



## The effectiveness of the police's role in dealing with thuggery in Serang Regency

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the police's role in combating thuggery in Serang Regency. Thuggery, as a form of social crime, not only disrupts public order but also causes public unrest and hinders regional development. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Research informants consisted of police officers, community leaders, and parties involved in efforts to combat thuggery. The results of the study indicate that the police have implemented several strategies, including repressive actions in the form of raids and law enforcement, preventive actions through routine patrols and legal socialization, and pre-emptive actions by establishing cooperation with the community to increase legal awareness. However, the effectiveness of these efforts still faces obstacles, such as limited police resources, a permissive culture of some communities towards thuggery practices, and weak coordination with other agencies. The conclusion of this study is that the police's role is quite effective in reducing the number of thuggery acts, but to achieve optimal results, stronger synergy is needed between the police, local government, and the community. This study recommends increasing the capacity of officers, optimizing community development programs, and strengthening regional regulations as strategic steps in eradicating thuggery in Serang Regency.*

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### 1. Introduction

Applicable laws and regulations, including the Criminal Code (KUHP) and Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police, are positioned as the primary legal basis for assessing the effectiveness of the police's role, as both legal instruments provide legitimacy and a normative framework for the police's authority, duties, and responsibilities in maintaining public order and security, enforcing the law, and protecting and serving the public. The Criminal Code serves as a reference in determining norms for actions categorized as criminal acts, while the Police Law provides the operational legal basis for police officers in carrying out their preventive and repressive functions. Thus, the effectiveness of the police's role is measured not only by empirical achievements in the field, but also by the extent to which police

actions are in line with the principles of legality, professionalism, and accountability as stipulated in these laws and regulations. The permissive cultural aspects of society toward thuggery practices significantly impact the effectiveness of law enforcement, as tolerance or even dependence on the existence of thugs by some citizens actually provides social legitimacy for the continuation of these practices. In some cases, thugs are seen as "protectors" or parties capable of providing quick solutions to security problems, even through unlawful means. This situation creates a dilemma for the police, as enforcement efforts often lack the full support of the community, which still views thugs as part of the social order. As a result, the effectiveness of law enforcement is reduced because police actions face resistance not only from the thug groups themselves but also from the permissive community. Therefore, a strategy that combines a legal approach with educational efforts and cultural transformation is required. Indonesia's position as the world's most populous country creates a clear need for jobs to meet the demands of its large population. This situation fuels competition in the job market, but available government job openings are inadequate to accommodate the entire population. As a developing nation, Indonesia is certainly not immune to the impacts of global events. These trends have begun to impact various aspects of life. Beyond having a significant impact on Indonesia, these changes have also influenced behavior, cultural shifts, and societal development. Furthermore, the country's economic conditions have declined since the reform era. This economic crisis has triggered a moral crisis. High poverty rates, rising unemployment, and increasing population density have led many people to commit crimes, particularly thuggery (Arifin & Minarosa, 2023). An abnormal social situation that arises in society is called thuggery. Thuggery is an act carried out to seize the rights of others by instilling fear among the community (Kafid, 2016). Thuggery acts that occur in Indonesia are increasing rapidly, this is triggered by the poor economic conditions of the community and the increasing level of unemployment. As a result, individuals in the job-seeking age group have begun to commit crimes to earn a living (Sinaga et al., 2020). Violent crimes known as thuggery have been clearly regulated in the Criminal Code, which includes aggravated theft (Article 365 of the Criminal Code), extortion with violence (Article 368 of the Criminal Code), rape (Article 285 of the Criminal Code), assault (Article 351 of the Criminal Code), damage to property (Article 460 of the Criminal Code), which can disrupt public order and cause public unrest. According to the author's analysis, the high development of violent thuggery in Indonesia is very contrary to the Criminal Law in force in Indonesia (Hidayah, 2023). Criminal Law is a number of legal regulations that contain prohibitions or obligations with the threat of criminal sanctions (legal sanctions) for violators. When thugs commit crimes that violate the Criminal Code, they are not prosecuted by the authorities, but only given instructions and guidance. It is undeniable that this phenomenon gives rise to a group of people, in this case thugs, who use violence to maintain their existence, both socially and economically (Yannita Nilam Herman et al., 2024).

Violence often occurs in thuggery after acts of extortion. This technique not only includes illegal and coercive demands for money from victims, but also involves the use of violence if the demands of the victim are not met (Soraya, 2019). Extortion or illegal levies are deliberate acts carried out to collect fees in certain amounts for personal gain. Legally, extortion is an unlawful act that is detrimental to individuals and society (Marpaung, 2018). The perpetrators of this extortion are the community as a whole, not police or government officials. In a social context, the phenomenon of extortion carried out by the community seems to have become a formalized social rule. This makes it increasingly difficult for society to distinguish between levies, extortion, begging, and thuggery. Such conditions make extortion a practice of extortion. The prevalence of extortion is also influenced by the socioeconomic progress of the community, and cultural aspects contribute to the practice of extortion becoming commonplace. It is hoped that the police, who are close to the community, can take steps to eradicate thuggery that commits illegal crimes there (Johar et al., 2024). Community involvement in helping the police reduce extortion practices in the community is also expected to prevent this from worsening (Kusumantara et al., 2022). The responsibility of law enforcement officers The law tasked with enforcing the law against thuggery is based on the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of

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Indonesia, as follows Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police (Polri Law) serves as the basis for the Indonesian National Police (Polri). Article 2 of the Police Law explains that "the function of the police is one of the functions of state government in the field of maintaining public security and order, law enforcement, protection, shelter, and service to the community." Based on Article 2, the Polri has a fairly central and significant role in protecting the state and enforcing the law for the community (Jati, 2012). In carrying out its function as a protector of the community, the police have a very significant role in efforts to overcome thuggery. The closeness of the police to the community is expected to encourage the taking of appropriate action in responding to the phenomena of thuggery in the community. This certainly requires the active participation of the entire community to assist the police in uncovering acts of thuggery that occur in their surroundings. Operations carried out by the police against perpetrators of thuggery, which generally only involve arrest and then release, do not provide significant benefits for the eradication of thuggery (Suartama et al., 2024).

This idea can be used as a consideration for policy makers at both the central and regional levels, so that the hope of creating a comfortable, safe, and orderly community can be realized (Ronzon et al., 2025). This thuggery has often caused unrest and chaos in the Pancatama Cikande industrial area, Serang Regency, with individuals demanding money from passing truck drivers by force by intimidating them if they do not give them a deposit. Truck drivers transporting goods who want to enter the Pancatama industrial area are always asked for money of 10 to 25 thousand rupiah with the modus operandi of giving retribution tickets to drivers according to the type of vehicle, blue tickets are charged for large trucks with a levy of Rp. 25,000, white tickets are charged for medium-sized trucks with a levy of Rp. 20,000, yellow tickets are charged for small trucks with a levy of Rp. 15,000, while pink tickets are for box trucks with a levy of Rp. 10,000. The thuggery has been going on for approximately 4 years with an estimated daily income of Rp. 7 million. Based on information report number LI/27/V/2025/Ditreskrim, the Jatanras sub-directorate team immediately moved to investigate and succeeded in arresting 7 perpetrators of extortion in two different locations with evidence of extortion money amounting to Rp. 2,188,000, as well as 4 bundles of different colored tickets with values of Rp. 10,000 to Rp. 25,000. The seven perpetrators were charged under Article 368 of the Criminal Code concerning the Crime of Extortion with a maximum sentence of 9 years in prison (Yayuk Dwi Setya Ningsih, 2019). The mass media often depicts thugs as perpetrators of crime, violence, and street crimes. To stop extortion that leads to violence in the future, or at least, stop extortion that has already occurred and is disturbing the community, law enforcement officers need to focus on cases like this (Sahari & Sugiarti, 2024). In general, the purpose of criminal law is to uphold and maintain public order by regulating and organizing community life. Therefore, it is hoped that Indonesian law enforcement officers will consistently enforce the law to eradicate these thuggery practices (Wahyuni et al., 2021). However, in reality, violent crimes persist in our culture. This shows that criminal law, which provides sanctions as a form of punishment, has not been able to resolve social problems effectively (Ismail & Ari, 2021).

However, thugs who have not committed crimes stipulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP) or equivalent legislation are generally only given advice and therapy. After receiving counseling, they are released without considering the benefit of the arrest or its impact on the thug. After release, the thugs will repeat the same crime, return to prison, receive counseling, and then be released again (Azhar et al., 2020). This is the cycle of thug extermination that occurs in Indonesia today. Perhaps Durkheim's theory that crime is a natural and inseparable component of society is very appropriate when these thugs re-enter the fray. According to Susanto, Effectiveness has another meaning, namely the ability of messages to influence. In this context, Effectiveness is defined as a measure of the ability of messages to influence others. In measuring Effectiveness, we can see the extent to which carefully prepared goals can be achieved. According to Mahmudi, Effectiveness can be defined as the relationship between the results obtained (output) and predetermined goals. The greater the contribution of results to the achievement of established goals, the more effective the organization, program, or activity is

considered (Candra et al., 2023). The level of achievement of established goals is essentially the definition of effectiveness. Achieving established goals or targets is the benchmark of effectiveness. Law, in the sociology of law, is a social control mechanism that aims to create societal balance by balancing change and stability. Creating a harmonious society is the main goal, with law functioning as a tool to control social change, namely a way to realize social change. Societal perspectives can undergo major changes from conventional to modern or logical through law. Procedures designed to ensure the efficient implementation of the law are referred to as legal efficacy (Ronzon et al., 2025).

## **2. Method**

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe and analyze in depth the effectiveness of the police's role in overcoming acts of thuggery in Serang Regency. The research location was conducted within the jurisdiction of the Serang Police Department with a focus on points vulnerable to thuggery. Research informants were determined through a purposive sampling technique, including police officers, community leaders, and residents who have experience or knowledge related to acts of thuggery. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, field observations, and relevant documentation studies. The data obtained were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model, namely through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To ensure the validity of the data, this study used a triangulation technique of sources and methods so that the results obtained can be scientifically accounted for (Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat, I Made Suraharta, 2024).

## **3. Analysis and Results**

The role of civil society, NGOs, and local organizations can be a key factor in strengthening police efforts to break the cycle of thuggery by providing social support, public control, and empowering communities to avoid dependence on illegal practices perpetrated by thug groups. Through legal education programs, citizen rights advocacy, and local economic empowerment, civil society and NGOs can help create collective awareness that thuggery is detrimental to social stability and development. Furthermore, local organizations can serve as strategic partners with the police in developing community-based prevention mechanisms, for example, by establishing communication forums between residents and officers, conflict mediation, and social monitoring. This collaboration not only narrows the scope for thugs to operate but also strengthens police legitimacy by ensuring communities feel actively involved in maintaining security and order in their communities. Police efforts to increase surveillance and enforcement in the Pancatama Cikande industrial area, known as a high-risk location, have had a direct impact on increasing residents' sense of security, both for the surrounding community and workers in the industrial area. Intense routine patrols, anti-thug operations, and improved coordination with company internal security personnel have reduced crime rates and reduced the often disturbing practice of extortion. The consistent presence of officers not only creates a deterrent effect on perpetrators but also fosters public trust that the authorities are truly there to protect. Consequently, economic activity and industrial productivity have become more conducive, while the public feels better protected from the threat of security disturbances that previously caused anxiety. Neither Indonesian laws and regulations nor scientific literature provide a comprehensive explanation of thuggery. This phrase is more often used to describe abnormal behavior that disrupts public order in social and practical contexts. However, a criminal law perspective needs to be considered to properly define thuggery. If an action committed by an individual or group fulfills the elements of a crime such as extortion, threats, physical violence, illegal occupation of territory, or other intimidating acts that disturb the community, then the act can be categorized as a form of thuggery. One behavior that disrupts the peace and harmony of society is thuggery. In this regard, thuggery should be a crime that is subject to severe punishment by the government to prevent people from feeling intimidated in their daily lives. This action refers to certain behaviors that intentionally disturb others without

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heeding legal provisions and regulations, making such behavior illegal and punishable. Therefore, eradicating thuggery in society should be a priority that requires immediate attention. Generally, thuggery activities occur everywhere, including in Serang Regency. According to Briпка Muhammad Naif, S.H. as the Head of Criminal Investigation of the Serang Regency Police. Stated that: "Thuggery is an act that begins with violence that is very disturbing to the community." Muhammad's naive opinion assumes that thuggery includes all forms of actions carried out by individuals or groups in a coercive manner or using violence to suppress, intimidate, or take advantage of others. Thus, he concluded that any behavior that begins or is accompanied by elements of violence, whether physical or verbal, can be classified as an act of thuggery (SUKATENDEL, 2024).

This approach shows that thuggery is not limited to crimes in public spaces alone, but also includes all forms of gross abuse of power that harm the community and disrupt public order. Therefore, any form of action that reflects forced domination over others, even if carried out without weapons or great physical strength, is still considered part of a pattern of thuggery that needs to be watched out for and prosecuted legally. Another thing was also mentioned by IPDA Henry Jayusman, S.H. as Head of Unit 1 of Criminal Investigation of the Serang Police. provides the following statement: "Thuggery is a form of action carried out by individuals or groups that deviates from social and legal norms, with the aim of fulfilling personal or group desires or interests (Berutu, 2024). This action is usually carried out through violence, coercion, or intimidation without a valid legal basis. Thuggers often take advantage of crowded situations in public places such as markets, industrial areas, or streets to extort, blackmail, or force others to give goods or money for personal gain, especially in financial form. This behavior reflects a violation of social and legal order, and threatens the comfort of society in public spaces." Henry's opinion emphasizes that thuggery is essentially a form of deviant behavior that is detrimental to others, because it is carried out in ways that are not legally permissible. These actions are usually carried out using violence, threats, or certain pressures to enforce will for personal or group gain. In other words, thuggery not only involves elements of criminality, but also reflects an attitude of disobedience to social norms and applicable laws. According to Henry, thuggery is a form of crime oriented towards unilateral profit while ignoring the rights of others and the legal order in society. Therefore, this action cannot be justified in any context and must be addressed firmly through a legal approach and preventive efforts that involve the active participation of the community (Pidana, n.d.).

Based on the interviews conducted by Muhammad Naif and Henry, it can be concluded that thuggery is a deviant act that clearly violates social norms and prevailing laws in society. Thuggery is not merely violent behavior but has evolved into a form of organized and individual social crime, with the primary goal of gaining personal or group gain, especially material or financial gain. Thuggery is typically carried out through violence, intimidation, coercion, and even extortion in public spaces such as markets, industrial areas, and busy streets. The choice of these locations demonstrates that thuggery perpetrators exploit busy situations and a lack of oversight to carry out their actions. They tend to target people engaged in their daily activities, both individuals and small businesses, thereby creating fear, insecurity, and discomfort for the community. Thuggery is clearly a violation of the social order, which should uphold the values of security, order, and justice. When people feel threatened in public spaces, damage to the social fabric occurs due to a loss of trust and a lack of legal protection. Therefore, acts of thuggery require serious attention from the authorities, particularly law enforcement officers, to prevent it from developing into a culture of violence that is tolerated and ultimately undermines the values of community life. Firm law enforcement, social education, and consistent supervision in areas prone to thuggery are crucial to maintain public order and allow the public to carry out their activities without fear or pressure from the threat of thuggery. Furthermore, preventative approaches such as legal education and community development are also crucial as a form of long-term protection (Rifai, 2022).

Based on the results of the research conducted, researchers found that the thuggery Serang Regency, when viewed from the perpetrators themselves, has been categorized as organized thuggery. Because in Puger itself, this action is carried out by a group supported by adequate human resources, infrastructure, and a system that is neatly arranged like in a company. The thuggery that occurred in Serang Regency is categorized based on two actions: Physical Actions. In this case, thuggery in Serang Regency is carried out by carrying out physical actions in the form of abuse either by hitting the victim or attacking using physical force. Even worse, this action also often causes casualties resulting in someone's death. In this physical action is not only intended to abuse, but the abuse carried out by thugs is also based on taking over someone's property. Examples in this case are theft with violence, extortion or blackmail. Psychological Actions: Psychological actions in thuggery carried out in Puger refer to actions such as cursing, swearing, demeaning and harassing someone. In this action, a thug does it to cause fear in the victim, so that when the victim feels afraid, this can be exploited by the thug (Lestari et al., 2021).

The act of thuggery in the Criminal Code itself can be seen in various categories, namely as follows: Article 365 of the Criminal Code "(1) Threatened with a maximum prison sentence of nine years, theft preceded, accompanied or followed by violence or threats of violence, against people with the intention of preparing or facilitating the theft, or in the case of being caught in the act, to enable escape for oneself or other participants, or to retain control of the stolen goods. (2) Threatened with a maximum prison sentence of twelve years: 1. if the act is committed at night in a house or enclosed yard where there is a house, in the street; 2. if the act is committed by two or more people in collusion; 3. if entering a place of crime by damaging or climbing or by using a fake key, fake command or fake official clothing. 4. if the act results in serious injuries. (3) If the act results in death, the threat of a maximum prison sentence of fifteen years. (4) Threatened with the death penalty or life imprisonment or for a certain period of time of up to twenty years, if the act results in serious injuries or death and is carried out by two or more people in collaboration, accompanied by one of the things explained in no. 1 and 3". Article 170 of the Criminal Code "(1) Anyone who openly and with joint force uses violence against people or property, is threatened with a maximum prison sentence of five years and six months. (2) The guilty person is threatened: 1. with a maximum prison sentence of seven years, if he intentionally destroys property or if the violence used results in injury; 2. with a maximum prison sentence of nine years, if the violence results in serious injury; 3. with a maximum prison sentence of twelve years, if the violence results in death. (3) Article 89 does not apply" (Menteri Kesehatan, 2024).

#### **4. Conclusion**

Policy recommendations for regional governments and the National Police to strengthen cross-sectoral synergy include establishing an integrated coordination mechanism through regular forums between the police, regional governments, other law enforcement agencies, and civil society organizations to develop joint strategies for preventing and combating thuggery and other social crimes. Regional governments can strengthen local regulations that support community economic empowerment and transparent management of public spaces, while the police can streamline their early detection and preventive patrol functions. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop a cross-agency data-sharing system, joint training, and community-based partnership programs so that synergy is not only formal but also operational at the field level. Thus, cross-sectoral collaboration can be more effective, measurable, and sustainable to create conducive security and order. This research contributes to the criminal law and criminology literature by providing both empirical and normative perspectives on the effectiveness of the police role at the local level, particularly in the context of combating thuggery. From a criminal law perspective, this research enriches understanding of how the norms of the Criminal Code and the Police Law are applied in daily law enforcement practices, as well as the challenges that arise when a permissive societal culture undermines the principle of legality. Meanwhile, from a criminology perspective, this research offers an analysis of the interactions between police

officers, civil society, and informal actors that influence local crime dynamics. By highlighting specific cases in vulnerable areas such as the Pancatama Cikande industrial area, this research opens up space for new discourse on the importance of collaborative strategies, community-based approaches, and cross-sectoral synergy in enhancing police legitimacy and effectiveness. This makes the research relevant not only for academics but also for legal practitioners and policymakers. Based on the results of the research conducted by the author with the title "The Effectiveness of the Role of the Police in Handling Thuggery Based on Law No. 2 of 2002 Concerning", it can be concluded that thuggery in Serang Regency has developed from extortion and violence into an organized practice that dominates the local economic space and harms the community socially and economically. Although the police have emphasized the action according to Article 13 of Law No. 2 of 2002 and reported a decrease in cases, the community still feels intimidated due to limited personnel, weak supervision, minimal community involvement, and fear of reporting. To overcome this, the Serang Police implement preemptive, preventive, and repressive strategies, but the eradication of thuggery still requires cooperation with the local government and the community, accompanied by legal education and productive economic alternatives so that handling touches the root of the problem and realizes social security. Handling thuggery is still hampered by unclear legal regulations, weak coordination between agencies, and limited personnel and infrastructure, so that police efforts tend to be reactive and have not provided a deterrent effect. Therefore, the eradication of thuggery needs to be supported by legal reform, institutional strengthening, cross-sector synergy, and active community participation so that handling is more comprehensive and touches the root of the problem.

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