



Social Impact of Carok on Offenders' Families: A Criminological Perspective in Sampang

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ABSTRACT

The settlement of carok as part of Madurese society is very important to analyze. This study aims to determine the social impact on the families of carok perpetrators in the perspective of criminology. The second objective is to determine the role of community leaders and the police in minimizing threats and taking preventive action against the families of carok perpetrators in Madura. The research method used in this research is the type of empirical legal research. The results showed that: First, from a criminological perspective, carok can be categorized as a crime. Carok in this case can be subject to articles of the Criminal Code related to crimes against the body and crimes against life. According to labeling theory, families of carok perpetrators are usually labeled by the community as families of criminals who are usually dubbed as "Kaloarga Tokang Carok". Second, Kiai in carok cases plays a role in reconciliation and mediation efforts between the families of carok perpetrators and the families of carok victims to minimize threats to the families of carok perpetrators. The Sampang Police, among others, conducted counseling with the perpetrator's family and collaborated with community leaders.

Keywords: *Criminology, Family of Carok Perpetrators, Labelling Theory*

INTRODUCTION

One of the phenomena strongly associated with the Madurese community is the continuing prevalence of carok (Tengolzor Ba-an et al., 2022). This practice is a matter of concern within the community itself because it has fostered negative public perceptions that portray the Madurese as quarrelsome and even violent (Yanuarko et al., 2022). Although this reputation may seem unfavorable, it actually

reflects a distinctive cultural identity and character, rooted in a deep sense of self-esteem and dignity. The Madurese uphold these values as fundamental aspects of their social life and personal honor. The Madurese people are known for their expressive, spontaneous, and open attitudes in responding to various circumstances, including the treatment they receive from others (Sangadji et al., 2021). For this reason, examining the cultural values of the Madurese people especially in relation to resolving carok cases becomes an essential subject of study in criminal law (Iqbal Amirullah et al., 2024). This importance is grounded in three main considerations which leads to the particular actions (Fathorrahim & Sholehuddin, 2023).

During this kind of situation, the very first considerations is that carok represents as an expression of self-defense and the protection of personal dignity when one feels humiliated. It is deeply intertwined with the moral and behavioral codes that define Madurese culture. Second, the resolution of carok through state institutions or positive law tends to prioritize procedural formalities, emphasizing the establishment of criminal elements and the construction of criminal offenses. State law, however, often neglects the cultural distinctiveness and moral values of the Madurese, particularly in disputes involving family, religion, or honor. Third, criminal law as an instrument for eradicating crime cannot be detached from the diversity of social and cultural values that shape conflict resolution. A purely formal legal approach sees disputes from a single dimension, whereas conflicts rooted in custom require cultural norms as essential references for achieving social equilibrium and justice.

Carok is closely linked to acts of assault and homicide. Assault is regulated under Articles 466 to 471 of Law No. 1 of 2023 concerning the New Criminal Code (*Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana*). Homicide, as stipulated in Article 458 paragraph (1) of the same law, states:

“Any person who takes the life of another shall be punished for murder with imprisonment of up to fifteen (15) years.”

Moreover, Article 459 further states:

“Any person who intentionally takes the life of another with premeditation shall be punished for premeditated murder with the death penalty, life imprisonment, or imprisonment for a maximum of twenty (20) years.”

As a criminal act, carok forms the basis of this research, not only because of its legal implications but also because of its social repercussions. The act has generated a lasting stigma, not only toward offenders but also toward their families, who often experience marginalization and social rejection. From the perspective of social science and criminology, the development of criminological thought in Indonesia has been influenced by Western theoretical frameworks, particularly those originating from Europe and the United States (Susanto, 2011). Within this context, labeling theory provides a relevant analytical framework for understanding

the stigma imposed on carok offenders and their families. Labeling refers to the process by which society attributes a negative identity or stereotype to an individual (Jamilah & Putra, 2020).

From a criminological perspective, carok can be classified as a crime against the body and life, since it involves physical violence between two or more individuals that can result in death. Therefore, carok can be analyzed not only through labeling theory but also as a form of violent criminal behavior. This conceptual foundation supports the present study, which focuses on carok cases in Sampang Regency, where such incidents remain frequent. The research highlights the social impact experienced by the families of carok offenders an urgent issue given that hostility and resentment often persist between the families of victims and perpetrators, even after the offender has been punished. Consequently, this study seeks to explore the social consequences borne by offenders' families and examine the role of law enforcement particularly the Sampang District Police and local community leaders in restoring social harmony and fostering reintegration for affected families.

In understanding carok within the framework of criminal law, it is necessary to discuss the concept of criminal acts as defined in legal theory. The term "criminal act" derives from the Dutch phrase *Strafbaar Feit*, composed of three elements: *straf* (punishment), *baar* (capable), and *feit* (act or deed) (Chazawi, 2007). According to Pompe, a *strafbaar feit* is an act that violates a legal norm whether intentional or not and thus disturbs public order, requiring legal action to maintain social stability and protect the public interest (Lamintang, 1997). Leo Polak argues that punishment, including criminal acts, entails suffering that continues to affect offenders even after the act, primarily through the social stigma they face (Widnyana, 2010). Tri Andrisman, as cited by Teguh Prasetyo, states that a *strafbaar feit* comprises several key elements (Prasetyo, 2011) namely : a) A human act; b) The act is prohibited and punishable by law; c) The act is committed by a person who is legally accountable for it.

Furthermore, criminology, as defined by Bongor, is a scientific discipline devoted to the broad study of crime. He distinguishes between general criminology and theoretical criminology, the latter focusing on identifying and explaining the causes of crime (Salainti, 2023). Research in criminal law cannot be separated from criminological theory, as these frameworks explain how social processes and perceptions influence crime. Among these, labeling theory is particularly relevant because it presents a sociological perspective that examines how social definitions influence behavior and identity (Anwar & Adang, 2010). According to A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, a label constitutes a social definition that, once assigned to an individual, becomes part of their personal identity and determines how society perceives them (Jamilah & Putra, 2020).

In this context, the phenomenon of carok reflects both legal and sociological dimensions of crime. Legally, it is categorized as a criminal act against the person; sociologically, it is a cultural manifestation of self-defense and honor. The intersection between law, culture, and society underscores the complexity of addressing carok through formal legal systems that often fail to accommodate cultural values. Therefore, integrating cultural understanding into law enforcement practices is essential to achieving justice that aligns with both the legal order and the moral fabric of the Madurese community.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs an empirical legal research approach. Empirical legal research is grounded in primary data obtained directly from the community as the main source, through field-based investigation in which data collection is conducted via observation and interviews (Waluyo, 2002). The research adopts a sociological jurisprudence approach, combining legal and sociological perspectives to understand how law operates within society, particularly in the cultural and social context of carok among the Madurese people.

The sources of legal materials and data in this study consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through field research conducted with the Indonesian National Police at the Sampang District Police (Polres Sampang), local community leaders (Kiai), families of carok offenders, and members of the community. These data provide direct insights into how legal norms are perceived and applied in real-life situations involving carok incidents. Secondary data, on the other hand, were obtained through library research, which included an examination of books, legal journals, scholarly opinions, and relevant research findings. These secondary sources encompass primary legal materials (such as laws and regulations), secondary legal materials (including academic commentaries and legal analyses), and tertiary materials that serve as supporting references to strengthen the analytical framework of the study. Through this methodological combination, the research aims to construct a comprehensive understanding of how criminal law and social realities intersect in addressing carok cases, reflecting both the legal framework and the cultural values that shape justice in the Madurese community.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Carok from a Criminological Perspective

Carok is an act or attempt of murder sometimes involving severe assault committed with a sharp weapon (*celurit*) by a man against another man as a response to perceived humiliation toward his relatives or family. In other words, carok occurs when a man's sense of dignity is insulted. The humiliation of male honor often becomes the underlying motivation for carok, which can lead to fatal

consequences. Despite its violent nature and the numerous lives, it has claimed, carok continues to occur frequently within Madurese society, particularly in rural areas.

Research on carok remains essential as the number of such cases continues to rise. Carok is not merely a legal problem; it is closely intertwined with the cultural identity of the Madurese people. The connection between Madurese culture and carok is an important factor in understanding how the community perceives, performs, and resolves these conflicts (Fathorrahim & Sholehuddin, 2023). Studying carok is crucial to protecting those potentially affected, particularly with regard to the social repercussions following such incidents. Therefore, examining carok through a criminological lens is necessary to understand the social reactions that accompany it.

A criminological perspective on carok allows for a deeper analysis of the criminal dimensions associated with this phenomenon. Criminology, as the science of crime, has developed as a discipline since the mid-nineteenth century (Pettanasse, 2011), and its insights are indispensable in analyzing carok as a form of violent crime. Because criminology is rooted in sociology, criminological research generally employs social research methods to explore the patterns and meanings of criminal behavior. Thus, this study uses criminological perspectives to explore carok as both a crime and a social reaction, particularly how communities respond to it as a deviant act within their moral universe.

Mustikajati et al. describe carok as a conflict-resolution behavior that has become socially disturbing because it is considered a criminal act (Mustikajati et al., 2021). Its classification as a crime is inseparable from its violation of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP). The legal provisions that apply to carok include those related to crimes against life (murder) and crimes against the body (assault) (Jayanti, 2020). Crimes against life are regulated in Book II, Chapter XIX of the Criminal Code ("Crimes Against Life"), which covers Articles 338 through 350. Meanwhile, crimes of assault are regulated in Chapter XX ("Assault") under Articles 351 through 358. From a criminological standpoint, carok qualifies as a violent crime an immoral act that violates human rights by causing injury or death to others.

Criminological Analysis of the Social Impact on the Families of Carok Offenders

The negative perception of carok within Madurese society also generates a broader stigma against those involved in it. Both the perpetrators and their families face significant social repercussions after a carok incident. While the perpetrators themselves are typically detained or surrender to the police following the event and are thus shielded within the correctional system, their families remain in their home villages and experience direct social consequences. The families of carok offenders are often seen as representatives of the offenders themselves and consequently

endure continuous social stigma and exclusion. This phenomenon illustrates that public condemnation in Madura extends beyond the offenders to include their kin.

This study examines the social effects experienced by the families of carok offenders in Sampang Regency from a criminological perspective. Using labeling theory, it explores how stigma functions as a social mechanism. Labeling is the process by which society assigns a definition or identity to an individual. According to A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, a label constitutes a definition that, once given, becomes part of a person's self-identity and shapes how others perceive them (Jamilah & Putra, 2020). Assigning a label or nickname creates a framework through which others judge a person's behavior according to the label rather than their individual actions. Edwin M. Lemert explains that deviant behavior often results from this labeling process, whereby society attaches a name or stigma that influences the individual's self-perception and future conduct.

The families of carok offenders experience these social reactions as a direct consequence of the crime. Community gossip and derogatory terms reinforce their marginalization. This was confirmed in an interview with Atnawi, the uncle of one carok offender in Sampang, East Java, who stated:

"The social impact on the families of carok offenders is significant after the incident. The community constantly talks about the offender's actions and refers to our family as 'the carok family,' especially those living nearby and even across the entire village. The negative stigma persists indefinitely and is worsened by the fact that one of our family members is in prison."

This testimony underscores the persistence of stigma as a form of secondary victimization against the families of offenders, showing that carok's impact extends far beyond the courtroom into the social fabric of Madurese life.

The Role of Kiai in Minimizing Threats and Preventive Actions

The kiai a religious scholar and community leader occupies a central and respected role in Madurese society. A kiai is regarded as a charismatic and authoritative Islamic figure whose piety and wisdom serve as moral guidance for the community. Most kiai in Madura also lead pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), reinforcing their influence in both religious and social affairs (Antariksa, 2016). Their deep connection with local communities, combined with the strong religious orientation of Madurese society, gives them immense authority in addressing social and moral issues including those related to carok.

In the context of carok, the kiai play a pivotal role in preventing further conflict and reducing social tension involving the families of offenders and victims. According to Atnawi, a family member of a carok offender, the kiai were instrumental in mediating reconciliation between the two families following the incident. This mediation illustrates the significant influence of the kiai in restoring

social harmony. Because of their moral authority, their directives are rarely questioned; communities generally follow their advice out of respect and religious obedience. In Madurese villages, disregarding a *kiai*'s instruction is considered improper, particularly when the *kiai* in question holds high social esteem. One prominent religious figure, *Kiai H. Abdul Ghafur Wahid*, emphasized:

"A kiai plays a crucial role within society. As a community leader, he must take responsibility for maintaining public safety. In relation to carok, the kiai often provides guidance, brings together both parties the offender's and the victim's families to calm emotions and preserve social order after the incident."

This statement highlights the *kiai*'s essential contribution to peacebuilding and reconciliation after *carok* conflicts. Reconciliation, as Theofransus Litaay (2011) explains, is vital for repairing damaged relationships and creating a peaceful atmosphere. It prevents cycles of revenge and facilitates mutual commitment to peace. Interviews with community members confirmed that *kiai* frequently act as mediators, visiting both families or inviting them to their homes to ensure genuine reconciliation and prevent retaliatory violence in the future.

The Role of the Sampang District Police in Minimizing Threats and Preventive Actions

The relationship between the police and the community is inseparable, particularly in handling *carok* cases in Sampang Regency. *Carok* often viewed as a last resort by some Madurese individuals frequently leads to loss of life, sometimes involving multiple fatalities among the conflicting parties. The Sampang District Police (*Polres Sampang*) thus play a crucial role not only in enforcing the law but also in undertaking preventive and protective actions for the affected families. Through collaboration with *kiai* and community figures, the police aim to mitigate post-conflict tensions, prevent retaliatory acts, and create safer social conditions in regions where *carok* remains deeply ingrained in local tradition. This situation can be observed over the past three years, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1. Data on Murder (Carok) Cases in Sampang District Police, 2022–2024

No.	Year	Number of Cases
1.	2022	6 cases
2.	2023	4 cases
3.	2024	4 cases

Source: Sampang District Police, June 10, 2024

The Sampang District Police (*Polres Sampang*) have actively carried out preventive measures to anticipate and reduce the occurrence of *carok*. These preventive efforts are intended to address potential situations and conditions that may escalate in the future, which could threaten public security and order (Kulsum, 2011). Such measures are essential not only to maintain social stability and community safety but also to protect the families of *carok* offenders from possible acts of revenge or other adverse social consequences initiated by the victims' families. Preventive policing thus serves as both a protective and restorative measure in maintaining communal harmony.

The families of *carok* offenders constitute a primary focus of this study because they are among the most vulnerable groups following the incidents. These families often bear the social stigma associated with being related to a convicted person, and the offense committed by one member becomes a collective burden for the household. Furthermore, the potential for retaliatory actions from the victim's family underscores the critical importance of the Sampang District Police's preventive role in mitigating threats and safeguarding these families from subsequent violence.

In this context, the role of the Sampang District Police in minimizing threats and implementing preventive measures is vital. One such effort includes providing counseling through the *Bhayangkara Pembina Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat (Babinkamtibmas)*, or the Community Security and Order Guidance Officers of the Sampang Police. The functions of *Babinkamtibmas* are regulated under Article 26(1) of the Chief of Police Regulation (*Peraturan Kapolri*) No. 3 of 2015 on Community Policing, which stipulates that their duties include: (1) conducting visits and outreach to local communities to listen to residents' concerns about security and public order (*Kamtibmas*), and providing explanations or solutions; (2) encouraging the implementation of neighborhood security systems (*siskamling*) for community protection; and (3) offering consultation, mediation, negotiation, facilitation, and motivation to the community in maintaining public security (*Harkamtibmas*) and resolving criminal or social problems, among other responsibilities.

Based on these provisions, *Babinkamtibmas* play a key role as part of the Sampang District Police in mitigating threats and carrying out preventive actions toward the families of *carok* offenders. In addition to counseling, the Sampang District Police have taken several further steps to minimize the social impacts experienced by these families. These efforts include: (1) conducting regular counseling sessions with the offenders' families; (2) collaborating with community leaders to clarify to the public that the criminal acts committed by *carok* offenders are individual actions, unrelated to their families; and (3) promoting public understanding that the offenders acted on their own volition and personal motives, not as representatives of their households. These preventive initiatives demonstrate the strategic role of the Sampang District Police in fostering reconciliation,

preventing retaliation, and maintaining public trust, while simultaneously upholding the principles of restorative justice within culturally sensitive contexts such as *carok* in Madura.

CONCLUSION

From a criminological perspective, *carok* is categorized as a criminal act that falls under the provisions of the Indonesian Criminal Code (*KUHP*). As a violent confrontation that often leads to injury or death, *carok* can be prosecuted under several criminal articles, including Article 351 of the *KUHP* on assault, Article 354 concerning aggravated assault, and even Article 338 on murder. These legal provisions illustrate that *carok* embodies a serious breach of both physical and moral order, constituting a form of violence that undermines human rights and social stability. However, the implications of *carok* extend far beyond the legal consequences faced by the offender. The act generates profound social repercussions that are felt most acutely by the offender's family. Through the lens of labeling theory, it becomes evident that families of *carok* offenders experience enduring stigma within their communities. They are often branded as "*Kaloarga Tokang Carok*," literally translated as "the family of the *carok* perpetrator." This social label carries a heavy burden, marking them not only as kin of a criminal but as participants in a collective moral condemnation. Such labeling operates as a mechanism of social control, reinforcing community norms while simultaneously marginalizing those associated with the offender, even when they bear no personal culpability. The stigma attached to these families perpetuates exclusion, psychological distress, and social isolation, making it difficult for them to reintegrate into the community.

In this context, community leaders such as the *kiai* and the Sampang District Police (*Polres Sampang*) play indispensable roles in mitigating the social consequences of *carok* and in preventing further escalation of conflict. The *kiai*, as a respected religious authority, often acts as a mediator and reconciler between the offender's and the victim's families following a *carok* incident. Their moral authority enables them to foster dialogue, promote forgiveness, and prevent cycles of revenge. This reconciliatory function is deeply rooted in the cultural and religious fabric of Madurese society, where *kiai* hold both spiritual and social legitimacy. Through mediation and restorative efforts, they help reestablish peace and rebuild communal trust that has been fractured by violence. Meanwhile, the Sampang District Police complement these efforts through structured preventive and protective measures. Their initiatives include counseling sessions for the families of offenders, collaborative outreach with community figures to clarify that the criminal act was an individual action unrelated to the family, and public education to reduce collective stigmatization. These efforts not only aim to deescalate tensions but also serve as part of a broader community policing framework designed to

restore security, foster reconciliation, and uphold justice. Together, the coordinated roles of the *kiai* and *Polres Sampang* exemplify an integrative approach that blends cultural wisdom, social empathy, and legal enforcement ensuring that the process of law operates not in isolation, but harmoniously within the moral and cultural realities of Madurese society.

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