

Stigma, Religion, and Collective Identity: The Transformation of Former Thugs in Solo

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Abstract

This study argues that the former thugs make an effort to rehabilitate their spoiled identity into a new identity collectively by presenting themselves on the front stage with a religious background. The former thugs change their appearance, spiritual behavior, ideological views, and economic management to create a new impression. This study employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological perspective. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis techniques consist of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. This study asks what the former thugs behave in the front stage? How do they navigate their identity to remove the stigma? This study finds that to navigate their identity, former thugs join the Islamic group, they change their nickname to a good nickname that shows their Islamic identity, they use their wealth to support religious activities and use it for something that is in accordance with Islamic teachings. They make these changes with their friends in the Islamic group collectively. This study incorporates Erving Goffman's theory, which posits that people in the West who have spoiled identities navigate their identities individually. In contrast, former thugs in Solo navigate their collective identity.

Keywords

Former thugs, spoiled identity, collectively

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1. INTRODUCTION

After the reformation of May 21, 1998, there was a shift in the orientation of the thugs from the mastery room. The public who rely on violence becomes a religious group (Wilson, 2003). The former thug was active in various activities, religious in space public good guard tabligh Akbar, following the demonstration demanding enforcement of Islamic law, following haul, manakin or attending congregational prayers at the mosque (Warsito & Zainuddin, 2023). The phenomenon of ex-thugs who fill this religious space is interesting because the thug is the person who controls the non-formal public by producing violence and fear of getting income (Jati, 2012). Phenomena like this are happening in big cities in Indonesia, including the city of Solo, one of the cities where warriors in Islamic law are based. The emergence of Islamist groups with the military presence in town has shifted the mastery room the public from thugs. This is one of the thugs' pushers. To convert identity, they become a good brother as army members or community migration (Warsito, 2018).

Reading the phenomenon of thugs who become brothers, researchers use the theory of Erving Goffman's identity. The theory begins with Goffman's opinion, which illustrates social interaction, like in theatres that display shows. In the show, he introduces the term *front stage*, where the actors or individuals try to display something that the audience expects or other people around them (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). He also introduced *backstage*, where the actors can behave more relaxed and be themselves. Alone and let go of the role that people expect (Goffman, 1956). In the metaphor stage as a place show, he then discusses how stigmatized people's behavior deviates from the past so that their identity is spoiled. Stigmatized people tend to keep going, try to accept return, and navigate themselves with various positive matters (Goffman, 1990). This research explores how the former thugs behave on the front stage. How do they navigate their identity to remove the stigma?

Study of a thug. Already done Lots of bachelor's, some bachelor's to hook ex- thug with movement radicalism (Ahyar, 2015; Douglas Wilson, 2006), partly to link ex-thugs with mastery source power economy (Kafid, 2016), and some bachelor's to link ex- thug with action terrorism (Purwawidada, 2014). These studies leave a gap about how thugs navigate identity in social interaction. This research aims to explain how the thugs convert their identity to an activist religion. How do they navigate themselves in social interaction?

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research method, with the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection. This study employed a phenomenological approach. This approach determines a person's interpretation of an object based on their socio-cultural experiences. To conduct research using a phenomenological approach, the researcher took three main steps: First, the researcher thoroughly understood the philosophy of phenomenology. Second, the participants selected for the study were individuals involved in the phenomenon being studied. Third, data were collected through extensive interviews and observations, followed by self-reflection. Fourth, the researcher analyzed the phenomenon intersubjectively (Sukoharsono, 2006). A phenomenological approach describes how former thugs experience environmental changes that prompt them to alter their identity. The thugs transform their identities into religious individuals because religious actors influence the changes in their environment.

To obtain qualitative data, the researcher employed several data collection methods: Interviews, observation, and documentation. In the interview, the researcher identified correspondents to be interviewed. Respondents were selected purposively based on predetermined criteria and selected from participants. Interviews were conducted with the following groups: leaders of the Jubah Rescue and Ekspresso groups. Second, active members of these three religious groups. The researcher selected seven individuals from each group to gain insight into their respective groups' perspectives on the Islamic faith. Third, religious scholars and leaders were interviewed to gain insight into their views on the movement.

Observations are conducted through the researcher's five senses and are based on the research objectives and questions. Observations include the physical environment, routine and religious activities, and participant interactions and conversations (Creswell, 2015, p. 231). In this study, the researcher will observe their main scheduled activities, including religious services and organizational activities such as meetings. The researcher will collect data from documents held by the movements and related documents, including newspapers, group activity reports, and other essential documents. These documents can include photographs, activity reports, or content found

on YouTube or other social media platforms. The data analysis technique in this study employed interactive techniques. This technique formulates data analysis methods by conducting them interactively and continuously until the data reaches the saturation point. Data analysis encompasses data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. (Sugiyono dalam Djamal, 2015, p. hal 145).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Thuggery in Solo City

A group thug is a person who takes advantage of his fearsome reputation and the admiration of others to get personal interest (Pribadi, 2015). According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the word *preman* used to depict an evil person who commits extortion, robbery, mugging, theft, and other criminal acts (Nasional, 2008). Wilson argues that thugs are depicted as perpetrators of violence and action crime by the young people marginalized from class economy intermediate to lower who live in the area slum city (Douglas Wilson, 2006). Some scholars argue that a thug is a strong person who does not care about the law and acts according to himself to get as desired. Thuggery also grows in areas rich in source Power economy like mine, although Far from the city. This group claims as Indigenous people's fighters for blackmailing entrepreneurs or requesting rewards from the community in dispute with the company. So thuggery emerges when there is inequality between the poor people and the entrepreneurs who have connections with elite rulers in control source Power (Bakker, 2021).

Thuggery is an activity that has existed since colonial times. Thuggery activities emerged because of the weakness in the control of the rulers' security in the area's outskirts. Thugs also emerged as a non-formal force that took advantage of the absence of government in regulating society. The emergence of thugs was also sometimes used by the authorities to control the people's obedience. The perpetrators of thugs during the colonial period in Java who stole and killed part from the ruler for control and to suppress farmers (Siegel, 2000). Some other perpetrators of thuggery commit criminal acts as social resistance against rulers and entrepreneurs' plantations that have been exploiting the land and labor of farmers (Pranoto, 2010). In contemporary times, some bachelors argue that thuggery is a product of the urbanization process in which young unskilled people from the villages who come to cities do not get jobs to improve their economy (Jati, 2012).

As a city with a long history from the kingdom era until the Reformation era, Solo City has become one of the urban destinations both from within the country and abroad, making this city a multi-ethnic city. The three large tribes that inhabit this city are Javanese, Chinese, and Arabs, in addition to other small tribes that make Solo City prone to conflict. Urban youth who do not get jobs to meet basic needs produce fear of being unable to withdraw money from the victim. So, an urban society that cannot balance income and needs gives rise to the practice of thuggery (Harahap, 2013). In addition to giving rise to thuggery, they also created slums and densely populated areas that occupied government land along the railway tracks and the banks of the Bengawan Solo River. (Saputro, 2020).

The emergence of slum areas with various irregular social systems impacts the emergence of new thugs from the environment. This condition is expressed by thugs who emerge from the environment in which they live. Such a damaged condition has affected the growth of attitudes and characters of teenagers in the Semanggi area, Pasar Kliwon sub-district, Surakarta. They stated that

their childhood was like most ordinary children who do not know evil or good. Some even said that during childhood, they learned to read the Iqra and recite the Qur'an (Warsito, 2017). They know bad behavior when they transition from childhood to early adolescence. The desire to try and imitate the environment arises when they are in the fifth and sixth grades of Elementary School.

The process of changing into a thug generally occurs during adolescence. This is because adolescence is a time to show the characteristics of developing values, morals, and attitudes. This development is a process for every teenager to find their identity (Masduki, 2003). Adolescence is a critical period in forming a person's personality or identity. At this stage, the family, school, and community environments play an important role in the formation. In developing a mature personality and attitude, teenagers identify and imitate the role models they see. Therefore, the condition of society that characterizes thugs in everyday life makes teenagers naughty and commit acts of thuggery.

In addition to the non-conducive community environment, the condition of educated parents who do not know good parenting patterns is also a major factor in the formation of adolescent social identity. The understanding of parents' duties to children is limited to providing a living and meeting physical needs, including clothing, shelter, and food (Subianto, 2013). The culture of accompanying learning, asking about conditions at school, and paying attention to socializing in the environment has not been built. So, children's activities that lead to bad things are considered normal; parents allow their children to smoke and gambling. When these negative activities develop into worse activities, parents still do not reprimand them because they think it is normal in society. This wrong perspective of parents is because some are also perpetrators of these sins.

In the 1980s, several gangsters emerged in Solo City, including Gojeck, Gondhez, Bronx, Jackpot, Sinthing, and Zharap. Gojeck and Gondhez were the gangster groups with the most members and territories. These gangster groups eventually disbanded except for the Gondhez's group, which still survives today. Nunggal founded Gondhez and several high school friends in 1984 when he returned from Jakarta to Solo City. This gangster is headquartered in Kepatihan Wetan Jebres Surakarta but has members from outside the city, such as Karanganyar Regency (Kurniawan, 2020).

To run the group, Gondhez ran a gambling business in Solo City. Senior members of Gondhez or the commanders of this group worked to run a gambling business called Singo Lawu. This gambling business ran from 1999 to 2005 with a turnover of 400 million Rupiah once opened, and it was open seven times a day. Due to pressure from the Police, Singo Lawu was closed in 2005, and they started running a soccer gambling business with a turnover of between 300 to 400 million until 2010 (Kurniawan, 2024). In addition to having a gambling business, Gondhez also established relationships with political elites to win the pair from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle. In 2008, Gondhez officially became a volunteer for the victory of the Central Java gubernatorial candidates Bibit Waluyo and Rustriningsih by mobilizing fifty thousand members spread across the Solo Raya area (Setiyowati, 2010).

In addition to the gubernatorial election, Gondhez also supports the mayoral candidates proposed by PDI-Perjuangan since the ratification of direct regional head elections. From 2000 to 2024, PDIP cadres have always won the Surakarta mayoral election; even former thug Hadi Rudyatmo, who is Catholic, was also able to win the mayoral election in the 2014-2019 period (Bram, 2023). Party Indonesian Democracy Struggle (PDIP) also dominates the election of the People's Representative Council in the city of Solo. In 2014, PDIP won the People's Representative Council election in Solo by winning 24 DPRD seats or more from half of the seats. This shows that

the emergence of Political Islam groups and Cultural Islamic preaching cannot yet replace domination group nationalists represented by PDIP as the winner of the legislative and also the elections in Solo City.

3.2 The Struggle for Public Space Between Islamist Groups and Thugs

Public space is where people meet and express or influence opinions, whether in the form of a coffee shop, meeting hall, or meeting place (Noor, 2016). Before the Reformation, thugs controlled public spaces they capitalized on to make money and express their desires. They were informal rulers and were not touched by legal cases because of their patronage relationships with political elites, both executive and legislative. The thugs in Banten who were members of the Jawara community became a mass organization of the Golkar party and fought to win the government party even though they were previously supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). These informal rulers entered Sakar Pendekar temporarily, and other non-formal rulers, namely religious scholars, entered Sakar Ulama (Masaaki & Hamid, 2008). The privilege in the form of legal immunity that they exchange for resources and people's votes in the election is also carried out by Jakarta thugs who are members of Pemuda Pancasila (Wilson, 2003).

The emergence of political Islamic groups that formed the Laskar challenged the informal power of the thugs in Solo City. The laskar's attacks on the spaces of power and economic resources of the thugs caused strong friction between them in the public spaces of Solo City. This contestation resulted in the loss of several of the thugs' economic resources, including parking lots. Some individuals in the army take land parking. There is no formal way to submit the price of land parking at auction. Surakarta city government requests, in a way, the force from the thug who won the auction. One of the informants, whom I asked why there was no continued service security in one of the places of entertainment on Slamet Riyadi Street, said: "*Wegah complicated by jihadist groups, sithik-sithik threatening not to bomb, how is it?*" (S. Eks, komunikasi pribadi, 4 April 2023).

Source Power second is entrepreneurs who have been protected by the troops so that the thug cannot blackmail them. One area of business secured by the soldiers is the Iron Market area in Kusumodilagan Kliwon Market. Place This is an area businessman is selling an iron building that was the victim of extortion by thugs at "Pasar Kliwon" (Market). Since the Laskar group then had Lots of thugs who converted identity, this village became one of the bases for troops and entrepreneurs in the region. This is safe from the extortion of a thug group (E. Napiter, personal communication, 28 April 2023). Source Power Third is a gambling and sales business of alcoholic beverages. The activities of the Laskar who raided gambling around their homes were gambling carried out by individuals at guard posts or crossroads. While the gambling business that was managed in a structured and organized manner had not been eradicated by the Laskar, the eradication of gambling systematically and in a structured manner was carried out by the police as an implementation of the order of the Chief of Police, Drs. Sutanto in 2005 (*Kapolri Ancam Copot Kapolda yang Gagal Berantas Judi*, t.t.). One of the significant impacts of business gambling on policy . This is Singo Lawu gambling managed group, thug Gondhez's Solo. Business estimated gambling turnover to be 2.8 billion per day, and this has led to a group of thugs, Gondhez, being forced to close because of the order of the Chief of Police (Kurniawan, 2024). This causes room thug for doing gambling to be more limited.

Apart from the loss of source power, some of the thug figures became the target of the search operation for the Laskar members, which caused their psychology to be disturbed (K. Laskar, komunikasi pribadi, Mei 2024). This is, as stated by the former thug named Edi.

When it happens, there is a clash between thugs and militia in the village. The hustle and bustle, Cemani, one of the ex-thugs who knows, I shout while pointing to "Kae Edi (that's Edi)." From the moment that members of the troops hunted me, I finally joined a group study so that I could be safe (E. Tobat, personal communication, 13 June 2024).

The violence carried out by the militia is rooted in the view that they are carrying out obedience to Allah. This ideological view is what makes the activities of resistance against evil continue to exist (Sumbulah, 2006).

The contestation for public space between thugs and militias often ends in physical clashes. Clashes that occurred between militias and thugs include: In 2005, the Surakarta Islamic Community Coalition, led by Sigit Qordawi, conducted *a sweep* and destroyed the night entertainment venue Warung Doyong Solo Baru cafe, which was suspected of selling alcoholic beverages and conducting prostitution business. (Warsito, 2018). The conflict between the militia and thugs continued on March 17, 2008, when a clash occurred at the Kusumodilagan intersection, Joyosuran, Pasar Kliwon, Surakarta, which killed one of the thug leaders named Heru Yulianto alias Kipli (Jihad, 2008). After that, *the sweeping of* perpetrators of immorality that caused clashes between thugs and militias occurred in areas that were pockets of thugs, such as in Minang Padi north of Tirtanadi terminal and Losari Pasar Kliwon. One of the major clashes that forced the police to deploy many personnel was the clash in Gandekan in 2012. This clash began with the persecution of two mosque congregations by a group of thugs led by Iwan Walet, who lived in Gandekan. The militia attack on Gandekan village was an act of revenge against Iwan Walet (Warsito, 2018).

3.3 Spoiled Identity Group Self Navigation in Interaction Social

a. Identity Change

The change in nicknames is a change that is visible to new Muslims in their daily lives. Thugs are often called by their fellow thugs with negative nicknames that refer to their physical condition or other bad nicknames that are reprehensible in Islam. The bad nicknames given to thugs include black because the person has black skin, nonong because the person has a black head, part on more to the front. Bald due to hair loss or pece when one of the eyes is defective. This term was created by other people who felt that the victim did not have a problem with it, so it became an identity. The change in calling becomes the implementation of God's command to call other people good because one's name contains prayer. Allah says in the Qur'an Surah Al Hujurat verse 11

"Do not insult one another and do not call one another by bad names how evil is the calling and the bad calling after faith. And whoever does not repent, then those are the wrongdoers."

This verse was first revealed when the Prophet Muhammad SAW arrived in Medina and found that everyone had two or three names. Someone could get angry if they were called by a certain name so the Prophet Muhammad SAW received this revelation and then forbade his

companions from using bad names (Ibnu Katsir, 1997). In the life of former thugs, they also change their friends' calls according to the new names or nicknames that are introduced to their friends. In addition to returning the call to the original name or the new name that is conveyed, they also call their friends with additional terms of respect, such as *mas*, *pak*, *ustaz*, *akhi*, *commander*, or *ndoro*. Examples of changes in calls include; the call black becomes ustaz Suyudi, Jabrix becomes ustaz Mulyono, Alex becomes Adi Abu Khalifah, Cimot becomes Rudi.

b. Appearance

The changes in the appearance of former thugs in the Juba Rescue and Ekspreso hijra communities are also clearly visible. At official religious events, they wear long Pakistani robes that reach down to the knees with trousers cut or folded above the ankles. Some members wear t-shirts printed with Islamic advice or words of wisdom. In the Juba Rescue group, members wear various accessories that show their Sufi Islamic identity such as necklaces or prayer beads. In addition, many members wear agate with real or artificial stones. Agate is one of the commodities traded among them, and they also have a trading network with communities outside Juba Rescue. The appearance of the Ekspreso group is relatively clean from prayer beads because in the teachings of the Puritan group, counting the best number of *dzikir*, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, is by counting using the fingers. Accessories worn by Ekspreso members are often vests and caps with the word Ekspreso written on them. One of the products purchased and worn by members is a t-shirt made by members with the word Ekspreso or other iconic Islamic writing with images of war equipment such as swords or assault rifles.

c. Spirituality

The spiritual journey of a former thug goes through several stages until he becomes a complete Muslim; the first is regret and awareness of mistakes made in the past and the process of forgiveness for oneself and others. This is the first stage experienced by thugs who will repent where they experience various events that make them unable to rely on themselves but return to Allah SWT. These events include having no place to hide from the pursuit of the law, debts that seem unpayable or disasters that befall them. Thugs, in certain conditions, feel reprimanded by Allah, and some of them continue to migrate, while others remain in the world of thugs. The second is the process of self-improvement by seeking mentors who teach religious values and goodness. In this second process, they seek the most comfortable place and one that suits their character. Thugs who like violence and assertiveness tend to choose Islamic clerics who form an identity of resistance to the Indonesian government. They even assert that being pleased with a government that does not follow the law of Allah is an act of *shirk* of obedience. Former thugs who joined this group could not describe the concrete reasons for choosing this group, as their explanation was limited to the suitability and comfort of their hearts in joining this resistance group.

Meanwhile, former thugs who are members of the tarekat group feel comfortable with the peace and the invitation to be busy with preparing for death by increasing daily real deeds. They feel less interested in the hustle and bustle of worldly problems that sometimes disturb their peace. This group is not against the government or the current system but they tend to prepare themselves and improve it by not getting carried away by the current of developing

issues. The former thugs who are members of this group feel that they get peace with the pattern of teachings and practices that they do. They feel bored with worldly matters that compete and bring each other down to get economic resources.

The search process can be done by telling the inner state to others and then they respond by showing alternatives for self-improvement. Sometimes the search process is accidentally initiated by people to study or with various stories that each person experiences in this search. Some former thugs attend various existing studies and then make choices after comparing and matching in their hearts. The third is the internal conflict within the former thug to continue in the process of self-improvement and commit sins again. The scholars group it into the *lawwamah passion*, namely the unstable condition of the soul in obedience. A soul that sometimes remembers and neglects, is pleased and sometimes angry and disobeys. When committing sins, this soul blames itself for why it still commits the sin. (Farid, 2001).

The spiritual process of former thugs is not stable, but they fight against themselves, who tend to want to repeat sins, especially at the beginning of the migration. After experiencing awareness, the thugs still commit sins such as getting drunk, while sins that harm others, such as extortion, stealing, or robbery, they can relatively leave behind. Dian said that at the beginning of the migration, he attended KH Ali's religious studies several times while several of his friends were drunk. Others said that they had performed their prayers but were still taking drugs. The majority of former thugs admitted that the process of adapting to new values was not easy. They could not completely abandon their various sins after they migrated. But the step of migration made them feel regret after committing sins and they believed that what they had done was wrong.

One of the major obstacles in hijrah is when they gather with people who are not yet aware while they themselves are still unstable. For that reason, some former thugs return to thug habits when they get the chance, especially if they gather with thug friends. So at this stage, the role and patience of a mentor are very important in monitoring the development of their Islam. One good way is to hand over training to senior members by monitoring daily developments. The fourth is a stable state in migration. After going through several stages of migration, a former thug is stable in terms of belief and deeds. In the fourth stage, the members of the migration are relatively active in participating in routine group activities and some have guided new members. They have also succeeded in leaving thuggery altogether and are not influenced to repeat thuggery activities except for those who do not migrate totally. Group members who do not migrate totally only take advantage of the migration moment for their own interests, whether social, legal or economic.

d. Ideology

The ideology of former thugs transformed from a life of darkness and past crimes into a life of Islamic values. These changes include; the first is the acceptance of Islamic teachings as a life guideline regulating their daily lives, from personal affairs to affairs related to other people and the government. Acceptance of Islamic teachings and the spirit of practicing these teachings are seen in nicknames, appearance, and behavior changes. Acceptance of Islam as a guideline for life certainly changes their outlook on life, that the world is everything without any calculation in the afterlife to become a person who prepares worldly life for the good of the afterlife as the real life. The strategy to achieve life goals is to be close to the Quran. For this

reason, one of the things prioritized in Juba Rescue and Ekspreso is teaching to read the Quran, starting from learning to read Iqra. To support this program, KH Ali ordered new members to learn to read the Quran from seniors intensively. He monitored the development of new members from the reports of senior mentors assigned to teach Iqra' until they could read the Quran (K. Laskar, komunikasi pribadi, Mei 2024). For Juba Rescue members, the ability to read the Quran accurately indicates the sincerity of hijra. They believe reading the Quran will defend its readers on the Day of Judgment.

The second is a change in attitude towards democracy, the reference to the political party of choice in the election has become one of the changes in the ideology of former thugs in Juba Rescue and Ekspreso. For members of the Juba Rescue group, elections are a routine that occurs every five years to elect representatives of the people and leaders of Indonesia. The difference occurs in the party they chose when they were still thugs and after migrating. When they were still thugs, they were voters and even the task force of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, hereinafter referred to as PDIP. When they migrated, the choice of party and leader was according to KH Ali's direction or their own choice when the teacher did not refer to a particular party or president. The tendency to choose a party is still pragmatic regarding which of the legislative candidates provides the most benefits. This is as conveyed by Tofan, who said that he would select a legislative candidate who was able to get his child to get the KIP Smart Indonesia Card (Tofan, personal communication, June 2024).

e. Economy

Joining a religious group has encouraged a new Muslim orientation towards economic issues, which includes the following discussions; the first is a change in income. The thugs who migrated because of their religious awareness began to leave their old jobs, such as theft, extortion, selling liquor, and being gambling masterminds. One respondent said that he was a liquor supplier in Solo City, so since he decided to migrate, he left that business and switched to buying and selling motorbikes, antiques, smoking pipes, and various halal businesses (K. Laskar, personal communication, Mei 2024).). Meanwhile, some thugs migrated because they lost resources and capitalized on religious terms for thuggery activities such as fighting usury practices to break the installment payments for buying motorbikes and selling them on lousy credit (Fakhruddin dkk., 2021). Others extort entrepreneurs on the pretext that the donation is for group activities, even for personal use.

The second is the challenges and obstacles of former thugs in adapting to get halal income. The challenge in finding halal work is the trust of capital owners to provide job opportunities. This was experienced by someone who was rejected by several friends or capital owners for various reasons because of his past as a prisoner four times (K. Laskar, personal communication, May 2024). Another obstacle in migration is knowledge. Some people feel that *backup* buying and selling illegal motorbikes is allowed; this is acknowledged by the perpetrators of the migration, who previously protected the motorbikes from being taken by *debt collectors* with a salary of two million rupiahs, which he shared with several other hijra members. After studying science in several places, he learned that it was haram, then he left.

The third is the change in the pattern of use of owned assets. In the Juba Rescue group, Abah Ali, as the murshid of the tarekat and the mentor of this hijra group, emphasized that the members go on the umrah. In 2014, 50 members of this group went on the umrah to the holy

land at their own expense and some were helped with additional costs by other members (Achmad Fadhli, 2015). Abah Ali also encouraged members to help each other economically with other members who were in trouble and encouraged charity to orphans and widows. Meanwhile, in the Ekspreso group, Suyudi, as the head of the hijra thugs, encouraged members to donate weekly to procure coffee charity at various pengajian (Islamic study groups). The spirit of using wealth for good and beneficial things is based on the word of Allah in the letter Al Isra (17) 26-27.

So, the changes in former thugs are very noticeable, as they used to get millions of rupiah quickly and then spent the money on various sins, either by drinking parties, gambling, inviting prostitutes, or consuming drugs. With large incomes, thugs build social networks so others respect and appreciate them. They finance various events held by people who are called bosses. The opposite condition makes them aware that their friends abandon them when they do not have money as usual. This makes them realize that respect is because of the material they have; when they do not have material, they are abandoned and sometimes even underestimated. (Achmad Fadhli, 2015). Their habit of giving money for sin makes donating and giving alms easy. The advantage of former thugs, with all their limitations is that they get a halal income they are quickly mobilized in collecting funds. KH Ali conveys that they are extraordinary people who have advantages over Muslims from birth, students, and even the Ustaz. They are easy to share and have very high loyalty.

Fourth is the impact of halal business on the family. Former thugs feel the positive effects of halal income even though it is less. One respondent said that when he was a thug, he sold illegal cars without complete documents that he got from theft. He explained that the proceeds of his crimes could reach millions a day. When he got a lot of money, his wife did not want to accept the money he got, while when he had migrated and his daily income was around one hundred thousand, his wife was willing to take the results of his work. According to the perpetrator, he felt pleased when his wife received the money from him (K. Laskar, personal communication, May 2024).

4 CONCLUSION

Former thugs in Solo with troubled pasts are also trying to navigate themselves collectively by joining religious groups and making changes. These changes include changes in appearance, spiritual activities, and ideology, which have altered their outlook on life, their economic patterns, and the way they earn and use money effectively. The collective identity navigation of former thugs in Solo is closely tied to Javanese traditions that value togetherness, in contrast to individualistic Western societies. Therefore, navigating a spoiled identity in Javanese society is a collective process.

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