NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY TO PEACE: A STUDY OF ASSIMILATION AND REINTEGRATION OF EX-OFFENDERS OF TERRORISM

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aims to investigate and analyze the assimilation models of ex-offenders of terrorism and identify the factors that drive them to participate willingly in the process of social reintegration.

Theoretical Framework: Using the segmented assimilation theory developed by Porter and Zou, this study examines the movement of former convicts through various institutions and social and economic activities has led to their acceptance by society or if they need to follow a different trajectory.

Method: A qualitative descriptive approach, coupled with the phenomenological method, was employed to gain profound insights into the lived experience of 15 former convicts hailing from diverse districts and cities in Central Java, Indonesia. To collect the data, we conduct interviews individually and in group to gain extensive their trajectory experiences for peace.

Results and Discussion: The results of the study indicate that two trajectory models occur in society as a way of returning former terrorists to a peaceful path: (a) the independent model and (b) the institutional model. The independent model focuses on individual roles and initiatives in the ex-offender communicating with the community through family, friends, or community leaders and religious paths to gain the trust of the intended social community.

Research Implications: This study provides valuable insights into the mechanisms of social reintegration for ex-offenders of terrorism, highlighting the importance of both individual initiatives and institutional support in facilitating successful assimilation into society.

Originality/Value: The study offers an original contribution to the field by examining the specific assimilation trajectories of ex-terrorists, providing a nuanced understanding of the social reintegration process and identifying key factors that influence successful reintegration.

Keywords: ex-offenders, terrorism, assimilation, social reintegration, counter violent terrorism.

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NAVEGANDO A JORNADA PARA A PAZ: UM ESTudo DA ASSIMILAÇÃO E REINTEGRAÇÃO DE EX-CONDENADOS POR TERRORISMO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Esta pesquisa visa investigar e analisar os modelos de assimilação de ex-condenados por terrorismo e identificar os fatores que os levam a participar voluntariamente do processo de reintegração social.

Referencial Teórico: Utilizando a teoria da assimilação segmentada desenvolvida por Porter e Zou, este estudo examina se o movimento de ex-condenados através de várias instituições e atividades sociais e econômicas levou à sua aceitação pela sociedade ou se eles precisam seguir uma trajetória diferente.

Método: Uma abordagem qualitativa descritiva, juntamente com o método fenomenológico, foi empregada para obter insights profundos sobre as experiências vividas por 15 ex-condenados provenientes de diversos distritos e cidades em Java Central, Indonésia. Para coletar os dados, realizamos entrevistas individuais e em grupo para obter uma ampla compreensão de suas experiências de trajetória para a paz.

Resultados e Discussão: Os resultados do estudo indicam que dois modelos de trajetória ocorrem na sociedade como uma forma de devolver ex-terroristas a um caminho pacífico: (a) o modelo independente e (b) o modelo institucional. O modelo independente foca nos papéis e iniciativas individuais do ex-condenado em se comunicar com a comunidade através da família, amigos, ou líderes comunitários e caminhos religiosos para ganhar a confiança da comunidade social pretendida.

Implicações da Pesquisa: Este estudo fornece insights valiosos sobre os mecanismos de reintegração social para ex-condenados por terrorismo, destacando a importância tanto de iniciativas individuais quanto de apoio institucional na facilitação da assimilação bem-sucedida na sociedade.

Originalidade/Valor: O estudo oferece uma contribuição original ao campo ao examinar as trajetórias específicas de assimilação de ex-terroristas, proporcionando uma compreensão diferenciada do processo de reintegração social e identificando fatores-chave que influenciam a reintegração bem-sucedida.

Palavras-chave: ex-condenados, terrorismo, assimilação, reintegração social, combate ao terrorismo violento.

NAVEGANDO EL CAMINO HACIA LA PAZ: UN ESTUDIO DE LA ASIMILACIÓN Y REINTEGRACIÓN DE EXCONVICTOS POR TERRORISMO

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Esta investigación tiene como objetivo investigar y analizar los modelos de asimilación de exconvictos por terrorismo e identificar los factores que los impulsan a participar voluntariamente en el proceso de reintegración social.
Marco Teórico: Utilizando la teoría de asimilación segmentada desarrollada por Porter y Zou, este estudio examina si el movimiento de los exconvictos a través de diversas instituciones y actividades sociales y económicas ha llevado a su aceptación por la sociedad o si necesitan seguir una trayectoria diferente.

Método: Se empleó un enfoque cualitativo descriptivo, junto con el método fenomenológico, para obtener una profunda comprensión de las experiencias vividas por 15 exconvictos provenientes de diversos distritos y ciudades en Java Central, Indonesia. Para recolectar los datos, realizamos entrevistas individuales y grupales para obtener una comprensión amplia de sus experiencias de trayectoria hacia la paz.

Resultados y Discusión: Los resultados del estudio indican que ocurren dos modelos de trayectoria en la sociedad como una forma de devolver a los exterroristas a un camino pacífico: (a) el modelo independiente y (b) el modelo institucional. El modelo independiente se enfoca en los roles e iniciativas individuales del exconvicto al comunicarse con la comunidad a través de la familia, amigos, os líderes comunitarios y caminos religiosos para ganar la confianza de la comunidad social deseada.

Implicaciones de la investigación: Este estudio proporciona valiosas ideas sobre los mecanismos de reintegración social para exconvictos por terrorismo, destacando la importancia tanto de las iniciativas individuales como del apoyo institucional en la facilitación de una asimilación exitosa en la sociedad.

Originalidad/Valor: El estudio ofrece una contribución original al campo al examinar las trayectorias específicas de asimilación de exterroristas, proporcionando una comprensión matizada del proceso de reintegración social e identificando factores clave que influyen en una reintegración exitosa.

Palabras clave: exconvictos, terrorismo, asimilación, reintegración social, combate al terrorismo violento.

1 INTRODUCTION

Terrorism has emerged as a major destructive element in conflicts, and as such, it should be addressed in the process of building peace. One of the causes of both violent and nonviolent extremism is grievances toward the political system or the political treatment of the state and/or its leaders. Deep disillusionment has also long been identified as a factor that can lead to extremism (Adnan & Amaliyah, 2021). Some believe that incorporating the demands of terrorists into the democratic process can help to address legitimate grievances within an unequal power structure, while others argue that the extremist views of some terrorist groups are incompatible with human rights and democracy. To address this situation, different states have different approaches regarding involving terrorist organizations in peace negotiations, agreements, and post-conflict governance. Deradicalization and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is one of the systematic programs initiated by states to tackle this situation (Bertram, 2016; Feddes & Gallucci, 2016; Hardy, 2020; Sumpter, 2020). Deradicalization refers to the process of
helping individuals who have been radicalized to abandon extremist ideologies and behaviors and reintegrate into society. This can be a complex and difficult process, as it involves addressing the underlying causes and drivers of radicalization, as well as providing individuals with the skills and resources they need to rebuild their lives and find a sense of purpose and belonging.

One challenge that can arise in the context of deradicalization is the paradox of ex-terrorism, which refers to the difficulty that ex-offenders of terrorism may face in finding acceptance and reintegration into society. Ex-offenders of terrorism may face stigma and discrimination from others, which can make it difficult for them to find employment, housing, and other resources they need to rebuild their lives (Grossman et al., 2022; Guo & An, 2022; Maruna et al., 2013; Nova & Suyaqillah, 2021; Özerdem, 2012; Sumner, 2017; Zhou, 2018). This can create a sense of isolation and marginalization, which can, in turn, make it more difficult for them to fully disengage from extremist ideologies and behaviors. However, John & Braddock (2010) found that deradicalization programs, which aim to help people leave extremist groups, are not reliable because there are no clear criteria for success and little research has been done on them. They also suggested that these programs should be based on individual experiences rather than trying to address all issues in a generalized way (Siregar, 2023). Additionally, the authors noted that it is important to consider the perspectives of those who have left extremist groups as well as the communities into which they are reintegrating (John & Braddock, 2010; J. Kaplan & Costa, 2015; Omelicheva, 2007; Sumner, 2017; Torjesen, 2013). Moreover, these studies indicated that ex-combatants who reside in communities where they are actively involved and engaged face fewer challenges when it comes to adjusting to civilian life and exhibit a decreased inclination to form or join organized groups.

Hence, there exists a pressing imperative to direct attention towards the amelioration of the social milieu within the communities to which these individuals are slated to return. Consequently, it becomes incumbent upon governmental authorities and other vested stakeholders to effectively confront these challenges and proffer comprehensive support and resources to ex-offenders with links to terrorism, facilitating their successful reintegration into the fabric of Society (Siregar, 2023). Such support mechanisms encompass various facets, including educational and vocational training, mental health provisions, and social assistance. Additionally, the endeavor may entail
concerted efforts to address the underlying catalysts of radicalization, such as socioeconomic disparities, social marginalization/exclusion, and the confluence of political or religious grievances.

Assimilation programs are designed to help individuals who are new to a community or society to adapt and integrate into that community. The assimilation of former terrorism prisoners into normal social life is a long social process occasioned by various reasons and factors. At least two factors can be identified as elements of the assimilation process of former terrorism prisoners: internal and external factors. Internal factors are variables that come from within the individual that drive the assimilation process, such as consciousness, willingness, and motivation (Özerdem, 2012; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009). External factors include elements from outside the individual that directly or indirectly can drive, facilitate, and mediate the assimilation process, including the family, media, organizations, and government. Both of these factor groups are important components in contributing to the process of assimilating former terrorist prisoners back into society. This phenomenon requires a thorough study to understand in detail the reasons and factors that impel ex-offenders to return to the path of peace in the social life of the community.

The Indonesian government takes both soft and hard approaches to terrorism cases, depending on the specific circumstances and nature of the threat (Nova & Syauqillah, 2021). The soft approach, on the one hand, generally involves using a nonviolent approach which is based on an ethical, constructive, and sustainable way of addressing conflicts and effecting positive change; to address the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, lack of education, and political oppression. This may include programs focusing on social and economic development, education, and political reform. The hard approach, on the other hand, involves using military or law enforcement measures to confront and eliminate terrorist threats. This can include measures such as arrest, detention, and military intervention. However, there could be many reasons why someone who has been involved in terrorism might struggle to actively participate in community activities, events, and initiatives; it may require a range of support and resources to help them integrate back into normal society (Feddes & Gallucci, 2016; Frazer & Nünlist, 2015; Shanaah & Heath-Kelly, 2022; Sumner, 2017). This includes addressing the specific needs and circumstances of the individuals involved, the resources and support available to them, and the broader social and political context in which they operate.
Nevertheless, research on the assimilation process of former terrorism prisoners has not been conducted widely. Previous studies tended to focus on deradicalization issues, which can be divided into three areas: a) the role of family in the deradicalization process (Fikriyati, 2018; Musyafak & Nisa, 2021; Sadat Harahap et al., 2019; Satriawan et al., 2019; Scaramella & Viartasiwi, 2018; Sikkens et al., 2017); b) the role of government institutions through deradicalization programs (Chalmers, 2017; Rapik et al., 2020; Suratman, 2017; Yulianto, 2020); and c) the participation of civil society in deradicalization activities (Anindya, 2018; Musyafak & Nisa, 2021; Sumpter, 2017). Research has shown that deradicalization programs in Indonesia have not been very successful. This may be because the programs do not have a sustainability effect after terrorism prisoners are released from prison. Aside from the central government, local governments should be involved in enabling former terrorism prisoners to reintegrate into society.

This study aims to have a significant impact and provide benefits in both theory and practice. In terms of theory, it aims to enhance the understanding of trajectory models for the peaceful reintegration of former convicted terrorists into society. In practical terms, the findings of this research can serve as a useful alternative model for stakeholders such as government agencies (National Counter Terrorism Agency, Indonesian State Intelligence Agency, Indonesian Central Authority Ministry of Law and Human Rights, and the Ministry of Religion) and civil society organizations in their deradicalization and reintegration efforts. By promoting an understanding of deviant attitudes and behavior and providing a path for peaceful reintegration, this research aims to support the process of assimilation or reintegration of former terrorists.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous research on the social assimilation of former terrorists into society is limited. Studies on the process of returning former terrorism convicts tend to use the term reintegration (Marsden, 2015; Sikkens et al., 2017). This terminology is consistent with the assimilation process conceptualized by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (2020) which aims to promote an attitude of tolerance and sympathy for the sake of social integration. Specifically, studies on assimilation in the context of terrorism cases have been conducted by Gould, 2003; Shaffer, (2015) who found that the 9/11 bombings in
New York had a significant impact on the Muslim community in America. The study found that the terrorist incident led to an increase in hatred toward immigrant Muslims, which affected the Muslim community in four ways: increased in-group marriage, higher fertility rates, a decreased female workforce, and low English language skills among immigrant Muslims.

Furthermore, a study on the reintegration of terrorist groups was conducted by Van der Heide & Schuurman in 2018, which examines the reintegration program implemented by the Dutch Probation Service in the Netherlands, focusing on program design, implementation, and effectiveness. This study highlights important considerations in the reintegration process. Reintegration efforts are based on cognitive and operational logic. Cognitive logic refers to the mechanisms by which policies are implemented effectively, while operational logic refers to how the organization performs tasks by putting policies into practice. In this context, reintegration is part of deradicalization and disengagement activities, which minimize extremist ideology and break individuals’ previous links with terrorist organizations (Schuurman & Schuurman, 2018).

Following these findings, Marsden in 2015 highlights two methods used in reintegrating convicted terrorists into society, both of which prioritize protecting the public and reducing the risk of recidivism (Marsden, 2015). This study utilizes multi-attribute utility technology to analyze the resettlement process of 24 suspected terrorists who returned from Iraq and Syria under the London Probation Trust’s (LPT) Central Extremism Unit. This unit is responsible for carrying out and managing the relocation of people suspected of terrorist offenses. The study consists of four steps: identifying the evaluation object and function; identifying stakeholders; obtaining important program attributes from stakeholders; and incorporating the level of importance into a systematic program framework. The study's findings indicate the success of the LPT in conducting resettlement, as seen in four areas: not mentioning past cases, reintegration into civil society, balance, a prosocial and open identity, and supporting the ex-offender to find a better way in life.

Terrorism is a set of ideologies that encourage individuals to commit acts of violence or make threats of violence to create fear or terror among a population. These actions can result in mass casualties and the destruction of vital infrastructure and public or international facilities. The purpose of such acts of violence is to impose a coercive will for political gain and promote radical change. Hudson and Majeska (1999) also note
that acts of terror are pre-mediated and politically motivated actions toward civilians. The acts of terror indicate that they are planned and intentional rather than spontaneous. Terrorism is a global issue that poses a threat to peace, tolerance, and diversity. It is often rooted in dissatisfaction with those in power, feelings of injustice, and overly narrow and literal interpretations of religion (Crelinsten, 2022).

Terrorism can be understood using various approaches, such as political, organizational, and psychological. From a political perspective, the emergence of terrorism is influenced by global political conditions where the views and activities of transnational movements to combat injustice and oppression are widely disseminated through the media (Medina et al., 2020; Moghaddam, 2005, 2009). Organizational theorists argue that terrorism is not an individual act, but rather, a collective decision based on shared beliefs and interests. Additionally, the media arguably plays a role in promoting acts of terrorism by reporting on oppression, injustice, and discrimination by the authorities, which can give rise to an aggressive attitude to defend oneself and a sense of solidarity among those who share the same perceived destiny and ideology (Archetti, 2015; Asongu et al., 2019; Shoshani & Slone, 2016; Tinnes, 2013). All three of these dimensions contribute to the multi-causal nature of the emergence of acts of terror in society.

The counterterrorism and deradicalization efforts implemented by the state and society, which take a repressive and preventive approach, have had an impact on some terrorist actors who have come to realize the wrongfulness of their actions. Former convicts typically do not act alone, but rather, form groups after recognizing their mistakes. Maarif (2018) researched the Circle Peace Foundation, which aims to persuade ex-convicts to return to the peaceful teachings of Islam, founded by Ali Fauzi, and promote a spirit of peace and constructive mindset change. In addition, the movement of former jihadists in community and economic empowerment programs for their colleagues is an alternative to government-led deradicalization efforts (Chalmers, 2017; Hwang, 2017). This group of former jihadists has become a new community and an asset for counterterrorism programs.

Assimilation is a process of becoming a part of society by identifying oneself as a part of the majority culture. In the context of criminal acts of terrorism, assimilation can be seen as a process of coaching ex-convicts by integrating them into society. The goal of assimilation is to promote an attitude of tolerance and sympathy for the sake of social
integration. This process requires awareness and the ability to adapt to the social and cultural context of the intended society or group. The success of assimilation is measured by the extent to which those undergoing assimilation can adapt to the majority culture. Conflicts and problems may arise during the assimilation process as individuals may need to change or abandon old habits to adapt to the new culture (Zhou, 2018). Assimilation is a social process that takes time and shared awareness based on an interest in accommodation and the cultural interests required to achieve a harmonious life.

Gordon (in Soekanto, 1999) emphasizes the importance of identifying the form of assimilation to determine the success of the assimilation process. The variables include assimilation in terms of culture, structure, marriage, identification, acceptance, accepting behavior, and citizenship. These forms are important for determining the type, method, and prerequisites required for assimilation. Assimilation is the right that convicts can obtain after fulfilling the requirements of the applicable law. For former terrorism convicts, the requirements for obtaining the right of assimilation include a willingness to cooperate with law enforcement, participation in deradicalization programs organized by LAPAS and/or the National Agency for Combating Terrorism, and a written pledge of allegiance to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Rapik et al., 2020; Supriadi et al., 2020). The success of an assimilation process is determined by not only the accuracy of the form used but also the prerequisites that need to be met to adapt to their new community.

Segmented assimilation theory, developed by Porter and Zou, is a theoretical response to explain changes among US immigrants who are divided into groups of new immigrants and old immigrants (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 2018). This theory posits that US society is stratified and unequal, and therefore, various segments of society allow for different levels of assimilation for immigrants. One of the main factors emphasized in this theory is the social context in which immigrants are accepted in US society. Segmented assimilation theory posits that assimilation can have varying consequences between individuals. Adopting this theory, the focus of this research is on how former terrorists attempt to be accepted back into society, specifically in the context of Indonesian society, which is segmented into extreme/ fundamentalist and moderate groups.

By using this theory, our research will examine whether the movement of former convicts through various social and economic institutions and activities has enabled them
to be accepted back by society, or if they still need to follow different trajectories as differential pathways of assimilation. Porter and Zou identified three possible paths of assimilation, including (1) increasing acculturation and integration into the middle class of society, known as the first way or straight-line assimilation; (2) acculturation and assimilation into the lower-class urban society, referred to as the second way or downward assimilation; and (3) deliberate preservation of culture and values, followed by economic integration, known as the third way or elective acculturation. This theory posits that there is more than one way for ex-convicts to take the path of peace and be accepted back into society.

3 METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach utilizing a mixed-methods design incorporating both primary and secondary data sources (Creswell, 2014). The primary data were acquired through field studies, encompassing interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) to directly gather comprehensive insights and delineate research dimensions. Additionally, secondary data encompassed pertinent documents of the assimilation and social reintegration challenges faced by former terrorist convicts, such as online news articles, prior research findings, and documents sourced from the Corrections Agency (BAPAS) under the Ministry of Law and Human Rights.

The study selected three former residency areas in Central Java as research sites: the former residencies of Semarang, Surakarta, and Pekalongan. The research involved diverse stakeholders in data collection, namely: (a) informants, comprising 15 former terrorism convicts who expressed remorse and swore allegiance to the Republic of Indonesia, (b) officials within BAPAS Semarang, and (c) representatives from organizations such as the Semarang Persadani Foundation, Surakarta Gema Salam Foundation, Brebes Podomoro Community, and the Peace Inscription Foundation (YPP). The selection of informants was based on the acknowledgment that not all ex-convicts willingly pledge allegiance to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, consequently impacting their integration and assimilation into society. The research spanned six months, commencing with desk reviews, followed by interviews and FGDs. In addition, secondary materials, including online news, were analyzed to assess data availability and contextualize the existing reality at the textual level before conducting
field research. Interviews were pivotal in acquiring data for comparative analysis, employing a triangulation process (K. N. Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; N. K. Denzin, 2006). These interviews were conducted at the respective locations of each informant after obtaining the requisite consent. Furthermore, 15 individuals were selected as informants, participating in the FGD session to validate initial findings. All identifiable personal data has been deliberately excluded, ensuring participant confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms or complete omission of names. Additionally, certain incidents might have been slightly modified to uphold the participants’ right to remain anonymous and safeguard their privacy.

Data processing and analysis involved a structured methodology. Initially, the data underwent rigorous processing in line with the methodology advocated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which encompassed data reduction, summarization, and organization based on thematic elements (Miles & Huberman, 1992). Subsequently, an interpretative technique was applied to reformulate, elucidate, and interpret data sourced from both FGDs and interviews, unveiling patterns, and trends, and extracting the underlying meaning inherent in the data. Coding, following established protocols, was conducted to categorize and organize the data into meaningful segments, facilitating a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the research findings. In addition, all participants involved in this study provided informed consent verbally before participating. The purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of the study were explained to each participant, and they were given the opportunity to ask questions before providing their consent. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 POST-PRISON ASSIMILATION AND A REINTEGRATION MODEL FOR TERRORISTS

Assimilation is a method used to prepare convicts and inmate learners for reintegration into society by teaching them how to blend in and prosper after serving their sentences. The goal is to return these individuals to the community and have them accepted as human beings rather than judging them for their past actions. The process of
assimilation is regulated by Permenkumham No. 21 of 2013 by the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights which lays out the guidelines and procedures for granting remissions, assimilation, family visits, parole, pre-release leave, and parole leave. As part of the coaching process, assimilation involves integrating prisoners and correctional students into community life, providing them with the necessary resources, education, and skills to subsequently succeed in society. Additionally, assimilation encourages community involvement and active participation in supporting the correctional system.

The assimilation program is available to prisoners and correctional students who meet certain requirements, such as displaying good behavior and participating actively in coaching programs, and who have served at least half of their sentence. Children in state or civilian custody may also be eligible for assimilation after completing six months of education in a juvenile detention center. Eligibility for the program is determined by the absence of disciplinary punishment in the last six months. The process of implementing assimilation is overseen by correctional officers, who record and recommend eligible prisoners and students to the head of the prison. The head of the prison then makes the final decision about granting assimilation, which can take place independently or with the involvement of third parties. Assimilation includes four types of activities: educational, skills training, social work, and community-based coaching. The program is typically conducted for no more than nine hours per day, excluding transit time, and is not held on Sundays or national holidays. The goal of assimilation is to help prisoners subsequently reintegrate successfully into society and improve their public image after their time in detention.

This study explored two different models of assimilation for ex-terrorism convicts in three research locations: Surakarta, Semarang, and Pekalongan. These models were identified as the independent model and the institutional model. The independent model focuses on integrating ex-convicts into community life through personal initiatives and activities, while the institutional model is a process of resocialization and reintegration into society through programs facilitated by the government or community institutions. The findings were based on interviews with 15 former terrorist convicts who had been released from prison and had undergone coaching in correctional institutions. These ex-convicts had taken different approaches to reintegrating into society after leaving prison, depending on their individual circumstances and prior social status.
4.2 INDEPENDENT ASSIMILATION MODEL

Former terrorism convicts undertake the independent assimilation model, motivated by the desire to return to a normal social life. One example of this is respondent 012, who did not face significant challenges when he returned to his hometown. This was largely due to his religious background and the presence of respected figures in his family. On his return to his hometown, he lived a normal life and could worship at the mosque, and was even offered the position of imam. He also engaged actively in promoting moderate values to his community and distancing himself from radical religious leaders, which aligns with the findings of Ambrozik, (2019 and Hwang (2017) that individual experiences and attitudes play a significant role in the disengagement process. However, despite these efforts, his mosque is still under suspicion and surveillance.

Respondents 015 and 013 employed similar strategies for their reintegration into society. However, both faced rejection from their communities, with 015 experiencing character assassination and 013 being rejected by the residents of his hometown. They both worked independently to reintegrate into society. Respondent 015 was able to do so with the help of a friend who defended him and stated that the accusations against him were false, while 013 handled the community's resistance by explaining his change and assuring others that he no longer posed a threat. Respondent 013 became involved in community activities such as Rukun Tetangga/RT (Neighbourhood Association) and religious activities at the Mushalla (mosque).

“...I was given the responsibility of overseeing the construction of the Mushalla (mosque), and later even became the leader of Ta’mir (prayers). In my community, I interact and associate with anyone regardless of their ideological or social background and differences. In my preaching, I use not only arguments from the Koran and Hadith in Arabic but also language and arguments that are easy for the general public to understand (013).”

Furthermore, respondent 001 tried to reintegrate into his community in the Cemani Sukoharjo area. He tried to combat people’s negative perception of him as a former terrorist through various actions in the community. He believed that the negative views and rejection he faced from the community were due not only to a lack of information about his personal changes and development post-sentence but also to a lack of cooperation from the police and village officials.
“...When I returned, the Neighbourhood Association (RT) had warned the residents not to associate with me. It made me feel uneasy. I made a strong effort to communicate with the leaders of the RT and RW about my activities after returning to the village, as prior to the incident, I had no issues with the community. The key is to focus on how to conduct oneself in society and correct any misconceptions that may impede the reintegration process (001).”

Respondent 002 followed a similar approach when reintegrating into the community in the Pasar Kliwon Solo area. He had no social issues or problems with his environment. This was due to his past habit of interacting regularly with the community and not engaging in any secretive activities. He had well-established relationships with his neighbors and community members. Additionally, his status as a native of the area and his open and easy-going attitude helped him assimilate quickly back into the community. The community responded positively to his situation, showing empathy and advising him to focus on worship, take care of his family, and avoid radical groups and activities. Respondent 002 emphasized that the community truly accepted him as a part of their lives. Respondent 004’s independent assimilation process was facilitated by his wife who lived in the Kalicari area of Semarang. At the time of his arrest by Indonesian Counterterrorism Special Detachment 88 (Densus 88), 004 was living in a rented house where the surrounding community did not know him personally or about his case. On his release from the correctional institution, he returned to his wife’s house, who had returned to her hometown while he was in detention. He stated that his wife was unaware of his specific activities and the affiliation of the study group he had attended. Similarly, the neighbors in the area where his wife lived were also unaware of his case, and the community was primarily of the abangan type. This type of community represents a syncretic religious tradition that combines elements of Islam with indigenous Javanese beliefs, customs, and traditions. This environment is often marked by a flexible and inclusive approach that allows for a diversity of beliefs and practices. These conditions allowed him to reintegrate smoothly into society without facing any questions or resistance.

In contrast, respondent 005 encountered difficulties during the independent assimilation process when he attempted to return to his family in Cilegon, Banten, where his wife lived. Upon his release from prison, his wife and family still held strong views and ideologies and were unwilling to accept the idea of a Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. This difficulty was highlighted by 005’s own words:
“... I am still facing difficulties in connecting with my family, children, and wife. Although I have visited them, I am not allowed to see my children. I was able to meet briefly with my wife, but it was done without my knowledge. Currently, my family in Cilegon remains distant from me (005).”

The closed attitude of his wife and family toward 005 was a result of his decision to pledge allegiance to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia while he was in Nusa Kembangan Penitentiary. Before he made this pledge, his wife and family used to visit him regularly while he was in prison. However, after he made this pledge, his relationship with his family was severed. His wife said, “Husband, please be patient, retract your pledge to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. I’d rather you came home in a shroud.” To this, he replied, “I made this decision based on knowledge, not out of desire. Not because of other people and not because I am weak.” Respondent 005 had suggested that his family read a book that had made him think, reflect, and decide to return to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, but his family refused this offer, citing fear of being doubted by the community.

Another obstacle experienced by respondent 009 was when he returned to Slawi, Tegal, his hometown. His family wanted to welcome him back, but the community refused to accept him because of his history and the fact that the authorities had visited his home frequently and he had been away for a long time. According to him, people’s attitudes toward him had changed; they used to be friendly and now they were distant, even though he would greet them and attend prayers and congregations. He attempted to reach out to them, but they kept their distance. His large family in Tegal, Central Java accepted him and were aware of his case. His involvement in the village was limited to just greeting and praying in the congregation at the mosque. The community’s acceptance of 009’s presence was supported by his brother who served as chairman Karang Taruna (Youth Village Community).

Respondent 007 also encountered difficulties when he tried to reintegrate into society upon returning to Brebes. He encountered administrative issues when he attempted to update his ID card at the local village office. His application for a change of address and place of residence was not processed properly by the village administration. As a result, he decided to move to Solo, Central Java to avoid conflict with residents. After living in Solo for five years, 007 decided to return to Brebes, Central Java, with the help of authorities who helped mediate and facilitate administrative matters. He attempted to assimilate by participating in community activities such as community service, and his
social interactions with residents were normal. However, these actions did not restore the trust of the people. This was evidenced by the reluctance of the village leader to visit his home, despite good communication with the leaders of the neighborhood association.

The strategies and methods used by former terrorism convicts vary in their independent attempts to reintegrate into society. These variations are a result of the different personal, familial, and community conditions. This impacts the time required to complete the assimilation process, which returns them to normal life within the community.

4.3 INSTITUTIONAL ASSIMILATION MODEL

The institutional assimilation model, which involves the use of institutional support from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and social and religious groups, is a commonly adopted approach by individuals who have previously been convicted of terrorism. Through this method, these institutions serve as facilitators in the process of integrating these individuals back into society and promoting their acceptance by the community on a voluntary and open basis. This study identified several institutions that play a role in the assimilation process, including Indonesia Correctional Institution, BAPAS (Corrections Bureau), BNPT (National Counter Terrorism Agency), Counterterrorism Special Detachment 88, PERSADANI Foundation, GEMA SALAM Foundation, Podomoro Union, and Terrorism Prevention Coordination Forum Central Java, as well as District Police Station, National Unity and Politics Agency in Regency/City, and districts officials. Each institution has its own specific responsibilities in overseeing the assimilation process, which are in alignment with its main duties and functions.

According to respondent 011, BNPT (National Counter Terrorism Agency) plays a role in bringing together former convicts of terrorism in the Solo Raya and Semarang regions to establish a friendship forum.

“… BNPT helped establish a national association for convicts across Central Java and many of us joined Gema Salam Foundation. I believe this step was beneficial for me and I always participate when receive an invitation.” (011)
Respondent 011 then added that the Gema Salam Foundation, which serves as a gathering place for former convicts, aims to provide a platform for sharing experiences related to reintegration into the community and addressing economic issues. However, he noted that due to poor management and a lack of transparency from the leadership, the foundation has not been able to achieve its mission fully.

“…According to reports I heard, funds intended for organizational and member activities within the Gema Salam Foundation have allegedly been mismanaged and not distributed equitably among members. As a result, members hailing from Semarang have perceived a lack of progress and benefit from their involvement with the foundation. Following a series of discussions and negotiations, these members ultimately decided to form their own community, resigning from the foundation and establishing a new organization under the auspices of the FKPT.” (011)

In the case of respondent 012, Badawi Rahman uses the mosque as a means of interacting and fostering unity within the community. The process of attending mosque congregations served allowed Badawi to reintegrate into religious and social life. Through his participation in the mosque community, he was able to demonstrate the changes that had occurred within him, including the adoption of a more moderate attitude and the discontinuation of inviting preachers from hardline political parties that advocate for the enforcement of Sharia in Indonesia. Similarly, 015, a prisoner from Semarang who spent 13 months at the Mobile Brigade Headquarters Kelapa Dua, Depok, and 4.5 years at Jaya Metro Police, employs the power of social connections to facilitate his reintegration into society. By building open communication with the residential communities, 015 can alleviate concerns and questions regarding his activities upon returning from prison.

The mosque and Mushalla were also used as a means of reintegration for respondent 013. His participation in the development of Mushalla and serving as the Takmir or leader of the mosque facilitated his acceptance by the community. Respondent 013 emphasized that the process of assimilation is not simple and requires intense dialogue, communication and the sharing of comprehensive information. He faced difficulties as rumors were circulating that he had been rejected by society. To address these issues, he tried to participate in and mediate discussions within the residential community when differences of opinion arose. Respondent 001 employed a similar approach in his efforts to assimilate in his district. He had a wide-ranging network and community connections, including the Mayor of Surakarta and both the police department
and armed forces. Leveraging these relationships, respondent 001 endeavored to persuade both the public and officials that he was a fully-fledged citizen of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and wished to participate in various community activities such as healthy walks, August 17 events, iftar together, community service, and residential community meetings in the village. He believed that the Mayor's role as a representative of the government was crucial in determining the success of the integration and assimilation process for ex-convicts in the Solo Raya area.

Respondent 001 used the establishment of the Foundation as a platform to connect with the public and agencies through various activities and events. The success of this integration with the community became evident when he managed the food stall. Beginning with the soto stall, he met and interacted with many people and gradually built friendships. In addition to coming for breakfast, people shared many stories, and the foundation also held a monthly program called Blessing Friday, which had a significant impact on reintegration and rehabilitation. Thanks to these efforts, the negative perception of respondent 001 as a former terrorist eventually prevailed. The involvement of institutions in the assimilation and reintegration process is evident in the story of respondent 003, a resident of Karanganyar, Central Java. The role of the Correctional Centres (BAPAS) as a liaison between respondent 003 and the community can be seen through the mentoring process, which included home visit programs.

Additionally, respondent 003 was asked to attend rallies at BAPAS, where he received training in entrepreneurial skills to achieve economic independence. Apart from BAPAS, the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) also played a role in the assimilation process. BNPT’s program included deradicalization activities outside of prison, such as meetings and promoting national understanding. In line with these activities, BNPT also provided economic empowerment by offering assistance such as capital for goats and agricultural fertilizers. Other agencies that provided aid included the police department and armed forces.

Respondent 007 experienced the presence of the police as a mediator between the village government and the community when he wanted to return to his hometown of Tegal after living in Solo for five years. The reason for his move to Solo was the community’s rejection after he was released from the Nusakambangan Penitentiary. To help reintegrate with the community, respondent 007 established a Tahfidz (people who practice memorizing the Quran) house as a means of socializing and interacting with
residents. The reintegration process included participating in community service activities and other social activities, and respondent 008 experienced the same thing. The BNPT supported his return to his hometown in Slawi, Central Java by explaining to the residential committee and the community that he had disassociated himself from the radical terrorist group. Additionally, the Kesbangpol (National Unity and Politics Agency) played a role in re-socializing respondent 008 into the community by providing space for him to speak as a human resource to high school students in deradicalization efforts.

5 CONCLUSION

Reintegration in social practice from ex-offenders of terrorism face individual and structural level challenges. These include trauma, stigma, and a lack of social support. Governments and other stakeholders can work to address these societal-level factors to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for ex-offenders of terrorism. By addressing these challenges and providing ex-offenders of terrorism with the support and resources they need, it may be possible to help them rebuild their lives and find a sense of purpose and belonging.

The independent model emphasizes individual roles and initiatives regarding establishing effective communication with the community. This approach involves engaging with the intended social community through various channels, such as family, friends, community leaders, and religious paths. By using these diverse avenues, the independent model works to cultivate trust and rapport within the community, thereby fostering meaningful connections and facilitating open dialogue. Whether through personal relationships, trusted community figures, or religious affiliations, the independent model recognizes the value of these pathways in establishing a strong and credible presence within the social fabric. This paper found that the assimilation program facilitated by institutions or foundations such as government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and social and religious groups performed stronger in ex-terrorism assimilation programs. By actively participating in community activities, events, and initiatives, these individuals experience a smoother transition from a military or combat environment to civilian society. They have access to a wider range of opportunities, including education, employment, and social services, which contribute to their overall
well-being and sense of belonging. These agencies boosted assurance in social situations reduced mistrust, allayed fears, and promoted peace in society, particularly in Central Java, Indonesia.

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