

# SHIFTING SOCIAL CONTROL AND THE DIRECTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE VINA CIREBON CASE THROUGH THE CORRECTIVE FUNCTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOWARDS LAW IN ACTION

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## Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of law enforcement in the Vina Cirebon case, which reflects a fundamental shift in the paradigm of social control from formal institutional mechanisms to informal, social media-based control in the digital era. The research is grounded in the prolonged stagnation of case handling, which exposed a significant gap between Law in the Books and Law in Action, later corrected through massive digital public pressure following the case's viral resurgence. The urgency of this study lies in understanding how social media facilitates the transformation of social control, performs a corrective function toward law enforcement practices, and reshapes public perceptions of the legitimacy and authority of the formal judicial system. This research employs a normative juridical method with a sociology of law perspective, using statutory, case, and conceptual approaches, supported by secondary data analyzed through qualitative descriptive-analytical techniques. The findings demonstrate that social media has emerged as a powerful instrument of informal social control capable of compelling law enforcement institutions to become more responsive and transparent, while simultaneously revealing a growing dependence of law enforcement on virality. Conversely, intense digital public pressure also generates risks, including reactive law enforcement, procedural haste, erosion of due process, and threats to the presumption of innocence. This study concludes that law enforcement in the digital age requires a careful balance between critical public oversight and consistent adherence to formal legal procedures in order to safeguard the rule of law and maintain the legitimacy of the justice system.

**Keywords:** *sociology of law; social media; social control; law in action; legal legitimacy.*

## Introduction

Humans, as social beings ( homo socius ), have been fundamentally tied to group and community life since the dawn of civilization. The need for security, the fulfillment of basic needs, and self-development are impossible without interaction and cooperation between individuals. <sup>1</sup>Social interactions within society are highly dynamic, complex, and involve diverse, often conflicting interests. This dynamic gives rise to various forms of social institutions, norms, and values that serve as guidelines for collective behavior. In this regard, the survival of society also depends heavily on the ability of its members to balance individual freedom with collective responsibility. An <sup>2</sup>orderly and harmonious life is a

<sup>1</sup>Kandunmas, F., & Fatlolon, C. (2023). LAW AS A TOOL OF SOCIAL CONTROL: (A Study in the Perspective of Legal Sociology). *Logos: Journal of Education, Catechesis, and Pastoral* , Vol. 11, No. 2. <https://ejurnal-stpakkambon.id/index.php/JL/article/view/38> .

<sup>2</sup>Sali, Y. (2021). The process of human interaction amid the Covid-19 pandemic, George Simmel's perspective. *MURAI: Papua Journal of Contextual Theology* , 2 (January 1), pp. 1-7. DOI:

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shared ideal, which demands a clear structure for managing conflict and maintaining order. Without agreed-upon structures and guidelines, social interactions have the potential to create social imbalance in society. Therefore, an instrument with coercive power and supreme authority is needed to ensure that order is maintained. This instrument is then embodied in the form of a formal legal system. Amidst the complexity of social interactions, law serves as a primary pillar for regulating communal life and preventing anarchy. Law serves a dual function: as a tool of social control and a tool of social engineering. As<sup>3</sup> a means of social control, law establishes boundaries of acceptable behavior and imposes sanctions for any violations. Its purpose is to achieve justice, legal certainty, and the benefit of all citizens without exception. The law serves to protect basic human rights, guarantee equality before the law, and resolve disputes through impartial and objective procedures. Ideal law is not only enshrined in statute books (Law in the Books) but also effectively implemented in everyday life (Law in Action).<sup>4</sup> Law enforcement institutions, such as the police, prosecutors, and courts, represent state authority, tasked with ensuring the realization of the law's noble objectives. Failure by these institutions to carry out their functions can shake the foundations of public trust in the state.<sup>5</sup>

Although the presence of law has involved the role of law enforcement institutions, various crimes that disrupt social dynamics remain unavoidable. Serious criminal cases, such as murder and sexual violence, not only harm the victims and their families but also create a widespread sense of insecurity and injustice within society. These crimes are indicative of serious social deviation and a failure in the process of socializing moral values and social ethics in society. In this regard, handling serious criminal cases demands a swift, transparent, and accountable response from law enforcement officials. Inability or negligence in resolving these cases can trigger public outrage and raise questions about the effectiveness of the entire justice system.<sup>6</sup> In the Indonesian context, many criminal cases are considered slow to resolve, riddled with irregularities, or even stalled without clarity. One of the most prominent recent cases was the murder and rape of Vina and her boyfriend, Eky.

The murder and rape case that occurred in Cirebon in August 2016 is a tragic example of a crime that shakes the public's sense of justice. The victims, Vina Dewi and her boyfriend, Muhamad Rizky Rudiana (Eky), were found dead in a horrific condition near the Cirebon flyover.<sup>7</sup> Initially, the case was staged by the perpetrators to make it appear as if the victims died in a single accident, having fallen from a motorcycle. However, based on further investigation and corroborated by the results of the autopsy, it actually showed injuries resulting from severe abuse and evidence of rape on Vina's body, revealing another fact that was more serious than previously suspected.<sup>8</sup> In this case, Vina and Eky were actually victims of brutal abuse by a group of 11 motorcycle gang members, which then followed up with the rape of Vina. The perpetrators attempted to cover up the crime by dumping the victims' bodies in a location designed to look like an accident scene. The police then succeeded in arresting eight of the eleven perpetrators, while the other three perpetrators were declared fugitives and placed on the Wanted Persons List (DPO).<sup>9</sup> In the initial law enforcement phase, which took place in 2016-2017, the legal process through court trials succeeded in handing down heavy sentences to the perpetrators. Seven adult perpetrators were sentenced to life imprisonment, and one juvenile perpetrator was sentenced to eight years in prison, and has since been released. Formally, these verdicts marked the completion of the legal process for the eight convicts. However, from the beginning, the investigation and trial process were marred by various irregularities and issues that raised public doubts. Three perpetrators designated as fugitives (DPOs), named Pegi, Dani,

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<https://doi.org/10.58983/jmurai.v2i1%20Januari.47>

<sup>3</sup>Sundari, N., Luthfiyah, FZ, & Rahmawati, W. (2024). The Role of Law as a Tool for Social Engineering According to Roscoe Pound. *Das Sollen: Journal of Contemporary Law and Society Studies* , Vol. 2, No. 1. Retrieved from <https://journal.forikami.com/index.php/dassollen/article/view/566>

<sup>4</sup>Satjijo Rahardjo, *Law and Social Change* , Bandung: Angkasa, 1998, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup>Latipulhayat, A. (2014). Roscoe Pound. *PADJADJARAN Journal of Law* , Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 413–424. <https://doi.org/10.22304/pjih.v1n2.a12>

<sup>6</sup>Utsman, Sabian. 2013. *Basics of Legal Sociology* . Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, p. 252

<sup>7</sup> Kompas.com, “Flashback of the Vina Cirebon Murder Case, Chronology to Engineering Death”, <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2024/05/17/14251011/kilas-balik-kasus-pembunuhan-vina-cirebon-kronologi-hingga-teknik> accessed on December 16, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Cnbcindonesia.com, "5 Facts about the Vina Murder Case, Chronology to the Viral Film", <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/lifestyle/20240530122555-33-542423/5-fakta-kasus-pembunuhan-vina-kronologi-hingga-film-yang-viral> accessed on December 16, 2025.

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and Andi, were never apprehended for eight years. The lack of clarity regarding the identity and whereabouts of these fugitives left a significant hole in the case that has yet to be closed. Issues of intervention, allegations of wrongful arrest, and changes in witness statements have fueled the legal process, resulting in the case seemingly being "frozen" and considered closed by law enforcement officials after the verdict was handed down by the court. Eight years later, the Vina Cirebon case suddenly resurfaced and became a major public topic in May 2024. The primary trigger for this resurgence was the release of a feature film depicting Vina's tragic story. The film successfully aroused empathy and sparked a wave of public outrage over the crime. This emotional response spilled over onto various social media platforms. Vina's story became the most discussed, commented on, and analyzed topic by netizens nationwide. As a non-legal medium, the film effectively mobilized collective consciousness, something the formal legal process had failed to achieve over the previous eight years. In this case, this sudden surge in public attention compelled law enforcement officials to reopen the case file, which had long been considered closed.

The virality of Vina's case on social media created unprecedented public pressure within the context of law enforcement in Indonesia. Millions of posts, comments, and analyses by social media users ( netizens ) voiced demands for the immediate arrest of the fugitive and a thorough investigation into the irregularities in the case. This phenomenon became known as a manifestation of the slogan " No Viral, No Justice , " implying that justice will only be achieved if a case receives massive attention in the digital space. In this case, social media transformed its function from a mere means of communication to an instrument of digital social control that dictates the agenda and priorities of law enforcement. The intensity of this pressure finally bore fruit, marked by the arrest of Pegi Setiawan, one of the fugitive fugitives. However, this arrest sparked new controversy and sparked heated debate about allegations of wrongful arrest and the integrity of the investigation.

Within the framework of the Sociology of Law, the Vina Cirebon case, which went viral on social media, presents new legal issues that can be examined from the perspective of the rich and complex science of legal sociology. This case questions the central concept of legal effectiveness as embodied in Law in Action itself, as it demonstrates that formal law cannot function optimally without intervention from social forces outside the system. The role of social media reflects a shift in social control, where digital communities are taking over the role of the state in demanding accountability and speedy case handling. Furthermore, the phenomenon of Trial by Public Opinion threatens the legitimacy and independence of judicial institutions. When justice is upheld due to mass pressure, rather than purely through legal process, this demonstrates the existence of legal pluralism, where informal norms in the form of digital demands can put pressure on the implementation of formal law enforcement through judicial procedures. This case then becomes an ideal basis for examining the extent to which social engineering carried out by the state is now dominated by social engineering carried out by the digital masses.<sup>10</sup>

The controversy surrounding the arrest of fugitive Pegi Setiawan, including the cancellation of his suspect status through a pretrial motion, has further exacerbated public distrust. The West Java Regional Police's sudden decision to reduce the number of fugitives from three to one was seen as an attempt to cover up past irregularities, fueling deep public skepticism. The sociological impact of this series of events has been a growing public cynicism toward the legal system. The public feels that protracted and questionable procedural justice will never yield the substantive justice they desire. This incident is not just about a single criminal case, but about a collective crisis of confidence in the state's ability to enforce the law fairly, transparently, and without interference from those in power. Therefore, in-depth and systematic research is needed to analyze these dynamics from a legal-social science perspective.

Based on the above description, this research is highly necessary considering the complexity of the Vina Cirebon case and its implications for law enforcement governance in the digital era. This urgency is based on three main focuses outlined in the problem formulation. First , it is important to analyze how social media facilitates a paradigm shift in social control from formal mechanisms through law enforcement institutions to informal control through digital social media in handling the Vina Cirebon case. Second , this research urges to find out how the corrective function of social media can intervene and change the Law in Action of law enforcement institutions in handling the Vina Cirebon case. Third , there is an urgent need to understand how the dynamics of the relationship between public pressure through social media and the response of law enforcement officers in the Vina Cirebon case reshape public perceptions of the legitimacy

<sup>10</sup>Martinelli, I., Yohana, Y., Venessa, C., & Hiumawan, EJ (2023). The Urgency of Regulating and Protecting the Rights of Privacy for Artificial Intelligence from a Legal Perspective as Social Engineering. *Jurnal Tana Mana* , Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 157-166. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33648/jtm.v4i2.415>

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and authority of the formal justice system. Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of the Sociology of Law theory, particularly regarding the interaction between law, state authority, and societal power in the digital space.

## Formulation of the problem:

From the background discussed above, the formulation of the problems that will be raised include:

- a. How does social media facilitate a paradigm shift in social control from formal mechanisms through law enforcement institutions to informal control through digital social media in handling the Vina Cirebon case?
- b. How can the corrective function of social media intervene and change the Law in Action of law enforcement institutions in handling the Vina Cirebon case?
- c. How do the dynamics of the relationship between public pressure through social media and the response of law enforcement officers in the Vina Cirebon case reshape public perceptions of the legitimacy and authority of the formal justice system?

## Research methods

This research uses a normative juridical method with a legal sociology perspective, which focuses on the analysis of legal norms and law enforcement practices ( law in action ) in the context of digital social dynamics in the Vina Cirebon case.<sup>11</sup> The approaches used include a statutory approach, by examining relevant criminal law and criminal procedure provisions, such as the Criminal Code (KUHP) and the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP); a case approach, through an in-depth analysis of the handling of the Vina Cirebon case from the court decision in 2016 to developments after it was widely discussed on social media, including the re-investigation process and pretrial decision; and a conceptual approach, by examining the theory of social control, Roscoe Pound's law in action , legal pluralism, legal legitimacy, and the social construction of truth in digital society.

The data used is secondary data consisting of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials.<sup>12</sup> Primary legal materials include laws and regulations framed in positive law in Indonesia. Secondary legal materials include books, scientific journals, academic articles, and sociological studies of law relevant to the issues of law enforcement, digital social control, and the legitimacy of the justice system. Tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other supporting sources that enrich the conceptual understanding of the research. Data collection techniques are carried out through literature studies, while data analysis techniques use descriptive-analytical qualitative analysis, by interpreting data systematically and critically to explain the relationship between social media pressure, the response of law enforcement officers, and its implications for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the formal justice system in Indonesia.<sup>13</sup>

## DISCUSSION

### The Paradigm Shift of Social Control from Formal Institutional Mechanisms to Informal Digital Social Media Control in the Vina Cirebon Case

From a sociological perspective, social control is a mechanism used by society or the state to enforce compliance with applicable norms and laws. Traditionally, law enforcement in the Vina Cirebon case has been entirely in the hands of formal institutions such as the police, through their investigative powers and the pursuit of fugitives. However, the facts show that for eight years, this formal mechanism has stagnated or become "frozen," resulting in the three suspects remaining free without any clarity on their status. The emergence of social media following the virality of the film "Vina: Sebelum 7 Hari" has significantly shifted the direction of this control from a closed institutional one to an open, informal one in the digital space. Digital communities are no longer merely objects of law but have transformed into subjects of oversight, exerting collective pressure on the performance of law enforcement officials, particularly the police. This shift demonstrates that informal social control now possesses coercive power almost equal to that of state authority. This demonstrates that the sociological power of society can take over the oversight role when formal institutions are deemed to have failed to carry out their mandate. Thus, social media has become a major catalyst in redefining how law

<sup>11</sup>Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamuji. *Normative Legal Research: A Brief Review* . Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2013, p. 13

<sup>12</sup>Amiruddin and H Zainal Asikin. *Introduction to Legal Research Methods* . Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2006, p. 118.

<sup>13</sup>Jhonny Ibrahim. *Normative Legal Theory and Research* . Malang: Bayumedia Publishing, 2006, p. 295.

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enforcement oversight is conducted in the modern era. concept of Law in Action highlights how the law is actually implemented in the field by community actors themselves, often differing significantly from the written legal text.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Vina Cirebon, existing legal norms require the case to be resolved completely, but in practice, the search for DPOs has been unfounded. The resurfacing of the case on social media then serves a corrective function, forcing law enforcement actors to revise their actions in the field. The fact that the West Java Regional Police reopened the investigation and made an arrest shortly after public pressure peaked is clear evidence of social media's intervention in Law in Action . This corrective function works by exposing procedural inconsistencies and bringing new evidence and witnesses to the public sphere.<sup>15</sup> In this case, in the case of Vina Cirebon, without digital pressure, it is highly unlikely that law enforcement institutions would have re-evaluated a case that had already been deemed in effect . This intervention demonstrates that the effectiveness of law in Indonesia now depends heavily on the extent to which a case can attract widespread public attention. This phenomenon emphasizes that in the sociology of law, the effectiveness of enforcement is often influenced by external socio-political factors rather than purely due to adherence to formal procedures.<sup>16</sup>

The relationship between digital public pressure and law enforcement's response in the Vina case reflects an asymmetrical yet interconnected power dynamic . Law enforcement officials, who theoretically possess independence, were in fact highly reactive to sentiments developing on social media platforms like X, TikTok, and Instagram. The swift response by law enforcement officials, such as holding larger press conferences and reconstructing the crime scene, was undertaken as an effort to manage the institution's reputation. However, this overly swift reaction sometimes risks ignoring the principle of legal prudence, as seen in the controversy surrounding Pegi Setiawan's arrest. Legal sociology views this phenomenon as a form of institutional adaptation to social pressures in order to maintain its stability and existence in the public eye. Public pressure not only demands results but also forces the investigation process to be conducted under the watchful eyes of millions of netizens daily. As a result, law enforcement authorities find themselves in a dilemma between following strict legal procedures and satisfying the expectations of the masses seeking swift justice. This dynamic demonstrates that the boundaries between the rule of law and the sovereignty of public opinion are increasingly blurred in Indonesia's digital ecosystem.

The Vina Cirebon case sparked debate about what constitutes substantive justice versus mere procedural justice. The public, through social media, was no longer satisfied with the 2016 court ruling, which was deemed flawed because it left three suspects unapprehended. Legal sociology views this as the emergence of digital "people's law" operating alongside state law, or what is known as legal pluralism. The fact that netizens conducted independent investigations and disseminated the identities of the alleged perpetrators demonstrates the existence of an informal norm system with its own authority. Substantive justice, from the public perspective, is the arrest of all perpetrators without discrimination, even if it means breaking through rigid procedural barriers. This often creates tension when the findings of "internet detectives" differ from the facts of the official police investigation in the field. Nevertheless, this drive to seek substantive justice is a natural societal response to a sense of injustice that has been pent-up for years. This digital legal pluralism ultimately forces the formal justice system to be more transparent and not solely fixated on administrative formalities.

One of the most serious impacts of law enforcement's reliance on virality is the delegitimization of the formal justice system. When the public perceives that justice moves solely through hashtags and virality, the law's authority as an independent authority will slowly crumble. The Vina Cirebon case demonstrates a profound crisis of trust, where every official statement from the police is often met with public skepticism and suspicion. This delegitimization stems from the perception that the law is sharp toward those in positions of power or "powerful individuals" behind the scenes. Sociologically, legal legitimacy depends heavily on the public's voluntary compliance, grounded in trust in the institution's fairness. If the public begins to view social media as the sole path to justice, legal institutions will lose their primary function as impartial conflict mediators. This crisis is a stark warning to the state that the rule of law is being threatened by the emotional and immeasurable power of virality. Restoring this legitimacy requires structural reforms that demonstrate that the law can operate fairly and consistently without relying on mass pressure. Thus, the discussion

<sup>14</sup>Pound, Roscoe, 1940, *Contemporary Juristic Theory* . California: Claremont Colleges, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup>Kinanti Puput Septiana, & Harefa, B. (2024). Problems of Criminal Law Evidence in Murder and Sexual Violence Cases (Case Study of the Vina Cirebon Murder). *Jurnal Mahkamah: Kajian Ilmu Hukum dan Hukum Islam* , Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 231–242. <https://doi.org/10.25217/jm.v9i2.5135>

<sup>16</sup>Soerjono Soekanto, 2008, *Factors Influencing Law Enforcement* , Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, p. 5

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of the Vina Cirebon case is fundamentally inseparable from the phenomenon of the social construction of truth in the post-truth era. On social media, legal truth often competes with narratives built on assumptions, scraps of information, and even widely circulated conspiracy theories. Legal facts in court are often less popular than viral narratives that more directly appeal to the emotions of the wider public. The sociology of law examines how truth is no longer found solely in the courtroom, but is constructed through massive and repetitive digital interactions. The pretrial ruling acquitting Pegi Setiawan was a crucial moment in which the formal legal system attempted to realign itself with more objective facts. However, social constructs that have already formed in society are often difficult to change even after an official legal decision. This creates new challenges for law enforcement officials to maintain professionalism amidst the onslaught of highly fluctuating public opinion. Ultimately, Vina's case is evidence that in the future, law enforcement will never be separated from the sociological dynamics of an increasingly intelligent and critical digital society.

## The Corrective Function of Social Media Intervention in Changing Law in Action of Law Enforcement Institutions in the Vina Cirebon Case

In the sociology of law, the discrepancy between "law on the books" and "law in action" is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of a legal system. Normatively, Indonesian law guarantees the protection of victims' rights and the obligation of authorities to resolve criminal cases to their roots. However, the facts in the Vina Cirebon case show that this written law ceased to be merely an administrative narrative for eight years. The suspension of the search for three fugitives without transparent reasons reflects that the law in practice is often selective and stagnant.<sup>17</sup> In this case, law enforcement institutions during this period appeared to be trapped in procedural formalities that neglected the aspect of substantive justice for the victims' families. This reality demonstrates that without external motivating factors, formal legal mechanisms tend to move slowly or even stop altogether. Therefore, pressure is needed to revive the "dormant" function of the law. This discourse provides an entry point to see how non-legal forces are beginning to intervene in previously closed judicial spaces.

Social media has transformed from a mere communication platform into an instrument of informal social control with coercive power over state institutions, particularly law enforcement. From a legal sociology perspective, this digital social control fills a gap in law enforcement that tends to stagnate and fail to be implemented by law enforcement agencies, such as the police and prosecutors. The widespread public outcry over the Vina case, triggered by public unrest online, has created social sanctions in the form of a vote of no confidence in the credibility of law enforcement agencies. The fact that millions of people discussed the irregularities of this case on platforms like X and TikTok forced law enforcement officials to provide a swift public response. This informal control works by exposing any gaps in past investigations deemed unprofessional to the wider public. The power of digital narratives has been able to undermine the dominance of the one-stop information system that has historically dominated law enforcement institutions. This phenomenon demonstrates that in the digital era, the legitimacy of a legal process is no longer solely determined in the courtroom, but also in the virtual public sphere. This shift in control paradigm marks a new chapter in which the public has a stronger bargaining position in overseeing the course of law enforcement.

The corrective function of social media in Vina's case operates through an organically organized mechanism of mass pressure to demand institutional accountability. This intervention occurred when massive public opinion forced the West Java Regional Police to reopen case files long considered administratively closed. Legal sociology analysis views this intervention as a form of societal correction to the failure of the legal bureaucracy to carry out its functions independently. The arrest of new suspects and the removal of other DPOs are a direct result of renegotiations between law enforcement and public demands. In this case, social media acted as a "shadow judge," reviewing facts on the ground that had previously been overlooked or deliberately ignored. This intervention was not merely opinion-based but also involved the collection of amateur evidence and new testimonies voluntarily emerging from the public. Through this corrective function, Law in Action, previously considered stagnant, was forced to adapt to evolving societal expectations of justice. This emphasizes that current legal institutions are no longer impervious to the dynamic influences of developments in information and communication technology. The virality of a case on social media has sociologically shifted the priority structure within Indonesian law enforcement institutions. The Vina Cirebon case, originally an untouchable "cold case," suddenly became a top priority on the national police's work agenda. This phenomenon

<sup>17</sup>Rakhmata, D. (2024). Application of the Principle of Transparency in the Law Enforcement Process (Analysis of the Vina Cirebon Case). *Cosmic Law*, Vol. 24, no. 2, p. 101-108. DOI: 10.30595/kosmik Hukum.v24i2.22714

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demonstrates that law enforcement resources are often allocated based on the level of public pressure and the potential damage to an institution's reputation. Evidence suggests the deployment of high-level expert teams and investigators immediately after the wave of social media claims reached its peak. Legal sociology identifies this as a shift from routine procedure-based law enforcement to social crisis response-based law enforcement. While this expedites case handling, there are legal risks arising from the hasty investigation process to quell public unrest. Excessive focus on a single viral case has the potential to overlook thousands of other cases that may be equally urgent but lack media traction. Therefore, the corrective function of social media has a dual side: accelerating justice and potentially ignoring the principle of legal prudence.

The pretrial ruling annulling Pegi Setiawan's suspect status represents a crucial turning point in the dynamics of law and digital society. Legally, the ruling represents a victory over flawed legal procedures, but sociologically, it validates public suspicions on social media. The pretrial judge, in this case, acted as the final bulwark, correcting investigators' actions deemed unprofessional under pressure from viral social media. The public's full support for the pretrial process demonstrates the alignment between the public's legal conscience and the judge's decision. This case demonstrates that strict social media monitoring can prevent the practice of error in persona, or wrongful arrests, that can occur without public scrutiny. The ruling also serves as a lesson for authorities not to simply provide "scapegoats" to instantly satisfy the anger of the digital masses. This demonstrates that legal sociology observes that formal law still has internal mechanisms for self-correction, even when triggered by external pressure. This event strengthens the public's position as critical observers and as a counterweight to legitimate judicial power.

The reliance of legal institutions on virality to act seriously has triggered long-term negative impacts in the form of delegitimization of legal authority. The public has begun to perceive that without social media buzz, justice will never be accessible to the common people. The phenomenon of "No Viral, No Justice" has become a stigma firmly attached to law enforcement in Indonesia following the Vina Cirebon case. Legal sociology emphasizes that an institution's legitimacy should stem from professionalism and consistency, not from reacting to media pressure. The fact that the police have had to repeatedly provide clarification and change statements demonstrates their confusion in the face of meticulous digital mass surveillance. This crisis of trust is highly dangerous for upholding the rule of law, as the public tends to take the law into their own hands in the digital space. If legal institutions lose their moral authority, the law will be seen as merely an instrument of power negotiable through media trends. Efforts to restore this legitimacy require demonstrating that the law can operate fairly and proactively without having to wait for a case to go viral first.

Thus, a sociological legal analysis of the Vina Cirebon case essentially concludes that social media has redefined the pattern of interaction between law and society. Law can no longer stand alone in a rigid procedural ivory tower, closed off from the influence of public aspirations in cyberspace. The intervention of social media's corrective function has successfully transformed Law in Action from a static and bureaucratic one to a more responsive, albeit sometimes fluctuating, one. This dynamic requires legal actors to possess strong digital literacy and integrity that is not easily swayed by emotional mass opinion. Future law enforcement must be able to integrate digital public oversight as a strategic partner in realizing transparency without sacrificing legal independence. This case provides a valuable lesson that substantive justice can only be achieved if formal law and informal social control work in healthy harmony. This redefinition of the relationship is inevitable amidst the development of an information society that increasingly demands absolute accountability from all holders of authority. Through a deep understanding of this paradigm shift, the justice system is expected to transform to become more humane and just for all levels of society.

### The Dynamics of Social Media Pressure on the Response of Law Enforcement Officials in Reshaping the Legitimacy of the Formal Justice System in the Vina Cirebon Case

The digital public pressure in the Vina Cirebon case was not merely a fleeting reaction, but rather a form of collective oversight that successfully uncovered the legal stagnation that had existed since 2016. Sociologically, the initial, somewhat secretive handling and the label of a "single-case accident" created a wound in legal legitimacy that then exploded when a fictional documentary triggered virality on social media. The facts show that public narratives on digital platforms were able to force the National Police (Polri) to issue a public explanation for the eight-year hiatus in pursuing the three remaining fugitives. This dynamic illustrates a shift in social control, where the public is no longer passively receiving information from authorities but is instead conducting independent investigations that pressure the authorities to take action. Law enforcement in this phase appears highly reactive to netizen sentiment, indicating that police priorities are beginning to be influenced by the intensity of online conversations. As a result, the law no longer

## SHIFTING SOCIAL CONTROL AND THE DIRECTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE VINA CIREBON CASE THROUGH THE CORRECTIVE FUNCTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOWARDS LAW IN ACTION

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operates in a vacuum but is under a public microscope demanding accountability for every detail of the chronology deemed odd. The arrest of Pegi Setiawan in Bandung in May 2024 was a crucial moment, demonstrating how law enforcement officials responded to the turmoil of social pressure. From a legal sociology perspective, this action was a form of crisis management to restore public trust that had been eroded by the "child of an official" issue and the inability to apprehend fugitives. However, this arrest backfired when the public discovered numerous discrepancies between Pegi's profile and the previously released DPO (wanted list) list. The fact that the police subsequently removed the names of two other DPOs (Andi and Dani) for fictitious reasons further heightened public suspicion of legal manipulation. This dynamic reflects the significant risk of law enforcement pursuing "instant results" to satisfy the digital masses' thirst for justice without supporting strong material evidence. Authorities were caught in a dilemma between the need to maintain institutional authority and the obligation to carry out precise legal procedures amidst the watchful eyes of millions of eyes.

The pretrial motion filed by Pegi Setiawan's legal team at the Bandung District Court became a battleground between procedural truth and demands for substantive justice. Legal sociology views this moment as a crucial checks and balances mechanism to prevent the emergence of absolute power amidst the pressure of virality. The facts at trial revealed that Pegi's suspect status was determined without the proper summons and examination procedures according to statutory regulations. Judge Eman Sulaeman's decision, which granted all of Pegi's claims and annulled his suspect status, was hailed as a victory for legal conscience over arbitrary investigations. Sociologically, this decision successfully re-established the legitimacy of the formal justice system by demonstrating that the courts are still capable of acting independently even under the pressure of divided public opinion. This pretrial motion serves as clear evidence that internal legal mechanisms still function as a safety valve to correct errors triggered by hasty institutional responses.

Pegi Setiawan's victory in the pretrial hearing has had a long-term impact on the interaction patterns between legal authorities and the public in Indonesia's digital age. Law enforcement can no longer be carried out conventionally because every stage, from arrest to evidence, will be tested in parallel by public opinion and court proceedings. Legal sociology notes that this case reinforces the stigma of "No Viral, No Justice" and serves as a warning that virality should not override the presumption of innocence. The fact that former convicts are now flocking to file judicial reviews (PK) indicates a domino effect on the entire legal framework of the 2016 Vina case. The legitimacy of the judicial system now depends on the ability of officials to carry out transparent internal reforms without having to wait for future public pressure. Ultimately, the Vina-Pegi case sets a sociological precedent that true justice requires a balance between intelligent public oversight and officials' adherence to absolute legal procedures.

### Conclusion

The Vina Cirebon case reflects a fundamental shift in law enforcement patterns in Indonesia, where social control is no longer monopolized by formal institutions but is increasingly influenced by the collective pressures of the digital community. Years of stagnant case handling have exposed a gap between the Law on the Books and the Law in Action, which has been corrected through the corrective function of social media as a form of informal oversight. This dynamic demonstrates that legal legitimacy is now largely determined by the ability of law enforcement agencies to transparently respond to demands for substantive justice from the public, especially social media users. However, excessive reliance on viral cases on social media also poses the risk of reactive, hasty law enforcement, potentially ignoring the principles of prudence and the presumption of innocence. Therefore, this case emphasizes that the rule of law in the digital era demands a balance between institutional responsiveness to public aspirations and consistent, objective and professional application of legal procedures.

Thus, future law enforcement needs to be directed at strengthening transparent and accountable internal mechanisms so that justice does not depend on viral pressure on social media. Law enforcement officials need to develop digital literacy and professional ethics to manage public opinion proportionally without compromising legal independence. At the same time, digital public participation needs to be directed at critical oversight based on data and legal facts, rather than solely mobilizing emotions. A healthy integration between informal social control and the formal legal system must be established in an effort to strengthen substantive justice, maintain the legitimacy of judicial institutions, and ensure that the law can operate fairly and consistently for all citizens.

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