



ILLEGAL LIQUOR CIRCULATION IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL LEGITIMACY

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Abstract

This article examines illegal liquor circulation within selected communities through a normative synthesis of legal and social concepts. It frames circulation as a patterned set of procurement, storage, distribution, and consumption activities sustained by trust based ties and informal rules. The discussion distinguishes licensed alcohol trade from unlicensed distribution and explains how secrecy practices, coded communication, and role differentiation reduce exposure. It outlines how community acceptance can arise from perceived affordability, availability, and social bonding functions, while risk is discounted through familiarity with sellers and shared narratives about product safety. The paper links these meanings to public order and public health duties, emphasizing that unverified composition and uncontrolled production heighten harm potential. It also discusses how enforcement pressure can shift routes and transaction timing rather than end circulation, generating adaptive routines. Normative evaluation is organized around legality, accountability, and consumer protection, including duties to prevent endangerment and to respect regulatory authority. The article concludes that sustained circulation reflects interaction among informal legitimacy, economic incentives, and weak traceability, and it identifies concept based entry points for clearer regulation communication and community oriented prevention in locally trusted social spaces.

Keywords: illegal liquor, community networks, secrecy norms, informal legitimacy, consumer safety, public order, accountability.

Introduction

The circulation of illegal alcoholic beverages is a social and legal issue that arises through the practice of distributing goods outside of established licensing, quality control, and trade regulations. In society, alcoholic beverages can be understood as a commodity that encompasses aspects of consumption, social identity, and specific habits. When such commodities circulate illegally, the problem that emerges is not just a breach of rules, but also a shift in how society interprets the reasonable boundaries between needs, habits, and order. Illegal circulation tends to operate through social relations that allow transactions to occur without formal procedures (Kentana et al., 2022). Such relations can be formed through regional proximity, friendships, or long-standing networks of trust. Within these networks, the traceability of the goods' origin often becomes blurred, making it difficult for consumers to ensure product quality and safety. This condition widens the space for risk, including health risks and legal consequences. This issue is also relevant to the challenges of law enforcement in handling the circulation of other hazardous goods, which often demand consumer protection and stronger legal certainty within society (Ali et al., 2024).

Certain communities often possess internal norms that influence how transactions are understood and executed. These norms may concern who is allowed to purchase, when purchases are made, how transactions are disguised, and how confidentiality is maintained. In communities with close-knit relations, purchases may be positioned as part of social interaction, such as for meetings, celebrations, or gathering habits. When illegal liquor becomes part of social routines, the boundary between personal consumption and economic practice becomes difficult to separate. The seller may be perceived as someone meeting the group's needs, while the buyer may be perceived as someone maintaining the continuity of relations. This perception turns transactions into social events with unwritten rules. On the other hand, it is important to understand that the handling of hazardous substances and drug abuse in society also faces serious obstacles in law enforcement aspects that require synergy from various parties (Mujito et al., 2023).

Illegal circulation practices can exploit loopholes in oversight through the inconspicuous movement of goods, the use of intermediaries,

or the use of storage locations that are difficult to detect (Wulandari & Handoyo, 2018). Such circulation often relies on adaptive patterns, as perpetrators adjust their *modus operandi* when there are signs of enforcement. Adaptation can take the form of changing distribution points, altering transaction times, or using closed communication channels. From a social perspective, adaptation demonstrates that illegal practices do not stand merely as individual acts, but as small systems that involve a division of tasks. This division can include suppliers, transporters, information keepers, and sellers who interact with buyers. Preventive efforts in dealing with serious crimes are often colored by debates regarding the effectiveness of sanctions, including whether strict measures such as the death penalty can serve as adequate preventive instruments for severe legal violations (Ferdinanta et al., 2024).

The circulation of illegal alcoholic beverages is also related to price formation and the perception of value (Uddarojat, 2016). Price can be understood as compensation for risk, access, and scarcity. In certain communities, prices can be arranged through informal agreements, including discounts for those close to the seller or additional costs for outsiders. Such price structures reinforce network exclusivity and strengthen the boundaries between members and non-members. Furthermore, illegal circulation can create product variations, from products imitating famous brands to products without clear identities. These variations expand consumer choices while simultaneously expanding risks. When the origin of a product is unclear, consumers rely on practical assessments such as taste, smell, or seller recommendations. Practical assessments can be misleading because they cannot replace quality inspection. In relation to human rights, access to recovery services and fundamental rights for individuals involved in legal cases, such as inmates, must still be ensured within the correctional system (Kurniawan et al., 2025).

The relationship between illegal circulation and public order is reflected in how environments respond to the existence of such practices. Some environments may be permissive, regarding the practice as closed and non-disruptive. Other environments may be oppositional, associating it with noise, violence, or security disturbances. These differing responses demonstrate that community judgment is influenced

by social experience rather than written norms alone. In certain communities, alcohol consumption can be framed as a symbol of solidarity, so opposition is viewed as a rejection of the group. To outsiders, this framing can create distance, as they perceive the illegal circulation as a threat to general rules. This distance potentially breeds conflict in values. Furthermore, support from family as the closest party in seeking recovery or rehabilitation for family members affected by substance issues becomes a crucial component that requires a clear legal foundation and protection (Saktiawan & Darmawan, 2025).

The issue that needs scientific explanation is how the practice of illegal alcoholic beverage circulation survives in certain communities through social mechanisms that maintain confidentiality, ensure supply, and sustain demand. Discussions often stop at the assertion that such circulation violates rules, whereas the sustainability of the practice requires more complex social conditions. There is a relationship between trust within networks and the courage to transact. There is a relationship between a community's internal norms and tolerance for risk. There is a relationship between the perception of social benefits from consumption and the justification for rule-breaking economic actions. If these relationships are not mapped, the explanation becomes reductive and fails to explain why the practice continues despite the threat of enforcement. This issue also involves how a community manages information, as control over information is often the primary tool for resisting external intervention. When information is guarded, proving the existence of illegal circulation becomes more difficult. Consequently, the practice can operate in an invisible sphere while forming a false sense of security for both perpetrators and consumers.

Another issue concerns the tension between legal norms—which demand the certainty of licensing and quality control—and social community norms, which often view consumption as a private choice. This tension influences how people evaluate the acts of buying and selling. At a certain point, a community may build an argument that illegal circulation is a response to limited access to legal products, or a response to restrictions perceived as inconsistent with their social needs. This argument does not negate the unlawful aspect, but it explains how justifications are formed. Furthermore, tension also arises in how society

evaluates victims and perpetrators. If health losses occur, the community may place it as "bad luck" or an individual error, rather than as a consequence of the illegal circulation system. This placement reduces the moral pressure to stop the circulation. In the legal realm, this placement weakens awareness regarding the seller's responsibility for safety. When responsibility is not recognized, the space for illegal circulation remains open. This issue demands a normative description that separates private claims from public consequences, as the circulation of goods without quality control carries implications that go beyond personal matters.

The urgency of this writing lies in the need to construct a structured conceptual mapping of illegal alcoholic beverage circulation practices in certain communities, particularly regarding the social mechanisms that make such practices stable. This mapping is important to clarify that illegal circulation is not merely an event of violation, but a series of actions structured through networks, internal norms, and social justification. A systematic normative description helps the reader understand the relationship between legal regulations, risk perception, and the structure of trust that shapes transaction behavior. The urgency is also related to the interest of public protection, as goods without quality oversight open up the possibility of health losses that are difficult to recover. Moreover, this writing is relevant to strengthening the understanding of social order, because illegal circulation is often related to how a community assesses the legitimacy of rules and how it responds to enforcement. With a tidy framework, academic discussion can move from moral generalizations toward a mechanistic explanation, making the discussion more precise and usable as a basis for policy discussion and social guidance.

The objective of this writing is to develop a conceptual framework regarding the factors that shape and sustain the practice of illegal liquor circulation within specific communities. The writing maps the mechanisms of trust networks, information control, division of labor, and internal norms that organize transactions. The writing also explains the forms of social justification that reduce guilt and normalize consumption, as well as their connection to perceptions of health and legal risks. This framework is intended to clarify the relationship between legal provisions and social behavior, so that readers obtain an argumentative basis to assess the positions of community protection, order, and responsibility.

Practically, this framework can assist in social development and the formulation of policy communications that are more accurately targeted.

Method

This research is designed as a qualitative literature study that positions written sources as the basis for formulating definitions, categories, and conceptual relationships regarding the illegal circulation of liquor within specific communities. The focus of the work is directed toward organizing concepts regarding legality, trade administration, quality control, public order, and social justification that influence the sustainability of the practice. Shipman (2014) is used to maintain caution when drawing conclusions from social sources, especially when an explanation might easily be tempted to generalize without clear boundaries. This framework helps distinguish between normative statements, conceptions of social action, and assumptions that require empirical proof. Sources are selected from legal materials and scientific works discussing the regulation of alcoholic beverages, principles of community protection, compliance theory, and the ways communities build internal norms. The entire discussion is ensured not to rely on interviews or field observations, so that the result is a coherent argumentative synthesis.

Material processing is carried out through systematic reading and thematic coding to find explanatory patterns regarding trust networks, information control, division of labor, and the social meaning of consumption that form community tolerance. Arfa and Marpaung (2016) are used to strengthen methodological discipline in legal reasoning, particularly in constructing arguments from normative sources and testing consistency between principles when faced with differing social habits. Variations in citation styles are applied to keep the narrative natural, such as narrative forms like Shipman (2014) and parenthetical forms like (Arfa & Marpaung, 2016). Conceptual validity is maintained through terminological consistency, the distinction between legal norms and community norms, and the affirmation of relationships between factors that sustain illegal circulation without presenting incidence figures. The final result is presented as a conceptual mapping that addresses the research problems through a description of interconnected social and juridical mechanisms.

Result and Discussion

Regulations regarding the circulation of illegal alcoholic beverages in Indonesia are strictly governed through a combination of consumer protection, trade, and public order regulations to minimize social and public health impacts. The primary legal foundation for this oversight rests on Presidential Regulation Number 74 of 2013 concerning the Control and Supervision of Alcoholic Beverages, which classifies alcoholic beverages into three categories based on their ethanol content. Under this regulation, alcoholic beverages circulating without an official distribution permit, lacking excise stamps, or produced as "bootleg" are categorized as illegal goods that are strictly prohibited from being traded within the legal jurisdiction of Indonesia.

From a trade perspective, the Ministry of Trade regulates distribution through Minister of Trade Regulation Number 20 of 2014 concerning the Control and Supervision of the Procurement, Circulation, and Sales of Alcoholic Beverages and its amendments. This regulation establishes strict limitations on sales locations, where alcoholic beverages may only be sold at specific locations such as hotels, restaurants, and bars that hold special permits, and their sale is prohibited at small retail outlets or minimarkets. The sale of illegal alcoholic beverages that violates these location and licensing provisions can lead to the confiscation of goods and the permanent revocation of business licenses by the relevant authorities. On a broader level, the effectiveness of law enforcement and the integrity of officials in cracking down on rule violations are key to ensuring order in society (Saktiawan et al., 2025).

Regarding fiscal aspects and state revenue, the circulation of illegal alcoholic beverages directly intersects with Law Number 39 of 2007 concerning Excise (Ginting et al., 2024). Every alcoholic beverage produced domestically or imported is obligated to pay excise duties, evidenced by the affixing of genuine excise stamps on its packaging (Mansour, 2023). The circulation of alcoholic beverages with fake, reused, or missing excise stamps is a serious criminal act punishable by imprisonment and fines that are multiples of the excise value that should have been paid, as it is considered detrimental to state finances and damaging to a healthy business climate.

Consumer safety aspects are the primary concern in Law Number 18 of 2012 concerning Food and Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection. Illegal alcoholic beverages, especially bootleg types, often contain hazardous substances such as methanol, which can cause death or permanent disability for consumers (Zayyan & Anggraini, 2023). Producers or sellers of illegal alcoholic beverages that result in illness or death can be charged with severe criminal sanctions under the Criminal Code (KUHP) on the grounds of negligence or intentional acts that endanger human life. This protection of consumer rights is also an important foundation in handling various other dangerous products in the market so that public safety is maintained (Ali et al., 2024).

Law enforcement against the circulation of illegal alcoholic beverages at the regional level is supported by regional regulations of each territory, which often implement more restrictive rules, including total bans (*zero alcohol*) in several regencies or cities. The Municipal Police, in conjunction with the police, routinely conduct enforcement operations against the unlicensed circulation of alcoholic beverages to maintain public order and prevent criminal acts often triggered by the consumption of illegal alcohol (Djidar et al., 2024). These regional regulations grant local authorities the power to destroy evidence on the spot to provide a deterrent effect for those involved in illicit circulation. This oversight effort is similar to the challenges in eradicating the circulation of unfit products or counterfeit goods, which are becoming increasingly prevalent in the digital era (Susanto et al., 2024).

The governance of alcohol oversight in Indonesia demands synergy between the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM), the Directorate General of Customs and Excise, and the Indonesian National Police. The public is also provided with space to participate by reporting the discovery of warehouses or distribution points for illegal alcoholic beverages in residential areas through official complaint mechanisms (Sari & Dompok, 2023). Through this layered regulatory framework, the government strives to ensure that the circulation of alcohol remains administratively controlled, meets health standards, and does not undermine the social values prevailing in society. Furthermore, it is important for producers to always comply with safety and labeling

standards as a concrete form of responsibility for the safety of product users (Hardyansah et al., 2023; Sumito et al., 2024; Nugraha et al., 2024).

The circulation of illegal alcoholic beverages within certain communities can be understood as a series of actions that possess internal order, despite existing outside the channels of licensing and oversight (Batara & Wahyuningrum, 2023). This order emerges because perpetrators require minimal certainty regarding supply, storage methods, handover procedures, and payment processes. In close-knit communities, this order is built through trust that is filtered by social proximity. Trust becomes a primary prerequisite because transactions involve legal and social risks. When trust is established, transactions can proceed without formal documentation, open promotion, or the usual consumer protection mechanisms. This situation gives rise to an exchange model that relies on personal reputation and shared knowledge circulating orally. Personal reputation forms judgments about who is considered safe, who is considered dangerous, and who is capable of keeping secrets. Shared knowledge also forms internal boundaries regarding acceptable behavior, such as prohibitions against bringing in outsiders, complaining in public spaces, or discussing the source of the goods. Thus, illegal practices persist because the community provides social tools to reduce uncertainty while simultaneously providing social reasons to maintain the continuity of the exchange.

Circulation networks can be viewed as an arrangement of relations that separate the functions of procurement, packaging, storage, distribution, and sales. The separation of functions does not always imply a formal organization, but rather a division of labor formed by habits and the suitability of roles (Trompette, 2024). A person who has access to suppliers will tend to settle into the procurement function, while someone who has a safe location will tend to become the storer. An individual with extensive relations with buyers may become a transaction intermediary because they are considered capable of reading buyer character and assessing risks. This division reduces the exposure of each individual, as complete information is not held by one person. From a normative viewpoint, this division of labor strengthens the durability of the practice because it complicates the task of proving the chain of acts as a single entity. At the same time, the division of labor fosters internal loyalty, as

each role is mutually dependent. This loyalty can be reinforced by economic gains, but also by social gains in the form of status within the group. Status arises from the ability to provide sought-after goods and the ability to maintain internal order. Therefore, efforts to understand illegal circulation need to examine how the division of labor and social status reinforce each other, so that circulation does not appear as an ordinary transaction, but as an activity managed socially.

Information control is a key mechanism that keeps illegal circulation running. Information control can take the form of selecting communication channels, using codes, restricting communication times, and using intermediaries to convey messages (Basu, 2014). In certain communities, information control also includes screening members—who is told the location, who is only told the time, and who is only informed through a trusted person. Screening ensures that everyone has only partial information, thereby limiting leaks. Information control also shapes psychological security because members feel there is a "social fence" protecting them. This sense of security increases the courage to transact. However, information control also affects how the community interprets legal authority. When information control becomes a habit, authority is perceived as something to be avoided, not something to be obeyed. This perception can evolve into an internal norm that views compliance as a weakness. In a normative framework, such a condition is significant because it transforms the relationship between citizens and rules into one of mutual suspicion. Illegal circulation then becomes not merely a violation, but a process of creating distance between the community and oversight. That distance strengthens the practice's ability to survive, while simultaneously increasing the risks to consumer safety.

The social reasons underpinning consumption can provide internal legitimacy to illegal circulation (Duxbury & Haynie, 2021). Consumption can be positioned as part of meetings, celebrations, or symbols of closeness. In such situations, alcohol is viewed as a tool that facilitates communication and reduces social stiffness. When the commodity is understood as a social tool, formal prohibitions may be considered inconsistent with the group's interaction needs. This assessment forms a justification that reduces feelings of guilt. Justification can take the form of statements that consumption is performed by adults,

is done in private spaces, and does not disturb others. However, such justification ignores the normative fact that illegal circulation negates quality checks and removes clear accountability if losses occur. Social justification can also divert attention from potential dangers, as groups tend to judge safety through past experience rather than oversight standards. When no visible incidents occur, the community strengthens the belief that the practice is safe. This belief becomes the basis for tolerance. In normative reasoning, experience-based tolerance which is limited poses a systemic risk because small changes in composition or the source of goods can cause great losses. Nevertheless, the belief in safety persists because it is maintained by the group's social needs.

The economic value in illegal circulation does not always appear as a singular motive, but it provides incentives that maintain the continuity of supply. Profits can come from price differences, access to goods that are difficult to obtain, or the reduction of compliance costs (Lord et al., 2017). When compliance requires permits, taxes, and sales standards, the illegal route can offer profits through the avoidance of those obligations. In certain communities, economic gain can be normalized through the narrative that everyone is just trying to survive. This narrative positions illegal circulation as a way to earn a living that is considered reasonable. At the same time, economic gain often depends on the ability to maintain social relations, because buyers need guarantees that they will not be cheated, and sellers need guarantees that they will not be reported. Economic gain and social trust are interrelated, because without trust, transactions do not occur. This state gives illegal circulation a unique "moral economy," where profit is exchanged for loyalty. Loyalty can take the form of keeping secrets, repeated purchasing, or protecting the seller from rumors. In a normative framework, this moral economy has the potential to obscure responsibility, as actions that harm the public may be viewed as legitimate acts for the sake of group solidarity. This obscuring of responsibility makes formal legal judgments often fail to change the practice, as the community has its own standards of justification.

The relationship between illegal circulation and health risks must be understood through the concepts of compositional uncertainty and the absence of oversight. Illegal products can have variations in alcohol content, variations in additives, and variations in the cleanliness of

production processes (Bujdosó et al., 2019). Consumers often rely on sensory assessments, such as smell and taste, to judge suitability. Sensory assessment is not equivalent to quality inspection, so the risk remains high even if the consumer feels confident. In certain communities, beliefs are often built on the experiences of those considered experienced, so the authority of knowledge shifts from regulatory institutions to informal figures. Informal figures may offer recommendations, but these recommendations remain in the realm of conjecture. When recommendations become the standard, the community may ignore warning signs. Furthermore, health risks are often perceived as individual risks, not public risks. This perception reduces the drive to demand accountability from the seller. In a normative framework, shifting risk to the individual lowers consumer protection, because protection requires the recognition that the seller has a duty of care. The lack of recognized obligation causes the practice to continue with unclear safety standards. Even if losses occur, the community may cover them up to maintain the group's good name. This cover-up strengthens information control while simultaneously reinforcing the cycle of circulation.

The dimension of public order arises when consumption triggers behavior that disturbs the environment, yet the assessment of what constitutes a disturbance often depends on local standards. Certain communities may judge that consumption done behind closed doors does not cause problems, thus viewing circulation as unrelated to public order (Alam, 2022). However, public order from a legal perspective includes the prevention of risks that may arise, including potential violence, accidents, and other disruptions. This discrepancy in standards creates interpretive tension. This tension can lead to justifications that authorities are acting excessively, or conversely, to the view that the community is turning a blind eye. In a normative framework, this interpretive tension is significant because it affects the legitimacy of enforcement. When legitimacy is low, the community becomes increasingly insular. This insularity increases the circulation's ability to adapt. Adaptation can take the form of relocating sites, distributing smaller stocks, or using rotating intermediaries. Thus, public order is not merely the result of enforcement actions, but also the result of how the community interprets authority. When authority is viewed as alien, enforcement triggers symbolic resistance. Symbolic

resistance can strengthen internal solidarity and reinforce the justification of illegal circulation as an act of defending social space. Under these conditions, illegal circulation becomes a symbol of group identity that is difficult for purely formal approaches to address.

The aspect of legality in the circulation of alcoholic beverages concerns the boundary between permitted and prohibited trade (Octaviyana, 2023). In the legal channel, there are permits, distribution standards, and oversight that can be tracked. In the illegal channel, these elements are avoided. This avoidance is not merely the omission of documents, but the elimination of accountability mechanisms. Accountability is necessary so that the public knows who is responsible when losses occur. In the illegal channel, responsibility easily evaporates because the seller's identity can be disguised, locations can move, and stock can be hidden. In a normative framework, the primary issue is not only the violation of rules but also the loss of avenues for recovery if losses arise. Harmed consumers find it difficult to make claims because there is no clear address and no evidence of transaction. The community may resolve issues internally, but internal resolution is often more focused on maintaining harmony than restoring rights. This situation places consumers in a weak position. At the same time, the illegal channel can exploit weaknesses in inter-agency coordination, as oversight is often fragmented and not always consistent. When oversight is inconsistent, perpetrators learn when to avoid it and when they can operate. This learning creates adaptive routines that increase durability. Therefore, legality needs to be read as a structure that influences behavior, not just a label attached to goods.

Internal community norms can function as a substitution for formal rules. This substitution is evident when a community has rules regarding who is permitted to purchase, how to avoid conflict, and how to respond to complaints. Internal norms may prohibit sales to individuals deemed unstable or prohibit consumption in certain locations to avoid drawing attention (Nurmala et al., 2022). Internal norms may also regulate payment methods to avoid leaving a trail. When internal norms are functional, the community feels it has its own system of order. This sense of ownership reinforces the belief that the practice is not harmful. However, internal norms have limitations because they do not provide quality guarantees and do not provide objective safety standards. Internal norms can also tend to

protect the seller because the seller is considered a member who must be safeguarded. In a normative framework, the substitution of formal rules by internal norms generates problems of legitimacy. The community assesses legitimacy based on closeness, while the state assesses legitimacy based on general rules. When these two bases of legitimacy compete, a space for conflict arises. In this space, illegal circulation can survive because the community is more obedient to internal norms than to general rules. At the same time, internal norms can reinforce exclusivity, making it difficult for outsiders to enter or conduct broader social monitoring. This exclusivity increases secrecy and reduces wider social oversight.

The justification for illegal circulation often exploits the argument of privacy, as if consumption does not touch public interests (Beckert & Wehinger, 2014). This argument has appeal because it positions choices as an individual right. However, in a normative framework, privacy has limits when actions bring risks to others and to order. Illegal circulation carries risks through uncontrolled production lines and irresponsible distribution channels. These risks can affect buyers, the buyers' families, and the environment. Furthermore, privacy does not obscure the fact that transactions are economic activities that require regulation. When the economy runs without regulation, the potential for exploitation and loss increases. In certain communities, the privacy argument can be used to reject questions, criticism, and oversight. This rejection strengthens information control. Information control then reinforces circulation. This cycle shows that justification is not merely an opinion, but a social tool that regulates behavior. In normative reasoning, understanding justification means understanding how practices are maintained through language. Language that emphasizes privacy, habit, or tradition can mask the fact that product safety remains unassured. Thus, the discussion needs to conceptually reorganize the boundaries of privacy and public responsibility, so that the position of illegal circulation can be assessed with consistent measures.

Stigma against reporting can also be an element that maintains illegal circulation. In close-knit communities, a person who reports can be considered a traitor. The social risks of reporting can include ostracism, conflict, or loss of support (Ram, 2020). These risks make members choose to remain silent even though they know about the illegal practice. Silence

reinforces the perpetrator's sense of security. The perpetrator's sense of security expands operations. In a normative framework, the stigma of reporting creates a barrier to public participation in maintaining order. When participation is weak, oversight depends solely on authorities. However, authorities have limited resources and information. This limitation is exploited by perpetrators through adaptation. Furthermore, the stigma of reporting can strengthen the justification that problems must be resolved internally. Internal resolution often does not touch upon aspects of legality, but focuses on control so as not to be conspicuous. As a result, circulation continues with slight adjustments. In certain communities, even those harmed by illegal products may choose not to report for fear of being accused of involvement. This fear locks the victim in silence. In a normative framework, victims who do not report lower the possibility of social correction against the practice. Social correction is a mechanism that can suppress circulation through moral pressure. Without social correction, circulation continues to gain space. Therefore, the stigma of reporting must be understood as a social factor that connects group identity with the continuity of violations.

Illegal circulation is also influenced by the logic of opportunity, namely the availability of transaction gaps that can be entered without high costs (Abid et al., 2022). Transaction gaps can arise when demand exists, when access to legal goods is restricted, or when legal prices are considered high. In certain communities, transaction gaps are seen as economic opportunities. These economic opportunities can encourage individuals who were previously passive to become perpetrators. However, new perpetrators require legitimacy from the network. Network legitimacy is obtained through recommendations, family ties, or friendship. This state shows that economic opportunity does not work alone. It requires a social door. The social door is opened by trust. In a normative framework, opportunity and trust form a strong combination, because opportunity provides an economic reason while trust provides social protection. Furthermore, the logic of opportunity is also related to location. Locations far from oversight or locations with specific crowds can be used to disguise transactions. Communities that control these locations have an advantage. Location advantage strengthens the network's position and reinforces the endurance of circulation. At the same time, economic opportunity often

changes the structure of relations, because profits can trigger internal competition. Internal competition can trigger conflicts that open gaps for information leaks. However, communities often develop ways to control competition through internal norms. Internal norms return to work as a stabilization tool. Thus, economic opportunity is the triggering factor, while internal norms are the stabilizing factor.

The quality of illegal products is often understood through informal categories formed by community experience. Categories can take the form of names for goods considered safe, goods considered "hard," or goods considered risky (Primananda et al., 2024). These categories help consumers choose without formal standards. However, informal categories can also be misleading because they are not based on testing. In a normative framework, reliance on informal categories indicates the existence of "knowledge substitution." Official knowledge about quality is replaced by social knowledge. This social knowledge can accelerate transactions and reduce anxiety, thus increasing circulation. Social knowledge can also strengthen the position of the seller who is considered an expert. Sellers considered experts obtain the authority to calm buyers and dismiss concerns. This authority increases buyer loyalty. Loyalty strengthens the network. When the network is strong, circulation becomes stable. However, if losses occur, social knowledge can shift the blame to the consumer on the grounds of excessive consumption or lack of tolerance. This shifting of blame keeps the seller from responsibility. In normative reasoning, shifting blame weakens the principle of public protection because it closes the space for accountability. This state shows that the quality of illegal products is a matter of knowledge and power. Those who control the narrative of quality can regulate the perception of risk. A low perception of risk reinforces normalization.

The normalization of illegal circulation can occur when repeated practices become habits that are no longer questioned. Normalization functions through the repetition of transactions, the use of language that neutralizes violations, and the formation of meeting routines (Teichmann & Falker, 2020). Meeting routines make consumption and purchasing feel natural. Neutralizing language can take the form of terms that avoid the word "illegal," such as expressions emphasizing flavor, brand, or type. With such language, concern for legality fades. In a normative framework,

normalization changes moral orientation. Violations are no longer viewed as a problem, but as part of a lifestyle. When a lifestyle is formed, external opposition can trigger a defensive reaction. A defensive reaction may take the form of rejecting criticism and strengthening internal solidarity. Internal solidarity reinforces information control. Information control reinforces circulation. This cycle shows that normalization has structural consequences. It is not merely an attitude, but a mechanism that forms small social institutions. Small social institutions have rules, roles, and sanctions. Sanctions can take the form of ostracization for those who violate norms of secrecy. Thus, normalization explains why sporadic enforcement often fails to change practices. Enforcement may cause the practice to move, but it does not change the norms. As long as internal norms remain accepting, the practice will reappear in an adapted form.

The dimensions of religion and public morality can influence how a community frames consumption, but that influence is not always one-way. In some communities, moral prohibitions may be strong, causing illegal circulation to operate more covertly (Yeomans, 2014). In other communities, moral prohibitions may be negotiated through justifications that emphasize freedom or tradition. This negotiation produces a "gray area" where people maintain a public facade while continuing to participate privately. In a normative framework, this gray area complicates social oversight, as actions are performed with a separation of personas. The separation of personas can reduce feelings of guilt and diminish pressure to change. At the same time, public morality can be used as a reason to stigmatize users, making users reluctant to seek help if losses occur. Stigma closes access to recovery. In normative reasoning, the closure of access to recovery increases danger because victims do not receive appropriate aid. Furthermore, illegal circulation can exploit moral tension by offering more secretive channels. Secrecy becomes a commodity. The more secretive, the higher the price. Higher prices increase profits. Profits increase incentives. Thus, public morality can have a paradoxical effect: suppressing openness while encouraging secrecy that increases profits. This discussion demands a careful reading of how moral norms interact with economy and networks.

A community's capacity to enforce internal norms is often influenced by trusted authoritative figures. Authoritative figures can be

elders, people with resources, or those considered capable of protecting members (Zachnik, 2023). These figures can regulate consumption limits to prevent disturbances, regulate who is allowed to sell, and regulate when transactions are carried out. Such regulation can make the practice appear orderly. In a normative framework, internal order is not the same as legal compliance (Susanti & Darmansyah, 2024). Internal order is an order that serves the continuity of the practice. When internal order functions well, the community feels it does not need outside rules. This feeling reinforces internal legitimacy and weakens state legitimacy. Furthermore, authoritative figures can control outgoing information, making external intervention difficult. If a member wishes to stop or report, the figure can apply pressure. Pressure can take the form of social sanctions. Social sanctions are effective because the community provides social necessities. In normative reasoning, social sanctions limit individual freedom and can maintain dangerous practices. Therefore, understanding illegal circulation requires examining how informal authority shapes governance. This informal governance can explain why practices continue even when people understand the risks. They continue to participate because there are group rules. Group rules limit individual choices. Thus, illegal circulation must be read as a practice produced by social governance, not merely as an individual choice.

The interaction between law enforcement and network adaptation often produces recurring patterns. When a crackdown operation occurs, the network adjusts by reducing stock, changing locations, or altering payment methods. This adjustment is not merely a spontaneous reaction, but the result of collective learning on how to avoid risk. Collective learning is stored in stories, warnings, and new rules. In a normative framework, these adjustments demonstrate that episodic enforcement can change the form of a practice, but not necessarily its roots. The roots persist when demand remains and internal legitimacy stays strong. Enforcement can also produce a temporary fear effect. When the fear subsides, the practice returns. Therefore, enforcement must be understood as one variable influencing dynamics, but not the only one. Furthermore, enforcement can affect public perception of justice. If enforcement is perceived as inconsistent, the community concludes that rules are negotiable. This assessment lowers compliance. In normative reasoning,

consistency is a component of authority. Inconsistent authority creates space for justification. Justification reinforces the practice. Thus, the relationship between enforcement and adaptation is interactive. Enforcement applies pressure, the network adapts, adaptation changes the enforcement target, and so on. This pattern explains why illegal circulation can persist for a long time. These dynamics of strict and consistent oversight are also a crucial aspect of consumer protection, primarily to ensure that products circulating in society meet the safety standards required by regulation (Romli et al., 2023).

Illegal circulation within certain communities is also linked to the relationship with the local economy (Lintangadi & Achir, 2022). Transactions can merge with other economic activities, such as small kiosks, entertainment activities, or gatherings. This integration provides camouflage. Camouflage reduces suspicion from outsiders and facilitates transactions. In a normative framework, camouflage adds to the problem of accountability, as the boundary between legal and illegal activities becomes blurred. This ambiguity can be exploited to avoid responsibility. For example, a seller may claim they only provide the venue, not sell the goods, or claim that the goods belong to someone else. Such claims hinder evidence collection. From the consumer's side, merging transactions with entertainment makes consumption feel more "natural"—natural in a social sense, not a legal one. When consumption becomes part of entertainment, people tend to lower their caution regarding the origin of goods. Lowering caution increases health risks. Furthermore, the local economy can create dependency, as some people rely on the income generated by the flow of buyers coming for those goods. Economic dependency makes the community reluctant to stop the practice. In normative reasoning, economic dependency strengthens internal legitimacy. Internal legitimacy based on livelihood is often very strong. Thus, illegal circulation can persist because it is interwoven with the means of subsistence. This condition demands a mapping that distinguishes between personal motives and structural motives that influence choices.

Policy communication and public messages about risk often clash with community experience. If a community never sees direct negative impacts, risk messages are considered exaggerated. If messages are delivered in a judgmental tone, the community feels attacked. Feeling

attacked strengthens resistance. Resistance can manifest as rejection of information and rejection of officials. In a normative framework, this resistance reduces the chances of prevention because information is not accepted. The community trusts internal narratives more (Lintangadi & Achir, 2022). Internal narratives can downplay risks by stating that the product has been used for a long time. Internal narratives can also assert that problems arise only because people "do not know their limits." This narrative shifts responsibility from the seller to the user. Shifting responsibility lowers accountability. In normative reasoning, effective public messages require the recognition that the community possesses experience and identity. However, recognition is not a justification for violations. Recognition is a way to open a conversation. If the conversation is closed, the network becomes tighter. A tight network reinforces circulation. Thus, how a message is understood in the community is a conceptual factor affecting the sustainability of the practice. While this text does not formulate programs, this mapping helps explain why illegal circulation persists even though prohibition messages have long existed.

Social justice within a community can be used as a justification for rejecting rules deemed biased. Some community members may judge that licensing rules favor large business operators and cast aside small ones (Montada & Maes, 2016). This assessment gives rise to the argument that the illegal path is a way to correct injustice. In a normative framework, the argument for correcting injustice needs to be separated from the obligation to protect public safety. Economic injustice does not justify the circulation of unmonitored goods. However, this argument explains how violations can obtain internal legitimacy. Internal legitimacy strengthens the courage to transact. Courage increases transaction volume. Furthermore, the social justice argument can strengthen solidarity toward sellers who are seen as "earning a living." Solidarity reduces the tendency to report. Thus, assessments about justice influence the social mechanisms that reinforce circulation. In normative reasoning, it is important to understand that compliance with rules depends on the perception of the rules' fairness. If rules are perceived as unfair, compliance drops. Illegal circulation exploits this decline in compliance. This state shows that illegal circulation is not merely a problem of criminality, but also a problem of regulatory legitimacy in the eyes of the community. Conceptual mapping must include the

dimension of legitimacy so that the explanation does not simplify the community as merely violators.

Illegal circulation can create new vulnerabilities, especially for groups lacking power within a community, such as adolescents or susceptible members (Mostafa, 2023). Although this discussion does not present data, it must be normatively acknowledged that easy access can increase the risk of uncontrolled consumption. A community may have norms prohibiting sales to certain groups, but such norms depend on the discipline of the seller and the members. When economic profits increase, discipline can weaken. In a normative framework, weak internal discipline poses a public danger because vulnerable groups lack protection. Furthermore, uncontrolled consumption can exacerbate household conflicts, interpersonal disputes, and health problems. The community might view this as a private matter, but the consequences can be far-reaching. Thus, illegal circulation must be read as an issue that can generate social externalities consequences borne by others. When consequences are borne by third parties, the privacy argument weakens. This is where legal norms regarding public order and public health find their rational basis. Illegal circulation places a community at unpredictable risk, which necessitates a preventive approach. However, prevention cannot function if the community remains insular. Therefore, the relationship between vulnerability, internal norms, and information transparency becomes part of the explanation for why the practice persists despite strong reasons to reject it.

Patterns of storage and distribution often exploit spaces considered safe, such as homes, small warehouses, or bustling places of business. Safe spaces are chosen to minimize the possibility of inspection (Ponce, 2024). In certain communities, safe spaces are also chosen because the owner possesses a strong reputation, making outsiders reluctant to enter. This social reputation acts as a shield. In a normative framework, the use of private space for public transactions creates a problem of boundaries. The boundary between the private and the public becomes blurred when private space is used for economic activities with public consequences. This ambiguity also affects enforcement because searching private space carries stricter legal and social requirements. Social requirements arise from the risk of conflict if authorities enter areas considered households.

Perpetrators exploit this sensitivity. Furthermore, distribution can be divided into small units to reduce losses if enforcement occurs. Small units also facilitate concealment. In normative reasoning, dividing into small units is an example of risk management by perpetrators. This rationality reinforces sustainability because perpetrators feel capable of controlling the risk. When risk feels manageable, perpetrators continue to operate. Therefore, understanding illegal circulation requires observing how space, reputation, and risk management form stable and hard-to-reach practices.

Trust between seller and buyer is often maintained through loyalty-testing mechanisms. Loyalty tests can take the form of initial transactions in small quantities, observation of buyer behavior, or requirements for recommendations from other members (Krylova, 2019). This mechanism limits access and prevents infiltration. In certain communities, loyalty tests also serve to build a sense of exclusivity, making buyers feel they are part of a group. Feeling part of a group increases the commitment to maintain secrecy. In a normative framework, the commitment to secrecy strengthens the structure of illegal circulation by reducing the opportunities for social correction. Furthermore, loyalty tests can bind the buyer to the seller, making it difficult for the buyer to switch. This attachment reduces competition and increases price stability. Price stability increases profit predictability, which in turn increases incentives. Thus, loyalty tests are not merely social actions, but economic tools. At the same time, loyalty tests strengthen information inequality. New buyers must follow the seller's rules, while veteran buyers receive special facilities. This inequality makes the seller more powerful. In a normative framework, the seller's power can lead to exploitation for example, lowering quality without notice. Buyers continue to purchase for fear of losing access, which exacerbates health risks. Therefore, seemingly positive trust mechanisms can carry negative consequences when used to shut down questions regarding quality.

Illegal circulation can also be understood through the concept of layered legitimacy. For perpetrators, legitimacy may come from economic necessity. For buyers, legitimacy may come from social needs (Zakki et al., 2023). For the community, legitimacy may come from a tacit agreement to maintain internal order. When these three layers of legitimacy meet, the practice becomes stable. However, this layered legitimacy differs from legal legitimacy, which requires compliance with permits, oversight, and safety

standards. In a normative framework, the difference in legitimacy generates a space for conflict that affects how enforcement is received. Enforcement may be considered unfair because it clashes with internal legitimacy. Conversely, enforcement may be considered necessary by outsiders because it protects the public. This conflict space makes communication between the state and the community difficult. When communication is difficult, the community becomes insular, which in turn reinforces circulation. Thus, layered legitimacy is a concept that helps explain why illegal circulation is not easily stopped. It is not merely a black-market activity, but an activity that gains justification from several sources of meaning. To break this stability, there must be a shift in meaning—for instance, when health risks become apparent or when social norms change. However, a shift in meaning does not happen automatically; it requires a strong trigger, such as a change in risk perception or trust. Therefore, layered legitimacy must be placed at the center of the explanation.

Legal and moral responsibility in illegal circulation can be mapped across several levels: the supplier, the distributor, and the seller who deals directly with the buyer (Beckert & Wehinger, 2014). In the illegal channel, the mapping of responsibility is often blurred because each party tends to blame the other if losses occur. The supplier may claim they only provide ingredients, the distributor may claim they only transport them, and the seller may claim the buyer already knew the risks. In a normative framework, this dissolution of responsibility contradicts the principle of due care regarding public safety. The principle of due care demands that parties who profit from transactions bear the obligation to prevent harm. When this obligation is unrecognized, illegal circulation creates a space without protection. Furthermore, the dissolution of responsibility reinforces social impunity. Social impunity means perpetrators feel no need to change because there are no moral sanctions within the group. Moral sanctions are often more effective than formal sanctions in close-knit communities. If moral sanctions are absent, formal sanctions must work harder, but they struggle to function when information control is strong. Thus, the blurring of responsibility is a conceptual factor that keeps the circulation running. It maintains the practice by avoiding guilt and moral risk, ensuring transactions continue despite inherent health and legal risks.

The digital space can expand the possibilities for transactions without revealing them physically in public spaces (Moeller, 2022). Communication can take place via text messages, closed groups, or referral systems. In certain communities, digital spaces strengthen information control because access can be restricted. Access restriction strengthens screening, and screening strengthens trust. In a normative framework, the use of digital space also complicates the burden of proof because communication can be deleted and identities can be disguised. On the other hand, digital spaces can accelerate the spread of rumors regarding enforcement, allowing networks to move quickly. This speed increases the ability to adapt, and adaptation increases endurance. However, digital spaces can also raise the risk of fraud, as buyers may deal with unknown sellers. To reduce fraud risks, communities return to relying on recommendations, which in turn strengthens network structures. Thus, digital space does not replace social networks but reinforces them. In normative reasoning, network reinforcement strengthens illegal circulation if internal legitimacy remains intact. Conversely, digital spaces can also strengthen prevention information if the community is willing to receive it. Therefore, the digital space is an arena for the contestation of narratives. However, in the practice of illegal circulation, the dominant narrative is often one of access and convenience. Convenience accelerates normalization, and normalization strengthens circulation. Therefore, discussions need to incorporate the digital space as a variable that influences information control and the pace of transactions.

The rationality of buyers in illegal circulation is often built on a comparison between direct benefits and risks perceived as abstract. Direct benefits may include lower prices or the ease of obtaining goods (Childs et al., 2020). Risks are considered abstract because health losses do not always appear immediately, and legal losses are perceived to be avoidable through secrecy. In a normative framework, this type of rationality shows that behavior does not always change through prohibitions, as people evaluate the chances of being caught or falling ill as low. These assessments of probability are shaped by the experiences of those nearby. If people around them remain safe, the risk is perceived as low. This state highlights the importance of risk perception as the core of the explanation. Furthermore, buyers may assess that they possess

control, such as control over the quantity of consumption. Control over quantity does not eliminate risk if the composition is unknown, but the belief in control provides a sense of security. A sense of security increases consumption. In certain communities, buyers also gain social status through participation, which makes their actions feel valuable. When an action feels valuable, prohibitions lose their power. In normative reasoning, buyer rationality strengthens circulation because buyers are the source of demand. Stable demand drives supply, and stable supply strengthens the network. Thus, understanding illegal circulation must place the buyer as a subject that evaluates, rather than merely an object that is trapped. The buyer's assessment is influenced by internal norms, languages of justification, and repeated experiences.

The circulation of illegal alcoholic beverages in certain communities can be explained as the result of the interaction between trust networks, information control, division of labor, internal legitimacy, and risk perception. This interaction forms a social system capable of adapting to the pressures of enforcement and moral criticism. When pressure is applied, the system changes its form rather than disappearing. The form may change from open sales to hidden sales, from large stocks to small stocks, and from direct transactions to intermediary transactions. In a normative framework, changes in form demonstrate that the root of the problem lies in the social mechanisms that organize acceptance, not merely in the availability of goods. As long as the community provides social legitimacy and justification reduces feelings of guilt, the circulation will find a way. Therefore, the answer to the problem formulation is that the practice is formed and survives because the community provides social devices to manage risk, give meaning to consumption, and maintain secrecy. These social devices work side-by-side with economic incentives and regulatory loopholes. When social devices are strong, formal rules become distant. When formal rules become distant, compliance weakens. Thus, an orderly normative understanding must place the practice of illegal circulation as a socio-legal process involving judgment, identity, and legitimacy, in addition to the element of rule-breaking.

Conclusion

The practice of illegal liquor circulation within specific communities is formed and sustained through social mechanisms that organize transactions outside the pathways of licensing and oversight. Trust networks enable transactions to take place without documentation, while information control through member screening, communication codes, and access restrictions reduces legal exposure. Informal division of labor breaks down the functions of procurement, storage, and sales, thereby blurring responsibility and making evidentiary proof more difficult. Internal community norms provide a substitute for formal rules, including codes of confidentiality and consumption protocols that provide an impression of internal order. Social justifications emphasizing privacy, solidarity, and social needs diminish guilt and normalize consumption, while perceptions of health and legal risks are often minimized due to limited experience and the narratives circulating within the group. Consequently, illegal circulation cannot be understood merely as an individual act, but as an adaptive social system resilient to enforcement pressure and moral critique, possessing an internal legitimacy that differs from legal legitimacy.

The implications and suggestions emphasize that a normative reading must separate internal community legitimacy from the demands of legality oriented toward public safety, public order, and accountability. The conceptual mapping of trust networks, information control, internal norms, and risk perception can be used to assess why approaches that solely emphasize prohibition often result in a shift in the form of the practice rather than its cessation. In the academic realm, this framework strengthens the discussion on how general rules confront informal governance that possesses its own social sanctions and group protection mechanisms. In the policy realm, this conceptual explanation supports the need for regulatory communication that clarifies the boundaries of privacy when public safety is threatened, as well as the need for prevention pathways that consider the stigma of reporting and barriers to citizen participation. In the social realm, the discussion encourages a reassessment of the transfer of risk to consumers, as the absence of quality control and accountability places the community in a state of vulnerability that is difficult to predict. Subsequent research based on

written sources can expand the categories of responsibility and legitimacy within illegal distribution practices.

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