

SOCIAL STIGMA TOWARD INDIVIDUALS SENTENCED TO CANING: A CASE STUDY OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE QANUN ON CANING IN KAMPUNG JAWA BARU, LHOKSEUMAWE

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Abstract

This study examines the social stigma experienced by individuals sentenced to public caning and the broader social consequences of implementing the Qanun Jinayah in Kampung Jawa Baru, Lhokseumawe City. The study is grounded in the recognition that caning produces not only physical and legal consequences but also enduring social repercussions for individuals following the execution of the sentence. It aims to identify the forms of social stigma experienced by former offenders, explain how such stigma is constructed and sustained through everyday social interactions, and analyze its implications for their social lives. This study employs a qualitative approach using a phenomenological method to explore the subjective experiences of the participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation involving former caning offenders, family members, community leaders, and local residents. The findings indicate that social stigma manifests in various forms, including labeling as morally deviant, social exclusion, differential treatment in interpersonal interactions, loss of trust, and secondary stigma experienced by family members. Such stigma is socially constructed through the legitimization of religious values that have become embedded within the community's social system and are continuously reinforced through everyday interactions. Its consequences are not merely temporary but have long-term effects on individuals' self-confidence, social relationships, and participation in community life. The study concludes that the implementation of the Qanun Jinayah functions not only as a mechanism for enforcing religious norms but also as a process that shapes social dynamics and moral boundaries within the community. Therefore, greater attention should be given to post-sentence social reintegration mechanisms that can facilitate the restoration of social relationships and community participation among former offenders.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Law does not operate merely as a normative instrument for regulating citizens' behavior; it also functions as a social mechanism through which judgments, moral boundaries, and interpersonal relations are constructed within society. Every criminal sanction carries consequences that extend beyond the legal verdict, as the implementation of punishment may alter the way society perceives individuals who have been convicted. In the context of publicly administered punishment, these social consequences become more pronounced because the offense, the offender, and the punishment itself are exposed to public scrutiny. Punishment therefore functions not only as a mechanism for enforcing norms but also as a social event capable of generating negative labeling, social exclusion, and changes in an individual's social status even after the formal sentence has been completed (Danial, 2021; Goffman, 1963).

Aceh possesses a distinctive legal framework through the implementation of the Qanun Jinayah, which regulates a range of offenses based on Islamic legal norms, including caning as a form of

punishment. Within the community, caning may be understood as a means of enforcing religious norms, exercising social control, and providing a moral deterrent against similar violations. However, the public execution of caning also raises significant sociological concerns, as the intended element of shame may develop into prolonged social stigma. Accordingly, the practice of caning needs to be examined in a balanced manner: on the one hand, as part of the enforcement of Islamic norms that enjoys legal and social legitimacy, and on the other, as a form of public punishment that may generate sustained social pressure on individuals after they have completed their sentence (Nurbaiti & Nisa, 2021; Nur Anita & Sani, 2022).

Kampung Jawa Baru in Lhokseumawe City provides an important setting for examining this issue because of its communal and religious social characteristics and the relatively close relationships among residents. In communities characterized by strong social ties, information concerning moral transgressions can easily circulate, remain in collective memory, and repeatedly resurface in everyday interactions. Social spaces such as residential neighborhoods, coffee shops, village activities, neighborly relations, and family networks become arenas in which social judgments are produced and reproduced. Consequently, the post-sentence experiences of former caning offenders within a local community cannot be understood solely as individual experiences; rather, they must be situated within broader collective social processes involving residents, family members, community leaders, religious figures, and local institutional actors (Makbull Rizki & Nisa, 2021).

Social stigma toward former caning offenders emerges when past wrongdoing becomes the primary basis for evaluating an individual's overall identity. From Goffman's perspective, stigma may produce a spoiled identity, a condition in which a person's social identity is reduced to an attribute regarded as discrediting or morally undesirable (Goffman, 1963). In cases involving caning, stigma may manifest through derogatory labels, gossip, social avoidance, diminished trust, restrictions on participation in community activities, and secondary consequences experienced by family members. Such stigma, however, does not emerge spontaneously. Berger and Luckmann argue that social reality is constructed through processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. From this perspective, stigma toward former offenders can be understood as a socially constructed reality that is legitimized through religious values, local norms, and the repeated reproduction of social judgments in everyday life (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Previous studies have examined the Qanun Jinayah from the perspectives of legality, effectiveness, norm enforcement, public perceptions, and human rights debates. However, studies specifically addressing the subjective post-execution experiences of former caning offenders within local communities remain limited. This gap is important because the legal completion of a sentence does not necessarily mean that punishment has ended socially. Moreover, research on caning needs to move beyond a predominantly normative approach by examining how communities construct and sustain stigma, as well as how they may create opportunities for its reduction and social recovery. In this regard, the concept of reintegrative shaming is particularly relevant because it distinguishes between forms of shaming intended to facilitate the offender's return to the community and forms of stigmatization that instead restrict opportunities for social reintegration (Braithwaite, 1989). Thus, this study does not seek to generalize the experiences of all former caning offenders in Aceh but rather to provide an in-depth case study of the dynamics of social stigma in Kampung Jawa Baru, Lhokseumawe.

Based on this background, the study aims to describe the forms of social stigma experienced by former caning offenders after the execution of their sentences in Kampung Jawa Baru; analyze how community members and local actors construct and sustain stigma through everyday social interactions; and explain the sociological and psychosocial consequences of stigma for former offenders and their families. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on post-execution experiences and the social construction of stigma within a local community through a phenomenological approach informed by the sociology of religion. The study is expected to contribute to the sociology of law and the sociology of religion by demonstrating that the implementation of Sharia-based law functions not only as a mechanism for enforcing religious norms but also as a process that shapes social identities, community relations, and the need for more equitable, humane, and restorative mechanisms of social reintegration.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences of individuals who had undergone caning under the Qanun Jinayah, particularly in relation

to social stigma, changes in social relationships, and the post-sentence consequences encountered in everyday life. A phenomenological approach was selected because the study sought not only to describe caning as a legal event but also to explore the subjective meanings attached to the experiences of former offenders as they resumed interactions with family members, neighbors, community leaders, and their broader social environment. Phenomenology enables an in-depth understanding of stigma from the participants' own perspectives, including experiences of shame, social exclusion, loss of trust, and difficulties with social reintegration following the completion of the sentence (Creswell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). The study was conducted in Kampung Jawa Baru, Lhokseumawe City, as the area is situated within the Acehese social context in which the Qanun Jinayah is implemented and is characterized by relatively strong communal ties, religious values, and social control.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the relevance of their experiences to the focus of the study. The primary inclusion criteria were individuals who had undergone caning under the Qanun Jinayah, resided or had previously resided in Kampung Jawa Baru, and had experienced post-sentence social life for a certain period of time. To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the social construction of stigma, the study involved not only former offenders but also family members, local residents, community leaders, and employees of relevant institutions. A total of 11 participants were involved, consisting of one former caning offender as the primary informant, three local residents, two community leaders, three family members, and two employees of relevant institutions. Primary data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and non-participant observations of patterns of social interaction involving the former offender in everyday life. Secondary data were obtained from official Qanun Jinayah documents, institutional records, scholarly articles, and other relevant literature. To ensure research ethics, participants' identities were anonymized, the data were used exclusively for academic purposes, and interviews were conducted with careful attention to participants' comfort and psychosocial vulnerability.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and continuous conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the data reduction stage, interview transcripts, observational notes, and documentary materials were selected, organized, and categorized according to the major themes of the study, including forms of social stigma, processes of stigma construction, moral and religious legitimation, social exclusion, loss of trust, courtesy stigma, and post-sentence psychosocial consequences. During the data display stage, the findings were organized into thematic narratives to analytically connect participants' subjective experiences with Goffman's theory of stigma and Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction. Conclusions were drawn through repeated engagement with the data to identify patterns linking public punishment, the production of social labels, and barriers to social reintegration. The trustworthiness of the findings was strengthened through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. This approach ensured that the interpretation was not based on a single source of evidence but was supported by consistency across different sources and data collection techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sugiyono, 2015).

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Result

This study examines the social experiences of a former caning offender following the implementation of punishment under the Qanun Jinayah in Kampung Jawa Baru, Lhokseumawe City. The findings were generated through in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and documentary analysis involving 11 participants, including a former offender, family members, local residents, community leaders, and employees of relevant institutions. The findings are organized into three major themes: forms of social stigma, the construction of stigma through everyday social interactions, and the sociological and psychosocial consequences experienced by the former offender and family members. Interview data were used to capture participants' subjective experiences, while observational data were employed to assess the extent to which these accounts corresponded with patterns of social interaction within the local community. The integration of these sources demonstrates that the consequences of caning do not end with the completion of the physical sentence; rather, they may persist through ongoing social judgment, differential treatment, and various forms of social restriction in everyday life.

Forms of Social Stigma Experienced by Former Caning Offenders

Based on the interviews and observations, the social stigma experienced by former caning offenders did not appear in a single form. Rather, it developed through verbal expressions, changes in social attitudes, restrictions on social relationships, declining levels of trust, and spillover effects on family members. These forms of stigma were interconnected, as verbal labeling often became the basis for social distancing, while such distancing further reinforced the perception that former offenders were different from other members of the community. In communities characterized by strong communal ties, information concerning past offenses can circulate easily and remain embedded in collective memory. Consequently, the identity of former offenders tends to be associated more closely with their past transgressions than with behavioral changes demonstrated after completing their sentence.

Verbal Stigma and Negative Labeling (Social Labeling)

The most readily identifiable form of stigma was negative labeling through derogatory terms, insinuations, and repeated discussions of past offenses. During the interview, RS, a 28-year-old former caning offender, explained that such labeling did not end after the punishment had been carried out. He continued to feel that his past wrongdoing had become the primary identity through which community members perceived and discussed him. This experience indicates that although formal punishment may end administratively, social judgment can persist through everyday conversations.

RS stated, "People often call me by negative names, and my past mistakes are repeatedly brought up or turned into gossip at coffee shops." This statement illustrates how stigma is constructed through the repetition of narratives and the use of negative labels in informal social spaces. Coffee shops become particularly significant because conversations among residents take place openly, are repeated over time, and can easily spread to others. The past offense is therefore no longer understood merely as a legal event that has been resolved, but becomes a marker of the individual's social identity. As a result, RS is evaluated primarily on the basis of having been publicly caned rather than on his subsequent conduct or efforts to change. This condition reflects the logic of social labeling, whereby a single negative attribute becomes a defining feature through which the person as a whole is interpreted.

Observational findings supported RS's account. Discussions of the past case were not always expressed directly, but were visible through whispering, insinuations, prolonged looks, and changes in the atmosphere when the informant entered a social setting. In several interactions, residents appeared more cautious, and conversations became noticeably more restricted. These patterns demonstrate that stigma can operate even without explicit verbal rejection. The repeated circulation of stories within the residential environment turns the past offense into shared social knowledge that is continuously reproduced, leaving the informant with limited space to construct a new social identity.

Social Exclusion and Interpersonal Distancing

Verbal stigma subsequently developed into changes in how community members interacted with the former offender. RS not only experienced negative labeling but also noticed a decline in greetings, social closeness, and involvement in collective activities. Although these changes may appear minor, they carried significant meaning for the informant because they signaled a reduced level of acceptance within the community. Social exclusion occurred indirectly through everyday practices that were difficult to challenge through formal mechanisms.

RS described the experience as follows: "Neighbors who used to greet me suddenly avoided me when we passed each other. During village activities such as communal work, I was deliberately not invited or my social interactions were restricted." This statement suggests that social exclusion does not necessarily take the form of formal prohibition or direct rejection. Avoidance in everyday encounters, exclusion from invitations, and restrictions on social interaction represent informal sanctions that make the individual feel that he is no longer accepted as an equal member of the community.

In a communal society, participation in gotong royong and village activities is not merely a routine practice but also a symbol of social membership and recognition. When access to such activities is reduced, former offenders lose opportunities to interact with others, rebuild relationships, and demonstrate behavioral change. Social exclusion therefore produces not only emotional discomfort but also substantive barriers to the process of social reintegration.

Field observations further revealed a tendency among some residents to maintain social distance in everyday interactions. The informant appeared more passive, was less engaged in group conversations, and occupied a less prominent position during communal activities. No formal rule was found that explicitly prohibited former offenders from participating in community activities. Instead,

exclusion emerged through routine practices, personal choices, and residents' attitudes. Because such treatment was informal, it was difficult to report, contest, or formally challenge. Both interview and observational data therefore demonstrate that social distance is constructed through small but repeated actions that gradually weaken the individual's sense of belonging to the community.

Crisis of Trust and Economic Discrimination

Stigma also affected the level of trust extended to former offenders. Based on interviews and observations of community interaction patterns, the status of being a former offender led individuals to be treated more cautiously in matters involving employment, loans, business capital, and responsibilities related to goods or money. These doubts persisted even in the absence of evidence that the informant had committed any subsequent offense. In certain situations, the informant's past was used as the primary basis for assessing honesty, reliability, and deservingness of trust. This indicates that stigma had moved beyond moral judgment and developed into practical consequences affecting economic life.

The economic effects became particularly visible when declining levels of trust restricted employment opportunities and access to business support. Local employers could become hesitant to employ the former offender because of concerns about the reactions of customers or surrounding residents, rather than because of any assessment of his actual competence. Difficulty obtaining employment subsequently weakened the individual's social position because it reduced his capacity to support his family and rebuild economic independence.

This situation creates a potentially self-reinforcing cycle: stigma restricts economic opportunities, while economic hardship may subsequently be used by the community as further justification for maintaining negative judgments. The findings therefore demonstrate that stigma does not affect self-esteem alone but also has material consequences for livelihood, economic security, and opportunities to rebuild one's life after completing a sentence.

Extension of Stigma to Family Members (Courtesy Stigma)

The effects of stigma did not end with the individual who underwent the punishment but extended to members of the family. NH, a 35-year-old family member, explained that the children and other relatives were also subjected to negative judgments from the surrounding community. This experience demonstrates that kinship ties with a former offender can become a basis for differential treatment. Family members consequently bear shame and social pressure for an act they did not commit.

NH stated, "The whole family has been affected. My child was even mocked at school. They said his father had been caned. That was the most painful part." This statement illustrates how social punishment may extend beyond the principle of individual responsibility. The informant's child was mocked at school solely because of the father's status, while other family members were required to cope with gossip and changing attitudes within the community. The expression "that was the most painful part" indicates that the greatest burden for the family was not merely the judgment directed at the former offender, but the involvement of the child in a stigma unrelated to his own actions. This phenomenon corresponds with the concept of courtesy stigma, in which individuals experience stigma because of their close association with a socially discredited person. The extension of stigma means that family members, who would otherwise be expected to serve as sources of support, may themselves require social protection and recovery.

Observational findings also revealed a degree of discomfort among family members during social interactions. They appeared more cautious in conversations and tended to limit their participation in social activities in order to avoid questions, insinuations, or discussions related to the case. For children, ridicule from peers may affect their sense of security at school and undermine self-confidence. For spouses and parents, pressure arises from the need to maintain social relationships while simultaneously supporting a family member who is experiencing rejection. These findings reinforce the argument that the consequences of public punishment may extend across the family system and persist well beyond the formal completion of the sentence.

The Construction of Stigma in Everyday Social Interaction

Social stigma in Kampung Jawa Baru did not emerge spontaneously. Rather, it was constructed through repeated processes embedded in everyday community life. These processes involved the legitimation of religious values, the public nature of the execution, the circulation of information, the influence of local leaders, and the repetition of social judgments in daily interactions. Values that initially functioned as moral guidelines gradually became criteria for categorizing individuals as either compliant with or in violation of community norms. These categories then shaped how residents determined levels

of acceptance, social distance, and trust toward former offenders. Through repeated reproduction, stigma eventually came to be perceived as a normal social response rather than as a form of discriminatory treatment.

Moral and Religious Legitimation

The Qanun Jinayah was understood by community members as a regulation possessing both legal authority and religious legitimacy. Interviews with residents and local leaders indicated that violations of the qanun were interpreted not only as legal offenses but also as forms of moral transgression. This dual judgment strengthened the stigmatizing process because social distancing could be perceived as a legitimate means of protecting communal values. Under such circumstances, differential treatment was not always recognized as discrimination but was instead regarded as an appropriate consequence of the offense.

This finding helps explain why stigma may persist even after the individual has formally completed the sentence. The legal completion of punishment does not necessarily eliminate the moral categorization attached to the offender. When legal transgression and religious-moral deviation are treated as overlapping categories, the former offender may continue to be positioned outside the community's preferred moral boundaries.

Public Execution as a Catalyst for Shame

The public administration of caning makes the identity of the offender easily known, recognized, and remembered by the wider community. Interview findings showed that information concerning who had been punished, the nature of the offense, and the execution itself continued to circulate in everyday conversations among residents. Observations of social interaction further indicated that this shared knowledge influenced how community members extended greetings, trust, and opportunities for participation.

Public execution therefore does more than communicate that a legal sanction has been carried out; it also generates a form of collective social memory that can be repeatedly reactivated whenever the case is discussed. Shame, which may initially be associated with the moment of punishment, can consequently be transformed into prolonged social pressure. The visibility of the punishment thus magnifies its social afterlife by making the offense part of the community's shared narrative.

The Role of Religious and Community Leaders

Religious and community leaders played an important role because their statements and attitudes served as important reference points in shaping public opinion. RCP, a 35-year-old community leader, explained that residents tended to follow the judgments of respected senior figures. This account suggests that stigma is not solely the product of individual attitudes but is also influenced by trusted forms of social authority. The position taken by local leaders may either reinforce social rejection or create opportunities for acceptance.

RCP stated, "People still listen to those who are respected in the community. Once religious or community leaders express their views, the attitudes of residents tend to follow." This statement illustrates how community judgments are shaped through hierarchical relationships and structures of trust. When local leaders emphasize wrongdoing and moral threat, residents may be more likely to maintain distance from the former offender. Conversely, when respected figures stress that the punishment has been completed and that the individual should be given an opportunity to improve, such messages can provide a basis for rebuilding social relationships.

Local leaders therefore occupy a strategic position because they do not merely interpret norms; they also influence everyday patterns of treatment. This finding suggests that social reintegration efforts are likely to be more effective when they actively involve religious and community authorities who possess social legitimacy.

Reproduction of Stigma through Conversation and Social Surveillance

Stigma was continuously reproduced through informal conversations, repeated storytelling, and social surveillance of the former offender's behavior. RS's account of gossip in coffee shops demonstrates how everyday conversation functions as a major mechanism through which social labels are reproduced. Observational findings similarly indicated that the informant's actions tended to attract closer attention and were more readily associated with his previous offense.

As stories are repeatedly circulated, residents who were previously unaware of the case may also become familiar with the label attached to the former offender. In this way, stigma remains socially active even after the legal event itself has passed. The repeated circulation of narratives contributes to the preservation of collective memory and places the former offender under continuous pressure to demonstrate that he has changed.

This process illustrates how stigma becomes self-reinforcing within everyday social life. The individual is not simply remembered as someone who once violated the law, but is continuously evaluated against that past identity. Consequently, the burden of proving moral and behavioral transformation remains disproportionately placed on the former offender, potentially delaying or obstructing full social reintegration.

Sociological and Psychosocial Impacts on Former Caning Offenders

The forms and processes of stigma identified in this study produced multidimensional consequences. Sociologically, these consequences were reflected in declining participation in community activities, restricted social networks, weakened trust, and reduced economic opportunities. Psychosocially, stigma manifested in feelings of shame, low self-esteem, anxiety about community judgment, and a tendency toward social withdrawal. These two dimensions reinforced one another: social rejection could intensify psychological distress, while withdrawal from social interaction could in turn be interpreted by community members as evidence that the former offender was fundamentally different from others. As a result, the process of social reintegration became increasingly difficult.

Internalization of Stigma and Spoiled Identity

Field findings indicate that the stigma experienced by the former caning offender was not limited to external social judgment but gradually influenced the way he perceived himself. RS explained that his past offense continued to be repeatedly mentioned in community conversations and discussed in informal social spaces. He stated, "People often call me by negative names, and my past mistakes are repeatedly brought up or turned into gossip at coffee shops." This statement demonstrates that RS was no longer perceived in a holistic manner as a community member, family member, or individual who had already completed his sentence. Instead, his social identity was frequently reduced to that of a person who had once been publicly caned.

The psychosocial consequences of such labeling were reflected in feelings of shame, diminished self-esteem, and heightened caution in social interactions. The repeated use of negative labels created emotional pressure because the past was continually brought back into present-day encounters. A social identity that might otherwise have been reconstructed following the completion of punishment became difficult to restore because community members continued to associate the individual with his previous transgression. In this context, stigma functions not only as an external social judgment but also as a psychological burden that may undermine self-confidence and obstruct the reconstruction of a positive social identity. This condition closely reflects Goffman's concept of spoiled identity, in which a stigmatized attribute becomes dominant in defining how an individual is socially perceived and, over time, how the individual may come to perceive himself.

Social Withdrawal

Field findings further show that the former offender experienced social withdrawal in response to exclusion and changes in community attitudes. RS explained that his social relationships with neighbors were no longer the same after he had undergone caning. He stated, "Neighbors who used to greet me suddenly avoided me when we passed each other. During village activities such as communal work, I was deliberately not invited or my social interactions were restricted." This account indicates that social exclusion did not necessarily take the form of explicit rejection, but was expressed through ordinary actions such as withholding greetings, avoiding encounters, excluding the individual from collective activities, or restricting social interaction.

Field observations showed that these conditions encouraged the former offender to become increasingly passive in social settings. He participated less frequently in group conversations and tended to maintain distance in order to avoid insinuations, uncomfortable looks, or discussions that might cause embarrassment. On the one hand, this withdrawal functioned as a self-protective strategy against social pressure. On the other hand, it further reduced his social networks and opportunities to rebuild relationships with the community.

Consequently, the former offender faced increasing difficulty in demonstrating personal change because the social spaces in which such change could be recognized were gradually narrowing. Social

withdrawal therefore represents both a consequence of stigma and a mechanism through which stigma may be unintentionally prolonged. Reduced interaction limits opportunities for mutual recognition, reconciliation, and the restoration of trust, thereby complicating the process of social reintegration.

Disruption of Family Relationships and Psychosocial Burden

The findings demonstrate that the effects of stigma extended beyond the former offender to members of the family. NH, a family member, explained that the family also experienced social pressure because one of its members had undergone caning. NH stated, "The whole family has been affected. My child was even mocked at school. They said his father had been caned. That was the most painful part." This statement illustrates how social stigma may transcend the boundaries of individual responsibility, as children and other family members experience ridicule, shame, and differential treatment despite having no involvement in the original offense.

The psychosocial burden on family members was reflected in anxiety, social discomfort, and heightened caution when interacting with neighbors or members of the school community. Family members faced a double burden: they were expected to provide emotional support to the former offender while simultaneously protecting themselves from gossip, insinuations, and negative community judgments.

For children, stigma may undermine feelings of safety and comfort within the school environment because peer ridicule transfers the consequences of the family member's punishment into the educational setting. For spouses and other relatives, social pressure can complicate the maintenance of everyday relationships and increase emotional strain. These findings demonstrate that the social consequences of punishment after execution can extend throughout the family system and generate a collective psychosocial burden rather than affecting only the individual who was formally punished.

Ambivalence in Community Attitudes

Field findings also indicate that community attitudes toward former caning offenders were not entirely uniform. Some residents continued to support caning as a legitimate means of enforcing Sharia norms and regulating social behavior, while at the same time expressing sympathy for the social and economic difficulties experienced by former offenders after the execution. This ambivalence reveals a tension between the community's commitment to maintaining moral norms and the need to create opportunities for individuals who have completed their sentences to recover and reintegrate socially.

Despite expressions of verbal sympathy, the findings indicate that such empathy did not always translate into social practices that actively supported reintegration. Former offenders continued to encounter barriers in the form of reduced social greetings, diminished trust, restricted employment opportunities, and limited participation in community activities. This suggests that social acceptance cannot be achieved through expressions of sympathy alone; rather, it requires tangible changes in everyday interactions and patterns of social inclusion.

The ambivalent attitude of the community therefore becomes an important factor in explaining why the process of social recovery remains gradual and difficult. Community members may simultaneously acknowledge that the formal punishment has ended while continuing to reproduce informal forms of exclusion. This tension between normative support for punishment and limited post-sentence acceptance creates a social environment in which reintegration remains incomplete and former offenders continue to carry the consequences of punishment beyond its formal legal duration.

Analysis

The findings demonstrate that caning produces consequences that extend beyond its legal and physical dimensions. Following the execution, former offenders continue to face informal sanctions in the form of labeling, social exclusion, suspicion, economic restrictions, and declining participation in community life. RS's statement that his past wrongdoing was "constantly brought up" illustrates that the completion of a legal sentence does not automatically eliminate the community's moral judgment. In a closely knit communal environment, an individual's social identity is strongly shaped by collective recognition; therefore, the repeated circulation of past events may construct a new social identity that is difficult to change. Punishment, in this sense, is no longer exercised solely through state institutions but is also prolonged by the community through everyday forms of social control.

Erving Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma explains how individuals possessing attributes regarded as deviant may experience a reduction in social status, from being perceived as whole persons to being defined primarily by a discrediting characteristic. RS's experience reflects this process because

he was more frequently identified as a former caning offender than as a community member who had already completed his sentence. His account that neighbors avoided him and that he was excluded from gotong royong activities illustrates a social separation between those considered “normal” and those perceived as discredited. Such social distancing produces a spoiled identity, as the informant’s identity becomes reduced to a single past transgression. When this social judgment begins to affect self-confidence and influences the decision to withdraw from social interaction, externally imposed stigma gradually develops into internalized stigma.

The findings concerning family stigma are also consistent with Goffman’s concept of courtesy stigma. NH explained that her child was mocked through remarks linking the child to the father’s punishment. This experience demonstrates how the stigma attached to an offender may be extended to those who maintain close social or familial relationships with that person. Such an extension of stigma blurs the principle of individual responsibility because family members are subjected to social sanctions for actions they did not commit. The consequences become particularly burdensome because the family, which should ideally function as a primary source of emotional and social recovery, is itself exposed to pressure, shame, and social restriction.

Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) theory of the social construction of reality provides further insight into how such stigma is produced and sustained. At the stage of externalization, community members express moral and religious values through sermons, conversations, insinuations, and judgments concerning violations of accepted norms. At the stage of objectivation, these values become institutionalized through the Qanun Jinayah and are recognized as legitimate social realities. At the stage of internalization, community members absorb these values as frameworks for evaluating former offenders, while former offenders themselves may come to internalize community judgments as part of their own identities. The accounts of RS, NH, and RCP illustrate that these processes occur through concrete experiences such as gossip, avoidance, ridicule directed at family members, and the influence of local authority figures.

Public execution constitutes a crucial point in the process of objectivation because an offense that may initially have been known only within a limited circle becomes transformed into collective knowledge. The public does not merely witness the implementation of punishment but also receives a symbolic message regarding the boundaries between socially acceptable and unacceptable behavior. This symbolic function may strengthen deterrence, but it simultaneously increases the risk that a deviant identity will remain attached to the individual over the long term. Observational findings concerning whispering, staring, and changes in the atmosphere when the former offender was present demonstrate how memories of the execution continued to be reactivated in everyday social interactions. These findings are consistent with Nurbaiti and Nisa (2021), who explain that publicly administered punishment may generate shame that develops into prolonged psychological and social pressure.

Social exclusion and economic discrimination further reveal tangible barriers to the process of reintegration. Former offenders require opportunities to interact with others, obtain employment, and demonstrate behavioral change in order to rebuild community trust. However, RS’s account of being restricted from village activities indicates that the very opportunities needed to demonstrate such change have become increasingly limited. When employment opportunities and access to business support are also reduced, former offenders encounter simultaneous social and economic pressures. This condition is consistent with Masni and Asriadi (2025), who emphasize that prolonged social sanctions may obstruct identity negotiation and the social readmission of former prisoners.

Religious leaders, community leaders, and village authorities therefore occupy an important position in interrupting the reproduction of stigma. RCP stated that once religious or community leaders expressed their views, “the attitudes of residents tended to follow.” This statement demonstrates that local authorities can significantly influence whether punishment is interpreted as the completion of individual accountability or instead becomes a basis for continuing social sanctions. When local leaders repeatedly emphasize past wrongdoing, community members are more likely to maintain social distance. Conversely, messages emphasizing opportunities for repentance, behavioral change, and renewed participation may create space for social acceptance. The moral authority of local leaders should therefore be mobilized to balance the enforcement of norms with the protection of human dignity and the restoration of social relationships.

The ambivalence evident in community attitudes suggests that opportunities for reintegration are, in fact, available. Support for the Qanun Jinayah does not necessarily mean that residents favor permanent exclusion, as some community members also expressed sympathy toward former offenders and their families. The problem is that such empathy does not always translate into concrete social practices, such as greeting former offenders, involving them in community activities, offering

employment opportunities, or refraining from degrading conversations. NH's account of the ridicule directed at her child demonstrates that, without changes in everyday behavior, families continue to bear social consequences even when community members claim to feel sympathy. A clearer boundary is therefore needed between legally sanctioned punishment and indefinite social stigmatization.

Taken together, the interview and observational findings indicate that the implementation of the Qanun Jinayah should be accompanied by a reintegrative approach following the completion of punishment. Psychosocial assistance is needed to help former offenders and their families cope with shame, anxiety, and declining self-confidence. Community education should emphasize that socially accepting an individual after punishment does not imply approval of the original offense; rather, it recognizes that formal legal accountability has been fulfilled. Programs that facilitate participation in gampong activities, social mediation, employment support, and the active involvement of religious leaders may help restore trust and social belonging. Such measures are important to ensure that the enforcement of norms does not result in prolonged exclusion that may ultimately weaken social cohesion and deepen social alienation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that caning under the Qanun Jinayah in Kampung Jawa Baru, Lhokseumawe, does not end with the legal process or the administration of physical punishment, but continues as a social experience that shapes the lives of former offenders and their families. The findings demonstrate that social stigma manifests through negative labeling, social exclusion, interpersonal distancing, loss of trust, restricted participation in community activities, and the extension of stigma to family members. Such stigma is constructed through moral and religious legitimation, the public nature of the punishment, the influence of local leaders, informal conversations, and everyday forms of social surveillance. The consequences are both sociological and psychosocial. Stigma not only weakens social relationships and limits the economic opportunities available to former offenders but also generates feelings of shame, low self-esteem, anxiety, social withdrawal, and emotional burdens for their families. Accordingly, the implementation of the Qanun Jinayah should be understood more broadly, not merely as an instrument for enforcing Sharia-based norms but also as a social practice capable of shaping identities, moral boundaries, and power relations within the community. This study highlights the importance of a more humane, restorative, and reintegration-oriented post-sentence approach. Individuals who have completed their punishment should be provided with meaningful opportunities to rebuild their lives, restore social trust, and participate fully and with dignity in community life.

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