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Julie Chernov-Hwang and [Kirsten E. Schulze](#)

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Why they join: Pathways into Indonesian Jihadi Organizations

Julie Chernov Hwang and Kirsten E. Schulze

Why do Indonesian Muslims join Islamist extremist groups? This article explores four pathways to entry into Indonesian militant groups: study groups, local conflict, kinship and schools. It argues that within all four of these pathways, social bonds and relationships are the common thread both in encouraging entry as well as in fostering commitment. Specifically, these relationships contribute to the formation and eventual consolidation of the identity as a member of the jihadi group through regular participation in activities, attending meetings, narrowing the circle of friends to those within the group, and participating in increasingly risky and possibly violent activities together. Drawing on original fieldwork including 49 interviews with current and former members of Jemaah Islamiyah, Mujahidin KOMPAK, Darul Islam, Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, Indonesia's pro-ISIS network and other jihadist groups as well as 57 depositions and court documents, this article explores the development and evolution of these pathways and how relational ties play a role in each.

Anas' pathway into extremism began in high school, when he was invited by a classmate to participate in what he had been told was a Salafi study group.¹ He enjoyed the group because, unlike other Islamic study sessions he had participated in, this one addressed jihad not as something remote or abstract but in such a way that "nurtured their spirits" for it.² From this broader study group, he was invited into a more exclusive one run by the Indonesian Islamist extremist group, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), although its affiliation was not disclosed to him at that time. There, he was taught the Quran and aspects of the JI worldview. Throughout he was observed and assessed to see whether he showed sufficient commitment to become a member of JI. When JI began sending fighters to the Indonesian island of Ambon, where conflict between Christians and Muslims had broken out, Anas wanted to go; he was ready for that commitment. However, his seniors refused, noting he had not done his military training. Not content with that answer, he circumvented JI and went to Ambon anyway. Despite this act of defiance, Anas was permitted to take his military training with JI in Ambon and gained fighting experience. When he returned home, he continued to socialize with JI members and to participate in JI activities. In 2001, after four years of activities at various levels in JI, Anas was finally deemed sufficiently committed and was allowed to take the loyalty oath – the *bai'at*. Now Anas was officially a member.

How do Indonesian Muslims like Anas join Islamist extremist groups? This article examines four entry points into Indonesian militant Islamist groups: *pengajian* (Islamic study groups), local conflict, kinship, and schools. It argues that within all four of these pathways, social bonds and relationships were the common thread both in encouraging entry as well as in fostering commitment. Specifically, these relationships contributed to the formation and eventual consolidation of a group-specific jihadi identity through regular participation in activities, attendance of meetings, narrowing the circle of friends to those within the group, cooperation with other group members, and embracing an increasingly risky and possibly violent trajectory.

It is important to note that these pathways were and are not fixed. As Islamist extremist groups in Indonesia evolved in response to changing internal conditions and external contexts, aspects of those pathways also evolved. Time in study groups and vetting processes also varied from organization to organization. Regardless of these small but significant shifts, social bonds remained critical to joining. Data permitting, this article will illustrate this in-pathway variation and highlight the in-pathway evolution since the emergence of the Darul Islam movement.

One point of relative consensus within the terrorism studies literature is that joining an extremist group is a process.³ John Horgan and Max Taylor point to multiple routes into terrorism, which are fostered by the interaction effect between an individual's political, economic, familial and organizational context, on the one hand and personal factors, including dissatisfaction with the sense of self, on the other.⁴ Andrew Silke, similar to Horgan and Taylor addresses terrorism as a process of becoming, highlighting specific factors, including youthful disobedience, opportunity, a desire for vengeance, and, in some instances, status.⁵ The research underpinning this article shows that for Indonesians joining and becoming a committed member of a jihadi group was indeed a process and often a quite

lengthy one. It thus concurs with Silke, Horgan and Taylor. It also shows the critical importance of the peer group as emphasized by Marc Sageman in his work on the role of informal social and friendship networks⁶ as well as Donatella Della Porta in her research on in-group activities and in-group friends.⁷ Friendships, however, are not the only salient type of relationship. Equally important are kinship relations and teacher-student relations which function as constructed kin relationships.⁸ In the Indonesian context, Sidney Jones has noted the prevalence of multi-generational jihadi families in Jemaah Islamiyah communities.⁹ Similarly, Sulastri Osman's research on kinship and teacher-student ties in Jemaah Islamiyah explored discipleship as well as how participation in extremist groups is passed from grandfather to father to son.¹⁰

This article draws upon a dataset of 106 Indonesians, who joined militant Islamist organisations between the mid-1980s and 2014, and analyses their individual pathways. Forty-nine were gathered by interview in the cities of Jakarta, Bekasi, Semarang, Kudus, Surabaya, Poso, Palu, Ampana, Pekanbaru and Ambon.¹¹ Of those, twenty one were members of Jemaah Islamiyah, although nine of those were initially recruited into Darul Islam and later switched to Jemaah Islamiyah, after the latter splintered from the former. Fourteen were members of local Poso jihadi groups: Tanah Runtuh (12), and Mujahidin Kayamanya (2). Seven were members of Mujahidin KOMPAK. Two were members of the pro-ISIS network including one recruiter; one was a participant in Indonesian *takfiri* cleric Aman Abdurrahman's study sessions; and two were members of Al-Qaeda in the Malay Archipelago. Another two were members of the salafi paramilitary group, Laskar Jihad. These interviews were augmented by 57 depositions and court documents, mostly covering the pro-ISIS networks and the new generation of Jemaah Islamiyah, who Indonesian authorities refer to as Neo-JI.

This article looks at four pathways into Indonesian jihadi organisations. First, it examines how Islamic study groups became the pathway of choice for outsiders — those who did not grow up in a jihadi family or attend a jihadi school. Second, it discusses how local conflicts motivated individuals to form and join Islamist extremist organizations and the role played by fighters from other parts of Indonesia in stimulating the development of those groups. Third, it explores the phenomenon of multi-generational jihadi families drawing on Jemaah Islamiyah and Darul Islam families where this route is most resonant. Finally, it analyses the role of schools in identifying and grooming potential recruits. The primary focus in these pathways is on four main groups: Darul Islam, Jemaah Islamiyah, Tanah Runtuh, and Mujahidin KOMPAK. Where data is available, there are also references to the pro-ISIS network.¹²

Why Indonesia?

If one wants to understand why Muslims join Islamist extremist groups, Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, provides a wealth of information. Indonesia has long had an Islamist extremist fringe dating back to the 1948-1965 Darul Islam rebellions¹³ and subsequent Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia (DI/NII) movement. The landscape of this fringe has been characterized by factionalization and fragmentation, diverging typically over issues of ideology, personality, and, importantly, where and under what conditions violence is permissible.¹⁴ The most notable of the DI splinter groups was Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which was established in 1993 by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. A faction within JI carried out a campaign of violence, including the 2000 Christmas Eve bombings, the 2001 Atrium Mall bombing, the 2002 Bali bombings, and the 2003 Marriott Hotel bombing.¹⁵ That faction later formed its own independent cell, Al-Qaeda in the Malay Archipelago, which carried out the 2004 Australian Embassy bombing, the 2005 Bali bombings, and the 2009 Marriot and Ritz Carlton hotel bombings.¹⁶ In 2008, JI co-founder Abu Bakar Ba'asyir left

the organization and established Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT), which operated partially above ground and partially clandestinely.¹⁷ In 2014, JAT split following Ba'asyir's decision to support ISIS, leading those who opposed ISIS to form Jamaah Ansharus Syariah (JAS).

Communal conflict in Poso (Central Sulawesi province) and Ambon (Maluku province) between 1998 and 2007 also gave rise to local jihadi groups, which were affiliated with JI as well as Mujahidin KOMPAK. This article looks at the entry process of two Poso-based affiliates: Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh (also referred to as Tanah Runtuh) and Mujahidin Kayamanya. These local conflict-oriented groups had far lower entry barriers and greatly expedited pathways to membership compared to Jemaah Islamiyah, where it frequently took upwards of a year and as long as five years until the *bai'at* (loyalty oath).

Since 2013 Indonesia has also seen the emergence of a pro-ISIS network which was responsible for the 2016 Jakarta attack, the 2016 Solo police station suicide bombing, and the 2017 Jakarta Kampung Melayu attack. This network was grafted onto an array of existing Islamist extremist groups. Most of these are loosely organised under the umbrella of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) led by *takfiri* cleric Aman Abdurrahman or associated with the much smaller network led by former JI member Abu Husna.¹⁸ These groups and networks are linked to Indonesians who have joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq.¹⁹ Most notable when looking at the pro-ISIS network as a whole is that the selection criteria, and induction processes are much looser than any of the other Indonesian militant organisations. This article will discuss these pro-ISIS groups within each of the four pathways – *pengajian* (Islamic study groups), local conflicts, kinship, and schools – in order to show where they conformed and where they diverged.²⁰

The highly factionalized landscape of militant Islamism in Indonesia offers rich opportunities for those seeking to understand the pathways through which Indonesians have

joined and are joining Islamist extremist groups. Moreover, the cross-group variation allows for the identification of patterns across movements, regions, roles, generations, and history.

The *Pengajian* pathway

Pengajian (Islamic study groups) are widespread across Indonesia covering the full religious spectrum from traditionalist to modernist and from moderate to radical Islam. Not surprisingly, they have also been the most common pathway into Indonesian Islamist extremist groups. Indeed, 87 of the 106 militant Islamists in the dataset for this article joined through radical *pengajian*. They were a key component in the recruitment of Muslims into the Darul Islam movement (DI) and Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) network since the 1980s as well as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) since 1993, and they continue to be crucial for understanding how Muslims have joined pro-ISIS groups in Indonesia since 2013.

Radical Islamic study groups have functioned autonomously as well as in conjunction with other pathways such as schools and local conflict. In their more exclusive form *pengajian* prepare a prospective member for induction into a particular Islamist organisation; in their more public form they aim at reaching out to the broader community through *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) in order to gain supporters and sympathisers. Both forms have been crucial to forming new relationships, separating the pious Muslim from the secular one, separating the jihadi from the “simply” pious, and separating a member or prospective member of a particular organisation from the broader jihadi environment. The strong social bonds formed in the more exclusive Islamic study sessions ensure both loyalty to the *ikhwan* (brothers) in that particular study group as well as the militant Islamist organisation.

Jemaah Islamiyah’s recruitment process through *pengajian* from its establishment in 1993 until 2002 was a tightly controlled one aimed at establishing a completely reliable and committed membership bound by loyalty not just to the *amir* but also their fellow *ikhwan*.

From being first “spotted” for potential recruitment in a public *pengajian* through the different stages of more exclusive *pengajian* could take anywhere from 18 months to five years.²¹ The duration of time in the study group depended on the level of commitment shown at the various stages, the frequency of attendance, and relationships built inside. This rigorousness and length as well as the formation and reshaping of relationships is illustrated by example of Yusuf, who joined JI via the *pengajian* pathway.

Yusuf developed an interest in Islam as a young adult in the mid-1990s. He was already working when he started attending Islamic study sessions at the Baitul Amin Muhammadiyah *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Jombang in the evenings. One of the Muhammadiyah teachers, who sympathised with JI, directed Yusuf and others to attend *pengajian* held by an *ustadz* (teacher) from the nearby JI *pesantren* Darus Syahadah.

After becoming friendly with this *ustadz*, Yusuf started going to his house to learn about Islamic education and *tauhid* (oneness of God). “First I studied Islam then I learnt about jihad. We also discussed the way the regime had treated [JI founders] Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir.”²² As the Darus Syahadah Islamic study sessions were more intensive than all the others he had attended, he wanted to join this group even though he did not know who they were at the time. Yusuf then attended what he called *pengajian khusus* (special Islamic studies sessions) and became part of a group of 20 people for nearly two years. These special study sessions were closed to the public and held in private houses. They were taught by a variety of *ustadz* from the *jamaah*. “One teacher was from [Bali bomber] Amrozi’s *pesantren* [Al-Islam], one was from Solo, and one was from Baitul Amin.”²³

From there Yusuf was invited by an *ustadz* from Al-Islam to join an intensive 3-day course referred to as MTI, short for Manhaj Taklimat Islamiyah (Islamic Briefing Material), the first part of which – MTI1 - covered *aqidah* (faith) and *ibadah* (worship). This was

followed by 3 days of *tadrib* (military training) in the mountains which included hiking, running, camping, and survival skills. Subsequently, it was expected that the members would stop having friends outside the community and would follow the rules of the community, isolating themselves from outsiders and interacting only with in-group friends.

After around 6 months of further *pengajian khusus* Yusuf was invited to attend MTI 2 which covered *iman* (belief), *hijrah* (migration) and the *bai'at* (oath). The MTI also addressed jihad which it defined in narrow military terms as *qital fisabillah* (war in the way of Allah) and considered obligatory.²⁴ At MTI 2 Yusuf met recruits from other places for the first time. The Islamic studies sessions now shifted from the *pengajian khusus* level to the even more exclusive *halaqah* (Islamic studies circle) level. “In the *halaqah* we learned that you don't just join *jamaah* Islam (the Islamic community) but *Jemaah Islamiyah*. However, I did not properly understand what that meant until the *bai'at*.”²⁵ With his *bai'at* in 1999, Yusuf reached a key commitment point and became part of a tightly knit, exclusive community. He was given a role, briefly becoming the deputy head for Jombang district. Then, he reached a second commitment point. He was offered the opportunity to train at Camp Abu Bakar in the Philippines in January 2000, thus becoming part of JI's Mindanao generation. At each of these points his relationship with JI was strengthened.

Yusuf's exhaustive description of the *pengajian* pathway into JI, shows that entry into JI as an outsider – as someone not from a jihadi family or JI school - was a painstakingly slow process going from large, public study sessions to increasingly smaller, exclusive, closed, and secretive ones. This gradual process of indoctrination and socialization ensured that only the most committed recruits became members. It enabled a careful assessment of the individual's character, and it assured that by the time he became a member, his circle of friends and mentors had narrowed and become focused on the in-group.

JI's *pengajian* pathway gained in importance after the 2002 Bali bombings when JI's schools came under scrutiny. At the same time, however, the joining process became less rigorous and more *ad hoc* as JI evolved into a "looser" organisation following the post-Bali arrest of significant numbers of key JI cadres while the remaining cadres went underground. A second series of arrests hit JI in 2007 in the context of the end of the Poso conflict which prompted JI to take a step back from jihad in Indonesia but also triggered reorganisation followed by a period of consolidation.²⁶

Pengajian have also been at the heart of this "new" Jemaah Islamiyah's recruitment strategy. Indeed, almost all of those the Indonesian police refers to as "Neo-JI" arrested between 2014 and 2016 in connection with producing, possessing, transporting, and storing weapons and explosives, came to JI through *pengajian*. Moreover, almost all of them were "spotted" initially at public *pengajian* at mosques not associated with JI from where they were "guided" into a smaller, more exclusive *pengajian* before eventually taking the *bai'at*.²⁷ The looser nature of the joining process is evident when looking at how Tatag Lusianto alias Awang became a member of JI. Awang was identified as a potential recruit in 2001 when he asked whether the Poso conflict was a jihad at a public, non-JI, *pengajian* but it was only in 2004 that he was approached by someone at the mosque who then invited him to his house. Having explored Awang's views in casual conversation, Awang was given a book on the historic struggle of DI leader Kartosuwirjo and his efforts to establish an Islamic state. This was followed by further conversations. Awang was then invited to more exclusive *pengajian*. There, he acquired a new circle of friends. He even set up an inter-*pengajian* study forum called FORMAT, showing how central these Islamic study sessions and groups had become to his new life. FORMAT became involved in the recovery activities after Yogyakarta was struck by an earthquake in 2006. It was only after these humanitarian aid efforts were completed that Awang was approached by a member of JI who invited him to join the special

pengajian which would lead directly to the *bai'at* and to becoming a member of JI and its exclusive community.

Like Yusuf, it took Awang years to move from first being identified to taking the *bai'at*. And as with Yusuf, the formation of new relationships was crucial to Awang's acceptance into JI. However, unlike Yusuf's tightly controlled and highly organised process with a carefully designed MTI curriculum, Awang's was much less rigorous in terms of progression and selection criteria as well as Islamic and ideological training. While this has arguably changed the quality of some of the members of this new JI, as a result of having to rely on selecting potential recruits at *pengajian* held by mainstream organisations or on university campuses, this has also broadened the pool of potential members and has allowed JI to target specific types of individuals. Indeed, JI's end of year report by its Directorate of Tarbiyah (Islamic education) for 2013-14 shows that JI was strategically trying to recruit university students, doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, chemists, information technologists, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, and metallurgists in order to build an Islamic society as the foundation upon which to establish an Islamic state.²⁸

Even with the rise of the internet and social media *pengajian* remained a key pathway as can be seen when looking at the pro-ISIS groups in Indonesia. As one *jihadi* explained:

If you join a Telegram channel or Facebook group you need to be active. If you are not active in the discussions the assumption is that you are a spy and you would be kicked out. Then, after a while, a direct contact would be set up through Facebook or Telegram like an invitation to a study group.²⁹

Thus, while the entry point was online, the actual process of joining the pro-ISIS community was through personal contact and forming social bonds, which signalled true commitment.

One such pro-ISIS group conducting *pengajian* was led by Syamsudin Uba who described his role as “telling people about the concept of al-Baghdadi.”³⁰ He held *pengajian*

for separate groups of men, women, the youth, and the general public “to socialise the caliphate.” In the early days he even held Islamic study sessions on campus – until he was kicked out. As Uba’s group Al-Aqsha Haqquna was originally established as a pro-Palestine organisation, Uba also used Palestine *pengajian* to spread the ISIS message and as a hook for recruiting into his pro-ISIS *pengajian*. For instance, at a *tabligh akbar* (mass religious meeting) he held on 30 July 2017 “we told them [the people attending the meeting] that [the] al-Aqsa [mosque] will not be liberated without the caliphate. So joining the caliphate is the only way [to liberate Palestine].” After such public sermons, there would always be a follow-up, for example through WhatsApp messages inviting people to join Islamic studies sessions.³¹

As in Jemaah Islamiyah, the *pengajian* had different levels. As Uba explained: “We need to see that they qualify before they go to the next level. This is a process. They need to read the Quran. They need to fast on Mondays and Thursdays. We look at them. We look at the family. Are they just talking or is this truly their belief?”³² Once an individual has passed through these steps and passed all necessary evaluations, they would come to a point where the next level of commitment would be ascertained. In this case, that meant *hijrah* (migration) to Syria for jihad or to live in the ISIS caliphate. If an individual was deemed to be ready, he would “get instructions via Telegram on how to link up with [the Indonesian commander of the ISIS Southeast Asia battalion] Bahrumsyah.”³³ Thus, for Indonesian ISIS supporters, true commitment necessitated first establishing new relational ties with other ISIS supporters in Indonesia and then abandoning their entire social network for a new life in Syria.

The Local Conflict Pathway

The desire to defend Muslim communities under attack motivated hundreds of Indonesians to go to Afghanistan in the 1980s, to the Philippines in the 1990s, and to Syria

since 2013. Training or fighting in Afghanistan or the Southern Philippines served as a commitment point for those who had already joined an Islamist extremist group and taken the *bai'at* while the Syria conflict since 2013 served both as an entry point and commitment point reflecting its glocal dynamics.³⁴ Between 1998 and 2007, Indonesians also joined local jihads in the context of the communal conflicts, which had erupted in Poso (Central Sulawesi province) in December 1998 and in Ambon (Maluku province) in January 1999. Of the 106 individuals in the dataset used by this article, 21 joined Indonesian militant Islamist groups as a result of these local conflicts, making this pathway the second most frequently cited.

The communal conflicts in Ambon and Poso originated from social, political and economic shifts resulting from decades of in-migration of Indonesians from other parts of the country, the centralizing and uniformizing policies of the Suharto regime, and the real and perceived Islamization of Indonesia in the 1990s. The violence saw Muslims and Christians pitted against each other, churches and mosques targeted, and religion used for mobilization. Not surprisingly both Ambon and Poso became an entry point into jihad and jihadi organizations for a host of Indonesian Muslims, those who were living in those conflict areas and those living in other parts of Indonesia, notably Java, who were motivated by feelings of solidarity. The latter arrived in response to the first extreme violence against local Muslims which in the Ambon conflict came in the form of the organised targeting of Muslim migrants by Ambonese Christians in January 1999.³⁵ In the Poso conflict this extreme violence was the Walisongo massacre in May 2000, which saw more than 100 students at the local Walisongo Islamic boarding school and migrants from the nearby transmigration location hacked to death by local Christians.³⁶ For both Javanese mujahidin and local mujahidin interpersonal and social relationships became a strong motivating factor - to go, to join, to stay, and to participate in the violence. This is most obvious when looking at the Afghan alumni in JI as well as Poso's Mujahidin Kayamanya and Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh. These

relationships also became a key factor in continuing the jihad even after the communal conflicts had ended - Poso in December 2001 and Ambon in February 2002. This continuing jihad was characterised by revenge attacks in both areas by extremist Muslims until 2005 in Ambon and 2007 in Poso. In Poso, moreover, the strong social bonds and networks of former combatants allowed for a re-emergence of violence from 2012 to 2016.

The first Javanese to arrive in Ambon in February 1999 came through KOMPAK, the humanitarian aid wing of Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII), which set up a coordinating office in the Waihaong area of Ambon city through which all outside organisations were subsequently channelled and allocated local bases. KOMPAK became the main avenue for Indonesian Muslims seeking to volunteer in Ambon either in a humanitarian or military capacity. This included members of Jemaah Islamiyah who were frustrated by the initial reluctance of JI to commit fighters. KOMPAK's openness turned the Ambon conflict into a pathway into jihad for anyone who wanted to volunteer as well as a pathway into what became "Mujahidin" KOMPAK. Jemaah Islamiyah, in contrast, was and remained exclusive; its volunteers were already members and most of them, like their military commander Zulkarnaen, were Afghan veterans, who already had strong social bonds and had formed a kinship-like community within JI. Moreover, many had gone to Ambon before the JI central leadership had given the green light and some had gone in complete defiance of the JI leadership. They had done so because as Afghan veterans they believed that they had the duty to defend fellow Muslims irrespective of political considerations and because Zulkarnaen had asked them to. Many went through KOMPAK, which was eased by the fact that KOMPAK's leader Arismundar was also a member of JI and an Afghan alumnus.

Among the early KOMPAK volunteers were Jek Harun, Asep Jaja, and Abu Sayyaf who were motivated by feelings of solidarity, by the desire to help Ambon's Muslims "with rebuilding the houses",³⁷ and to provide aid to the displaced Muslims.³⁸ The subsequent

transition from humanitarian aid worker to jihadi was a simple one. When Abu Sayyaf realised that it “was not possible to deliver the humanitarian aid without being armed” he “joined military training for 5 days” including “training with automatic weapons.”³⁹

Aput, who joined a year later in 2000, after KOMPAK had opened its doors to anyone who wanted to go, had a remarkably similar pathway, except that KOMPAK was now using the conflict and its humanitarian mission to actively recruit for Mujahidin KOMPAK. Aput was a student at Trisakti University in Jakarta when the Ambon conflict erupted, and because he was interested in the conflict he started attending meetings held by DDII and by the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World (KISDI) where they were shown videos on the communal violence which were then followed by discussion. He “felt called to go to Ambon to help” so he became a volunteer for DDII to deliver humanitarian aid and “signed up with KOMPAK to go to Ambon”.⁴⁰ He was sent to Seram island, next to Ambon, to deliver aid and “on the way we were shot at.” Upon his return to the KOMPAK office in Waihaong, KOMPAK’s coordinator and military commander “Abdullah Sunata asked us whether we wanted to return to Java as our mission was completed or whether we would like to join the military training and help defend the Muslims.”⁴¹ He decided to join the military training at a camp in East Seram where he studied *fiqh jihad* (Islamic jurisprudence on jihad) and received “weapons training with AKs and M-16s” from trainers all of whom were Afghan veterans.⁴²

While volunteers from Java were motivated by the desire to help and defend fellow Muslims, revenge was among the main motivations of local Muslims. One local Ambonese *mujahidin* leader cited “Muslims being terrorised out of the areas where they were minorities”⁴³ as his reason for wanting to fight, while one Muslim child fighter joined because he wanted to “defend my religion but also because my older brother died.”⁴⁴ In the Poso conflict, the Walisongo massacre in May 2000 became the single most referred to

reason for locals wanting to become *mujahidin*. As one member of the Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh explained: “After Walisongo, we wanted revenge”.⁴⁵ Others concurred stating that they were angry after they saw the bodies floating down the river, “five to six bodies every day and I don’t know how many at night”,⁴⁶ “the bodies of women, children, babies – mutilated.”⁴⁷

The Javanese *mujahidin* in both conflicts set out to improve local military capacity. In Ambon, KOMPAK and JI trained local Muslims but did not formally partner with affiliate groups, viewing them as “unsuitable” and “unreceptive” for anything other than military training.⁴⁸ This differed greatly from Poso, where the population was deemed to be duly “receptive.”⁴⁹ It was this receptiveness alongside Poso’s strategic position which made the leadership of JI’s *mantiqi* (region) III consider establishing a *qoidah aminah* (secure base) there.⁵⁰ Like in the Ambon conflict, KOMPAK was the first to enter. This time it was followed quickly by JI around August 2000 and both established local affiliates: Mujahidin KOMPAK affiliated with local fighters in the Kayamanya neighbourhood and JI with the community around Tanah Runtuh. The primary differences between JI’s and Mujahidin KOMPAK’s recruitment process was that JI instituted a modified version of their *pengajian* pathway at Tanah Runtuh while Mujahidin KOMPAK ran a three to four week course which focused on military training, preferring a “learning by doing” approach.⁵¹

Islamic study sessions were central to the process of becoming a member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh and this differentiated it from Mujahidin Kayamanya as well as the Ambon conflict as a whole. Of the 21 individuals who cited local conflict as key to their joining an Islamist extremist group, 12 attended Islamic study sessions at Tanah Runtuh. They explained that in the weeks following the Walisongo massacre, *ustadz* from JI began arriving and held public Islamic studies sessions in certain local mosques. For local attendees,

the lessons provided a common Islamic lens to legitimate the desire for revenge that was already present.⁵²

As “BR”, who was in the first batch of volunteers, recalled “the *pengajian* took place after the evening prayer in the Bonesompe neighbourhood of Poso city. The imam announced it and invited anyone interested to stay. So I decided to stay”.⁵³ Reflecting on what he learned in the *pengajian*, B.R. noted he and his peers gained a shared understanding of Islamic brotherhood and how jihad was an obligation from which they could not run.⁵⁴ “Yuda,” who was also in the first batch, explained that those who attended the *pengajian* learned “the meaning of jihad”, “how to wage jihad” and “how to recognize a *kafir* (unbeliever).”⁵⁵ While the youth attendees in Poso were learning to reframe their desire for revenge against the Christians as seeking and obtaining justice, the Javanese *ustadz* holding these study sessions were noting regular attendees and checked their background.⁵⁶ BR, “after maybe 7 times” attending Islamic studies sessions, was invited to join the *tadrib* (military training). “They told us to bring sports clothes, a change of clothes, a towel, soap, toothbrush and a Quran”.⁵⁷ The training lasted for a week and the 30 volunteers were taught “the study of strategy, tactics, warfare, force formation, how to shoot, camouflage, making bombs, and protecting yourself from the enemy.”⁵⁸

For the first batch of volunteers, *tadrib* came right after the public Islamic studies sessions as fighters were desperately needed and their “instructors were ex-Afghan veterans - 11 persons.”⁵⁹ Subsequent batches moved to special Islamic studies sessions and only then to *tadrib*, where their instructors and later their commanders were the star pupils from the first batch like BR. With this new manpower and immediate security needs addressed through the first batch, *tadrib* also became more flexible with a more intensive option of 3 full days as well as a less intensive 3 week option evenings only.⁶⁰ The process was then completed with *dauroh* (group internal Islamic studies) which focused on the Islamic community, the

caliphate and the *bai'at*.⁶¹ The *ustadz* determined when you were ready to move on to the next stage as a result of which “some persons from the first batch took their *bai'at* with the third batch.”⁶² Until the *bai'at* none of the volunteers were aware that they being recruited by JI.

As BR recalled: “I knew it was an Islamic community but I did not know it was an organisation” [at the time].⁶³ Those interviewed reported that even at the time of the *bai'at*, they were still unaware that their teachers and trainers were JI. This is not all too surprising as a *bai'at* is always made to a person rather than an organisation. Those who joined Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh recalled making their *bai'at* to Abu Rusdan who was a member of JI's central board and Abu Tholut, then the head of JI's *mantiqi* III, or later to Poso Muslim leader, Haji Adnan Arsal,⁶⁴ whose Islamic boarding school became the base of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh.

The *pengajian* and training provided the volunteers and later members of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh and Mujahidin Kayamana with a like-minded peer group, which shared the experiences of the conflict, a sense of vengeful solidarity, an ideological prism to legitimate that desire for revenge, and the experience of induction into their respective organisations. The social bonds formed during the induction were further reinforced by the shared experience of defending neighbours together and carrying out attacks together against Christians and the security forces. These peer relationships, moreover, developed kinship-like characteristics as the jihadi brethren moved into the space left by their families which had been killed, dispersed, and displaced to safer areas outside Poso. The new jihadi family strengthened their resolve and motivated members of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh and Mujahidin Kayamanya in no uncertain terms.

The social bonds formed during the Ambon and Poso conflict also ensured that enduring and reliable networks existed after the conflicts ended. These have subsequently been drawn upon to establish new pro-ISIS militant Islamist organisations in the area and

have played a key role in recruiting new members into them. One such organisation is Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (MIT) which was established in Poso in late 2012 under the leadership of Santoso, who himself had been a member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh. Santoso drew upon these relationships, unaddressed Muslim grievances from the Poso conflict, and the desire for revenge against the police to recruit local Muslims into his new group. Another example is the Indonesian ISIS network more broadly, which actively sought out Ambon and Poso alumni as they had prior combat experience. The most prominent of these was Abu Walid who went to Ambon with Mujahidin KOMPAK in 1999 where he fought under the name of Kholid. In December 2013, he departed for Syria to join the jihad against the Bashar al-Asad government and became one of the most important leaders in ISIS' Indonesian battalion Katibah Nusantara.⁶⁵

The Kinship pathway

The literature on terrorism notes that kinship is an important mechanism for recruitment.⁶⁶ This is especially true for Jemaah Islamiyah. Kinship provides unmatched loyalty and unconditional support, as it is not only the ties of in-group solidarity that bind but also the actual familial ties that ensure commitment. In joining, kinship ties create more flexible pathways to entry; in some instances, they expedite the route into the group, bypassing *pengajian* altogether. In conducting illicit activities, familial ties reduce the likelihood of infiltration.⁶⁷ Kinship also makes disengagement far more difficult, as one risks severing ties with parents, children, spouses and siblings, should one depart the group, and it makes recidivism more likely as relatives can put pressure via familial bonds to lure someone back in.

Due to the longstanding history of Indonesian jihadi groups there are multigenerational jihadi families, where the parents were members of Darul Islam, who

subsequently joined JI following the split. Some sent their children to JI schools. When they married and had children themselves, they followed the same path. The multigenerational jihadi tradition and its intersection with a radical Islamic education in a handful of boarding schools is possibly unique to Indonesia. It has also been largely unique to Jemaah Islamiyah, which is the only salafi-jihadi organization in Indonesia that has an extensive school network. This tradition of what Sidney Jones termed “inherited jihadism” can also be seen with the involvement of Indonesian jihadis in conflicts abroad where the sons of those who joined the Afghan jihad in the 1980s have, in turn, joined the Syrian jihad.⁶⁸

Of those interviewed, 11 joined through via kinship. There are four main routes. The most common is through parents where one is actually born into jihad, socialized by parents into the jihadi worldview, and sent to the right jihadi schools to be groomed to become a member of a jihadi organization. The jihadi community is at the core of one’s social network from childhood. The second route is through siblings. Here the pattern is that older siblings often recruited younger siblings, although they did not necessarily persuade their older siblings to follow them. The third is through extended family members such as uncles who groomed a specific nephew to follow them from a young age. The fourth is through marriage which has served to consolidate in-group social ties and commitment to the organization.

One example of being born into a jihadi family is Abu Rusdan, son of Darul Islam leader Haji Muhammad Faleh.⁶⁹ Due to his family ties, Abu Rusdan’s pathway into Darul Islam and subsequently JI was expedited. He explained, “my circumstance made me close to them. I often interacted with them so they trusted me.”⁷⁰ Abu Rusdan was inducted into the group at the age of 15.⁷¹ He fought in Afghanistan, was a member of JI’s central board, and briefly served as interim *amir* in the 2000s.

Another example of joining via the parents is “Hisham,” a *dai* (preacher) with JI who came from a Darul Islam family and whose father had been a subordinate of JI’s founder,

Abdullah Sungkar before Sungkar established JI. Hisham's parents, all of his siblings and their spouses all joined Jemaah Islamiyah. When he was little, he recalls, veterans of the Soviet-Afghan war visited his house and his father took him to the *tabligh* (mass religious meeting) that Abdullah Sungkar held every weekend. Thus, he was socialized from a very young age into salafi-jihadi ideas. His parents also sent the boys to salafi-jihadi schools affiliated with Sungkar's network, with his elder brother attending Al-Mukmim, Abdullah Sungkar's own *pesantren*, and Hisham being sent to Al-Islam in the early 1990s.⁷² Al-Islam represented the second stage in his socialization process not only into JI but also into becoming a *mujahid*. When he graduated in 1997, he took the *bai'at*, noting that

Actually, I had no idea what JI was. I just knew this was a community that fought for Islam through war. I joined them because since I was a kid, my father told me he would like me to die as a martyr and I always dreamed I would.⁷³

Hisham's joining process illustrates how family ties and educational ties reinforced one another. He was socialized from an extremely young age into the JI community. What stands out to him is not what he learned but with whom and from whom he learned it. He did not fully understand what he was joining, only that it would enable him to live out the purpose his father had set for him - to die a martyr.

There are also several recent instances where sons of veterans of the Afghan jihad have gone to join the Syrian jihad, thereby carrying on the family jihadi tradition. The most prominent of these were Umar Abdul Azis, son of Bali bombing mastermind Imam Samudra, who joined ISIS;⁷⁴ Rusydan Abdul Hadi, son of Afghan veteran Amir Mahmud, who also joined ISIS⁷⁵ and Ridwan Abdul Hayyie, son of Abu Jibril, who joined a local jihadi group.⁷⁶ In these instances, however, it was not parents intentionally socializing their child

into a particular group or sending their children to Syria but the adult children themselves who made the decision to follow in their fathers' footsteps.

Older brothers also brought younger siblings into Jemaah Islamiyah without parental approval or encouragement. For example, Mukhlas, former commander of JI's *Mantiqi I* brought younger brothers, Ali Imron and Amrozi and younger half-brother Ali Fauzi into Jemaah Islamiyah. In fact, Mukhlas had been grooming Ali Imron since the age of 10. As a result, Ali Imron had an expedited joining process. He did not have to spend years in *pengajian*. Instead, he took the *bai'at* and went to Afghanistan on the strength of Mukhlas' recommendation. As he explained,

I heard from my friends, who studied alongside me in the Afghanistan Mujahidin Military Academy that they joined JI through education first. They were educated by Darul Islam members in their respective areas. They already knew that the *pengajian* they attended would be different from *pengajian* organized by [the mainstream organizations] Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. They already knew about Darul Islam, its mission and vision, when they were sent from Indonesia to Malaysia. In contrast, I did not know. I only knew that Mukhlas had a community or a group or an organization because Mukhlas often talked about it when I was a kid. He told me that he had a community and was an *ustadz*. I didn't understand the details. Hence when I wanted to join Mukhlas, the only thing I knew and possessed was Mukhlas...I felt I was the most special. The process was special because it was so fast. I was not from a JI *pasantren* (Islamic boarding school). I spent a very short time [one month] at Al-Mukmin. I was never educated [Islamically]. I never joined *halaqah* sessions.⁷⁷

Ali Imron's experience was somewhat unique among the 11 cases of kinship examined.

Among the siblings that Mukhlas recruited into JI, only Ali Imron was allowed this expedited

trajectory, as Mukhlas deemed him to be ideologically ready for participation in jihad and in his community. His brother, Amrozi, and half-brother, Ali Fauzi, who joined later, after Ali Imron had already left for Afghanistan, were not deemed as “ready.” They both went through courses of religious study at the Luqmanul Hakim Islamic boarding school in Malaysia in order to cultivate the correct mindset, devotion, commitment, and temperament.

When siblings joined Islamist extremist groups in Indonesia, rather than being born into them, they either joined together or an older sibling recruited a younger one. Even in large families, younger siblings typically did not or were not able to recruit the older ones. While Mukhlas brought his younger brothers, Amrozi and Ali Imron, into Jemaah Islamiyah, he was not able or did not attempt to recruit his four older siblings. Similarly, the twins Saifuddin and Nurudin, JI and Mujahidin KOMPAK members and Ambon veterans, joined together but they did not recruit older brother Muinudinillah.

Another type of kinship socialization is through an extended family member. Two of those who joined Islamist extremist groups in the dataset of this article did so through uncles. Here too familial social ties were used to frame the joining process as is illustrated by “Abu Azzam”, who was systematically groomed by his uncle for almost a decade from 2000 to 2009 to join Al Qaeda in the Malay Archipelago led by Noordin M. Top. The grooming of Abu Azzam started when he was still in school.

[In the beginning] he would often invite me to climb mountains with him. Or go hiking or swimming. [He would then introduce me to people] “Syahrir is from JI. He’s good at using weapons.” He taught me jihad in a subtle manner. We often had small talks, “about this, what do you think.”⁷⁸

When this grooming process came to fruition “Abu Azzam” already had a college degree and a steady job. However, his uncle was able to involve him in his cell and in the preparation of an attack on the basis on their relationship.

I studied psychology [at university] but he had a better understanding than me in practicing psychology. We were getting closer. He always called me and asked me where I was. “Could you please take me somewhere? Could you please accompany me?” I only knew afterward that when he asked me to take him somewhere, we were meeting Noordin [M. Top]. I met Noordin several times but I did not know he was Noordin. [I also met] Afham, Soni and Dr. Azahari. He knew I would reject *pengajian* because I had already studied religion in religious school and felt I no longer needed to attend religious study. Hence, the way he approached me was great. He knew what I liked and what I didn’t like....He was a disciplined person.... He had his cell. He had his network. He was not very open about it. I only knew when I was already on the inside. Suddenly, ten people visited me. Then he explained who they were. He wanted me to be comfortable. He knew I rejected bombing so he needed to make me love him first. Then, finally, he said, “if someday you are with me, would you participate in a bombing?” He was able to make me say “yes I would do it for you.”⁷⁹

In this instance, his uncle systematically cultivated him as an asset, built up their relationship, and in doing so, caused him to abandon his internal sense of right and wrong. As with Mukhlas and Ali Imron it was the relationship which drove the membership, as opposed to ideology or specific grievances.

Within a discussion of kinship, it is also necessary to talk about the role of marriage. Marriage can function as a pathway to entry. However, most often, it has functioned as a commitment point. Within militant Islamist groups broadly, marriage has been a way of

solidifying in-group ties by finding a partner from the group, thus ensuring any offspring will be raised to share the group's worldview and ideally, become members in good standing themselves in time. Within JI and DI, as with other Java-based Muslim groups, in-group marriage has been commonplace.⁸⁰ It would be expected that someone from a JI or DI family would have their marriage arranged to a female member of the group. Even for those who joined JI and DI through *pengajian*, marriage became a way to show commitment to the organization. Yusuf, for example, whose pathway was discussed in the Islamic study sessions section, had his marriage arranged while in prison to a member of the JI women's wing in Semarang. Until the 2017 school year, he was sending his children to a JI school in Semarang, thus ensuring they would be raised with the correct Islamic worldview, even though his activities in JI were minimal. His marriage and connections to his wife and her family ensured that JI will always be part of his larger social network.

Marriage has also played a role in Indonesia's pro-ISIS network. Here, in addition to traditional arranged marriages there were also "secret marriages" and the result of "meeting" on Facebook or in a Telegram group, although it should be pointed out that the first "online marriage" was in Noordin M. Top's network. While marriages in the pro-ISIS network, DI, and JI all were a commitment point, in JI and DI they served to strengthen the social bonds within the in-group and loyalty to the network. By contrast, some marriages in the pro-ISIS network in Indonesia - as opposed to those in Syria - served to underwrite terror attacks. The most prominent of these is Dian Yulia Novi who would have become Indonesia's first female suicide bomber had she not been arrested on her way to attack the presidential palace. According to her deposition, Dian met her husband Muhammad Nur Solikin through Facebook and married him secretly by proxy through representatives arranged by Solikin. They only met for the first time two days after their marriage in October 2016. In November,

on their second meeting they both took the *bai'at* to ISIS leader Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi, and in December, on their third meeting, Dian was to carry out a terror attack.⁸¹

The School/*pesantren* pathway

Both Darul Islam and Jemaah Islamiyah have their own networks of schools, *madrasas*, and *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). Many of these were founded by Darul Islam members, who went on to join Jemaah Islamiyah and took their school with them. Schools as a means of recruitment have largely been a Jemaah Islamiyah-specific pathway. There are estimated to be between 40 and 60 schools affiliated with JI.⁸² The most notable for jihadi recruitment historically have been Al-Mukmim in the village of Ngruki near Solo, which is currently affiliated with Jamaah Ansharusy Syariah (JAS); Al-Islam in Lamongan; Al-Mutaqin in Jepara; Darus Syahadah in Boyali; and the now closed Luqmanul Hakim in Malaysia's Johor state.⁸³ Pro-ISIS groups lack such a schools network. There have been a few schools associated with ISIS, most notably, Ibnu Mas'ud in Bogor, founded by the leader of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah, Aman Abdurrahman.

The Jemaah Islamiyah school system was and remains completely self-contained, beginning with playgroups to socialize the children in the salafi-jihadi tradition before they know any other alternatives.⁸⁴ They then move to kindergartens to study the Quran and elementary schools before being sent to a JI-affiliated boarding school.⁸⁵ Students can enter and exit at any time; some complete the entire system, while others enter this educational system at middle school or high school.

The purpose of these schools has been the cultivation of a network of graduates sympathetic to the salafi-jihadi worldview and understanding of Islam. However, a small proportion of those students (approximately 6-8 per cohort) who attended the school would be offered the opportunity to attend the extra-curricular religious study groups which could

potentially lead to eventual recruitment.⁸⁶ JI parents who send their children to JI schools do so with the intention that their sons will follow fathers into the group while daughters will be educated to become the wives of group members. For example, for Farihin Ahmad, a JI member from a multigenerational jihadi family who was involved in the 2000 attack against the Philippine ambassador, JI schools reinforced the messages he gave his own children about the necessity of jihad and increased the likelihood that his children would have the opportunity to follow in their father's footsteps.⁸⁷ However, those on the margins of JI also send their children to JI schools, for they see the schools' approach aligning to their personal religious principles. For example, Yusuf (see *pengajian* pathway), explained that he had sent his school-aged children to a Jemaah Islamiyah affiliated elementary school because they separated boys from girls and he deemed the quality of education better compared to other schools in the area.⁸⁸

M.B., a JI member first recruited into Darul Islam while a student at Al-Mukmin Islamic boarding school in the 1980s described the assessment metrics that were utilized in recruitment at the school while it was a Darul Islam and subsequently a JI school. He contended the screening process began as early as middle school and was undertaken with great care, examining the behaviour in religious study outside of formal *pesantren* activities and in one's daily activities. Recruiters observed students in Quran study. Who was diligently participating? They took note of their potential recruit's character: did they lie; did they break the rules; did they dress appropriately; were they calm; were they intelligent; were they clean, etc... They would be visited by the designated recruiters and invited to join Quran study groups and extra classes such as martial arts. They would be observed through these extra-curricular activities and it would be ascertained who had the potential to be recruited. Once they reached their second year of senior high school, if they passed that stage, they were then ready for *dauroh*, group internal study sessions over several evenings where potential

members were briefed on the history of Darul Islam, on the necessity of continuing the struggle, on intelligence, and other matters before they ultimately took the *bai'at*.⁸⁹

According to M.B. the process of being recruited at Al-Mukmin into what was Darul Islam in the 1980s and the process of being recruited into Jemaah Islamiyah following the split in 1993 was quite similar, insofar as both targeted the same kind of youth with the same core set of personality characteristics: loyalty, religious fervour, obedience, cleanliness, calmness, and intelligence - and both recruited at the same point, senior high school. He noted, however, that JI was far more cautious in the recruitment process than Darul Islam. Solahudin notes that only top students from safe family backgrounds were considered for recruitment; it was rare for JI to recruit someone from a military or police family.⁹⁰ Moreover, the course of study in the extra-curricular study groups differed, as JI study groups highlighted the MTI materials.⁹¹ According to Solahudin, after they had learned the material, they would take a religious course designed to reinforce what they had been learning; this was the final stage prior to induction.⁹² As one Al-Mukmin graduate who was interviewed by Solahudin explained:

I became a member of the Jemaah Islamiyah organization in 1994, when I was in sixth class at the Al-Mukmin Islamic boarding school in Ngruki, Solo. At the time, my friends and I took part in the MTI studies taught by Ustad Abdul Rohim, Ustad Joko and Ustad Mukhlis for around 10 days. When it was over, Ustad Joko invited my friends and me to take the oath as members of Jemaah Islamiyah.⁹³

Hisham's description of joining JI via the schools pathway at the Al-Islam *pesantren* in Lamongan following graduation echoes similar themes. As he came from a JI family, he would have been considered a safe recruit. He took the typical slate of classes, including Arabic, English and *sharia*, and likely was observed for his performance. While Hisham did not discuss being invited into extra-curricular study groups, he elaborated on the paramilitary

aspects of recruitment. While at Al-Islam, he met JI members who had just returned from training in Mindanao; he learned knowledge of jihad from Ali Imron; and he was taught how to shoot.⁹⁴ He explained the actual joining with almost an air of inevitability. He did his *dauroh* with Mukhlas for a week. In either 1996 or 1997, following graduation, members of JI's Surabaya branch appeared, recruited the fresh graduates and gave them their tasks. He took the *bai'at* in 1997.

Hisham also highlighted that the teacher-student discipleship relationship was among the most powerful social bonds to emerge from the schools pathway, notably, his experience as a student of Ali Imron. He explains, "When I was at Al-Islam, Ali Imron was my role model in jihad."⁹⁵ The bond between the teacher and student persisted after he graduated. When Hisham wanted to go to Mindanao to fight in a jihad rather than continue to work as a *da'i* (preacher), he reached out to Ali Imron for help.⁹⁶ When Imron went on the run following the Bali bombing, he sought out Hisham to accompany him.⁹⁷ Hisham contends Ali Imron still remains "his" *ustad*, and they converse weekly via Moto GP, Blackberry Messenger or WhatsApp chat.⁹⁸

Hisham noted that the *pesantren*'s approach changed somewhat following the first Bali bombings in 2002. Whereas he was taught practical applications of *jihad* such as shooting in addition to the traditional coursework, in the aftermath of the Bali bombing, the school curriculum was revised to focus on "regular Islamic subjects" like *sharia* and *aqidah* and away from *jihad* in practice.⁹⁹

Looking at the schools pathway there are clear commonalities between those students who joined Darul Islam in the 1980s and JI in the 1990s at Al-Mukmim and at Al-Islam. They were carefully selected. They were chosen based on personality characteristics, degree of commitment, and, for JI, having the right family background. As they reached the second year of high school, they were offered the opportunity for extra-curricular instruction in

Islamic studies that went beyond what was typically on offer at the school as well as instruction in martial arts and sports. To varying degrees, depending on the school, there was also some form of paramilitary training, although this was muted following the 2002 Bali bombings as attention turned to the *JI pesantren*, due to the affiliation of the bombers with specific schools. Either just prior to or just following graduation, they would be formally inducted into the group. Together with the family pathway, schools provided a steady stream of members into DI and JI and socialized a wider portion of the population into becoming sympathizers and supporters of those who had formerly been their playmates and peers.

While schools are not a prominent pathway in the pro-ISIS community, there are a few schools worthy of mention. Pesantren Anshorullah in Ciamis and Miftahul Huda in Subang were involved in preparations for the 2016 Jakarta bombing. The most well known pro-ISIS school is Ibnu Mas'ud, which opened in Depok in 2009 before moving to Bogor in 2011. Founded by Aman Abdurrahman, the school aimed to socialize children as young as four into the *takfiri* ideology.¹⁰⁰ According to Sofyan Tsauri, an ex-militant who was involved in the Aceh training camp in 2010, the school had a dual function: first, to educate the children of jihadis and, second, to serve as a safe house for fugitive extremists.¹⁰¹ When Aman Abdurrahman swore *bai'at* to Abu Bakar al Baghdadi, the school became affiliated with the pro-ISIS network. Indeed, as of July 2017, eight teachers and four students had gone to fight in Syria or had attempted to go, while another 18 from the school had been arrested or convicted on charges of plotting or carrying out terror attacks.¹⁰²

Conclusion

This article examined four major points of entry into Islamist extremist groups in Indonesia: *pengajian*, local conflict, kinship and schools. In all of these, social bonds have featured prominently. In the schools pathway, these have been bonds among peers and

between teachers and students. In JI circles in particular, one embarked on an extended multi-tiered process of indoctrination leading ultimately to induction. This process enabled a winnowing out of those who appear to show less commitment or who showed flaws in their character. The process of moving through those layers of Islamic study sessions also created intense bonds between teacher and student and among in-group members. While this pathway became less rigorous over the last decade, as JI attempted to widen its support base, there was still sufficient time spent in the *pengajian* to build ties of affinity, mentorship and friendship. The same has held true for Islamic study sessions sponsored by pro-ISIS groups

In the conflict pathway, for the local fighters, the shared experience of trauma amid the communal violence, the shared desire for revenge, and, if a member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, the bonding that occurred within the study group, fostered a similar unified sense of identity. The Javanese *mujahidin* who went to Ambon and Poso to fight were driven by a common sense of solidarity with their fellow Muslims; loyalty to in-movement seniors like Zulkarnaen who asked them to join the fight; and a common understanding that this was a defensive jihad and thus, their presence was required given their skill set. While the communal conflicts have ended, groups like Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (MIT) reopened the struggle against the Indonesian police, inspired by those same feelings of vengeful solidarity that drove the initial recruits to Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh and Mujahidin Kayamanya.

The kinship pathway differed markedly from the first two. Socialization into Jemaah Islamiyah or Darul Islam started from a young age. Parents, uncles and elder siblings exposed them into the right worldview, sent them to the right schools, and introduced them to the right people. In some instances, youth from jihadi families would have an expedited pathway to entry; in other cases, they would be sent to a JI or DI-affiliated boarding school. Eventually when the time came for them, he or she would typically marry someone from another JI/DI family or from a JI-affiliated school, thus further solidifying the commitment

and perpetuating those linkages over the next generations. In some cases, relatives targeted specific younger nephews or siblings for recruitment over the long term and systematically groomed them, drawing on in-family love and loyalty to ensure commitment. In other cases, simply having a parent who fought in a jihad or was executed by the state was sufficient to prompt someone to travel to Syria to seek their own jihad experience. However, for those inspired by relatives, the familial social bonds provided powerful reinforcement to stay in the movement and be a member in good standing as familial loyalty was intertwined with in-movement loyalty.

Finally, within Darul Islam in the 1980s and especially within Jemaah Islamiyah, following its split with Darul Islam, radical Islamic boarding schools also provided a pathway to entry into a circle of sympathizers of the movement and possibly, for those with the right temperament, family background and character, membership. The goal of these schools was to create a community of like-minded individuals sharing a common salafi-jihadi worldview that was sympathetic to the JI/DI perspective and goals. It was seen as an important step in the process of founding an Islamic society which would become the nucleus of an Islamic state after establishing the *qoidah aminah* (secure base). Of those youths, a small handful would be invited to join JI/DI proper. Thus, in contrast to the *pengajian* pathway, where one was expected to narrow one's social circle and divorce oneself from affiliations to other organizations, there was no such requirement for school recruits as they were effectively already part of the community. Indeed, the community was both the school and the *sub-jamaah* that existed within it. At the time of writing, there has been no evidence of the pro-ISIS groups attempting to build a broader schools network although there are some affiliated schools. While they have recruited from among the alumni of the radical boarding schools and have recruited from state schools and universities, they have preferred to work through *pengajian* and social media. In person ties, however, remain valued over social media.

¹ Many thanks to Greg Fealy and Sidney Jones for their fantastic critical feedback.

² Interview with Anas, former member of JI and Mujahidin KOMPAK, July 2010, Jakarta, Indonesia.

³ For research on joining extremist groups as a process, please see: Moghaddam, Fathali, *From the Terrorists Point of View*, (New York: Praeger Security, 2006); Andrew Silke, "Becoming a Terrorist", in Andrew Sike (ed), *Terrorists, Victims and Society*, (London: Wiley and Sons, 2003) , Quintan Wiktorowicz; . *Radical Islam Rising*, (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); Mark Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Donatella Della Porta,, "On Individual Motivations in Underground Political Mobilizations" in *Social Movements and Violence: Participation in Underground Organizations, International Social Movement Research*, 4, (1992); John Horgan and Max Taylor, "A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Processes in the Development of the Terrorist", *Terrorism and Political Violence*. 18:4 (2007).

⁴ Horgan and Taylor, "A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Processes in the Development of the Terrorist", pp. 590-91.

⁵ Silke, "Becoming a Terrorist."

⁶ Sageman., *Understanding Terror Networks*.

⁷ Della Porta, "On Individual Motivations in Underground Political Mobilizations", p.6.

⁸ See John Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways, from Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology about Radicalization into Terrorism", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 618:1 (2008); Mohamed Hafez, "The Ties that Bind: How Terrorists Exploit Family Bonds", *CTC Sentinel*, (February 2016) Sulastri Osman, "Jemaah Islamiyah: Of Kin and Kind," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 29:2 (2010).

⁹ Sidney Jones, "Inherited Jihadism: Like Father, Like Son", *Australian Financial Review*, 4 July 2007.

¹⁰ Osman, "Jemaah Islamiyah: Of Kin and Kind", pp. 167-70.

¹¹ When conducting interviews, we offered interviewees the opportunity to be referred to either by a general title, one of their in-movement aliases or an alias we constructed especially for this project. If the person was interviewed in prison, we used either the general title or a project constructed alias to ensure a measure of anonymity.

¹² IPAC, "The Evolution of ISIS in Indonesia", *IPAC Report No.13*, 24 September 2014.

¹³ There are different dates for the Darul Islam rebellions in Indonesia. Some historians consider 1962 as the end date with the capture of its key leader Kartosuwirjo while others prefer 1965 as that is when the last of the rebellions, the one in South Sulawesi, stopped. The year 1965 also saw Kartosuwirjo's execution. For a comprehensive discussion of the DI rebellions see C. Van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981).

¹⁴ See Solahudin, *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah*. UNSW Press. (2013).

¹⁵ See for example Ali Imron, *Sang Pengebom*, (Jakarta: Penerbit Republika, 2007).

¹⁶ See Sidney Jones, "The changing nature of Jemaah Islamiyah", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 59, No. 2, June 2005, pp.173-174.

¹⁷ ICG, "The dark side of Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT)", *Asia Briefing No 107*, 6 July 2010.

¹⁸ These include Jama'ah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT), Tauhid wa'al Jihad, Ring Banten and Mujahidin Indonesia Barat (MIB), Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (MIT), and Forum Aktivistis Syariat Islam (FAKSI). See IPAC, "The Evolution of ISIS in Indonesia", *IPAC Report No 13*, 24 September 2014. See also Sidney Jones and Solahudin, "ISIS in Indonesia", *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2015.

¹⁹ "Indonesian and Malaysian Support for the Islamic State", *Management Systems International Final Report*, 2016, p.2.

²⁰ This analysis does not cover the Indonesian ISIS battalion in Syria.

²¹ These stages according to Solahudin were *tabligh* (public religious meeting), *taklim* (smaller Islamic study group), *tamrin* (closed Islamic study group), and *tamhish* see Solahudin, *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia*, pp.160-61. Similarly Nasir Abas in his book explains the stages as *tabligh*, *taklim*, *tamrin*, and *tamhish* see Nasir Abas, *Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah: Pengakuan Mantan Ketua JI* (Jakarta: Abdika Press, 2009), p.99. These stages and terminology are JI specific. The majority of those interviewed for this article referred to *pengajian* (open to the public) and *pengajian khusus* (closed to the public). This article uses *pengajian* as it is a more generic term that encompasses all the militant Islamist discussed here.

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- ²² Interview with Yusuf, former JI member, Semarang, 8 August 2017.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Solahudin, *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia*, p. 159.
- ²⁵ Interview with Yusuf, former JI member, Semarang, 8 August 2017.
- ²⁶ For a detailed analysis of the “new” JI see IPAC, “The Re-Emergence of Jemaah Islamiyah”, *IPAC Report No 36*, 27 April 2017.,
- ²⁷ See for instance the Deposition of Rohmat Joahar Arifin alias Arifin alias Ali Dermawan alias Jao alias Nano, Markas Besar Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia Detasement Khusus 88 Anti-Terror, Berita Acara Pemeriksaan, 18 May 2014; the Deposition of Tatag Lusianto alias Ariyanto alias Awang alias Wahyu bin Jahri, Markas Besar Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia Detasement Khusus 88 Anti-Terror, Berita Acara Pemeriksaan, 9 March 2016; or the Deposition of Slamet Sucipto alias Awal alias Pak RT, Markas Besar Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia Detasement Khusus 88 Anti-Terror, Berita Acara Pemeriksaan, 19 May 2014.
- ²⁸ “Laporan Akhir Tahun Dittar 2013 ke 2014”, obtained by one of the authors.
- ²⁹ Conversation with an Indonesian jihadi, Jakarta, 27 July 2017.
- ³⁰ Interview with Ustadz Syamudin Uba, Al-Aqsha Al-Haqquna, Bekasi, 31 July 2017.
- ³¹ Interview with BeWe, ISIS recruiter, Bekasi, 31 July 2017.
- ³² Interview with Ustadz Syamudin Uba, Al-Aqsha Al-Haqquna, Bekasi, 31 July 2017.
- ³³ Interview with BeWe, ISIS recruiter, Bekasi, 31 July 2017.
- ³⁴ See Kirsten E. Schulze and Joseph Liow, “Making Jihadis, Waging Jihad: Transnational and Local Dimensions of the ISIS Phenomenon in Indonesia and Malaysia”, *Asian Security*, 2018.
- ³⁵ For a comprehensive analysis of the Ambon conflict see Gerry Van Klinken, “The Maluku Wars: Bringing Society Back In”, *Indonesia* 71: 1 (2001); Jacques Bertand, “Legacies of the Authoritarian Past: Religious Violence in Indonesia’s Moluccan Islands”, *Pacific Affairs* 75:1 (2002); Kirsten E. Schulze, “Laskar Jihad and the Conflict in Ambon”, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* IX :1 (2002); Birgit Bräuchler, *Cyberidentities at War: Der Molukkenkonflikt im Internet* (Bielefeld: Transcript. 2005); Noorhaidi Hasan, Noorhaidi, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2006).
- ³⁶ For a comprehensive analysis of the Poso conflict see Lorraine Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi: Were People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People”, *Indonesia*, Vol 72 (Oct 2001); Gerry Van Klinken, *Communal Violence and Democratisation in Indonesia: Small Town Wars* (London: Routledge, 2007); M. Tito Karnavian, *Indonesian Top Secret: Membongkar Konflik Poso* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2008); and Dave McRae, *A Few Poorly Organised Men: Inter-religious Violence in Poso, Indonesia* (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2013).
- ³⁷ Interview with Jek Harun, former member of Mujahidin KOMPAK, Solo, 18 August 2015.
- ³⁸ Interview with Abu Sayyaf, former member of Mujahidin KOMPAK, Solo, 17 August 2015.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Interview with Aput, former member of Mujahidin KOMPAK, Bekasi, 8 January 2014.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Interview with local mujahidin leader, Kebun Cengkeh (Ambon), 4 April 2005.
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Mahfud, Muslim child fighter, Ambon, 23 February 2011.
- ⁴⁵ Interview with a former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, Palu, January 2012.
- ⁴⁶ Interview with BR, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, Palu, 6 August 2017.
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Iwan Ambo, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, Palu, 5 August 2017.
- ⁴⁸ Interview with Nasir Abas, former head of JI Mantiqi III, Jakarta, 3 April 2017.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Interview with Abu Tholut, former head of JI Mantiqi III, former member of JAT, Kudus, 8 August 2017.
- ⁵¹ Julie Chernov Hwang, Rizal Panggabean, and Ihsan Ali Fauzi, “When We Were Separated, We Began to Think for Ourselves Again: The Disengagement of Jihadists in Poso, Indonesia”, *Asian Survey*, Vol 53, No 4 (2013), p.762.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Interview with BR, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, Palu, 6 August 2017.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Julie Chernov Hwang, *Why Terrorists Quit: The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), p134.
- ⁵⁶ Interview with Iwan Ambo, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, Palu, 5 August 2017.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with BR, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh, Palu, 6 August 2017.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.

- ⁵⁹ Interview with Cecep, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtu, Palu, 5 August 2017.
- ⁶⁰ Interview with Iwan Ambo, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtu, Palu, 5 August 2017.
- ⁶¹ Interview with BR, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtu, Palu, 6 August 2017.
- ⁶² Interview with Iwan Ambo, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtu, Palu, 5 August 2017.
- ⁶³ Interview with BR, former member of Mujahidin Tanah Runtu, Palu, 6 August 2017.
- ⁶⁴ Interviews with Iwan Ambo and Cecep, former members of Mujahidin Tanah Runtu, Palu, 6, August 2017.
- ⁶⁵ See Kirsten E. Schulze and Joseph Liow, "Making Jihadis, Waging Jihad: Transnational and Local Dimensions of the ISIS Phenomenon in Indonesia and Malaysia", *Asian Security*, 2018.
- ⁶⁶ See Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways, from Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology about Radicalization into Terrorism"; Hafez, "The Ties that Bind: How Terrorists Exploit Family Bonds"; Osman, "Jemaah Islamiyah: Of Kin and Kind"; Della Porta, "On Individual Motivations in Underground Political Mobilizations".
- ⁶⁷ See Osman, "Jemaah Islamiyah: Of Kin and Kind", p164.
- ⁶⁸ Jones, "Inherited Jihadism: Like Father, Like Son."
- ⁶⁹ Sidney Jones, "Darul Islam's Ongoing Appeal", *Tempo* article republished on the International Crisis Group website, 18 August 2010, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/darul-islam-s-ongoing-appeal>.
- ⁷⁰ Interview with Abu Rusdan, former member of Jemaah Islamiyah, Kudus, 8 August 2017.
- ⁷¹ Jones. "Inherited Jihadism: Like Father, Like Son."
- ⁷² He cannot recall whether it was 1991, 1992 or 1993.
- ⁷³ Interview with Hisham, member of Jemaah Islamiyah, Surabaya, July 2015.
- ⁷⁴ Dandy Koswaraputra, "Imam Samudra's Son Killed in Syria", *Jakarta Post*. 16 October 2015
- ⁷⁵ "Rusydan Putra Dr Amir Mahmud Hijrah ke Daulah Islamiyah, Syahid di Jabal Khilafah." *Panjimas*. 19 May 2015.
- ⁷⁶ Interview with Muhammad Jibril Abdurrahman, brother of Ridwan, Jakarta, 2 August 2017. See also A.Z. Muttaqin, "Ta'ziyah sekaligus tahniah atas gugurnya Ridwan", *Arrahmah*. 26 March 2015.
- ⁷⁷ Interview with Ali Imron, member of Jemaah Islamiyah, Jakarta police headquarters prison, Jakarta, 3 August 2017.
- ⁷⁸ Interview with "Abu Azzam", former member of Al-Qaeda in the Malaysian Archipelago, Jakarta, 1 August 2017.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ⁸⁰ See Osman, "Jemaah Islamiyah: Of Kin and Kind."
- ⁸¹ See the Deposition of Dian Yulia Novi alias Dian alias Ukhti alias Ayatul Nissa Binti Asnawi, Marka Besar Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia Detasemen Khusus 88 Anti Terror, Berita Acara Pemeriksaan, 16 December 2016.
- ⁸² There are conflicting estimates. Yusuf (see *pengajian pathway*) counted 40 such schools. Noor Huda Ismail in the course of research for his dissertation counted 60.
- ⁸³ Solahudin. *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia*. p161.
- ⁸⁴ Jones. "Inherited Jihadism."
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Correspondence with Taufik Andrie, Executive Director of the Institute for International Peacebuilding, November 21, 2017.
- ⁸⁷ Osman, "Jemaah Islamiyah: Of Kin and Kind." *RSIS Working Paper #194* (2010), p10.
- ⁸⁸ Interview with Yusuf, former member of Jemaah Islamiyah, Semarang, June 2016.
- ⁸⁹ Interview with MB, member of Jemaah Islamiyah, POLDA Metrojaya, Jakarta, 3 August 2017.
- ⁹⁰ Solahudin, *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia*, p. 162.
- ⁹¹ Ibid,
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Ibid, p.163.
- ⁹⁴ Interview with Hisham, member of Jemaah Islamiyah, Surabaya, July 2015.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁰ Tom Allard, "Indonesian School a Launchpad for Child Fighters in Syria's Islamic State", *Reuters*, 19 July 2017.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.