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## **Criminal Subculture Of Street Teenagers**

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### **Abstract**

**This study is intended to explore the experience of the criminal subculture in Indonesia. This research was conducted in the City of Heroes (a pseudonym), in particular, in East Java, Indonesia. This study used qualitative methods to assess the informants who are acting against the law. This study found that the teenagers conflicting with the law generally have similar social backgrounds and conditions as they come from poor and mostly broken-home families. The desire to be accepted by the group requires them to adjust and obey the values held by the subculture group, which also becomes the identity of the teenagers who are in conflict with the law. Besides their ongoing adaptation to the values of the group, they also have to survive in the middle of alcoholism and drugs. This is often done by selling alcohol and drugs to other street children.**

**Keywords: subculture, conflict, teenagers**

## **Subcultura Criminal De Adolescentes De La Calle.**

### Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es explorar la experiencia de la subcultura criminal en Indonesia. Esta investigación se realizó en la Ciudad de los Héroes (un seudónimo), en particular, en Java Oriental, Indonesia. Este estudio utilizó métodos cualitativos para evaluar a los informantes que actúan en contra de la ley. Este estudio encontró que los adolescentes que están en conflicto con la ley generalmente tienen antecedentes y condiciones sociales similares a los que provienen de familias pobres y en su mayoría hogares quebrados. El deseo de ser aceptado por el grupo requiere que se ajusten y obedezcan los valores del grupo de subcultura, que también se convierte en la identidad de los adolescentes que están en conflicto con la ley. Además de su adaptación continua a los valores del grupo, también tienen que sobrevivir en medio del alcoholismo y las drogas. Esto a menudo se hace vendiendo alcohol y drogas a otros niños de la calle.

Palabras clave: subcultura, conflicto, adolescentes.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Criminal acts are not only carried out by adults whose age is considered to make them capable of being responsible for the actions taken. Lately, crimes committed by teenagers have not only manifested themselves in the form of delinquency but they have also come into contact with and entered the realm of the law. The actions include those of motorcycle gangs, stealing cases of alcoholic drinks, engaging with drug dealers and users, and in some cases, the teenagers are also taking part in committing acts of sexual crime and murder.

This is akin to the Klitih phenomenon that occurred in Yogyakarta in 2016, where the perpetrators who on average were 13-18 years old teenagers who attacked their victims randomly at night in quiet places using various sharp weapons such as sickles, swords and knives ([https:// nasional.sindonews.com/read/1258824/16/kenakalan-remaja-1511113926](https://nasional.sindonews.com/read/1258824/16/kenakalan-remaja-1511113926) accessed on February 8, 2018).

Several times have the rape cases that have occurred in Indonesia been

committed by teenagers. One example is a rape case that befell YN middle school students in Bengkulu. A 14-year-old girl was raped en masse by 12 people who were the friends of the victim who lived in one village. They were all aged 17-21 years old (<http://regional.kompas.com/read/2016/05/03/13122501/Pelaku.Rapist.and.Killer.Sister.Student.First.Attend.Cemetery.Victim> accessed on 8 February 2018).

This example is one of the many cases of crime committed by teenagers. It extends past murder and rape and into other types of crimes, namely beatings, inter-school brawls, theft and the use and circulation of drugs. According to the National Commission's records, throughout 2014, the trend of crimes against children experienced a shift where they were no longer carried out by adults. The perpetrators were children and teenagers, namely those in the age range of 6-14 years old. In 2014, there were around 1,851 complaints where this number increased compared to 2013, which was only 730 cases. Nearly 52% of these figures are theft cases that were followed by violence, rape, drugs, gambling and ill-treatment (<https://gaya.tempo.co/read/632007/sepanjang-2014-kejahat-children-increased> accessible on February 9, 2018).

Teenagers are of a vulnerable age because they are in search of their self-recognition. They usually form their own subcultures which often are in contradiction with the established or dominant cultural values. The crime committed is not merely related to seeking attention because of an unstable psychological condition or because they live in the midst of their families and communities whose conditions are not favorable. It also includes the identity of the teenager as an individual.

WILLIS (1978: 53, in BARKER, 2013) describes the teenage subcultures as being like motorbike hordes, with the noise deliberately made by motorists as an expression of culture, masculine values and identities, friendship and the interaction style of a motorcycle gang. The motorcycle gang subculture is a form of resistance and it is the taming of teenagers against massive technological production. In addition, the mass production and development of information technology has also given birth to a deviant virtual subculture, namely due to the birth of new and deviant forms of crime such as pornographic subcultures, online pedophilia, and online prostitution (BLEVINS & THOMAS, 2009; HOLT, 2010; HOLT, et. , al, 2010).

There have been several debates related to subculture theory and the crimes committed by teenagers. Some studies assert that subculture theory is no more relevant as they start referring to the post-subculture paradigm (MUGGLETON & WEINZIERL, 2003; REDHEAD, 1999; BANNETT, 1999; THORNTON, 1996; XIAO, 2017), which is not class resistant. It refers instead to individual hedonism (ANDERSON, 2000). In some countries like Indonesia, delinquent subculture communities still exist and represent the identity of lower-class teenagers who live on the streets. These subculture groups not only act like the “punk” community but they have been involved in various criminal acts such as stealing, alcohol-related consumption, drug dealing, sexual harassment, violence and even vandalism by breaking public facilities.

This study aims not only to explore the experiences of the criminal delinquent subculture of street teenagers. This is in addition to proving that subculture theory is still relevant to use to analyze the various phenomena of delinquent crimes. However, even though the subculture group leads to certain groups of lower-class teenagers, namely street teenagers, these teen communities are not actively involved in global culture such as the upper-class teenager’s lifestyle (SHILDRICK, 2006). Some ideas about subculture still apply to certain contemporary teenagers groups who are marginal and underprivileged (MARTIN, 2009) in certain areas.

## 2. METHOD

This research was conducted in the City of Heroes (a pseudonym), a metropolitan city located in the western part of Indonesia, in particular in the East Java Province. This city is an urban area that has undergone a vast and extreme expansion consisting of real estates and shopping centers. Teenagers from a middle-high economic background live in the real estate area and they tend to spend their time in the shopping centers. Poor teenagers likely reside in the suburbs and they tend to spend a lot of their time on the streets. This qualitative research was conducted by interviewing 6 teenagers using the unstructured interview technique. The teenagers involved in this study were 13-18 years old who spent time on the streets and who had experienced conflicts with the law. All of the mentioned locations and names have been made anonymous.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Street Teenagers in the City of Heroes

This research was conducted by focusing on several teenagers who live in the City of Heroes. During the Dutch colonial period, this city was well-known as a city that resisted the invaders. The teen communities were believed to be the driving force of resistance against the invaders of the city. In the later development era, this city became an industrial area both on a medium and large scale, which has continued to grow rapidly. The growing industries in this area have attracted many laborers and this has triggered the flow of urbanization in this region and the surroundings. The condition of the city has turned into a densely populated residential area, including some growing slum areas around the river (people living along the river banks).

In the last ten years, the City of Heroes began to grow many new businesses, especially in the culinary fields and in the form of magnificent shopping centers. The growing population in this area has also led to the high demands for housing, which has become a business opportunity for developers. The real estate business in this city has begun to develop. Slowly but surely this has caused a lot of land conversion from agriculture to housing and residential areas.

New lifestyles and identities have been reshaped within the community due to the growth. There are no significant differences in terms of lifestyle between the upper and lower economic communities. Marginalized communities are more likely to have consumptive behaviors just like the upper economic groups. They tend to spend part of their income in the shopping centers as well. However, related to the opportunity of obtaining economic resources, the gap is obviously different.

There are certain community groups that are totally untouched and marginalized, and they are alienated from all of the lifestyles in the city. The teenagers in this study were the marginalized groups amidst the glimmering lifestyle of urban hedonism in the city. They have an involvement in the urban teenager subcultures that are commonly found in other big cities. They live on the streets; busking, stealing, and picking pockets during the day. At night, they inhabit narrow slum alleys while consuming alcohol and (illegal) drugs as the menu to relieve their fatigue. This is their solu-

tion to all of the hard and depressing problems in their lives.

### Jonan - Distributing Illegal Drugs

Jonan is 17 years old. He is a working-class teenager who works daily at a small restaurant in the City of Heroes. Jonan got a job in the restaurant from his supervisor at the City Integrated Service Unit for Children. Jonan was part of the service unit as he once was caught in raids by the authorities consuming and distributing illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages among other street children.

Jonan's street lives began when his mother passed away and his father remarried. Jonan's stepmother apparently did not love Jonan as her child, and he was only given rice and salt to eat daily. At that time, Jonan lived in Jakarta, which is the Capital of Indonesia. Not feeling happy living with his stepmother, Jonan decided to leave home.

One day, Jonan and his friends came to a music concert in the City of Heroes. After coming to the concert, Jonan decided to stay in the City of Heroes. Jonan joined his fellow street children and he began to follow the lifestyle of his new friends in that city, such as when he started to smoke cigarettes.

In addition, Jonan also followed his friends when it came to drinking alcohol, which was often mixed other substances like energy drinks to get the maximum sensation of the flying effect. Jonan has become a heavy addicts of alcoholic drinks. Jonan and his friends often mixed alcohol with illegal drugs. Despite the fact that there have been some groups who have died due to an overdose of alcoholic drinks and drugs, Jonan and his friends continued to consume alcohol mixed with dangerous drugs.

Along with his friends, Jonan earned his living by busking as a street singer. The money they earn is not much and it is only enough for food. To meet his need to consume alcohol and illegal drugs, Jonan and his friends gained extra money by distributing illegal drugs to fellow street teenagers.

Jonan got access to alcohol and illegal drugs through a sales agent who also lived in the City of Heroes. This agent stayed in a small house in a narrow alley in one corner of the City of Heroes. The agent sells various types of illegal drugs. Due to this, later Jonan was caught during a raid

(especially focused on illegal drug distribution) and eventually he became a supervised member of the integrated service unit of the city.

#### **Adit - Stealing from the Supermarkets**

As he wanted to experience the lifestyle like his friends at school, Adit finally decided to steal. He started by misusing the money for school fees and books and he also stole his friends' money. The money was used to go to the theater, to take a walk and to buy food at the mall.

This 13-year-old teenager could not pay back the money because his mother did not have enough money as well. Adit's mother was a single parent of three children, fighting to become the backbone of the family. Being afraid to ask for money from his mother and embarrassed at school, Adit decided to tell his problems to his friends. His friends, who were members of a group of street teenagers, then invited Adit to join the group and steal for money. Adit and his friends stole from a supermarket. The common items stolen were small items that could be easily hidden in their clothes, such as soft drinks and food.

In the group, they shared the task of committing theft. One of them acted as a thief in the store, while other acted as a supervisor outside the store. After stealing from the supermarket, the stolen goods were shared with the members of the group—which not only consisted of boys but also girls as well. They likely enjoyed the action of theft because they felt satisfied and they could share what they took within the group.

One day, Adit and his friend stole a mobile phone from one of the cellular phone shops. However, for the first time, Adit was unlucky because it was discovered by the shop owner and he was reported to the police. Adit was arrested and then imprisoned. After this, Adit underwent social supervision.

#### **Bima - Stereotyped as a Bad Boy**

Like other street teenagers, Bima also felt that he was less fortunate due to his family's condition. Bima lived with his father and stepmother who often quarreled. In addition, Bima was always the target of the anger of his parents. The 15-year-old teenager had been experiencing violence from his father as well as his stepmother, such as being beaten several times. He also got the stereotype from his parents that he was a bad boy.

Receiving harsh treatment from his parents, Bima could only be silent and surrender as he realized that he was helpless. The only actions that could be done by Bima was not wanting to study, mingling and smoking with his friends at school, and joining a group of football supporters. His attitude triggered his parents to treat him even more violently. Regarding the situation with his family, Bima decided to leave the house and live on the streets.

Once he was caught during raids by the authority, Bima was handed over to the Child Protection Agency. Knowing Bima's condition including that he experienced violence from his parents, Bima was not returned to his home but instead he became a supervised teenager.

#### Hijrah - Engaging in Gangster Brawls

Hijrah was a punk gangster and he was often involved in fights between gangster groups. This teenager never attended school but he joined the "Paket C" National High School Equivalency Program at the junior high school level. Hijrah considered himself to be a marginalized person who lived in a small village called Kaliondo. In that village, Hijrah stayed with his punk friends. He claimed that the lifestyle of being punk followed by himself and his gang was a form of actualization to show their identity as a marginal group. They live on the streets, busking and spending their money in order to eat and play.

Their lifestyle is considered to be free and unsuitable with the values and norms in society, such as consuming alcohol and smoking. It is not proper for Indonesian people that teenagers consume these two things, and they are likely to be considered deviant, particularly when dealing with drugs.

Hijrah's gang also committed crimes such as pick-pocketing and dealing illegal drugs. Hijrah said that his decision to live on the streets was because he had never had a complete family since childhood, except for his mother who was still alive.

#### Mario - Abandoned by the Family

This 15-year-old teenager had a complicated life, even though his attitude looked to be very calm and mature. Mario has never attended school be-

cause, since his birth, his parents did not register him for a birth certificate which is one of the requirements to register for school. Every day, Mario lives with his grandparents and he spends time playing online games. Mario gets the money to pay for his online games by pick-pocketing.

Who would ever think that this polite and mature teenager acts as a pick-pocket to eat and play online games? Since childhood, he has been abandoned by his parents. His father was arrested by the police due to criminal acts, while his mother left the house, leaving Mario alone. Finally, he was cared for by his grandparents who also always lack economic resources. Like other street teenagers, Mario also consumed cigarettes and alcohols. To buy these items, they are often involved in criminal acts such as stealing or pick-pocketing.

#### Hasbi - Consuming Illegal Drugs

Hasbi attended one of the leading schools in the City of Heroes. This 15-year-old teenager was caught by police raids carrying illegal drugs at school. Hasbi was a quiet and polite child who consumes alcohol and drugs, which started within his friend circles at school. Initially, Hasbi was offered by his friends to try the substances. Even though he had hesitated and questioned the drinks, his friends' persuasion made Hasbi finally try the. He drank the alcohol along with taking the illegal drugs.

Hasbi said that his friends at school had known about alcohols and drugs for a long time. Not only men, but women also consume the liquor and drugs as well. Hasbi's character was not able to survive in such a difficult situation. He began to prefer to sit in the back row in the class, sleeping while in class and hanging out with his friends within the liquor and drug-consuming subculture. He chose to be friends with the group as he felt insecure due to the bullying that he had experienced at schools such as labeled 'stupid'. There was a sense of fear of not being accepted in the community outside of the subculture group.

On the other hand, Hasbi did not have friends in the community where he lived as he was introverted. Moreover, the condition of Hasbi's family was not harmonious as his father and mother separately, and his mother had remarried. Hasbi felt that the subculture group could accept him as he was, so Hasbi chose to spend more time with them, and of course, he followed the rules within the group.

Hasbi did not only consume liquor and drugs. To buy these items, Hasbi had to sell liquor and illegal drugs to stalls, at night clubs or to his friends at school. To this stage, Hasbi has been committed crimes. The school principals observe suspicious behaviors among the group members, including those of Hasbi, and they worked with the police to carry out the raids. At that time, Hasbi and his friends were caught by the police red-handed carrying drugs. Some of his friends were expelled from school, while Hasbi was given the opportunity by the school to attend school under the condition that he had to undergo rehabilitation.

### 3.2 Motivation for Committing Crimes

In general, crimes are always associated with the individual's inability to fulfill their needs financially or to cope with the poverty. The study found that the informants came from poor families. However, it is not just the poverty itself that becomes the key factor that encourages the teenagers from poor families to commit crimes to meet their daily needs. What these teenagers do, such as stealing, drinking alcohols, being addicted and distributing illegal drugs, is a form of mischief. Not because they are hard-pressed in life but because they want to do it as a form of resistance to the dominant institutions such as their families. It is also part of the mechanisms involved in surviving on the streets.

Some of the informants were included in the crime circle because their actions were innate and not because of the pressure of poverty as told by Adit. Adit and his group were accustomed to stealing food and drinks from the supermarkets because it was something that was usually committed by the group.

In addition, Adit also spent his school fees and his friends' money on having fun including buying food and drink and traveling to the malls. Adit was under pressure because he did not have the money to pay himself. One of the solutions that he chose was following the advice from his friends, which was to begin to steal cellphones alongside his friends.

"I stole this new cellphone because I needed the money to pay back my friends' money that I had spent for fun. I thought that I only spent a little money for food, drinks, and strolling over (at the malls), but this was not realized until suddenly the money was gone." -Adit.

In committing theft, Adit worked with his friends. Adit's subculture community had a habit of stealing from the supermarkets. They steal items that are easily put in their clothes, such as soft drinks, food and sweets. They commit this crime because they felt happy after stealing the items.

"Usually, my friends and I take Coca-Cola, Fanta, while the small children usually take candies. It feels great to be able to steal from a supermarket with friends." -Adit.

Mario, who has been abandoned since childhood, committed crimes because he felt that living with his grandparents was inadequate. Mario stole and pick-pocketed to meet his needs, namely playing online games and smoking cigarettes. Mario said that "I lack the cost of living, so I steal."

In addition to being helpless and forced to commit crimes, this study also found that such violence in the family and the surrounding community has encouraged teenagers to commit crimes. As an established structure, family and society have an essential role to play in the socialization of values from childhood through to adolescence. For teenagers conflicting with the law, it turns out that the family is the institution or structure that should be resisted. They fight because they are used to experiencing pressure in their family, such as coming from a broken family, physical and psychological violence, and also negligence from their family members. Many teenagers have decided to leave their homes because they cannot resist and deal with the treatment from their parents.

Bima, Hasbi, Jonan, Mario, and Hijrah are teenagers from broken home families. Bima has committed crimes and he has been involved in criminal circles since he left home. For Bima, labeling him 'a bad boy' was enough to make him decide to leave his house. Such deviations are caused by the community giving a "label" which increases the tendency for them to make deviations (LEMERT, 2010). In addition, labeling created a distance between Bima and his parents. His parents always had a reason to treat him violently. Bima often received blows from his father such as when he returned home from school late or when he did not want to study. "I was frequently beaten by my father. If I was late from school, I was scolded. If I did not want to study, I was called a bad boy." -Bima

One form of resistance as taken by Bima was leaving his house and busk-

ing with his friends, which was the cause of Bima being caught and getting sent to the Institute for Social Housing (Liponsos) for coaching.

“I was once invited by my friend to go busking, and I was subjected to raids and then sent to the Social House (Liponsos). When I returned from the Liponsos, my parents were very angry and beat me.” Bima said.

The same thing was done by Hasbi. As a child born and living in a broken home, Hasbi decided to get away from the pressure as well as to show his resistance to the family by leaving the house.

“I didn’t feel comfortable at home because of my family and the bad environment. I couldn’t stay any longer at home because my mom and dad fought constantly. Moreover, now my mom is with her new husband. Even though I was at my own home, I felt that I had no friends. Finally, I went out and lived on the streets to have friends.” -Hasbi.

On the other hand, the condition of Hasbi’s school environment, especially related to his friends, was also not very supportive because he was often bullied by his friends and had been since elementary and middle school. Getting bullied made Hasbi feel alienated and he decided to mingle with other students whose behavior was considered to be “deviant” as he felt that he had the same condition as them. According to GOFFMAN (1956), deviant behavior occurs because of stigma. Goffman stated that the very negative naming of a person or group radically influences one’s self-concept. “Since elementary school, I have been bullied by my friends. Said you are stupid, you are such a fool.” Hasbi

In this new circle, Hasbi was introduced to new behaviors such as the consumption of alcohol and drugs as a way out of the problems at hand. Hijrah and Jonan also encountered the same pattern when they joined the crime circles. They both came from a broken home where their mother had passed away. Their father often beat them. Hijrah was from Bali Island and they finally decided to travel to the City of Heroes. In this city, he met with his friends whose background was the same as Jonan’s.

“The parents... my mother passed away and my father married again. Father never scolded me, but he frequently beat me up”. –Hijrah  
 “Wow, don’t ask (how the condition I have experienced in my family)!

When my father was working, I was only given rice and salt by my step-mother. If they fought, I often became the target and I was beaten by my father.” -Jonan

When the condition of the family no longer gives them a sense of safety, another community as friendship usually becomes the alternative option for the teenagers to socialize. In many cases, it is obvious that friendship has replaced the essential role of the family as a space to learn values (SHILDRICK, 2006).

Teenagers are likely to spend more time with their friends. For teenagers in general, time with their peers is used to play and learn. Even in the case of teenagers from middle to upper class families, they often spend their time shopping, going to the mall and watching the latest movies at the cinema with their friends.

This condition might be different for teenagers who have a problem with the laws. Their friends are considered to be a good place for them to avoid unfavorable situations with their family and also society at large. Their peers are no longer shaped on the bases of similarities in terms of age, hobbies and school, but they are formed because of the similarity of fate and what they are fighting for together.

Hasbi, Hijrah, and Jonan were involved crime circles because of the poor communication process within their family. Their decision to mingle with their friends also influenced them in making other crucial decisions such as committing illegal actions like stealing, drinking alcohol and consuming and distributing drugs.

Conditions such as a broken-home family and social acceptance by the people surrounding them led Hasbi to prefer to hang out with their friends who accepted his condition. At first, Hasbi started consuming liquor because he saw his friends consuming liquor as well. He considered this to be part of their acceptable values.

“At school, I saw that my friends were drinking. And then I asked what they were drinking, they simply answered that they were drinking beer. They added that the drink had a good taste. They offered me the drink (the beer). At first, I was too hesitant, until I took it and drank it straight from the bottle, and it turned out to be very delicious.” –Hasbi

After Hasbi took part in consuming alcohol, Hasbi was then encouraged further to participate in taking drugs, of which Hasbi was caught by the police while at school.

“Once, the police were raiding schools, and one raid was at my school. At that time, I was carrying drugs inside my bag, and it was finally discovered (by the police). I was ashamed of my classmates.” –Hasbi

Hijrah and Jonan are members of one gang who were also involved in a brawl because they are also members of a football supporters club. Usually, they fought with children from other gangs, such as the PAJM (Marginal Child Forces). Their motivation to join the gang was because of the invitation from their friends. Jonan also said that in addition to brawls, what was done by the members of the gangs was drinking alcohol and consuming drugs.

“Sometimes, when my friends felt guilty, they drink (alcohols) up to one big jerry cans, mixed with SS (crystal meth) and LL (Trihexyphenidyl HCl) type pills.” –Jonan

Teenagers who are addicted to drugs, like Jonan and Hasbi, will not only busk to make money to be able to consume the alcohols and drugs, but also, one of the survival mechanisms that they have to do in order to keep getting the items is becoming drug dealers. The drugs are circulated to their fellow friends and other street children.

The initial motivation to distribute the illegal drugs was being invited to do so by their friends. According to Jonan’s confession, he knew where to buy the items. He consumed some and some were circulated to other friends. This results in the circulation of alcohol and illegal drugs among street children.

### 3.2 Crime as Part of Youth Life

Teenagers as a social group are the most vulnerable to crimes, both as the objects and subjects. Quite often, teenagers who are the object of crime will one day be the subject. A study conducted by COSSINS and PLUMMER (2016) revealed that boys who are the victims of sexual abuse have the

potential to become the perpetrators of the same crime in the future. Other causes of children committing crimes mentioned are because of a psychological condition (WALTERS, 2014), inharmonious family (HARSANTI & VERASARI, 2013), poverty and a bad environment (MAKARIOS, CULLEN, & PIQUERO, 2017; SABARISMAN, 2015).

Some studies also relate the crime committed by teenagers as a subculture to behavioral deviations from the dominant culture and resistance to dominant culture. BARKER (2016) mentions that children, especially teenagers, have subcultures and enthusiasm in the form of a culture that keeps changing over time. In shaping the culture, it is not uncommon for some of them to construct subcultures that might deviate from the dominant cultural values and institutions. These deviations produces new forms of crime such as pornography, pedophilia, prostitution, drugs and human trafficking, which recently can also be committed online due to the impact of the vast development of information and technology (IT) (BLEVINS & HOLT, 2009; HOLT, 2010; HOLT, BLEVINS, & BURKERT, 2010).

Some teenagers live in a community or social group. This social group is usually a friendship group. Such social groups consist of teenagers and they can be categorized as subculture groups. They include punk groups, motorcycle gangs, and several other gang types.

It is quite common that the existence of subculture groups is a representation of the teen community where the members are from poor families living in violence, negligence and living a way of life that deviates from the normative and legal values (LEMERT, 2010). Their livelihood is earned from an illegal income, such as committing theft, receiving stolen goods, committing minor crimes, and other unclear sources that are apparently considered acceptable and normal (TERPSTRA, 2006).

For this group of teenagers, living normally and being accepted in the community is difficult. Even in community life, they are often considered as deviants because they behave differently to the dominant values and they fall into marginal groups. Bad stereotypes are often associated with the teenagers that are in conflict with the laws. As a result, they often look for friends or groups who are able to accept their condition even though the group may have a subculture that is also different from the dominant values.

Among the teenagers themselves, those with values that do not conform to dominant values such as stealing, consuming alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs, are considered to be deviant teenagers. The identity of teenagers with a history of consuming drugs weakens their social capital as teenagers and this creates a vicious cycle for them (SUONINEN & VIROKANNAS, 2008).

The criminal acts that have been carried out by these teenagers, because of being forced and influenced by their friends, has made them increasingly distant from the dominant values in society. Most community groups consider these youth groups to be a public enemy of society. Instead of being accepted, the existence of the subculture group is usually avoided.

Teenagers who have committed crimes under the law should be considered victims. This position is because every court should think about the future of the children (ANTONOPOULOS, DINGWALL, & HILLIER, 2018). AGUILAR (2016) said that the punishment of teenagers should be abolished, and implanting good values is more important for the children than prison. Therefore, teenagers who are in conflict with the law in Indonesia are preferably handled more by the Child Protection Institution, government-owned social institutions, and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).

It should be noted that when teenagers are in conflict with the law due to committing crimes and entering court, it can be concluded that their opportunity to avoid criminalization has disappeared. This condition is believed to be detrimental to the future of the teenagers which may encourage them to return to becoming criminals because they cannot be reintegrated with the community (ANTONOPOULOS et al., 2018).

The rejection from the community upon being in conflict with the law may encourage them to be more accepted as part of the subculture groups. What the teenagers consider doing is just a part of being accepted in their groups. In the case of Hasbi who was always bullied with the label “stupid” by his friends at school, he did not have opportunity to mingle with good friends, especially the groups of diligent and good children. The natural instinct of being accepted as a friend encouraged Hasbi to be friends with groups that accept him. “I’m stupid. But, I want to have friends. They (street teenag-

ers) are good with me, and I think I am happy with them.” –Hasbi

As a teenager, Adit also wanted to be like his friends who could snack freely. When he was in his group and he did not eat food, he would be ridiculed by his friends. His friends in his group were used to snacking by stealing from the supermarkets. If Hasbi did not do the same thing as them, then he should be willing to be ridiculed. “I took part in stealing because I wanted to be able to eat snacks (like my friends). If they eat, while I don’t, usually they will ridicule me.” –Adit.

When asked about the first time that he stole food and drink from the supermarket, he admitted that he was so embarrassed and also scared. However, his friends kept inviting him and teaching him how to steal and how to deal with the situation.

“When stealing, fear and shame must be there. But my friends kept encouraging me. The point is that you don’t take it too long. And, when we are afraid (nervous), the shop owner might even notice us.” –Adit

While Hijrah and Jonan joined the same gang, the gang did not have a ruler in the area. For Hijrah and Jonan’s gang, the only way to claim being ruler was brawling with others. In addition to brawls, the group was owned by three teenagers who consumed alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs just like in Hasbi’s groups.

There were a number of pills commonly consumed by the group members, namely SS (crystal meth) and LL (Trihexyphenidyl HCl) type pills. They used to consume the alcoholic drinks and illegal drugs in the Kasa area (pseudonym). In addition to Jonan’s confession, some of his friends who consumed alcohols often committed sexually harassed women who were passing by, particularly at night. Jonan is a Jakartan coming to the City of Heroes to watch a music concert. However, he was left behind by his friends from Jakarta who were also with him. To survive, he was invited by a street singer in the city to join him in busking. Since that moment, Jonan began to be introduced to liquor by his friends—which was thought to be mineral water.

“My first intention coming to the City of Heroes was to see the concert, then I was left by my friends. So I decided to stay in the City of Heroes. I

met new friends on the streets here, and I was invited to join in by busking to get money. I also often played with them. At first they gave me a drink that I thought was mineral water. But I thought that it feels different to mineral water.” –Jonan

Once he drank, Jonan felt addicted, even though Jonan did not want it at first. However, to be accepted within the group, Jonan understood that he had to follow the rules adopted by the group. Otherwise, Jonan said that he might be ridiculed and bullied by his friends as a “sissy”, which is a term for men who do not dare to do what the group expects.

“I tried to drink and it felt very good after several times. My friends always said that if you want your body to feel light, then you should mix it with drugs such as SS and LL pills. One time, I mixed the drinks with the pills, and it felt very light in my body.” –Jonan

Jonan added that he actually knew that his drinking was illegal. However, he did not want to be called a “sissy”, so he finally decided to take it. The boys in the group feel ashamed when they are deemed as not being masculine in relation to their gender role. To maintain their self-esteem, they will use various methods to meet the standards of masculinity that apply in society. Such social constructions encourage them to consume alcohol in order to be considered masculine (BOSSON et al, 2009).

“I knew it was a drug. Even though I didn’t want it at first, in the end, I took it too. They (his friends) kept forcing me to drink. If I didn’t want (to drink), they would say I am a “sissy”. Instead of continuing to be ridiculed like a sissy, I finally followed their willingness to drink the beer mixed with drugs.” –Jonan

What is done by the teenagers is a fusion; a negotiating process as part of the group. These teenagers blend with the group by following the sub-culture within the group, which will become the identity of the group. According to (STEARNS, 2012), with their opposition to the “illogical” dominant values, they feel superior to other groups. The members of the group are a family and they accept the members as they are. They are even willing to share everything.

“I gave up every time I was beaten (by my father). As it was done,

and my father would sleep, I left the house. If my money ran out, my friends gave me money,” Bima said

Hijrah also said that he ate thanks to the money that he earned from busking on the street. If the money ran out, then his friends in the group would give some of their money to those who did not have food. This kind of mutual relationship shows that solidarity is a sign of group membership. This is related to the study conducted by BARON (2003), who found that there was a tendency for the teenagers to self-select their friendships. There is a sense of attraction to form friendships with fellow teenagers who have congruent behavior like them.

The subculture group has shaped the identity of these teenagers and it has formed solidarity among the members of the group. Thanks to this, they can survive in the midst of the public rejection.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Teenagers who are in conflict with the laws generally have similar social backgrounds and conditions, such as coming from poor and mostly broken-home families. They are vulnerable to violence, especially when it is carried out by their own families. Some are abandoned by their families. They are likely to spend more time with the groups that have different subcultures, such as being involved in gangster brawls, the punk community, and looking for their own income to meet their needs by busking, stealing, and selling alcoholic drinks and drugs.

The initial process of becoming involved in the crime cycle begins with self-helplessness, pressure from their family and rejection from the surrounding community as to their existence. There is also the influence from their friends within the subculture groups. The desire to be accepted in the group requires them to adjust and obey the values in the subculture group, which also becomes the identity of the teenagers who are in conflict with the law, such as stealing, drinking alcohol, and consuming drugs. Besides the ongoing adaptation to the values of the group, they also have to survive living in the middle of alcoholism and drugs by selling alcohols and drugs to other street children.

The crimes committed by these teenagers have become a cycle or circle

from which the teenagers are not able to get out of without assistance from other parties. In this study, the teenagers who have committed criminal acts eventually conduct similar actions again and again because they belong to a group that has the same values, which are different from the dominant values in the society. The existence of such groups makes it difficult for them to leave. Moreover, some of them commit crimes, such as circulating drugs, in order to keep on consuming these items.

Repressive actions such as punishment cannot immediately solve the problem. Every time they leave the prison or the rehabilitation process, the “bad” label that is on them, especially from the community, encourages them to return to the subculture group, who on the other hand accept them unlike the community.

One of the solutions to save teenagers from criminal acts is through preventive actions starting from within the family. The success of the family as an institution in communicating the value of socialization is the key to preventing such subcultures. Family supervision and guidance is needed, especially regarding how to communicate their values without violence. Second, there should be a commitment to abolishing the stereotype of teenagers who have been in conflict with the law. Instead, people should accept them as part of the community so then they no longer fall into the crime circles again. Third, youth guidance and empowerment programs, especially those targeted to the subculture groups, are needed to lead them to positive activities. The most important thing is to abolish the stereotypes against the subculture groups so then they feel accepted by society, and especially so by their family.

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