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Social Trust And Lethal Violence In Urban Public Space: A Socio-Legal Analysis Of The Murder Of A Youth By Street Musicians In Bintaro

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Abstrak

Fenomena pembunuhan seorang pemuda oleh pengamen jalanan yang jasadnya dibuang di lahan kosong Bintaro menunjukkan runtuhnya kepercayaan sosial dan kerentanan kekerasan mematikan di ruang publik urban, penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis hubungan antara social trust, posisi sosial-ekonomi pelaku/korban, dan respons penegakan hukum dalam konstruksi kasus tersebut, menggunakan metode kualitatif sosio-legal berbasis studi kasus dengan analisis pemberitaan media, kronologi peristiwa, dan dokumen hukum terkait, berlandaskan teori social trust, teori modal sosial, dan perspektif socio-legal studies tentang relasi hukum dan masyarakat, Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi singkat tanpa jejaring kepercayaan, kondisi marjinal pelaku, lemahnya kontrol sosial di ruang publik, serta cara media dan aparat mengonstruksi narasi "kriminal jalanan" berkontribusi pada normalisasi risiko kekerasan dan potensi erosi kepercayaan publik terhadap sistem peradilan pidana, sehingga disimpulkan bahwa penguatan social trust akar rumput dan peningkatan kepekaan sosio-legal dalam penanganan kasus serupa menjadi kunci pencegahan kekerasan mematikan dan pemulihan legitimasi hukum.

Kata kunci: kepercayaan sosial, kekerasan mematikan, ruang publik urban, studi sosio-legal, narasi kejahatan dalam media, legitimasi sistem peradilan pidana.

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Abstract

The phenomenon of the murder of a young man by street buskers, whose body was dumped in a vacant lot in Bintaro, reflects the collapse of social trust and the heightened vulnerability to lethal violence in urban public spaces. This study aims to analyze the relationship between social trust, the socio-economic positions of perpetrator and victim, and the law-enforcement response in constructing the case. It employs a socio-legal qualitative case-study method, using media coverage, event chronology, and related legal documents as primary materials, grounded in social trust theory, social capital theory, and socio-legal perspectives on law–society relations. The findings show that brief interactions without pre-existing trust networks, the perpetrators' marginal conditions, weak social control in public spaces, and the ways media and authorities construct the narrative of 'street crime' all contribute to normalizing the risk of violence and to the potential

erosion of public trust in the criminal justice system. The study concludes that strengthening grassroots social trust and enhancing socio-legal sensitivity in handling similar cases are key to preventing lethal violence and restoring the legitimacy of law.

Keywords: social trust, lethal violence, urban public space, socio-legal studies, media crime narratives, criminal justice legitimacy.

Preliminary

Violent acts resulting in death are the most serious crimes in the hierarchy of social violations. Their impact extends beyond the physical loss of life to include psychological and social consequences, including the breakdown of a sense of security and trust among citizens (Stager dkk., 2024). From a sociological legal approach, murder cannot simply be analyzed as a violation of certain articles of positive criminal law (Cozzubo dkk., 2021).This phenomenon must be read as a reflection of social dynamics involving interpersonal relations, collective values, and the level of social trust that develops within society. Social trust is a crucial element that facilitates interaction, mutual assistance, and the formation of relationships, even with individuals unknown to them. However, when this element of trust is abused and leads to violence, it becomes urgent to examine the relationship between social trust and the potential for violence within society (Țical, 2024).

In everyday practice, mutual assistance is often positioned as a constructive form of solidarity. Values such as empathy, caring, and mutual assistance are integral to social norms in Indonesia. However, reality shows that in some cases, this kindness can actually become a loophole for perpetrators of crime. This situation highlights that social interactions do not always operate within a framework of security, but can be risky when trust is exploited for criminal activity.

The murder case in Bintaro, Pondok Aren, South Tangerang, in July 2025 serves as a relevant case study to examine the complexity of such relationships. This case stands out because it involved a paradoxical situation: the victim was murdered by someone he had previously helped. This incident illustrates how an interaction that begins with good intentions can transform into a fatal tragedy.

The victim, Cahya Agung Dwija (31), was found dead with a slit wound to his throat in an empty lot on Jalan Sisingamangaraja. Police investigations identified the perpetrator as Abdul Syukur (30). Interestingly, there was no prior relationship between the two, they had only met a few hours before the incident.

The chronology begins on Monday evening, July 14, 2025. Abdul Syukur, who had just returned from Bekasi after busking, arrived at Jurangmangu Station around 11:00 PM WIB. He walked to the bus stop near the Bintaro Xchange and met the victim. The perpetrator asked for help ordering an online motorcycle taxi because he didn't have a cell phone. After learning they were going in the same direction, the victim offered him a ride on his motorcycle.

After arriving at the perpetrator's house in Pondok Aren, the two chatted and had coffee. Then, the perpetrator invited the victim to an empty field near their house, claiming his parents were sick at home. Unsuspecting, the victim agreed. However, behind this interaction, the perpetrator had already prepared a plan for the crime. Abdul Syukur had been carrying a knife in his bag since leaving home. Early Tuesday morning, at 1:30 a.m. Western Indonesian Time (WIB), as the victim was about to leave, the perpetrator attacked from behind and slit his throat. The victim died on the spot after standing up. The perpetrator then covered the body, took the victim's motorcycle and cell phone, and fled.

This case is not an isolated incident, but rather part of a rising trend of urban violence in Indonesia. Data from the Indonesian National Police (Polri) shows a 15% increase in robbery-related homicides in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek) between 2024 and 2025, with 40% of these cases involving brief interactions between victims and perpetrators who exploited social trust. This phenomenon is exacerbated by rapid urbanization in South Tangerang, where Bintaro's population has surged by 20% over the past five years (BPS, 2025), leading to overcrowding in public spaces and weakened community oversight. This context underscores the urgency of a socio-legal analysis to uncover the structural roots behind the betrayal of social trust.

This case has raised public concern because it demonstrates how the victim's kindness can backfire. Socially, this incident reflects the tension between the value of trust that fosters solidarity and the risk of crime in interpersonal interactions. Social trust is a crucial variable in individual decisions when interacting with strangers.

From a sociological legal perspective, this case is not simply a violation of the Criminal Code, but rather a social phenomenon that demonstrates the dynamics of norms, beliefs, and deviance. Socio-legal analysis allows for an understanding of how law interacts with social realities, including factors of poverty or marginalization that influence criminal behavior (Markovska dkk., 2025).

Recent research in sociology and criminology has increasingly examined the link between social trust and crime, with various studies confirming that levels of social trust are strongly correlated with perceptions of security and patterns of interaction between citizens. For example, a study in the Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics (2023) found that crime victims tend to lose trust in others, indicating a direct impact of criminal experience on social relations. Other research reveals that perceptions of security and trust in legal institutions are interconnected in shaping citizens' attitudes toward social order and how exposure to crime news in the media influences levels of social trust and perceptions of risk in daily interactions. However, the majority of studies still focus on quantitative analyses of the impact of crime in general on public trust (Omar dkk., 2025).

This study fills a gap by employing an in-depth qualitative approach to a specific case, exploring how the betrayal of trust in urban interactions triggers violence and affects the legitimacy of the law.

Method

Research Design and Analytical Framework

This study employs a socio-legal approach to analyze the relationship between social trust and fatal violence in urban public spaces. The socio-legal perspective views law not merely as a set of codified norms in legislation, but as a social phenomenon that interacts with societal values, behaviors, and everyday practices (Rengifo, 2025). Through this lens, the research examines how the misuse of social trust in daily interactions can escalate into fatal criminal acts and how communities interpret such events from legal and social perspectives.

The study adopts a qualitative methodology to identify general patterns in respondents' views on the link between social trust and the potential for violence in society. The case study approach is particularly relevant in examining complex interactions between law, social trust, and violence, as it allows the researcher to capture nuanced meanings, interpretations, and social dynamics that cannot be quantified.

Analytically, this research employs a triangulation strategy, integrating:

1. Empirical data (community interviews),
2. Documentary data (media reports and legal texts),
3. Theoretical frameworks (social trust theory, social capital theory, and socio-legal perspectives).

This triangulation strengthens the validity of findings by cross-verifying data from multiple sources, ensuring that interpretations are not based on a single narrative or bias.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involves identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring patterns within the data. The analytical steps include:

1. Data reduction: selecting relevant information from interviews, media, and legal documents.
2. Coding process: categorizing data into key themes such as trust, violence, marginalization, and legal legitimacy.
3. Interpretation: connecting empirical findings with socio-legal theories to construct a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon.

This method allows the researcher to systematically examine how social trust is constructed, challenged, and transformed within the context of urban violence.

Research Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, the number of respondents is relatively limited, which may not fully represent the broader population of urban communities. Second, reliance on media reports may introduce framing bias, as media narratives often emphasize sensational aspects of crime. Third, the study focuses on a single case, which limits generalization but strengthens depth of analysis.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the socio-legal dynamics of trust and violence in urban settings.

Results And Discussion

Community Perceptions of Social Trust in Public Spaces

Interview findings reveal that communities generally uphold values of solidarity and mutual assistance as key social norms in daily life. However, the Bintaro murder case has introduced a new dilemma regarding the practice of social trust in interactions with strangers.

One respondent (R1), a university student who frequently visits Bintaro Xchange, stated that helping others is a customary and socially acceptable practice in Indonesian society. In their view, the victim's act of assisting the perpetrator in booking an online ride reflected spontaneous empathy.

Yet, following the incident, they have become more cautious in engaging with strangers in public spaces.

A similar sentiment was expressed by another respondent (R2), an employee at a Bintaro Xchange store. They noted that the victim-perpetrator interaction exemplified how social trust can emerge spontaneously in everyday situations, particularly when assistance is needed. Nevertheless, the case also highlighted the potential for such trust to be exploited by individuals with criminal intent.

These findings indicate that social trust remains robust in urban communities, but specific criminal incidents can shift perceptions of safety, fostering more defensive attitudes in social interactions.

Socio-Economic Conditions of the Perpetrator and Potential for Violence

From a socio-legal standpoint, criminal acts are inextricably linked to the perpetrator's social and economic circumstances. Case reconstruction and media reports indicate that the perpetrator came from a marginal economic background as a street busker with limited financial access.

Several respondents linked these conditions to criminal propensity. Respondent (R3), a local trader active around Bintaro, argued that economic pressures often drive individuals toward crime, especially without stable employment opportunities.

Respondents emphasized, however, that economic hardship does not fully justify lethal violence. This suggests that while economic factors contribute to criminality, individual intent, opportunity, and weakened social controls also play pivotal roles.

Drawing on social capital theory, marginalization can erode an individual's social networks and detachment from collective norms. When individuals operate outside stable social networks, informal social controls diminish, heightening the risk of social deviance.

Weaknesses in Social Control in Urban Public Spaces

The Bintaro murder underscores how urban public spaces become vulnerable to violence when social controls falter. The victim-perpetrator interaction initially occurred in a crowded area, but the crime shifted to a more secluded spot, minimizing intervention opportunities.

Respondent (R4), an online ride-hailing driver often picking up passengers near Jurangmangu station, observed that certain Bintaro areas are sparsely monitored at night. They suggested this increases criminal opportunities, particularly without security personnel or community presence.

In sociology of law scholarship, this phenomenon relates to informal social control, the oversight emerging from community interactions. High anonymity in large cities weakens such controls, amplifying deviance risks. Thus, public space safety relies not only on formal law enforcement but also on active community social networks. (Askarizad et al., 2024)

Media and Authority Construction of the "Street Criminal" Narrative

Media coverage framed the case within a "street criminal" narrative, portraying the perpetrator as a marginalized individual preying on the public. Such framing risks shaping public perceptions that certain groups are inherently dangerous. Respondent (R5), a student following the case via online media, noted that reporting heightened wariness toward lower-income strangers, such as buskers or informal workers.

In socio-legal studies, media narratives significantly influence societal views of crime and justice systems. Beyond relaying facts, media constructs interpretations of perpetrators, victims, and accountability. Overemphasizing perpetrators' social identities can reinforce stigma against specific groups, diverting attention from broader structural issues like poverty, inequality, and inadequate social protections.

Implications for Public Trust in the Legal System

The case impacts public confidence in the criminal justice system. Respondents noted that police swiftness in apprehending the perpetrator helped restore community safety perceptions. They stressed, however, the need for preventive measures to avert recurrence. Legitimacy here hinges not only on punishing offenders but also on fostering security and trust at the community level. Sociology of law posits a reciprocal law-society relationship: high social trust enhances legal compliance, while rising crime erodes it, potentially undermining legal legitimacy.

Strengthening community social trust, enhancing public space security, and adopting socially sensitive law enforcement are thus crucial for preventing fatal violence and maintaining social stability.

The Dilemma of Social Trust in Interactions with Strangers

The Bintaro case highlights an urban dilemma: balancing social solidarity with personal safety. In Indonesian culture, aiding those in need, even strangers is a deeply ingrained moral value, evident in daily interactions. Rising public space crimes, however, prompt greater caution. Interviews revealed respondents rethinking aid to unknowns post-incident.

Respondent (R6), a student using public transport and residing in Bintaro, described ambivalence: morally compelled to help, yet aware of risks from strangers. This suggests urban social trust is situational, shaped by experiences and media, leading to more selective assistance amid perceived risks.

The Law's Role in Restoring Social Trust

Socio-legal theory positions law not just as punitive but as a mechanism for restoring social order and trust. Post-violence public anxiety tests law enforcement responsiveness, determining sustained or diminished societal faith. Police efficiency in investigating and arresting the perpetrator demonstrated state efforts to maintain stability and legal certainty. Respondents reported relief from this outcome.

Respondent (R7), a Pondok Aren resident, affirmed that the arrest alleviated local safety concerns, though prevention remains essential. Legitimacy derives from perceptions of law as fair, responsive, and protective. Criminal case handling thus encompasses juridical and social dimensions for rebuilding trust.

Social Implications for Interaction Patterns in Public Spaces

Criminal exploitation of social trust may reshape public interactions, promoting urban individualism amid risk perceptions. Long-term, this could erode social cohesion, limiting interactions through mutual suspicion. Yet, some respondents urged preserving solidarity with heightened vigilance. Respondent (R8), a Bintaro service worker, advocated empathy tempered by caution. Communities thus negotiate solidarity-security balances, rendering the case a reflection on redefining trust boundaries in modern urban life.

Theoretical Reflection: Social Trust as a Double-Edged Sword

This research underscores that social trust serves dual roles. It promotes collaboration, unity, and community bonds, yet simultaneously exposes individuals to harm when manipulated by malicious actors. Social trust theory posits trust as a cognitive shortcut for decision-making amid uncertainty. Cahya's fatal error in Bintaro stemmed from extending broad trust to Abdul, presuming benign intentions that went unreturned. Urban settings thus face a fundamental tension: the mechanism enabling social harmony doubles as a pathway to vulnerability.

Urban Anonymity and the Crisis of Social Cohesion

City life fosters anonymity, eroding personal connections and diminishing natural oversight. Contrasting rural networks of mutual accountability, urban exchanges remain fleeting and detached.

Such conditions spawn a "cohesion crisis," loosening communal standards and accountability. Deviance flourishes through Diminished peer monitoring,Weakened community loyalty, Faded ethical duties to strangers. Bintaro demonstrates how facelessness lets offenders seize momentary chances absent social repercussions.

Legal Construction of Violence: Between Normativity and Reality

Socio-legally, statutes frame violence via rigid labels like KUHP murder and aggravated robbery. Yet these overlook contextual drivers. Bintaro exposes legal limits in addressing:

- Crime causation,
- Trust manipulation tactics,
- Enabling social factors.

Socio-legal inquiry thus connects abstract rules to lived practice, insisting legal interpretation embed social realities.

Preventive Socio-Legal Strategies

Results advocate multifaceted prevention blending enforcement and social measures: Community Controls

- Neighborhood vigilance programs,
- Shared public space responsibility.

Environmental Design

- Enhanced area illumination,
- CCTV deployment,
- Heightened security in hotspots.

Risk Education

- Guidelines for safe stranger aid,
- "Prudent trust" advocacy.

Inclusion Policies

- Job programs for at-risk groups,
- Support for marginalized populations.

Prevention demands state-society partnership beyond policing alone.

Media Ethics and Crime Representation

Media's perceptual influence demands ethical scrutiny. Sensational coverage risks:

- Perpetuating marginal stereotypes,
- Amplifying societal fear/distrust,
- Reducing complexity to headlines.

Journalists should contextualize crimes as structural outcomes, not mere anecdotes, fostering informed rather than panicked publics.

Implications

This research yields significant theoretical and applied insights into the interplay between social trust and fatal violence within urban public domains. Theoretically, it contests the prevailing view of social trust as uniformly advantageous, revealing its conditional and dual character. Far from solely bolstering unity, trust emerges as a liability in unbalanced or hazardous encounters, aligning with socio-legal frameworks that advocate embedding juridical events within encompassing social processes where confidence, conventions, and systemic disparities converge to influence violent outcomes.

The study advances Indonesian socio-legal discourse by linking doctrinal legal principles to observable social conditions. By illuminating trust's transformation into victimhood, it broadens crime analysis beyond statutory breaches, framing violence as emerging from intricate blends of personal volition, societal frameworks, and situational elements. Consequently, subsequent scholarship should prioritize everyday exchanges and routines as pivotal arenas for dissecting criminality and juridical authority.

Practically, findings guide urban planners and administrators. Public space security demands more than conventional policing; it necessitates multifaceted tactics encompassing deterrence, spatial planning, and civic involvement. Enhancing infrastructure—through illumination, monitoring technologies, and personnel deployment—curbs criminal prospects, while grassroots oversight fortifies organic regulation.

Crucially, cultivating "prudent confidence" via awareness initiatives preserves benevolence alongside vigilance, enabling solidarity without undue exposure. Community workshops can impart strategies for secure public engagements.

Law enforcement's role extends beyond incident response to trust cultivation. Bintaro's prompt resolution exemplifies how alacrity and candor sustain institutional credibility, yet proactive, neighborhood-focused tactics better preempt threats through collaborative risk identification.

Media bears responsibility too, as narratives mold safety perceptions and group attitudes. Balanced portrayals avert prejudice against informal laborers, favoring contextual analyses of crime's roots over alarmism.

At the societal level, urbanites renegotiate trust amid rising caution, potentially safeguarding individuals at cohesion's expense. Balancing communal bonds with self-protection thus challenges contemporary cities.

Ultimately, combating urban lethality calls for comprehensive socio-legal strategies fusing enforcement, education, and reform. Evolving trust from naivety to discerning reciprocity ensures enduring security and harmony.

Conclusion

The Bintaro murder illustrates that fatal violence in public spaces transcends mere criminal law violations, embodying social dynamics of urban trust. The victim-perpetrator interaction, rooted in aid, underscores enduring solidarity and empathy. Yet, trust misuse transforms benevolent acts into perilous encounters.

Findings identify contributing factors: interactions lacking robust trust networks, the perpetrator's marginal socio-economic status, and lax urban public controls. Media criminality narratives further shape interpretations, heightening risk perceptions toward strangers.

Socio-legally, the case reveals urban trust dilemmas, pitting solidarity against self-protection and fostering cautious, defensive interactions. Swift, transparent law enforcement bolsters legal legitimacy, restoring safety and confidence. Prevention demands effective policing alongside community trust-building, environmental security, and socially attuned policies.Ultimately, fortified social trust, improved controls, and responsive law are vital to avert fatal violence, harmonizing solidarity and security in urban societies.

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