidence-based insights for crime prevention policy.

Keywords: Criminal Law, Law Enforcement, Metropolitan Police, Motor Vehicle Theft, Vehicle Theft Crime

How to Cite: Setiawan, A., Soekorini, N., & Aranggraeni, R. (2026). Law Enforcement Effectiveness Against Motor Vehicle Theft at Surabaya Metropolitan Police. *Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia*, 6(1), 109-120.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a state governed by law, as expressly stipulated in Article 1 Paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. As a rule-of-law state, all actions undertaken by both citizens and state administrators must be based on the prevailing legal framework. Law plays a fundamental role in social life by maintaining public order, ensuring legal certainty, promoting justice,

and protecting society from various forms of legal violations and criminal acts. In a legal state, law is not merely understood as a set of written regulations but also as an instrument for achieving social peace and public welfare. Therefore, law enforcement constitutes a crucial element in ensuring that legal norms are effectively implemented in everyday life.

Law enforcement refers to the process through which legal rules are implemented by law enforcement authorities to achieve the objectives of the law. According to [Rahardjo \(2009\)](#), law enforcement is a process of transforming legal ideals into reality, whereby its success should not only be measured by the number of offenders apprehended and punished but also by its ability to create security, order, and justice within society. Effective law enforcement fosters public trust in the legal system and law enforcement institutions, whereas weak law enforcement may generate public anxiety and diminish confidence in the legal system itself. One form of criminal offense that continues to be a serious concern in Indonesia is motor vehicle theft. This crime falls within the category of offenses against property as regulated under Articles 362 and 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP). Motor vehicle theft causes significant concern among the public because, in addition to resulting in substantial material losses, it also disrupts the public's sense of security in carrying out daily activities. Today, motor vehicles are not only means of transportation but have also become essential assets that support economic activities, education, and employment.

In practice, motor vehicle theft is frequently committed through increasingly sophisticated methods and often involves organized criminal networks ([Gunadi, & Subawa, 2021](#); [Amri, Bawono, & Maerani, 2021](#)). Offenders do not merely act individually but commonly operate in groups with specific divisions of labor, where some members monitor the surrounding environment, others execute the theft, while others are responsible for distributing or selling stolen vehicles to receivers of stolen goods. Such circumstances make motor vehicle theft one of the most challenging crimes to eradicate comprehensively. The continuous increase in the number of motor vehicles each year has contributed to the high incidence of motor vehicle theft. Due to their considerable economic value, motor vehicles remain a primary target for criminal offenders. Furthermore, the growing dependence of society on motor vehicles has resulted in a significant increase in the circulation of vehicles within communities, creating greater opportunities for offenders to commit such crimes.

[Nugraha \(2023\)](#) argues that motor vehicle theft is one of the most frequently occurring criminal offenses in urban areas because it offers substantial economic benefits to offenders. Stolen vehicles may be resold at low prices, supplied with falsified documentation, or dismantled and sold as spare parts through illegal markets. This indicates that motor vehicle theft has evolved beyond a simple criminal act and has become a sophisticated crime involving organized networks and systematic operations. Surabaya, the second-largest metropolitan city in Indonesia, is characterized by intense economic activity and high levels of public mobility. As a center for trade, education, industry, and services in East Java, Surabaya has one of the highest levels of motor vehicle usage in the country, which indirectly increases the potential for motor vehicle theft. Moreover, the densely populated nature of Surabaya and its high level of social activity make it difficult to maintain optimal supervision of motor vehicles, as many individuals park their vehicles in public places, open parking areas, or locations with minimal security monitoring that offenders can exploit within a matter of minutes.

The increasing prevalence of motor vehicle theft in Surabaya indicates that significant challenges remain in law enforcement efforts. Offenders not only take advantage of victims' negligence but also employ increasingly sophisticated tools such as T-shaped keys or electronic devices capable of bypassing vehicle security systems within a short period of time. Additionally, advancements in communication technology have facilitated the sale of stolen vehicles through organized networks, making it increasingly difficult for law enforcement authorities to trace and recover stolen property. The existence of receivers of stolen goods further contributes to the persistence of this crime, as they play a critical role in the criminal chain by providing a stable market for stolen vehicles ([Anggraini & Lenny, 2021](#)). As long as individuals continue to purchase vehicles without proper documentation or at suspiciously low prices, motor vehicle theft will remain profitable and continue to flourish.

Despite the growing body of literature on criminal law enforcement in Indonesia, studies specifically examining the effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft at the metropolitan police level remain limited. Most existing studies focus on normative legal analysis or general crime prevention strategies, without adequately addressing the empirical dimensions of law enforcement performance, the role of organized fencing networks, and the interplay of legal culture and community participation in a metropolitan context. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by empirically analyzing: (1) the effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft within the jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police (Polrestabes Surabaya); (2) the factors influencing such effectiveness; and (3) the efforts undertaken to combat motor vehicle theft crimes. The novelty of this study lies in its empirical examination of law enforcement effectiveness at the metropolitan police level in Surabaya, combining legal effectiveness theory with a sociological juridical approach to produce findings that are both academically and practically relevant for improving crime prevention policies in urban areas.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Restorative Justice Theory

Restorative justice is a criminological approach that emphasizes repairing harm caused by criminal behavior through inclusive processes involving victims, offenders, and the community. Unlike retributive justice, which prioritizes punishment, restorative justice focuses on accountability, victim recovery, and the restoration of social relationships. Restorative justice is conceptualized as a collaborative process that engages all stakeholders in identifying harms, addressing consequences, and determining appropriate reparative actions to restore social balance and accountability ([Braithwaite, 2016](#)). This approach also promotes offender reintegration and emphasizes participatory decision-making as a mechanism for achieving social harmony.

In Indonesia, restorative justice has become an important element of criminal law reform aimed at creating a more humane, efficient, and cost-effective justice system. Its implementation is formally regulated under Attorney General Regulation No. 15 of 2020 concerning the termination of prosecution based on restorative justice. In the context of motor vehicle theft, this approach is particularly relevant for minor offenses or first-time offenders, where rehabilitation and victim restoration are prioritized over punitive imprisonment ([Braithwaite, 2016](#)).

2.2 Legal Effectiveness Theory

Legal effectiveness refers to the extent to which legal norms achieve their intended objectives in society. Effectiveness is determined not only by formal legal structures but also by institutional behavior and public compliance. From a socio-legal perspective, law enforcement effectiveness is strongly influenced by procedural justice and institutional legitimacy, where individuals' compliance is shaped by perceptions of fairness, trust, and authority ([Tyler, 2017](#); [Murphy, Tyler, & Curtis, 2009](#)). These dimensions highlight that effective law enforcement depends on both structural capacity and societal acceptance ([Nagin, & Telep, 2017](#); [Sun, Wu, Hu, & Farmer, 2017](#)). Friedman legal system theory further explains that legal effectiveness is shaped by three interrelated components: legal structure, legal substance, and legal culture. Structure refers to institutions, substance refers to regulations, and culture refers to societal values and attitudes toward law enforcement. Collectively, these perspectives indicate that legal effectiveness is both institutional and behavioral in nature.

2.3 Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory explains that crime can be prevented when individuals perceive that the costs of offending outweigh the potential benefits. Criminal behavior is therefore influenced by rational decision-making based on expected consequences ([Chalfin & McCrary, 2017](#); [Abramovaite et al., 2023](#)). Deterrence operates through specific deterrence, which targets repeat offenders, and general deterrence, which aims to discourage potential offenders in society. In the context of motor vehicle theft, legal sanctions such as Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code are intended to increase the perceived cost of offending. However, the effectiveness of deterrence is not solely determined by the severity of punishment but more critically by the certainty and consistency of law enforcement.

[Muladi \(2010\)](#) emphasizes that criminal sanctions must also integrate rehabilitative objectives to prevent recidivism and support long-term crime reduction.

2.4 Criminological Theory of Property Crime

Motor vehicle theft is categorized as a property crime driven primarily by economic motivation and opportunity structures, where Routine Activity Theory explains that crime occurs when a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardianship converge ([Cohen, & Felson, 1979](#); [Reynald, 2015](#)). This framework is particularly relevant in urban contexts such as Surabaya, where high vehicle density, limited surveillance in public spaces, and inconsistent security practices increase crime opportunities, indicating that criminal acts are shaped not only by offender motivation but also by situational conditions that facilitate their occurrence. In addition, property crime is often supported by illegal markets and organized networks, as the existence of fencing systems (receivers of stolen goods) plays a critical role in sustaining motor vehicle theft by providing a stable distribution channel and economic incentive for offenders to continue operating ([Anggraini & Lenny, 2021](#)).

2.5 Theory of Criminal Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is a process of translating legal norms into social reality, where its effectiveness is measured not only by prosecution rates but also by its ability to create order, security, and justice in society ([Rahardjo, 2009](#)). Effective law enforcement requires an integrated approach that combines preventive strategies, such as patrols and public awareness programs, with repressive actions, including investigation, arrest, and prosecution. In addition, crime control must integrate both penal and non-penal strategies, encompassing social, economic, and educational interventions as emphasized by [Arief \(2010\)](#). This integrated approach is essential in addressing motor vehicle theft, as it targets both immediate criminal behavior and its underlying structural causes.

2.6 Previous Studies

Numerous empirical studies have examined the effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft in various Indonesian jurisdictions, providing important comparative insights for this study. [Gunadi and Subawa \(2021\)](#) conducted research at the Bali Regional Police Directorate of General Criminal Investigation and found that motor vehicle theft is predominantly carried out using fake keys, recorded in 1,737 cases, followed by the use of original keys or physical force methods in 144 cases. Their study further indicates that law enforcement responses are implemented through a combination of pre-emptive, preventive, and repressive strategies, highlighting that an integrated enforcement approach is essential for effectively addressing the complexity of motor vehicle theft.

[Anggraini and Lenny \(2021\)](#) examined the role of police institutions in combating motor vehicle theft fencing networks at the Bareleng Police Resort. Their findings emphasize that receivers of stolen goods play a crucial role in sustaining the stolen vehicle market by providing distribution channels for illegal goods. This underscores the importance of not only targeting perpetrators at the point of theft but also dismantling downstream criminal networks as part of a comprehensive enforcement strategy. In addition, [Nugraha \(2023\)](#) analyzed motor vehicle theft from a criminological perspective and identified economic motivation, organized criminal networks, and increasing sophistication of modus operandi as key drivers of its persistence in Indonesia. The study highlights that effective law enforcement requires the integration of criminological insights to address both the behavioral and structural dimensions of the crime.

Furthermore, [Hartanto, Ablisar, Mulyadi, and Marlina \(2015\)](#) investigated criminal policy approaches to motor vehicle theft prevention at the Sunggal Police Sector and found that enforcement effectiveness is significantly influenced by community participation as well as the availability of adequate facilities and investigative infrastructure. Their findings suggest that collaborative policing and institutional capacity strengthening are critical components in improving overall law enforcement performance.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

This study analyzes the effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft in Surabaya through an integrated theoretical framework combining Legal Effectiveness Theory ([Tyler, 2017](#);

[Friedman, 1975](#)), Deterrence Theory ([Chalfin & McCrary, 2017](#); [Muladi, 2010](#)), and Routine Activity Theory ([Reynald, 2015](#)). These theories collectively explain that law enforcement effectiveness is shaped by institutional legitimacy, rational offender decision-making, and situational crime opportunities. The framework enables analysis of preventive and repressive policing strategies, institutional constraints, and socio-environmental factors influencing motor vehicle theft dimensions that empirical research in Indonesian jurisdictions has consistently identified as key determinants ([Marsiawan et al., 2022](#); [Prakoso et al., 2025](#))

3. Research Methodology

This study employs an empirical legal research method using a juridical-sociological approach to examine the effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft within the jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police by integrating legal analysis with empirical evidence obtained from documentary sources, consistent with the socio-legal tradition of coupling legal doctrine with empirical observation of legal culture and institutional practice ([Pennisi, 2022](#)). Empirical legal research focuses on how legal norms are implemented in practice and how law enforcement institutions respond to criminal acts in society ([Mansah & Oktama, 2023](#)). The study applies statutory, case, and conceptual approaches, where the statutory approach examines legal provisions governing motor vehicle theft, particularly Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code, the case approach analyzes its implementation in real cases, and the conceptual approach employs Legal Effectiveness Theory, Legal System Theory, Deterrence Theory, and criminological perspectives as analytical frameworks ([Friedman, 1975](#); [Becker, 1968](#)).

The study relies on secondary data collected through library research and document analysis. Data sources include legislation, court decisions, police publications, crime reports, scientific journal articles, and other relevant legal materials related to motor vehicle theft and criminal law enforcement. Document analysis is used to systematically review, classify, and interpret relevant materials to support the research objectives, following a structured procedure of skimming, reading, and interpretation to ensure the credibility of conclusions drawn from textual sources ([Morgan, 2022](#)). This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how legal norms are applied and enforced in practice within the criminal justice system.

Data analysis is conducted qualitatively through a phased process of data reduction, coding, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing, moving from deductively derived categories toward an integrated explanation of the findings ([Bingham, 2023](#)). The findings are analyzed using Legal Effectiveness Theory ([Soekanto, 2011](#); [Friedman, 1975](#)), Deterrence Theory ([Becker, 1968](#)), and Routine Activity Theory ([Cohen & Felson, 1979](#)) to evaluate law enforcement effectiveness. To ensure validity and reliability, source triangulation is applied by comparing legislation, court decisions, official reports, and previous studies ([Pennisi, 2022](#)). The study acknowledges limitations due to reliance on secondary data, which may not fully capture the practical experiences of law enforcement actors and crime victims.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Overview of Law Enforcement Against the Crime of Motor Vehicle Theft Within the Jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police

Motor vehicle theft in Surabaya operates within a complex situational context shaped by high vehicle density, urban mobility patterns, and organized criminal networks. As Indonesia's second-largest metropolitan city and the economic center of East Java, Surabaya records one of the highest levels of motor vehicle usage in the country. This structural condition directly correlates with crime opportunity: secondary data from Polrestabes Surabaya confirm that motor vehicle theft (*pencurian kendaraan bermotor/curanmor*) consistently constitutes the dominant share of street crime, with 425 *curanmor* cases uncovered out of 554 total street crime cases in 2024, representing 76.7% of all street criminal offenses handled that year. This proportion confirms that motor vehicle theft is not an isolated or incidental crime but a structurally embedded form of urban property crime, consistent with Routine Activity Theory's explanation that crime concentrates where motivated offenders encounter suitable targets in the absence of capable guardianship ([Cohen & Felson, 1979](#)).

The dense population and continuous social activity across Surabaya's urban areas further compound enforcement challenges. Many vehicle owners park in open public spaces or locations with minimal security monitoring, creating recurring opportunity structures that offenders systematically exploit. The dominant modus operandi documented in Surabaya involves the use of T-shaped keys and steering lock-breaking tools, a pattern also recorded across other Indonesian jurisdictions. [Gunadi and Subawa \(2021\)](#) found that 1,737 out of 1,881 *curanmor* cases at Polda Bali involved fake or modified keys, while [Marsiawan et al. \(2022\)](#) similarly identified specialized tool use as the primary method in Central Java cases. The convergence of findings across jurisdictions suggests a nationally consistent criminal methodology, implying that situational crime prevention, particularly physical security hardening and CCTV deployment, are more likely to produce sustainable deterrence than repressive enforcement alone ([Gómez, Mejía, & Tobón, 2021](#)).

Beyond individual offenders, motor vehicle theft in Surabaya is frequently embedded within organized criminal networks involving specific divisions of labor, where some members conduct surveillance, others execute the theft, and others are responsible for distributing or selling stolen vehicles through fencing channels. Stolen vehicles are typically resold outside the jurisdiction, supplied with falsified ownership documents, or dismantled into spare parts through illegal markets. This organized structure significantly complicates law enforcement efforts, as tracing stolen vehicles across regional boundaries requires inter-agency coordination that is not always consistently available. The persistent role of fencing networks is corroborated by [Anggraini and Lenny \(2021\)](#), who found that receivers of stolen goods provide the economic infrastructure that sustains *curanmor* as a viable criminal enterprise, and further evidenced by the prosecution of a significant proportion of recidivist suspects during Polrestabes Surabaya's 2024–2025 operations.

In response to these conditions, Polrestabes Surabaya operates under the authority granted by Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police, which mandates the maintenance of public security and order, law enforcement, and community protection. Law enforcement responses against *curanmor* are structured around two complementary approaches, namely preventive and repressive measures, which are analyzed in detail in the subsequent sub-section. Overall, the situational and structural conditions described above indicate that motor vehicle theft in Surabaya must be understood not merely as a legal enforcement problem but as a criminological phenomenon shaped by opportunity structures, organized networks, and institutional capacity, all of which the following analysis examines through the lens of legal effectiveness theory and empirical performance data.

4.2 Forms of Law Enforcement Implemented by the Surabaya Metropolitan Police

Law enforcement against motor vehicle theft in the Surabaya Metropolitan Police jurisdiction is implemented through two main approaches, namely preventive and repressive measures. These approaches are designed to reduce crime occurrence while ensuring legal accountability after offenses are committed, and their empirical outcomes are reflected in the performance data presented in Table 1. Preventive measures are conducted before criminal acts occur and aim to reduce opportunities for motor vehicle theft. These include routine patrols in vulnerable areas, public legal education, installation of CCTV in strategic locations, strengthening community-based security systems, and encouraging vehicle owners to apply additional security measures. Routine patrols are considered important in increasing police visibility and deterring potential offenders, while CCTV and community participation enhance environmental surveillance and crime prevention capacity. Quasi-experimental evidence from a large-scale camera installation program found that surveillance cameras produced a measurable deterrent effect on property crime even without increased monitoring capacity, suggesting that visible surveillance infrastructure can shift offender behavior independently of arrest outcomes ([Gómez, Mejía, & Tobón, 2021](#)). In the context of Surabaya, these preventive measures are associated with the documented decline in *curanmor* cases from 544 in 2023 to 444 in 2024, a reduction of 12%, indicating that sustained preventive strategies can produce measurable short-term outcomes. This further indicates that the effectiveness of preventive measures is strongly influenced by collaboration between police institutions and the community.

Repressive measures are applied after criminal acts occur and focus on law enforcement actions such as investigation, arrest, identification of criminal networks and receivers of stolen goods, and case submission to the Public Prosecutor's Office. These actions are generally carried out under Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code, which regulates aggravated theft involving vehicles and collective offending. Empirically, repressive enforcement in 2024 resulted in the prosecution of 315 suspects from 425 uncovered *curanmor* cases, yielding a calculated arrest rate of 74.1%, which improved to 78.7% in the 2024–2025 period with 472 suspects prosecuted from 600 reported cases. However, repressive enforcement continues to face structural challenges, including increasingly sophisticated criminal methods, organized fencing networks, and difficulties in tracing stolen vehicles that are moved or dismantled outside the jurisdiction, all of which contribute to the resurgence of *curanmor* cases observed in the 2024–2025 period despite improved arrest rates.

Overall, preventive and repressive measures represent an integrated law enforcement system in addressing motor vehicle theft, where effectiveness depends on coordination between law enforcement institutions, community participation, and available operational resources. The empirical pattern observed in Surabaya, namely short-term crime reduction through prevention followed by resurgence despite improved arrest rates, suggests that neither approach is sufficient in isolation, and that sustainable effectiveness requires their simultaneous and consistent application, consistent with Arief's (2010) argument that crime control must integrate both penal and non-penal strategies to address the structural causes of criminal behavior.

4.3 Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Motor Vehicle Theft

The effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft in the jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police can be assessed using several key indicators, including case clearance rate, arrest rate, recovery rate, crime trend reduction, and public trust in law enforcement institutions. In the context of Surabaya, official police reports indicate that the total number of criminal cases decreased from 4,534 cases in 2022 to 4,292 cases in 2023, representing a reduction of approximately 4% in overall crime trends ([Detik, 2023](#)). In addition, the crime clearance rate reached approximately 78.9%, reflecting a relatively high level of case resolution by law enforcement authorities ([Detik, 2023](#)).

Table 1. Motor vehicle theft enforcement indicators in Surabaya, Polrestabes Surabaya (2023–2025)

Indicator	2023	2024	2024–2025	Sources
Total reported criminal cases (all categories)	4,297 cases	4,179 cases	–	Antara
Overall case resolution (clearance)	3,616 cases resolved	5,008 cases resolved	–	Antara,
Curanmor cases reported (specific)	544 cases	444 cases	600 cases	Ngopibareng.id, TargetNews.id
Curanmor cases uncovered & suspects processed	–	425 cases uncovered; 315 suspects prosecuted	472 suspects prosecuted	Antara, TargetNews.id
Curanmor arrest rate (calculated)	–	74.1% (315/425)	78.7% (472/600)	Antara, TargetNews.id

To present these indicators systematically, Table 1 summarizes the available secondary quantitative data on law enforcement performance against motor vehicle theft within the jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police. As presented in , data from Polrestabes Surabaya reveal a generally positive trend in law enforcement performance against motor vehicle theft across the observed period. The total number of criminal cases (all categories) declined from 4,297 cases in 2023 to 4,179 cases in 2024, representing a reduction of approximately 5%. More notably, the overall case resolution rate increased significantly by 38%, from 3,616 cases resolved in 2023 to 5,008 cases in 2024, indicating improved investigative capacity and enforcement output during this period.

With respect to *curanmor*-specific indicators, reported motor vehicle theft cases decreased from 544 cases in 2023 to 444 cases in 2024, a reduction of 12%, suggesting that enforcement efforts and

preventive strategies produced measurable outcomes. However, this downward trend was not sustained, as *curanmor* reports rose again to 600 cases in the 2024–2025 period, reflecting a 10% increase and indicating the persistent and cyclical nature of motor vehicle theft in urban Surabaya. This pattern is consistent with findings from [Anggraini and Lenny \(2021\)](#), who emphasize that the persistence of organized fencing networks sustains criminal recidivism and undermines the long-term effectiveness of repressive enforcement measures.

Regarding arrest performance, available data indicate that 425 *curanmor* cases were uncovered in 2024, resulting in the prosecution of 315 suspects, yielding a calculated arrest rate of approximately 74.1%. In the 2024–2025 period, 472 suspects were prosecuted from 600 reported cases, producing an arrest rate of approximately 78.7%. These figures suggest a gradual improvement in enforcement responsiveness, which aligns with deterrence theory's emphasis on the certainty of punishment as a key driver of law enforcement effectiveness ([Chalfin & McCrary, 2017](#)). Nevertheless, as also shown in Table 1, disaggregated data on vehicle recovery rates and public trust indices remain unpublished at the municipal level, limiting a comprehensive assessment of all five effectiveness indicators proposed by [Soekanto \(2011\)](#).

Overall, the data presented in Table 1 indicate that law enforcement against motor vehicle theft in Surabaya is partially effective: aggregate crime trends and arrest rates show improvement, yet the resurgence of *curanmor* cases in 2024–2025 and the absence of recovery and public trust data suggest that enforcement gains remain fragile and require sustained institutional commitment to preventive and community-based strategies.

From a theoretical perspective, Soerjono Soekanto legal effectiveness framework explains that law enforcement outcomes are influenced by legal structure, law enforcement capacity, facilities and infrastructure, community participation, and legal culture ([Soekanto, 2011](#)). In this context, although the legal framework under Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code provides a strong normative basis, operational effectiveness is shaped by structural and situational challenges, including organized fencing networks and cross-regional movement of stolen vehicles. Furthermore, deterrence theory emphasizes that the effectiveness of law enforcement depends more on the certainty of punishment than on the severity of sanctions alone ([Chalfin & McCrary, 2017](#)). Therefore, although crime reduction and clearance rates indicate significant enforcement efforts, the absence of consistent recovery and arrest rate data suggests that law enforcement effectiveness remains partially constrained in operational practice.

4.4 Application of Article 363 and Its Deterrent Effectiveness

The consistent application of Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code across *curanmor* cases in Surabaya reflects the legal structure's normative adequacy. In Cilacap District Court Decision No. 235/Pid.B/2015/PN.[Wicaksono, Budiyo, and Dwiatmodjo \(2021\)](#) confirmed that all elements of Article 363 were fulfilled, resulting in a sentence of one year and six months, a finding that illustrates the judiciary's capacity to enforce legal certainty in property crime cases. Similarly, Supreme Court Decision No. 1092 K/Pid/2022, as cited in [Sinaga, Sianturi, and Leonardo \(2024\)](#), affirmed conviction for collective aggravated theft under Article 363 paragraph (1) point 4, reinforcing judicial consistency at the appellate level.

However, the deterrent value of these convictions must be assessed against empirical outcomes. The fact that 472 suspects prosecuted in 2024–2025 included a significant proportion of recidivists, as reported by Kapolrestabes Surabaya Kombes Pol Luthfi Sulistiawan, suggests that criminal sanctions under Article 363 have not fully achieved specific deterrence. This finding aligns with Muladi's (2010) argument that penal sanctions must integrate rehabilitative objectives to prevent recidivism, and with [Chalfin and McCrary \(2017\)](#) evidence that sentence severity has limited deterrent effect absent consistent enforcement certainty. Therefore, while Article 363 provides a structurally sound legal basis, its operational deterrent function remains constrained by recidivism patterns and the continued activity of organized fencing networks that reduce offenders' perceived risk of detection.

4.5 Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement

Applying [Soekanto \(2011\)](#) five-factor framework to the empirical findings of this study, the following pattern emerges. First, regarding legal structure, Article 363 provides an adequate normative foundation, confirmed by consistent judicial application across district and Supreme Court levels. Second, law enforcement capacity is evidenced by the improvement in arrest rates from 74.1% (2024) to 78.7% (2024–2025), though the recurrence of recidivist offenders indicates gaps in post-prosecution monitoring. Third, facility and infrastructure factors are partially addressed through CCTV deployment and inter-agency coordination, consistent with [Gómez, Mejía, and Tobón \(2021\)](#) finding on the deterrent value of surveillance infrastructure. Fourth, community participation, operationalized through *siskamling* programs, contributed to the 2024 crime reduction but has not prevented the subsequent resurgence, suggesting that community engagement remains inconsistent. Fifth, legal culture, reflected in low public awareness of vehicle security practices, continues to create opportunity structures exploited by offenders, consistent with Routine Activity Theory's guardianship dimension ([Cohen, & Felson, 1979](#); [Reynald, 2015](#)).

4.6 Efforts to Optimize Law Enforcement Against Motor Vehicle Theft

The empirical findings of this study indicate that current enforcement efforts have produced partial but unsustainable improvements. The 12% *curanmor* reduction in 2024 followed by a 10% resurgence in 2024–2025 suggests a pattern of reactive enforcement rather than systemic crime prevention. Consistent with [Friedman \(1975\)](#) legal system theory, sustainable effectiveness requires alignment between legal structure, substance, and culture, dimensions that current enforcement practice has addressed unevenly.

Evidence-based priorities for optimization include: first, dismantling fencing networks as a structural intervention, given that recidivist prosecution alone has not disrupted the economic incentives sustaining *curanmor* ([Anggraini & Lenny, 2021](#)); second, expanding technology-based vehicle identification systems to improve recovery rates, which remain unpublished and thus unaccountable; and third, institutionalizing community participation through structured *siskamling* coordination rather than episodic campaigns, consistent with [Hartanto, Abhisar, Mulyadi, and Marlina \(2015\)](#) finding that community-based enforcement is a critical complement to institutional policing capacity.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study set out to answer three research questions: the effectiveness of law enforcement against motor vehicle theft within the jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police, the factors influencing such effectiveness, and the efforts undertaken to combat the crime. With respect to the first question, the findings show that law enforcement is implemented through an integrated combination of preventive and repressive strategies, but performance is best categorized as partially effective: available secondary data indicate a 12% decline in *curanmor* cases in 2024 and an improvement in arrest rates from 74.1% to 78.7% in the 2024–2025 period, yet the subsequent resurgence of 600 reported cases and the absence of disaggregated recovery rates and public trust indices suggest that enforcement gains remain fragile and cannot be fully substantiated against all five effectiveness indicators proposed. Regarding the second question, effectiveness is shaped by five interrelated factors, namely legal structure, law enforcement capacity, facilities and infrastructure, community participation, and legal culture, with organized fencing networks and the high proportion of recidivist offenders acting as the most persistent structural constraints. With respect to the third question, current efforts combine routine patrols, CCTV deployment, investigation, arrest, and network disruption under Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code, but the cyclical pattern of crime reduction followed by resurgence indicates that repressive measures alone are insufficient without parallel and sustained investment in surveillance technology, fencing network dismantlement, and institutionalized community-based prevention.

This study contributes to the literature by providing an integrated analytical framework that combines Legal Effectiveness Theory, Deterrence Theory, and Routine Activity Theory to explain motor vehicle theft enforcement from institutional, behavioral, and situational perspectives. The novelty of this

research lies in its indicator-based evaluative approach, encompassing case clearance, arrest rate, recovery rate, crime trend, and public trust, interpreted through secondary document analysis, which highlights the gap between ideal performance indicators and the availability of empirical data at the municipal level. This approach emphasizes that law enforcement effectiveness should be assessed not only normatively but also through the transparency and accessibility of criminal justice data, a dimension that future research and institutional reporting practice should prioritize.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study is limited to the jurisdiction of the Surabaya Metropolitan Police and relies primarily on secondary data sources, including legal documents, police reports, and academic literature. As a result, the analysis is constrained by the limited availability of disaggregated statistical data specifically related to motor vehicle theft indicators. The reliance on secondary data sources also limits deeper empirical validation, as the practical experiences of law enforcement actors and crime victims are not directly captured.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research is recommended to expand the scope of analysis by incorporating multiple jurisdictions and comparative studies between urban and rural contexts. Further studies should also integrate primary quantitative data, particularly crime statistics such as arrest rates, recovery rates, and clearance rates, to strengthen empirical measurement of law enforcement effectiveness.

In addition, future research may explore the integration of technological innovations such as digital surveillance systems, artificial intelligence-based crime detection, and integrated vehicle tracking systems to improve the effectiveness of motor vehicle theft prevention and enforcement strategies in Indonesia.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the Surabaya Metropolitan Police for providing access to institutional data and documentation that supported the research process. The author also extends appreciation to all legal practitioners and academics who contributed their time, knowledge, and insights to this study. Special thanks are extended to the supervisors and colleagues whose guidance, constructive comments, and encouragement greatly contributed to the completion of this research. The author is also grateful to family members and friends for their continuous support throughout the preparation of this study.

Author Contributions

AS contributed to the conceptualization of the study, development of the research design, data interpretation, and preparation of the manuscript. NS contributed to the literature review development, theoretical framework formulation, and validation of research analysis. RA contributed to data collection support, document analysis, and manuscript revision. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

References

- Abramovaite, J., Bandyopadhyay, S., Bhattacharya, S., & Cowen, N. (2023). Classical deterrence theory revisited: An empirical analysis of Police Force Areas in England and Wales. *European Journal of Criminology*, 20(5), 1663-1680. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14773708211072415>
- Amri, Y. I., Bawono, B. T., & Maerani, I. A. (2021). Criminal investigation of motorcycle stealing goods. *Law Development Journal*, 3(1), 169-174. <https://doi.org/10.30659/ldj.3.1.169-174>
- Anggraini, M., & Lenny, L. (2021). Peran kepolisian dalam penanggulangan tindak pidana penadahan kendaraan bermotor hasil curian (studi pada Polresta Barelang). *Jurnal Justitia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Humaniora*, 8(4), 670-686. <https://doi.org/10.31604/justitia.v8i4.670-686>
- Arief, B. N. (2010). Bunga rampai kebijakan hukum pidana. *Kencana*.
- Becker, G. S. (1968). Crime and punishment: An economic approach. *Journal of Political Economy*, 76(2), 169-217. <https://doi.org/10.1086/259394>

- Bingham, A. J. (2023). From data management to actionable findings: A five-phase process of qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231183620>
- Braithwaite, J. (2016). Restorative justice and responsive regulation. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 36(3), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojls/gqw014>
- Chalfin, A., & McCrary, J. (2017). Criminal deterrence: A review of the literature. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55(1), 5-48. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.20141147>
- Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review*, 44(4), 588-608. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094589>
- Detik News. (2023). Polrestabes Surabaya anev 2023: Crime rate turun 4% dan clearance rate 78.9%. Retrieved from <https://news.detik.com>
- Friedman, L. M. (1975). *The legal system: A social science perspective*.
- Gunadi, K. T. A., & Subawa, I. B. G. (2021). Upaya pencegahan dan pemberantasan tindak pidana pencurian kendaraan bermotor dalam perspektif KUHP di Ditreskrim Polda Bali. *Jurnal Hukum Mahasiswa*, 1(2), 170-187. <https://doi.org/10.36733/jhm.v1i2>
- Gómez, S., Mejía, D., & Tobón, S. (2021). The deterrent effect of surveillance cameras on crime. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 40(2), 553-571. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22280>
- Hartanto, E., Ablisar, M., Mulyadi, M., & Marlina. (2015). Kebijakan kriminal terhadap pencegahan pencurian kendaraan bermotor (Studi di Kepolisian Sektor Sunggal). *USU Law Journal*, 3(1), 101-112.
- Mansah, I. R. H. F., & Oktama, A. (2023). Penegakan hukum terhadap pencurian kendaraan bermotor berdasarkan pasal 362 KUHP di wilayah kepolisian Bandar Lampung. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 9(15), 343-351. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8210277>
- Marsiawan, H., Wahyuningsih, S. E., & Bawono, B. T. (2022). The law enforcement on crime of motorcycle theft. *Law Development Journal*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.30659/ldj.4.2>
- Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1), 64-77. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>
- Muladi. (2010). Teori-teori dan kebijakan pidana. *Alumni*.
- Murphy, K., Tyler, T. R., & Curtis, A. (2009). Nurturing regulatory compliance: Is procedural justice effective when people question the legitimacy of the law? *Regulation & Governance*, 3(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-5991.2009.01043.x>
- Nagin, D. S., & Telep, C. W. (2017). Procedural justice and legal compliance. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 13, 5-28. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-110316-113310>
- Nugraha, F. T. (2023). Tindak pidana pencurian kendaraan bermotor dalam perspektif kriminologi. *Lex Laguens: Jurnal Kajian Hukum dan Keadilan*, 1(1), 23-36. <https://doi.org/10.08221/lexlaguens.v1i1.3>
- Pennisi, C. (2022). Legal culture and empirical research: Improving the socio-legal character of the sociology of law. *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*, 12(6), 1347-1357. <https://doi.org/10.35295/osls.iisl/0000-0000-0000-1323>
- Prakoso, M. Z., Benzema, M. K., Hidayat, W., & Fadilah, D. M. (2025). Juridical review of the role of the police of the Republic of Indonesia in law enforcement of motorcycle theft cases: A case study of Kesambi Police, Cirebon City. *Jurnal Abdisci*, 3(2), 251-257. <https://doi.org/10.62885/abdisci.v3i2.735>
- Rahardjo, S. (2009). Penegakan hukum: Suatu tinjauan sosiologis. *Genta Publishing*.
- Reynald, D. M. (2015). Guardianship and the routine activity approach: Time for a broader conception of guardianship. *Criminology*, 53(3), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12072>
- Sinaga, S., Sianturi, R. H., & Leonardo, F. (2024). Pertanggung jawaban kepada pelaku pencurian yang dilakukan dua orang atau lebih dengan bersekutu ditinjau dalam Pasal 363 Ayat (1) KE-4 KUHP (Studi Putusan Mahkamah Agung No. *legisa*, 16(1), 12-21. <https://doi.org/10.58350/leg.v16i1.384>

- Soekanto, S. (2011). Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penegakan hukum (rev. ed.). *RajaGrafindo Persada*.
- Sun, I. Y., Wu, Y., Hu, R., & Farmer, A. K. (2017). Procedural justice, legitimacy, and public cooperation with police: Does Western wisdom hold in China? *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 54(4), 454–478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427816638705>
- Tyler, T. R. (2017). Procedural justice and policing: A rush to judgment? *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 13, 31–49. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-110316-113320>
- Wicaksono, H., Budiyo, & Dwiatmodjo, H. (2021). Penerapan Pasal 363 KUHP tindak pidana pencurian dalam keadaan memberatkan (Tinjauan yuridis terhadap Putusan Pengadilan Negeri Cilacap Nomor 235/Pid.B/2015/PN.Clp). *Soedirman Law Review*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.slr.2021.3.1.127>