



Transformative Leadership from Marginalized Origins: A Model for Community Empowerment and Socio-Economic Change

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the transformative leadership model implemented by a village head with a background as a former thug and its implications for the community empowerment process in Cikuya Village, Cicalengka District, Bandung Regency, Indonesia. Village leaders with non-conventional backgrounds are often perceived negatively and considered problematic in the context of village governance. However, in practice, such figures have the potential to bring about significant social change, particularly in village development and strengthening community participation. This study uses a qualitative approach with juridical-sociological methods to deeply understand the socio-political dynamics, leadership patterns, and the legitimacy of the village head's power from the perspective of constitutional law and Islamic values. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, involving the village head, village government officials, community leaders, and residents of Cikuya Village as key informants. Data analysis was carried out using the siyasah dusturiyah theoretical framework as proposed by Ibn Taymiyyah, which emphasized that the legitimacy of leadership is not determined by a person's social background, but rather by the leader's capacity to carry out mandates, uphold justice, and create benefits for the wider community. Through this approach, research is expected to be able to reveal the process of social transformation from a thug figure to a formal leader who is recognized legally and socially. Apart from that, this research is also expected to show how leadership can form effective, responsive, and inclusive patterns, as well as to provide theoretical contributions to the study of village leadership and practical contributions to strengthening village governance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The leadership of the village head plays a central role in driving development and community empowerment at the local level. As a formal leader democratically elected through the Village Head Election (Pilkades), this figure is not only responsible for managing government administration but also serves as a driving force for community participation, utilization of local resources, and the implementation of welfare programs. Within the framework of regional autonomy, Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages provides a strong mandate for village

heads to carry out service, empowerment, and development functions independently and responsively to community needs (Sugiyono, 2022). However, leadership dynamics at the village level do not always follow a bureaucratic or ideal model, particularly when actors with unconventional backgrounds, such as former thugs, are elected leaders.

Leadership is a key factor in determining the success of development and community empowerment at the village level. As the formal leader at the local level, the village head plays a strategic role in mobilizing community participation, managing resources, and creating a conducive environment for shared prosperity. From a constitutional law perspective, the position of village head is constitutionally recognized as part of an autonomous regional government system. This law emphasizes that villages are not only the smallest governmental unit but also public legal entities with ancestral and traditional rights to manage their affairs based on the principles of autonomy and assistance. Village heads are democratically elected through village head elections (pilkades), which are regulated by law, ensuring the principles of accountability, transparency, and political legitimacy. This reflects the sovereignty of the people in a democratic legal state as guaranteed by Article 1 paragraph (2) and Article 18 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, anyone who is elected as village head, including those with non-traditional backgrounds such as former thugs, has basically gone through a legitimate legal and political legitimacy process, as long as they fulfill the administrative and substantive requirements in accordance with statutory provisions.

The phenomenon of former thug village heads is no longer uncommon in Indonesia. In some regions, figures once associated with violence, informal domination, and legal uncertainty have instead gained political legitimacy from the community. Cikuya Village, Cicalengka District, Bandung Regency, is a compelling example, where a village head with a track record as a thug successfully won the village head election and is credited with bringing significant changes to infrastructure development and community economic empowerment (Mulyadi, 2022). This raises critical questions: how can a transformative leadership model emerge from a figure with such a controversial background? And how does this leadership style impact community participation and well-being?

This study has three main objectives. First, it aims to identify and analyze the transformative leadership model implemented by the Cikuya Village Head, a former thug, in implementing community empowerment. In the context of local leadership, this model reflects not only an administrative approach but also an integration of local wisdom, assertiveness, and service (khidmah). Transformational leadership is characterized by the ability to build a shared vision, inspire change, and strengthen participation (Bass & Riggio, 2020). In Cikuya Village, this is evident in efforts to open access to agricultural roads, preserve the Margaluyu martial art, and initiate regular religious study groups, all of which are carried out through deliberation and social mobilization. Second, it aims to evaluate the impact of this leadership model on the fulfillment of basic community rights, including the right to access infrastructure, cultural participation, religious freedom, and economic well-being. Fulfillment of these rights is a crucial indicator of village governance effectiveness within the framework of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, which emphasizes the principles of empowerment, independence, and social justice (Sugiyono, 2022; Susanto, 2021). Optimal budget realization in the empowerment and development sectors, as reflected in the 2025 Village Budget (APBDesa) report, provides concrete evidence that village head leadership has a direct impact on improving the quality of life for residents.

Third, this study aims to analyze the phenomenon of the leadership of these former thugs through the lens of siyasah dusturiyah in Ibn Taymiyyah's thought, in order to assess the extent to which these leadership practices align with the principles of Islamic leadership: amanah (trustworthiness), 'adl (justice), and maslahah ummah (common good). Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that the legitimacy of leadership is not determined by social background, but by moral capacity and real contributions to the public good. Thus, this study not only reveals the dynamics of non-conventional leadership at the village level, but also provides theoretical contributions in enriching the discourse of contemporary Islamic leadership and practical in designing inclusive, responsive, and equitable empowerment policies.

This research makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to the study of local leadership. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on village-level leadership models by analyzing a unique phenomenon: the transformation of a thug figure into an effective formal leader. These findings demonstrate that rural leadership does not always follow bureaucratic or democratic patterns but can also emerge through unconventional approaches rooted in local social and cultural dynamics. Thus, this research broadens the spectrum of leadership theory, particularly transformational leadership, by incorporating contextual dimensions such as social background, informal power capital, and moral adaptability. This research opens up new insights that non-traditional leadership, such as that originating from a thug background, can actually be a driving force in

community empowerment, provided it is directed toward the values of justice, service, and welfare. This opens up space for further studies exploring the correlation between a leader's personal background, including past track records, and local-level socio-economic development achievements.

From a socio-political perspective, this study also reveals the complexity of village governance, influenced by the interaction between formal and informal power. In Cikuya Village, local culture, social networks, and the influence of the symbolic dominance of former thugs did not hinder participation but instead mobilized them to strengthen social cohesion, stability, and empowerment programs. These findings emphasize that village-level leadership cannot be understood solely through an institutional lens, but must also consider the cultural, historical, and relational factors that shape a leader's legitimacy and effectiveness. This study is not only descriptive-analytical in nature but also has significant practical and policy implications for village governance. By identifying supporting factors such as social legitimacy, relational networks, and communication capacity, as well as obstacles such as past stigma and limited access to funding, and the effectiveness of the leadership of former thug village heads, this study provides an empirical basis for increasing transparency and accountability in village fund management. The findings regarding optimal budget realization in the areas of empowerment, development, and religious affairs indicate that community-oriented leadership can encourage fairer and more efficient budget allocation.

The recommendations from this study can be utilized by local governments and supervisory institutions (such as the Inspectorate or the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency) to strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for village programs, thus aligning them with the principles of good governance: participatory, transparent, responsive, and accountable (Sari & Nugroho, 2022; Susanto, 2021). This research provides strategic input for local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in designing contextual mentoring interventions. For example, through leadership training based on local and Islamic values, technical assistance in village budget planning, and facilitation of inter-village collaboration networks. This approach aligns with Wibowo's findings, which emphasize that charismatic leadership in rural areas needs to be supported by a system that strengthens institutional capacity, rather than relying solely on individual figures. Thus, leadership transformations like those in Cikuya Village can be replicated sustainably, rather than simply being a personal phenomenon. Furthermore, the results of this study have the potential to raise public awareness of the importance of active participation in village development (Wibowo, 2020).

When residents understand that a transformative leadership style, even from an unconventional background, can have a real impact on improving infrastructure access, preserving culture, and strengthening religious life, they tend to be more motivated to participate in village deliberations, empowerment programs, and social oversight. This reflects the Islamic principles of deliberation and mutual assistance, which are the foundation of participatory democracy at the local level (Ramli, 2023). The normative foundation of this dynamic is emphasized in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 247, which states that Allah chose Thalut as a leader not because of his wealth or social status, but because "Allah has chosen him over you and given him excellence in knowledge and physical qualities." This verse serves as a reminder that the legitimacy of leadership from an Islamic perspective is determined by moral capacity and tangible contributions to the common good, not by past background.

In the context of Cikuya Village, the former thug village head has proven that self-transformation toward trustworthy and just leadership is possible as long as he is able to carry out his khidmah (service) and ra'iyyah (people's shepherding) functions. Therefore, this research can serve as a basis for developing a village leadership model that is inclusive, just, and based on local-religious values. Its policy recommendations can be adopted in the preparation of Regent Regulations or Guidelines for Village Head Development by the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration (Kemendes PDTT), to support leadership that is responsive to the needs of all community groups, including women, youth, farmers, and marginalized groups. Thus, village leadership is no longer viewed as an arena of domination, but as a collective space for realizing social justice and shared prosperity, in accordance with the spirit of maqā (village governance). yesid al-shari'ah and Ibn Taymiyyah's political science (Duderija, 2017; Zahrah, 2023).

Muhammad Iklil Musyafa with the title "From Thug to Village Head" This study aims to explore the dominance of former thugs in the governance system in Kendangdukuh Village, as well as how the village head manages various actors in the area. This research is motivated by the existence of a village head who has a background as a thug and has led for three consecutive terms. The main focus of this study is to explore how the dominance of a former thug affects governance at the village level, as well as how the village head manages various actors within the village. The experience of the village head as a thug turned out to bring major changes in Kendangdukuh Village, especially in terms of increasing security which has become more guaranteed and significant. The above

research focuses more on the dominance of former thugs in the governance system and how the village head manages various actors in the area. Meanwhile, the author's research emphasizes the leadership style of the village head in the context of community empowerment, including its impact on community participation and shared welfare. The main objective of the above research is to explore how the dominance of former thugs affects village governance. On the other hand, the author's research aims to analyze the leadership model of the former thug village head in increasing community empowerment, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors for the effectiveness of this leadership.

Yanda Rustami (2024) with the title "Leadership Model of Village Head Leadership in Village Development in Bakau Aceh Village, Mandah District, Indragiri Hilir Regency". This study aims to analyze the Leadership Model of village head leadership in village development, with a focus on the Head of Bakau Aceh Village who has served since 2015. The above study found that the leadership style of village heads in Bakau Aceh Village is democratic, involving the community in decision-making, two-way communication, and acceptance of suggestions. However, this study has the potential to find more varied leadership styles, such as a combination of authoritarian, paternalistic, or transformational, because former thugs are often associated with dominance and assertiveness. The above study focuses more on physical development and village infrastructure, such as concrete bridges and COVID-19 posts. Meanwhile, this study emphasizes community empowerment, including the impact of leadership on community participation and social welfare.

Reza Fadilah Darmajati (2023) with the title "The Village Head's Leadership Style in Community Empowerment in Harapan Jaya Village, Tempuling District, Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province." The study aims to identify the objectives, actions, and outcomes of the community empowerment program in Harapan Jaya Village. This includes increasing community knowledge, fostering family ties, improving business insight, and fostering economic independence through the Village Head's leadership style. The study above does not mention the village head's background as a thug. Instead, this study specifically highlights the incident of a former thug village head. The study above uses a governmentality perspective. Meanwhile, this study uses the theory of siyasah dusturiyah and the principles of Islamic leadership. The study above found that village heads in Harapan Jaya Village tend to use a democratic leadership style and are based on two-way communication. The study above focuses more on the implementation of the community empowerment program through a governmentality perspective. Meanwhile, this study emphasizes the impact of former thugs on community empowerment, including factors that support and inhibit leadership effectiveness.

Theoretically, thug leadership is often associated with an authoritarian or paternalistic style, which tends to be centralistic and repressive (Utami et al., 2021). However, in practice, the transformation from a dominant figure to a servant leader can occur through an emotional approach, familial approach, and a commitment to social justice. The concept of transformational leadership suggests that leaders can inspire change through vision, charisma, and motivational abilities (Bass & Riggio, 2020). In the local context, this model needs to be reexamined by considering cultural, religious, and village governance values. This study adopts the perspective of siyasah dusturiyah (Islamic political thought) that emphasizes justice, trustworthiness, and the benefit of the ummah, referring to the concept of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, who argued that leadership legitimacy lies not in background but in the ability to bring benefit (Zahrah, 2023). Through this approach, the research aims to analyze how the former thug village head in Cikuya Village transformed himself and his leadership style to empower the community, as well as its impact on strengthening fair and inclusive village governance.

2. METHOD

This study uses an empirical-analytical approach by applying the juridical-empirical method, which is a combination of normative legal analysis and observation of social realities in the field. This approach was chosen because the phenomenon of the leadership of a former thug village head does not only concern legal-formal aspects (such as legitimacy through the Village Head Election and the provisions of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages), but also involves social, cultural, and moral dynamics that can only be understood through direct observation and interaction with local actors. Within the juridical-empirical framework, this study integrates two main dimensions, the juridical dimension, namely the analysis of relevant laws and regulations, especially the Village Law, the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs, and the principles of siyasah dusturiyah in the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyyah as part of Islamic constitutional law. This dimension is used to assess the formal and normative legitimacy of the village head's leadership. The empirical dimension, namely the collection of primary data through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation of the village head, village officials, community leaders, religious leaders, and residents of Cikuya Village. This empirical data aims to explore the meaning,

perceptions, and actual practices of transformative leadership in the context of community empowerment.

The empirical-analytical approach allows researchers not only to describe phenomena but also to analyze the causal relationships between leadership backgrounds, leadership styles, and their impact on the social, economic, and spiritual well-being of the community. This aligns with the characteristics of qualitative research, which is exploratory and interpretative (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). Data were analyzed thematically using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques (Miles et al., 2020). Furthermore, the analysis was conducted using Ibn Taymiyyah's siyasah dusturiyah theoretical framework as a normative analytical tool, emphasizing the principles of 'adl (justice), amanah (trust), and maslahah ummah (common good). Thus, this study not only answers "how" leadership works but also "to what extent" these practices meet ethical standards of leadership from the perspective of Islamic law and good governance.

The combination of an analytical-empirical approach and a juridical-empirical method allows this research to provide a holistic picture, both from a legal perspective and from a social perspective, of the transformation of a former thug into an effective, responsive, and just empowerment leader in Cikuya Village. Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including the village head, village officials, community leaders, religious leaders, and residents from various social strata. Participatory observation was conducted during village deliberations, the implementation of empowerment programs, and informal interactions between leaders and the community. Meanwhile, documentation included the collection of secondary data such as village profiles, reports on the realization of the 2025 Village Budget (APBDesa), meeting minutes, archives of religious and cultural activities, and related regulations (e.g., Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages). Data analysis was conducted thematically with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Empirical findings are contrasted with the theoretical framework of transformational leadership and the principles of Ibn Taymiyyah's siyasah dusturiyah, resulting in an analysis that is not only descriptive but also critical-normative. Through a combination of empirical-analytical approaches and descriptive-analytical methods, this study is able to provide a comprehensive picture of how a former thug can transform into an effective, just, and empowering leader based on Islamic values.

This research is exploratory and descriptive, focusing on understanding the leadership transformation process, decision-making patterns, and community responses to these leadership styles. Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including village heads, village officials (village secretaries, RT/RW heads), community leaders, religious leaders, and residents from various social strata. The aim was to gain a firsthand perspective on leadership backgrounds, empowerment strategies, and community perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Primary data were supplemented by secondary data in the form of academic literature, laws and regulations (such as Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages), and relevant Islamic sources, including the concept of siyasah dusturiyah from Ibn Taymiyyah's thought. Data analysis was conducted thematically using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques (Ritonga, 2020). The study also utilizes the siyasah dusturiyah theoretical framework as an analytical tool to assess the legitimacy and ethics of leadership from an Islamic legal perspective, with reference to the principles of maslahah, 'adl (justice), and amanah. By combining a juridical-sociological approach and qualitative methods, this study is able to provide a holistic picture of how former thug leadership can become agents of social change, while also examining the alignment of leadership practices with the principles of good governance and Islamic values.

The theory of siyasah dusturiyah as an integral part of siyasah syar'iyyah in Islamic political thought to analyze the legitimacy and ethics of the leadership of the former preman village head from the perspective of Islamic constitutional law. The concept of siyasah dusturiyah, as developed by Ibn Taymiyyah, does not prioritize a person's social background or formal status as the main measure of leadership eligibility, but rather emphasizes the principles of justice ('adl), trust, competence (kafa'ah), and fulfillment of the ummah's maslahah (common good) (Ambas et al., 2025; Zahrah, 2023). Ibn Taymiyyah argues that the legitimacy of a leader must be based on two main pillars: shariah and bay'ah (agreement or oath of allegiance from the people). In *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, he states that imamah (political leadership) is not valid without bay'ah, which reflects the principle of people's sovereignty within the framework of shariah (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2005). This is relevant to the context of local democracy in Indonesia, where village heads are elected through Pilkades, a process that is constitutionally a modern form of bay'ah. Thus, even if the village head has a background as a former thug, as long as he is legally elected by the community, then his leadership has legal and moral legitimacy, as long as he carries out the trust fairly and responsibly. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that leaders must be free from zulm (tyranny)

and have the ability to manage public affairs (*kafa'ah*). He rejects authoritarianism and tyranny, and insists that tyrannical leaders must be reprimanded, even deposed if they damage the order of society (Utami et al., 2021). However, in certain cases, Ibn Taymiyyah allows the leadership of controversial figures, as long as they are able to uphold justice and prevent greater damage (*mursalah mudharat*). This principle is very relevant to the phenomenon of former thug village heads in Cikuya Village, who despite having a complex past track record, are considered successful in bringing about positive change through infrastructure development, increased community participation, and economic empowerment programs.

In the context of *siyasah dusturiyah*, leadership is not merely power, but also a mandate (*amanah*) and *khidmah* (service) to the community. Ibn Taymiyyah referred to a leader as a *ra'i* (shepherd) who will be held accountable for his *ra'iyyah* (people) before Allah SWT (Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim). This approach provides a strong basis for evaluating leadership effectiveness not from popularity or power, but from its real impact on people's welfare and transparency in resource management. Therefore, the analysis of *siyasah dusturiyah* in this study serves as a critical tool to assess whether the leadership of the former thug village head has fulfilled the principles of *maslahah*, *'adl*, and *amanah*, and is able to transform himself from a dominant figure into an agent of inclusive and just empowerment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During his three-year tenure, the village head demonstrated widespread acceptance and respect, both within the community and from external parties such as NGOs, journalists, and communities in the Cikuya area. This confirms that his leadership was not merely administrative but also built moral and social authority recognized across groups. The phenomenon of respect and reverence can be understood as a form of social legitimacy. Leadership based on local wisdom can strengthen the dignity of village leaders in the context of democratization, thereby increasing public trust. This aligns with the narrative that leaders strive to be role models and maintain good relationships with various parties (Joen et al., 2022). Furthermore, external respect indicates a strong capacity for communication and social relations. The village head's leadership style directly impacts the productivity of village officials (Rahmawati et al., 2024). By establishing harmonious relationships, the leader expands the village's social network and enhances its positive public image. Theoretically, this is consistent with the concept of transformational leadership. The transformational leadership of the village head can accelerate village development because it is adaptive to environmental changes (Gazalin & Lawelai, 2024).

In the era of regional autonomy, village heads are required to be the primary drivers of positive change (Azizah et al., 2025). The role of local leaders is crucial in improving the welfare of rural communities. By striving to be good leaders, village heads are not only oriented towards power, but also towards service and dedication. Thus, the leadership narrative over the past three years can be categorized as a transformational leadership practice that has successfully built social legitimacy, strengthened external networks, and improved the welfare of the village community. The Cikuya Village Head demonstrated his leadership power by opening access to agricultural roads through mediation and deliberation. The resulting land grant agreement became a significant milestone in improving farmer welfare. Before the road access, rice harvests had to be carried manually. Now, motorized vehicles can enter agricultural areas, making distribution of agricultural products more efficient. This emphasizes the strategic role of village head leadership in mobilizing community participation and strengthening the village economy (Sugiana et al., 2025). Cikuya Village has a cultural icon in the form of Margaluyu pencak silat, a heritage that is still preserved. The village head plays an active role in further promoting pencak silat, making it a cultural identity for the village and a means of strengthening social cohesion. This transformational leadership in the cultural sphere emphasizes the importance of the village head as a driver of positive change in the era of regional autonomy (Judiijanto et al., 2025).

In terms of religious matters, the village head initiated regular religious study groups three times a month at the village hall. He also supported the village's Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) program by organizing the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) and the marawis competition during his three-year leadership. His presence at every religious event strengthened his moral and spiritual legitimacy in the eyes of the community. This aligns with the village head's transformational leadership, which accelerated village development by integrating democratic and religious values (Nurjaman et al., 2021). His leadership was democratic yet firm, owing to his background as a former thug. His "if it has to be A, then A" attitude earned him respect from the community, NGOs, and even journalists. This charisma fostered a sense of security in Cikuya Village.

Adaptive and assertive transformational leadership has proven effective in building community trust. In addition to opening road access to the most remote neighborhood units (RW), the village head also actively invites

farmers to collaborate. This step strengthens solidarity and collaboration among villagers. Annual work recaps demonstrate his consistency in integrating economic, cultural, and religious development. Furthermore, we can look to the Village Budget (APBDesa) realization report as an accountability instrument that reflects how village leadership manages financial resources for development. In the context of Cikuya Village, the 2025 report demonstrates how the village head, with a background as a former thug, was able to effectively direct the budget for community empowerment, infrastructure development, and socio-cultural and religious strengthening.

Figure 1. Leadership Accountability via Annual Recaps and APBDesa Reports: Integrating Economic, Cultural, and Religious Development in Cikuya Village (2025)

LAPORAN REALISASI APB DESA PEMERINTAH DESA CIKUYA KECAMATAN CICALENGKA KABUPATEN BANDUNG TAHUN ANGGARAN 2025				
URAIAN	Ref.	ANGGARAN (Rp)	REALISASI (Rp)	LEBIH/(KURANG) (Rp)
PENDAPATAN				
Pendapatan Asli Desa		70.000.000,00	52.500.000,00	17.500.000,00
Pendapatan Transfer		3.613.808.500,00	3.305.260.535,00	308.547.965,00
Dana Desa		1.412.556.000,00	1.109.008.000,00	303.548.000,00
Bagi Hasil Pajak dan Retribusi		570.281.300,00	570.281.300,00	0,00
Alokasi Dana Desa		1.400.971.200,00	1.400.971.235,00	35,00
Bantuan Keuangan Provinsi		135.000.000,00	130.000.000,00	5.000.000,00
Bantuan Keuangan Kabupaten/Kota		95.000.000,00	95.000.000,00	0,00
Pendapatan Lain-lain		0,00	156.652,00	156.652,00
JUMLAH PENDAPATAN		3.683.808.500,00	3.357.917.187,00	325.891.313,00
BELANJA				
BIDANG PENYELENGGARAN		1.542.108.830,00	1.519.651.250,00	22.457.580,00
BIDANG PELAKSANAAN		1.464.623.500,00	1.212.123.500,00	252.500.000,00
BIDANG PEMBINAAN		294.180.339,00	294.180.339,00	0,00
BIDANG PEMBERDAYAAN		10.000.000,00	10.000.000,00	0,00
BIDANG PENANGGULANGAN BENCANA,		100.800.000,00	100.800.000,00	0,00
JUMLAH BELANJA		3.411.712.669,00	3.136.755.089,00	274.957.580,00
SURPLUS / (DEFISIT)		272.095.831,00	221.162.098,00	50.933.733,00
PEMBIAYAAN				
Penerimaan Pembiayaan		416.169,00	416.169,00	0,00
Pengeluaran Pembiayaan		272.512.000,00	221.012.000,00	51.500.000,00
PEMBIAYAAN NETTC		(272.095.831,00)	(220.595.831,00)	(51.500.000,00)
SILPA/SILPA TAHUN BERJALAN		0,00	566.267,00	(566.267,00)

Lihat Catatan Atas Laporan Keuangan yang merupakan bagian yang tidak terpisahkan dari laporan keuangan

Cikuya, 30 December 2025

PJ Kepala Desa Cikuya

Jauh Hermanto, S.STP

Source: personal documentation, 2025.

The total budgeted village revenue was Rp3,683,808,500.00, with a realization of Rp3,357,917,187.00. The difference of Rp325,891,313.00 indicates challenges in optimizing revenue, particularly in the Village Fund, which realized Rp1,109,008,000.00 from a budget of Rp1,412,556,000.00. Nevertheless, transfer revenue remains the backbone of village finances. This emphasizes the importance of village leadership in optimizing transfer funds

for local development (Sari & Nugroho, 2022). Realized expenditure reached Rp3,136,755,089.00 from a budget of Rp3,411,712,669.00.

The development implementation sector absorbed Rp1,212,123,500.00, lower than the budget of Rp1,464,623,500.00. However, the development, empowerment, and disaster management sectors were fully realized within the budget. This demonstrates the village head's commitment to ensuring optimal social, religious, and empowerment activities. Consistent budget realization in the empowerment sector is an indicator of community-oriented leadership (Susanto, 2021). The budget surplus was recorded at Rp221,162,098.00, with a current year's SILPA of Rp566,267.00. This figure indicates efficiency in village financial management. This transparency and accountability strengthen the legitimacy of the village head's leadership in the eyes of the community. Charismatic leadership accompanied by financial accountability can create social stability and public trust (Wibowo, 2020). The allocation of funds for the development implementation sector supports the opening of access roads for agricultural businesses, which directly impacts the efficiency of agricultural product distribution. In the socio-cultural sector, development efforts have been fully realized, supporting arts and cultural activities such as the Margaluyu pencak silat (martial arts) and the marawis (traditional Javanese dance) competition. Furthermore, in the religious sector, support for regular religious studies and the Islamic Religious Day (MTQ) is reflected in consistent development spending. Budget efficiency and decisive leadership create a sense of security in the village, strengthening the synergy between the community and the village government.

Industrial Political Theory

Within the framework of Islamic political thought, the concept of siyasah dusturiyah as developed by Ibn Taymiyyah serves as the primary normative basis for assessing the legitimacy and ethics of leadership at the local level. Unlike a purely legal-formal approach, siyasah dusturiyah emphasizes that leadership is not merely an administrative position, but rather a divine mandate that must be carried out based on the principles of 'adl (justice), amanah (trust), and maslahah ummah (common good). Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that a leader is legitimate according to sharia if he fulfills two pillars: sharia and bay'ah (the people's oath of allegiance). In the Indonesian context, bay'ah is represented through the democratic mechanism of the Village Head Election (Pilkada), so that the former thug village head in Cikuya Village, despite his controversial social background, has legal and moral legitimacy as long as he is legally elected by the community (Arifin, 2015; Zahrah, 2023). Ibn Taymiyyah does not use social background as the primary measure of leadership suitability. In Majmū' al-Fatāwā, he stated that "Allah gives power to whom He wills" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2005), a principle that is explicitly reflected in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 247:

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَتَى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَزَدَهُ بِسَنْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ٢٤٧

"Their Prophet said to them: "Indeed, Allah has appointed Saul as your king." They said: "How can Saul rule over us when we have a better right to rule than him, and he has not been given enough wealth?" He said: "Indeed, Allah has chosen your king and endowed him with vast knowledge and a strong body." Allah grants kingship to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing."

This analogy is highly relevant to the case of the Cikuya village head. Despite being a former thug, he was able to demonstrate his capacity through concrete contributions such as opening access to farm roads, preserving the Margaluyu martial arts (pencak silat), and strengthening religious life, all of which are manifestations of maslahah (beneficial benefit). This concept is expanded upon in fiqh siyasah, a branch of Islamic jurisprudence (jurisprudence) that regulates state or government governance based on sharia principles. Fiqh siyasah is not static, but rather contextual and adaptive to social realities. One of its main principles is:

رَدِءُ الْمَفَاسِدِ أَوْلَى مِنْ جَلْبِ الْمَصَالِحِ

"Preventing harm takes precedence over pursuing benefit."

In the case of Cikuya Village, the transformation of a former thug into village head prevented potential social damage such as agrarian conflict, distributive injustice, or cultural degradation, replacing them with stability, participation, and empowerment. All of this demonstrates that his leadership was oriented toward service (khidmah) rather than mere power, in line with the Prophet's teachings that:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعْيَتِهِ

"Each of you is a leader, and each of you will be asked about your leadership" (HR. Bukhari-Muslim).

From the perspective of Maqashid Syariah, the leadership of the Cikuya Village Head can be analyzed through five main objectives of sharia: preserving religion (hifz al-din), life (hifz al-nafs), reason (hifz al-'aql), descendants (hifz al-nasl), and wealth (hifz al-mal). First, in preserving religion, he actively supports religious programs that strengthen the spiritual values of the community. Second, in preserving life, he creates a sense of security and social stability through a firm but inclusive approach. Third, in preserving reason, he encourages citizen participation in deliberation and decision-making, which strengthens the intellectual capacity and political awareness of the community. Fourth, in preserving descendants, he preserves local culture that becomes the moral and social identity of the younger generation. Fifth, in preserving wealth, he manages the Village Budget (APBDesa) transparently and efficiently, with optimal realization of the empowerment budget and a budget surplus that demonstrates financial accountability (Duderija, 2017). Thus, despite his controversial background, the Cikuya Village Head's leadership transformation represents a practical integration of Ibn Taymiyyah's principles of governance and the Maqasid Sharia. He not only fulfills an administrative function but also acts as a *ra'i* (shepherd) who safeguards the physical and spiritual well-being of his people. This confirms that in Islam, the value of leadership is measured not by who a person was in the past, but by what he does today for the common good.

Transformation of the Social Identity of Leaders: From the Stigma of Thuggery to Public Legitimacy

One of the most significant findings in this study is the transformation of the social identity of the Cikuya Village Head from a figure previously stigmatized as a former thug to a leader who gained broad social legitimacy from the community. This phenomenon is not simply a change in individual perception, but rather a complex process involving ongoing social interactions, consistent public policies, and evidence of real performance directly felt by villagers. In the context of leadership theory and the sociology of identity, such changes reflect the ability of transformational leadership to redefine the leader's personal image through collective actions that directly shape the community's social structure. Theoretically, this change in social identity is closely related to what is explained in social identity theory, which shows that an individual's social identity is formed through interactions within groups, where social categories (e.g., "former thug") can change as the individual displays attributes that are more prototypical of the new group's values expected by society. In the context of leadership, individuals who successfully create a sense of togetherness and demonstrate behavior consistent with group norms can gain recognition as legitimate leaders.

In the case of the Cikuya Village Head, the negative stigma associated with his background in thuggery did not simply disappear, but transformed into social capital that was strengthened through strategic actions consistent with the collective aspirations of the village community. Rather than rejecting his background, the Village Head adopted an open and reflective approach, drawing on his past experiences to demonstrate decisiveness, courage in decision-making, and conflict mediation skills. This kind of decisiveness, which in the past might have been associated with precarious behavior, is now understood as administrative and moral decisiveness that brings certainty, security, and order to village social life. This shift in meaning confirms that the legitimacy of local leadership is not solely determined by social background, but by the leader's ability to manage change and meet the collective expectations of the community.

In relevant leadership studies, such identity transformation is also found when an individual successfully cultivates group identification and shifts perceptions from negative stereotypes to an understanding of the leader's positive contributions. This is demonstrated by Tse and Chiu's research, which found that transformational leadership behaviors increase group identification because leaders combine individual aspirations with the collective goals of the organization, ultimately increasing legitimacy and trust (Tse & Chiu, 2014).

This identity transformation is particularly evident in the Cikuya Village Head's social communication patterns with residents. When the village head consistently demonstrates active involvement in village activities, from opening access roads for farming businesses, directly benefiting farmers, to supporting cultural and religious activities, villagers no longer view him through the lens of past stereotypes. Instead, the community begins to internalize a new narrative in which the village head is understood as a protector of the common good. This perceptual transformation becomes a form of public legitimacy that occurs through concrete actions consistent with the collective values of the rural community.

Social stigma, according to Goffman, is an attribute inherent in an individual and is seen as deviating from social norms, often leading to discrimination or marginalization. However, through identity management mechanisms, strategies individuals use to maintain self-esteem and social status amidst the stigma of former gangsters can successfully negotiate their social identity by demonstrating relevant and meaningful social contributions. This kind of research is also demonstrated in studies of ex-gangsters who successfully transformed their social identity through involvement in religious communities, ultimately strengthening their social standing within the wider community (Warsito, 2025).

This identity transformation also impacts public trust in the village government as an institution. From an organizational and governmental perspective, public legitimacy is not only about administrative ability but also about moral and social recognition from the citizens being led. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has been proven to strengthen social cohesion because leaders not only convey a vision but also build reciprocal relationships that enrich collective experiences. Thus, the transformation of the Cikuya Village Head's social identity from the stigma of thuggery to public legitimacy is not simply a change in individual perception, but the result of a complex process of social interaction. This process involves the leader's ability to align behavior and actions with the community's collective values, so that the old stigma is gradually replaced by recognition of real contributions to social development and shared well-being. This phenomenon strengthens the argument that transformational leadership at the village level is not only effective in an administrative context but also as an agent of social change capable of deconstructing stigma and building strong social legitimacy.

Transformational Leadership and Strengthening Village Community Participation

Community participation is a crucial indicator for assessing the success of village-level development. The transformational leadership of the village head has been shown to be a fundamental factor in increasing community involvement in various village development processes, from planning and implementation to program evaluation. The concept of transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and empower the community to work together toward goals greater than mere administrative achievement (Andriani & Kurniadi, 2022). In the context of Cikuya Village, research findings indicate that the village head acts not only as a decision-maker but also as a facilitator, creating space for dialogue and collaboration among residents. This aligns with empirical findings from various studies showing that an inclusive and participatory leadership style can encourage increased community participation. Transformational leadership significantly influences community participation in village development, as residents feel motivated to contribute when leaders demonstrate commitment and the ability to bring a shared vision to life.

Leadership that focuses on community empowerment can create a sense of ownership in village development programs. When communities are involved from the outset in planning, such as through village deliberations or public consultations, they no longer view development as a mere government project, but rather as a shared need that they themselves shape. This is evidenced by research in several other villages in Indonesia, which shows that community involvement in development planning contributes to a greater sense of responsibility for the development outcomes achieved. This type of participation has two important dimensions: cognitive engagement and behavioral engagement. Cognitive engagement means that communities understand development goals and their impacts, while behavioral engagement relates to concrete actions taken by residents, such as attending village meetings, providing input, and participating in community service or productive activities. Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in facilitating both dimensions through effective communication, motivational encouragement, and providing space for residents to actively contribute.

In the context of the Cikuya Village study, the opening of access roads for agricultural businesses and the involvement of farmers in technical discussions are specific examples of the application of transformational leadership that fostered real community involvement. This infrastructure access not only improved economic conditions but also encouraged residents to discuss, express their aspirations, and work together to achieve

collective goals. Other research has also shown that when village heads adopt a leadership style that supports open and participatory dialogue, the level of trust between leaders and residents increases, and community participation in development is higher (Yunas et al., 2025). The presence of this leadership style also demonstrates a positive relationship between transformational leadership and community social capital. Social capital, which encompasses social networks, trust, and shared norms, is a crucial foundation for sustainable village development. When residents feel valued and empowered, social relationships between residents strengthen solidarity and collective capacity to solve shared problems. Studies on community empowerment through participatory management confirm that approaches that systematically involve residents generate a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, which in turn enhance the sustainability of village programs. Furthermore, the inspiration and motivation of village heads are key factors in strengthening community participation. Transformational leadership is able to communicate a compelling long-term vision, encouraging villagers to contribute voluntarily. Village leaders with a transformational style are able to motivate residents through direct discussions, social rewards, and recognition of individual or group contributions, creating an environment where participation is seen as an essential part of the village community's identity.

It is important to note that transformational leadership is not simply about involvement in one or two projects, but about creating a participatory culture that is embedded in village social life. This implies a broader social transformation in which residents feel not merely beneficiaries but also key actors in development. In the case study in Cikuya Village, farmer involvement in technical deliberations, as well as active participation in socio-religious and cultural activities, demonstrates how the village's social capital is strengthened and contributes to a sustainable participatory structure. However, it is also important to note that the success of transformational leadership in increasing community participation does not automatically occur without adequate planning and resources. Factors such as open communication, transparency in village resource management, and community capacity training also play a crucial role in strengthening the effectiveness of participation. This is reflected in the literature, which emphasizes the importance of strategies to increase community participation that involve community education, the use of local communication media, and clear feedback mechanisms in village forums. The findings of the Cikuya Village study reinforce empirical evidence that transformational leadership significantly strengthens village community participation, particularly through an inclusive, empowering, and motivating approach. This leadership creates a collaborative culture that fosters a sense of ownership in village development, strengthens social capital, and supports the sustainability of village programs.

Integration of Economic, Cultural, and Religious Development as an Empowerment Strategy

Village community empowerment in the context of sustainable development cannot be understood in a sectoral or partial manner. Research in Cikuya Village shows that an effective empowerment strategy integrates economic development, local cultural preservation, and the strengthening of religious activities. This integrative approach not only improves economic well-being but also strengthens socio-cultural identity and spiritual solidarity among villagers.

Economic development is a key component of community empowerment. In the case of Cikuya Village, the opening of access roads for agricultural businesses marked the beginning of the economic transformation of a village community that previously relied on inefficient harvest distribution methods. Improved transportation access reduced distribution costs and gave farmers greater opportunities to market their crops commercially, directly increasing their incomes. Similar findings emerged in a study of rural economic empowerment, which emphasized that community involvement in local economic activities is fundamental to sustainable village well-being. This study emphasized that an approach that considers local needs and empowers village economic actors is key to driving local economic development (Nazeri et al., 2024). Economic empowerment is not limited to agricultural production but also embraces the potential of other sectors, such as Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), which function to grow local businesses and encourage community involvement in the collective management of village economic resources. The study of BUMDes demonstrates how such initiatives can strengthen the economic resilience of rural communities, making them key actors in the local economic development process.

Beyond the economic aspect, preserving the local culture of Cikuya Village through Margaluyu pencak silat is a crucial element of the empowerment strategy. Culture serves as a value structure and symbolic resource that unites residents and forms the basis of a strong community identity. Preserving traditional arts and culture, such as pencak silat, is not only about the continuity of an art form, but also about strengthening social cohesion and the formation of sustainable social capital within the community. Community empowerment literature shows that

integrating cultural aspects into community development can enhance a sense of belonging and strengthen social solidarity among villagers. In the context of women's empowerment, for example, the integration of religious and cultural values can open up space for economic participation while strengthening social values that support the empowerment of marginalized groups (Idellia et al., 2025). Margaluyu pencak silat in Cikuya Village is not simply a cultural performance; it serves as a bridge for social interaction, bringing together the older and younger generations. Thus, cultural preservation becomes a means of transmitting collective values such as mutual cooperation, discipline, and mutual respect—values that are crucial for the village's socio-economic development.

The religious dimension is another integral pillar in empowering the Cikuya Village community. The village head initiates regular religious activities such as religious study groups, the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ), and the marawis (traditional musical instrument) competition. These activities not only enrich the spiritual lives of residents but also serve as a social platform that strengthens social networks among residents, expands social participation, and strengthens community cohesion. Empirical research shows that integrating religious activities into village development can strengthen collective community motivation and increase active participation in development programs. For example, a study on the role of religiosity in rural development in Indonesia concluded that the involvement of religious organizations significantly increased community engagement in the village development process by providing social networks, shared norms, and a strong sense of collective responsibility. Religious activities in Cikuya Village do not stand alone but are interconnected with economic and cultural programs. For example, religious activities involving the entire family often create additional social spaces for sharing information about local economic opportunities or village cultural activities. In this way, religious activities directly contribute to socio-economic development while strengthening solidarity among residents.

The three aspects of economics, culture, and religion do not exist in isolation but rather interact dynamically within the Cikuya Village community. The village head's transformational leadership understands that community empowerment must be carried out holistically, paying attention to both the material and non-material aspects of social life. This strategy differs from development models that focus solely on economic growth, because in a contextual approach, aspects such as cultural identity and spiritual values are also important indicators of community progress. This integrative strategy is relevant both in theory and in practice. Research on sustainable community empowerment shows that development models that integrate various dimensions of socioeconomic, social, cultural, and spiritual life are more effective in creating lasting change than purely sectoral approaches (Amaludin & Aris, 2025). In the context of Cikuya Village, this integration is reflected in the opening of road access that increases economic productivity, the preservation of pencak silat that strengthens a sense of identity and togetherness, and religious activities that reinforce solidarity and moral values. Together, these three form the foundation of empowerment that focuses not only on material aspects but also on the overall quality of social life.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that a leader's social background, even if controversial, such as being a former thug, does not automatically hinder the realization of effective leadership oriented towards social change at the village level. The research findings indicate that the Cikuya Village Head underwent a significant self-transformation, from a previously dominant figure to a transformative leader who is responsive, inclusive, and focused on the interests and welfare of the community. This change is not only personal, but is also reflected in leadership practices and village development policies implemented. From the perspective of siyasah dusturiyah, as understood by Ibn Taymiyyah, the Cikuya Village Head's leadership can be considered legally valid and morally legitimate. Legally, this legitimacy is obtained through the village head election mechanism (Pilkades), which can be understood as a modern form of the bay'ah concept. Morally and ethically, his leadership reflects the main principles of Islamic leadership, namely amanah (trust), 'adl (justice), and an orientation towards maslahah ummah (the common good). These principles serve as the foundation for decision-making and implementation of village policies. The impact of transformative leadership is evident in several strategic sectors. Economically, the development and opening of farm roads have increased the efficiency of agricultural product distribution and positively impacted farmers' welfare. In the socio-cultural sphere, efforts to preserve the Margaluyu pencak silat (martial arts) have strengthened local cultural identity and community social cohesion. Meanwhile, in the religious sector, regular religious study sessions, the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (Quran Recitation Competition), and the marawis (traditional dance) competition have strengthened spiritual values and increased religious participation among village residents. Furthermore, transparent, accountable, and community-empowerment-oriented village budget (APBDesa) management demonstrates a strong commitment to the principles of good governance. Budget surpluses and optimal program implementation in the areas of development and empowerment reflect leadership

that is truly centered on community needs. Thus, this study confirms that personality transformation, accompanied by a sincere intention to serve, can transform negative stigma into constructive social capital. From an Islamic perspective, these findings align with the teachings of repentance, change for the better, and social justice as the foundations of a leadership blessed by Allah SWT.

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