



The Role of Mass Media in Criminal Law Enforcement

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Abstract

The mass media plays a significant role in criminal law enforcement through the formation of public opinion and social control over the judicial process. This study examines how the mass media plays a role in shaping public perception of criminal law cases, and examines efforts to manage and control mass media coverage so as not to disrupt the criminal law enforcement process, as well as its impact on justice and transparency in criminal law enforcement. The data collection technique used in this study is document study or library research, and the data analysis used in this study is qualitative analysis. The results show that the mass media can expedite the legal process and increase accountability, but also has the potential to disrupt the process if not managed properly. Solutions are directed at ethical and professional news management to support the effectiveness of law enforcement.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly everyone, regardless of educational background, social status, level of well-being, and so on, owns a mobile phone (gadget). The primary purpose of owning a mobile phone is for communication, but with the advent of various features on mobile phones, such as those on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, usage has increased significantly.

This can change the way people access information and engage in social interactions. The existence of social media currently has both positive and negative impacts. The positive side of social media is primarily for users who utilize its existence to exchange useful information to support their daily activities, with users from various backgrounds. (Agung Wibowo, 2023).

The mass media, in every event, constructs the event, which is then used as a news presentation, in construction. Events become news, this is what then differentiates the form of reporting from each media, because it depends on the media's level of awareness of journalistic ethics. The role of mass media as a means of social control as well as a means of building public opinion based on the mass media's reporting at that time. In this case, mass media, in the form of print and electronic media, serve as a means of communication and information for the public, both at the local and national levels.

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Based on news from electronic newspapers on the internet, mass media serves as a means of communication and information for the wider public (Putra, 2016). Even the ability of mass media in shaping public opinion is highly considered in every political agenda. The process carried out by mass media in providing space and time for every event, including political events, of course, receives continuous public attention. The greater the space and time given, the greater the public's attention to the event, this is what is called agenda setting theory. Mass media does have an interest in providing public information, especially after the enactment of Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, but that does not mean that the guarantee of openness is in the interests of law enforcement, press freedom is not freedom without limits and does not pay attention to applicable regulations (Hamad, 2010).

Without mass media, the public might not receive sufficient information about developments in law enforcement. Various legal incidents have turned out to be... Successfully uncovered by the mass media through its investigation, without media involvement

Due to the mass media's influence, a number of legal cases may not be revealed to the public. Budioyono (2013) even calls the function of mass media related to the prevention of corruption a social control function, namely monitoring the disclosure of corruption cases handled by law enforcement, starting from investigation, prosecution, trial, and correctional. The role of mass media in eradicating corruption through reporting; conducting investigations into corruption cases and exercising control; and monitoring issues of corruption. Ultimately, the role of mass media aims to create a culture of shame for perpetrators of corruption.

Based on this background, this research will discuss how the role of mass media in influencing public opinion regarding cases criminal law, while also examining efforts that can be made to manage and control mass media coverage so as not to disrupt the criminal law enforcement process. Thus, this research is expected to provide a clear picture of the importance of balancing press freedom and effective law enforcement, so that the mass media can optimally carry out its social control function without negatively impacting the legal process itself.

METHODS

This study uses a normative juridical approach by analyzing positive legal norms through a study of legislation, doctrine, and related legal literature. The type of research used is descriptive, namely research that aims to provide a systematic and in-depth overview of the role of mass media in the context of criminal law enforcement. (Wanson Noventa Purba, 2025)

The data used is secondary data, including primary legal materials in the form of laws and regulations, secondary legal materials in the form of doctrines, books, journals, and relevant scientific articles, and tertiary legal materials in the form of legal dictionaries and encyclopedias. The data collection technique is carried out through literature studies (*library research*), while data analysis was carried out qualitatively through grammatical and systematic interpretation, and was linked to legal theories on press freedom, the social control function of mass media, and the principles of fair and effective criminal law enforcement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Mass Media in Influencing Public Opinion on Criminal Law Cases

In this era of globalization, modern society has experienced significant changes in the way it obtains information and participates in law enforcement. One factor influencing public opinion regarding law and justice is social media and the mass media.

The existence of social media can have both positive and negative impacts depending on its use and utilization. Essentially, public participation through social media has positive impacts, one of which is increasing transparency and accountability in law enforcement. Public control on social media allows public voice and opinion to influence decisions made by law enforcement. *decisions influenced by public opinion* However, public control on social media not only has a positive impact on achieving substantive justice (Dedihasriadi & Nurcahyo 2020), but it can also create new problems.

One such problem relates to violations of the constitutional rights of individuals involved in litigation or in the process of law formation and enforcement. In fact, conveying aspirations as a form of public participation on social media currently has a significant impact on the law enforcement process (Shelma Mayolaika, Valeria Victoria Effendy, Christian Delvin, 2021).

In this era of reform, freedom of expression is highly respected in various fields. As a result, the public is presented with a variety of news from print and electronic media, as well as social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and so on. The expressions expressed by this society are built on the belief that the law can be effective only if violations are punished. This simultaneously places a moral obligation on society to punish crimes, just as society places a moral obligation on its members to refrain from breaking the law. The imposition of punishment signifies society's disapproval of evil acts and reaffirms the values criminal law was designed to uphold. This reflects a more modern view of the more appropriate place for retribution within the criminal justice system (Apriani, 2010).

In law enforcement efforts, the mass media has a significant influence through its reporting to the public on a case. The mass media, whether print, electronic, or digital, is able to create public opinion in society regarding a legal case with the information and news it conveys (Juditha, C. 2014). Through the public opinion built in society, the mass media performs a control function over the judicial process for a legal case, including in criminal cases. The role of the mass media is large in providing information to the public. Public opinion will be carried over into discussions and dialogues of legal observers who appear on the screen. So that the public is increasingly intelligent both in terms of understanding in the field of law and the deterrent effect that will be experienced by corruptors among government bureaucrats.

In the context of law and justice, the role of the media is becoming increasingly significant. The public views social media as an effective medium for seeking justice. The role of the mass media as *means of transparency and accountability in law enforcement*: With its advanced features, social media allows for a variety of ways to share facts through videos, photos, and even live reports from crime scenes. This increases transparency in highlighting ongoing legal events.

The public can easily upload or share video recordings of criminal acts that are happening live or that have already happened. This recording can be used as important evidence during the investigation, inquiry and prosecution process in court. *Building awareness of law enforcement*: Social media helps

law enforcement raise legal awareness so they can comply with or confirm regulations. This means law enforcement can exert formal behavioral control over social events or behaviors deemed to deviate from legal norms (Kusumaningsih, 2024). *social control* as well as a means *public opinion builders* society based on mass media coverage at that time.

Mass media, in this case, consists of print and electronic media as a means of communication and information to the public, both at the local and national levels. Based on electronic newspaper news on the internet, mass media serves as a means of communication and information for the wider public (Akbar, 2011).

In general, mass media has a function as a medium of information, education, entertainment and social control. This is as formulated in Article 3 paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of Law No. 40 of 1999 concerning the Press, namely the function of the National Press is as a medium of information, education, entertainment and social control, and can function as an economic institution. The social control function of the press is further explained in the General Explanation of Press Law No. 40 of 1999 concerning the Press, which among other things states, the press which also carries out social control is very important to prevent the abuse of power, whether corruption, collusion, nepotism, or other misappropriation and deviation.

Based on the formulation of the function of the press or mass media in the Press Law above, it can be seen that the function of the press or mass media is as a medium of information, education, entertainment and social control. In relation to its relationship with the use of mass media in overcoming criminal acts of corruption, the function of mass media here is primarily as a medium of information and social control.

The case study used by the researcher is the corruption case in South Kalimantan. In the context of corruption, the mass media in South Kalimantan plays a key role in highlighting corruption cases. With high coverage intensity, the media can make corruption a major issue that must be considered by the public and policymakers. In South Kalimantan, the media often covers corruption cases involving public officials, members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), or regional heads. The most recent example is the OTT (Stealing Operation) case of project procurement within the scope of the South Kalimantan Provincial Government on October 6, 2024, which involved several related institutions and also the Governor of South Kalimantan. Continuous and in-depth coverage has made the public increasingly aware that corruption is a serious problem that must be addressed immediately.

Reporting by nearly all local and national media outlets has made the issue widespread and garnered public attention. News involving high-ranking officials or prominent figures automatically becomes a key topic in political and social discourse in South Kalimantan. The media has highlighted the topic of corruption eradication as a pressing and crucial issue for the public and authorities to address.

Through consistent reporting, the media can raise public awareness about the negative impacts of corruption on the regional economy, the quality of public services, and public trust in the government.

The media can report how corrupt practices hamper infrastructure development, harm the poor, and reduce funding for critical sectors like education and health. This makes corruption not only a legal issue, but also a socio-economic one that requires special attention.

Furthermore, the media often highlights how corruption is linked to the abuse of power by public officials. This framing highlights the irregularities of officials who use their positions to enrich themselves or their groups, and undermine the integrity of government institutions. Cases involving high-ranking officials or

members of the legislature in South Kalimantan are often reported with an emphasis on this aspect, suggesting that corruption is a structural problem related to the abuse of power.

The media also frames corruption as a major factor eroding public trust in government. When citizens perceive their officials as involved in corruption, they tend to lose trust in the existing political and governmental system. The media portrays this issue as damaging the relationship between the government and its citizens and hindering the creation of clean and effective governance.

In several reports, media in South Kalimantan have linked corruption to social injustice that harms the poor. This framing highlights the inequality that arises when funds, supposedly used for development and public welfare, are misappropriated by powerful individuals or groups. In this context, the media plays a role in raising collective awareness that corruption is not just an individual problem, but also a structural issue that threatens social justice.

Media coverage can frame corruption as a legal issue that must be resolved through firm law enforcement. In this case, reporting focuses more on the legal process that perpetrators of corruption must go through and the importance of transparent and accountable actions by law enforcement officials. Public perception can be consciously influenced by media reports about the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in handling corruption cases. If the media highlights cases that are processed properly, this can increase public trust in the legal system. Conversely, if law enforcement is perceived as weak or there are indications of collusion, the media can criticize and emphasize the need for reform within the legal system.

Therefore, the mass media plays a crucial role in framing the issue of corruption, selecting various narratives that will influence public perception. Through framing, the media can portray corruption as a crime that harms society, an abuse of power, a systemic problem, a challenge to law enforcement, and a moral issue that affects the integrity of public officials. Thus, the media not only provides information but also shapes public perceptions of corruption and influences the actions taken by the public and policymakers (Arnafama, 2025).

Efforts to Manage and Control Mass Media Coverage so as not to Disrupt the Law Enforcement Process The form of cooperation between the mass media and law enforcement agencies should also be carried out in reporting court hearings. There are several things that should not be disclosed first, because they can form a "picture" of the case that may be inaccurate, the Abu Bakar Baasyir case and the Anand Khrisna case for example.

In reporting legal cases, especially criminal cases which automatically become hot news and are eagerly awaited by most of the public, there is often a clash between the public interest in developments in the news and the correct process of enforcing criminal law.

This also makes it difficult for the mass media and law enforcement to collaborate effectively in a unified crime prevention policy. While law enforcement tries to be careful in conveying information to the public, the mass media tends to demand transparency, even perhaps "nudity," because the public has the right to know the development of this information. The media is not only a source of public information, but also a driving factor or trigger to be able to optimize the function and role of law enforcement agencies (the criminal justice system) in overcoming corruption. This driving factor is supported by the advantages of the mass media itself: First, mass media has a wide reach. Reporting on law enforcement through the mass media will have a very wide reach or coverage in disseminating information on handling corruption crimes, will be able to cross regional boundaries (geography), age

groups, gender and also socio-economic status (demography) and differences in understanding and also psychographic orientation (Mustawa Nur, 2022).

This will generate feedback for law enforcement officers, perpetrators of corruption, and their families. For law enforcement officers, it has a psychological impact, namely, their work being monitored by the public. For defendants in corruption crimes or their families, it will create a sense of shame, as their crimes are known to the public. Second, it has the ability to multiply messages, or an extraordinary multiplier of messages .

A legal event can be multiplied according to the number of copies of newspapers, tabloids, and magazines printed; it can also be broadcast repeatedly as needed. As a result, this multiplication has a huge impact on the public.

Third, each media can discuss a legal event according to their own views, of course with the agenda setting function that they have, the media has a very broad opportunity (almost unlimited) to report on corruption cases, so that the media agenda is parallel with the public agenda, and the impact will be that the role of the media in forming public opinion will be even stronger (Budyono, 2013).

CONCLUSION

In law enforcement efforts, the mass media has a significant influence through its public reporting on a case. The mass media can shape public opinion regarding a legal case through the information and news it conveys. Through this public opinion, the mass media performs a monitoring function over the judicial process in a legal case, including criminal cases. Media coverage can increase transparency and accountability, while simultaneously accelerating the legal process, particularly in uncovering cases such as corruption. However, the media's power to shape public perception also has the potential to create bias, put pressure on law enforcement officials, and risk violating the presumption of innocence if not managed proportionally.

The media also frames corruption as a major factor eroding public trust in government. When citizens see their officials involved in corruption, they tend to lose trust in the existing political and governmental system. The media portrays this as an issue that damages the relationship between the government and citizens and hinders the creation of clean and effective governance. In several reports, media in South Kalimantan have linked corruption to social injustice that harms the poor.

This framing highlights the inequality that arises due to the flow of funds that should be used for development and the welfare of the people, but are instead misappropriated by individuals or groups in power.

Therefore, a balance is needed between press freedom and the interests of law enforcement. Managing news coverage based on the principles of ethics, professionalism, and responsibility, along with establishing synergy between the media and law enforcement officials, are crucial factors in ensuring the media's ability to maintain its social control function without impeding the judicial process. In this way, the mass media can optimally contribute to realizing a just, transparent, and integrated legal system.

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