Looking at Links and Nodes:
How Jihadists in Indonesia Survived

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The major militant Islamist network in Indonesia, comprising the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and its associated groups, was believed to have been responsible for dozens of violent incidents after 2000, including the Bali bombings of 2002 and 2005. Generally JI sympathized with al-Qaeda's ideology, openly supported al-Qaeda and other militant ideologues by translating and publishing their work in Indonesia, and sent hundreds of fighters (*mujahidin*) to Afghanistan for training. The Indonesian militant Islamist groups were not foreign controlled, but they shared some features with a broader militant Islamist network. This essay takes as its point of departure Albert-Laszlo Barabasi's characterization of al-Qaeda as a matrix of self-organized networks, not a military organization with structured divisions. In Barabasi's theorization of networks, al-Qaeda appears as a "scale-free network" of a limited number of persons who had accumulated many nodes in a scattered and self-sustaining web. Hence, JI was loosely organized and yet hierarchical, composed of small cells held together by personal loyalties, family, school, and other friendly connections. Faced with intensifying police assaults, militant Islamists increasingly fell back on their networks. Using published reports and the author's own interviews with relevant individuals, this essay traces the links and nodes of the militant Islamic networks in Indonesia and examines why and how jihadists in Indonesia tenaciously sustained their violent activities.

Keywords: Indonesia, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), Islamist, jihadist networks, Islamic State (IS)

Introduction

It has been more than a decade since the Bali bombings of 2002, which increased international awareness of militant Islamists, more commonly called jihadists by Western media and security experts, in Indonesia.[1] Jihadists in Indonesia, represented by an

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1) Islamism and jihadism are political discourses similar to other political discourses such as socialism and liberalism. Islamism attempts to reestablish Islamic civilization and to center Islam within the ↗

organization called Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), carried out a series of attacks on Western targets such as US-owned hotels and tourist sites over the next few years. Indonesia became the "second front" in the War on Terrorism. Indonesian security authorities arrested or shot down most of the key jihadists and a few hundred other perpetrators and accomplices. JI and related groups became more and more dispersed, and the structures of their organizations dissolved. However, jihadists have survived in different forms with smaller groups and continued their "war on the enemy of Islam." Furthermore, the recent war in Syria and proclamation of the so-called Islamic State (IS) seem to have revitalized their international connections and activities. This paper examines why and how jihadists in Indonesia tenaciously sustained their violent activities.

To examine this, I shed light on JI and related groups in Indonesia by preliminarily applying network theories, mostly those proposed and summarized by Barabasi. There are detailed reports published by Sidney Jones on current militant Islamists,[2] and the historical background and chronological paths have been revealed by ex-activists and Indonesian experts (Abas 2005; Huda Ismail 2007; 2010; Solahudin 2011; 2013; Wildan 2013). There are hundreds of published and unpublished books, booklets, papers, and videos in which militant activists translate and share their ideology for their fellow activists. Using these materials as well as my interviews and discussions with activists, insiders, and experts, this paper tries to extract certain significant aspects of Indonesian jihadists by focusing on the links and nodes in such networks.[3] The significance of this paper is that it reorganizes existing reports and materials with theoretical and comparative views by applying network theories. Through focusing on several key actors or "nodes," this paper especially emphasizes the changing characteristics of the jihadist network in Indonesia, which could not be fully captured by existing studies. JI is an organization with a loosely organized but hierarchical structure that is divided into regional cells. Its members are recruited through families, schools, friends, or other connections.

As organizations weaken because of arrests and police assaults, jihadists modify

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↘ political order. It may involve an ideological struggle carried out by a diffuse strategy of "moral and intellectual reform" (Sayyid 1997; Miichi 2006). Jihadists are those who have given highest priority to armed struggle interpreted as *jihad fi sabilillah*, or "war in the cause of Allah." It should be noted that the usage and employment of the word "jihad" depends on identity. In the general Muslim context, all efforts to propagate Islam are jihad; in the eyes of jihadists, the word has come to signify a holy war against all infidels whom they stigmatize as such (Kepel 2004).

2) Her reports appeared on the Web site of the International Crisis Group (ICG). She founded the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) in 2013 and has provided updates on jihadists in Indonesia.

3) I would like to thank Taufik Andre, Nur Huda Islamil, the late Urwah alias Bagus Budi Pranoto, and many other anonymous informants.

themselves and rely more and more on new types of horizontal networks. Most recent violent attacks have been carried out by infamous, small splinter groups. It is not very meaningful to analyze each group or organization separately in this regard, and thus network analysis is useful.

The following sections will first provide the key concepts of network theories. They will then draw on the changing structure of jihadist organizations in Indonesia by briefly describing family and school ties and their international expansions and limitations. The network surrounding the Malaysian jihadist Noordin M. Top and the changes after his death will then be explained, by highlighting three figures. Before concluding, some implications of emerging Internet networks will be discussed.

I   Theological Background

Network theories assume that networks are present everywhere. They can be applied to understand issues ranging from how Christianity spread beyond Judaism to the vulnerability of the Internet and the spread of deadly viruses (Barabasi 2003, 7). Some key concepts and theories on networks give us suggestions to analyze social and political phenomena. This paper highlights several ideas for a deeper understanding of Indonesian jihadist networks.

In his influential book *Linked* (2003), Barabasi describes al-Qaeda as a military organization not with divisions but with self-organized networks. It was populated over the course of several years by thousands of individuals who were drawn to its radicalism by religious beliefs and impatience with the existing social and political order. It is a typical scale-free network in which a limited number of persons have many nodes, accumulated over the course of years, yielding a scattered and self-sustaining web (*ibid.*, 222–223). This model can be applied to the current condition of Indonesian jihadist networks, with some reservations.

Mark Granovetter's classical "weak-ties" theory also contributes to an understanding of jihadist networks in Indonesia. The weak-ties theory proposes something that sounds preposterous at first. A natural a priori idea is that those with whom one has strong ties, such as cherished friends, are more motivated to help with job information. In contrast to this, those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to different information than what we receive (Granovetter 1973, 1371). Weak ties (shown as thin lines in Fig. 1) between small clusters "play an important role in any number of social activities." This weak-ties model describes how militant Islamic activities have been conducted through links to
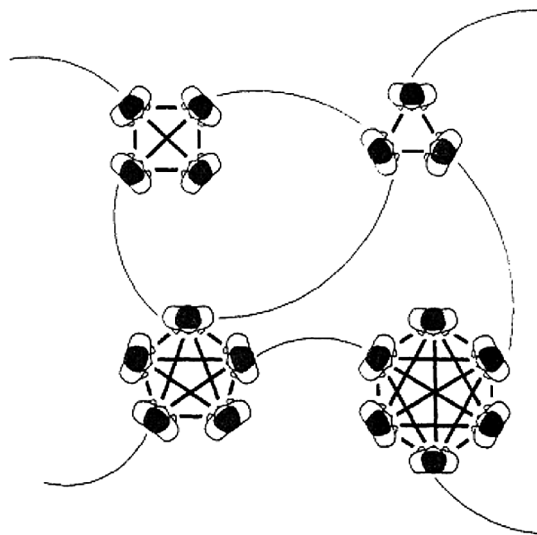
Fig. 1 Strong and Weak Ties
Source: Barabasi (2003, 43)

other, mostly local, groups and networks.

　An analysis of Indonesian militants reveals at the same time a weakness of network analysis. This paper suggests what we can and cannot find through network theory and how to overcome the theory's weaknesses.

II　From Hierarchical Organizations to Horizontal Networks

JI originated in the Darul Islam (DI) movement, which aimed to establish an Indonesian Islamic State (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII)[4] with armed uprisings during the 1950s. The uprisings were suppressed by the government. DI/NII subsequently went underground, where it divided into small factions. The founder of JI, Abdullah Sungkar (1937–99), was a leading figure of a DI faction and left it to his followers. Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir (b. 1938), his longtime associate, also belonged to the Masyumi party, one of the four major parties participating in the 1955 election, as well as related organizations such as DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council).

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　4) According to the classic understanding of Islamic theology, this world is divided into *dar al-Islam* (house of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (house of war). The Darul Islam (or Dar al-Islam) movement in Indonesia intends to establish Islamic political authority within Indonesian territory and includes the name Negara Islam Indonesia; the name of this group is thus abbreviated as DI/NII.

During the early 1970s, Sungkar and Ba'asyir, along with other preachers, established the Islamic boarding school Pesantren al-Mukmin, known as Pondok Ngruki, in the village of Ngruki near the city of Solo in Central Java. Sungkar and Ba'asyir were very critical of Suharto's authoritarian regime, which intervened in Islamic movements and enforced a basically secular nationalism, and they were charged under the law governing subversive activities.

Sungkar and Ba'asyir managed to escape to Malaysia in 1985 and settled in Johor, where they opened the Lukmanul Hakiem school and organized *mujahidin* (jihad fighters) to be sent to Afghanistan in the late 1980s in order to undergo military training. Influenced by Salafi (Wahhabi) scripturalism, Sungkar was said to be critical of inauthentic customs practiced by Masduki, a DI factional leader. In 1993 Sungkar formed his own group named Jemaah Islamiyah, which means simply "Islamic community" (see Solahudin 2011, 197–224). His political ideology sharpened at the time, from domestic political opposition to global jihad revolution.

> Al Qaeda is so scattered and self-sustaining that even the elimination of Osama bin Laden and his closest deputies might not eradicate the threat they created. It is a web without a true spider. (Barabasi 2003, 223)

The organizational structure of Indonesian jihadist groups changed over time and became closer to Barabasi's al-Qaeda model, though it was more hierarchical in the beginning. In the early years of the twenty-first century, JI was often described as having a central committee and regional branches (see Fig. 2). JI had four regional divisions, called *mantiqi*, which covered the area from the Philippines to Australia. Each of these divisions had a top-down command structure. There were four phases of systematic cadre training: public lectures (*tabligh*), religion courses with small numbers of students (*taklim*), a closed religious study session (*tamrin*), and an advanced stage (*tamhish*) (Abas 2005, 99–100). When a central or regional leader was captured and unable to maintain his leadership, he was quickly replaced. After Abdullah Sunkar, the leader (*amir*) of JI, died in 1999, the co-founder, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, adopted the position of amir. Several members replaced Ba'asyir after he was captured. Ba'asyir never returned as the amir of JI even after he was released, although he remains an important node.[5] Instead, he

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5) Ba'asyir established the Council of Mujahedeen for Islamic Law Enforcement (MMI, Majalis Mujahidin Indonesia) in 1999 and became its amir. MMI is a "legal" organization that aims at enforcing Islamic law in an Indonesian framework. Some JI members who remained underground and did not accept the Indonesian government did not join MMI. Ba'asyir established Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid in 2008 and separated from MMI. After he was arrested again in 2010, he was replaced as amir by M. Akhwan.
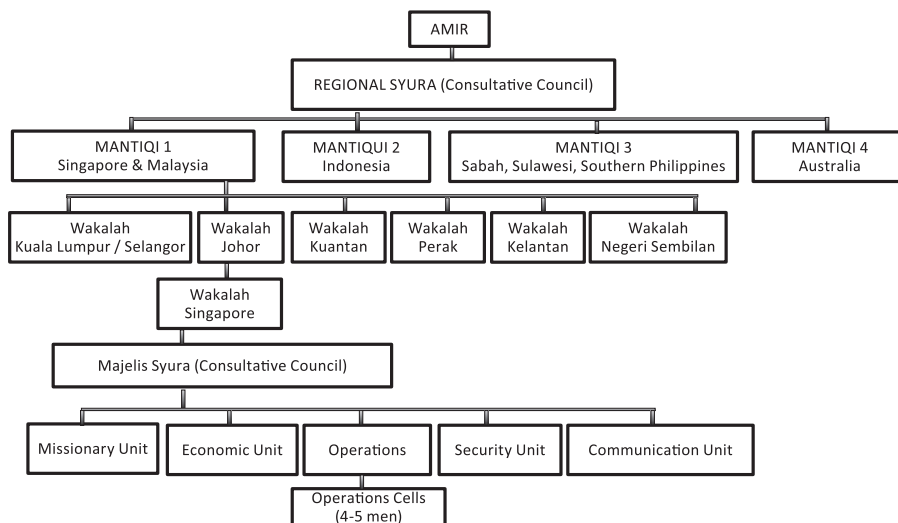
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Fig. 2 Organizational Structure of Jemaah Islamiyah, as Described by Singaporean Authorities in 2003
Source: Singapore, Ministry of Home Affairs (2003, 10)

established JAT (Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid) and became its amir in 2008. His religious authority and thus legal judgment (*fatwa*) are recognized even among non-JI and non-JAT members.[6] Nevertheless, the JI and JAT networks can survive without him. As I will describe later, the organizational structure dissolved and came to resemble self-organized webs. Though the earlier form of the organization was very different from the current form, it also can be argued that JI was designed flexibly from the beginning. Membership in JI is based on a loyalty oath (*bai'at*) pledged to the leader. During the 1990s, many members pledged their loyalty to Abdurrahim Thoyib, alias Abu Husna, who acted in a leadership position while Sungkar was away from Indonesia.[7] When JAT was established, members made another oath to Ba'asyir. According to former DI and JI members, a loyalty oath represents a lifetime commitment but does not necessarily entail continuing activity within the organization. Loyalty to the organization is less important than personal relationships, and JI can be described as an organization made up of personal networks.

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6) Ba'asyir's statements during his trials were often reported as fatwa by jihadist media. Ba'asyir has also issued open letters from time to time. See, for instance, "Fatwa Ustadz Abu: Kapolri, Jaksa Agung, dan Ketua Mahkamah Agung Murtad!" Arrahmah.com, March 1, 2011, accessed March 28, 2011; and "Inilah Surat Ustadz Ba'asyir dengan 3 Bahasa untuk Presiden Myanmar," VOA-Islam. com, August 1, 2012, accessed March 31, 2015.
7) Abdurrahim Thoyib was captured in Malaysia and deported to Indonesia in 2008.

It should be noted that al-Qaeda itself transformed significantly, especially after the 9/11 attacks in 2001 (see Sageman 2008). It is known that Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, al-Qaeda's leading strategist, wrote *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* with the aim of transforming al-Qaeda from a "vulnerable hierarchical organization into a resilient decentralized movement." He encouraged individuals to play a role without being part of an organization. Though his 1,604-page book predated 9/11, his idea was largely adopted after the collapse of the Taliban (Cruickshank and Ali 2007). Indonesian jihadists, probably intentionally from the beginning, followed al-Qaeda's path.[8]

III   Expanding Family and School Ties

Family and school ties characterize JI's internal network. Initially, most of the mujahidin sent to Afghanistan were recruited from DI families. There were, at the same time, members from non-DI families who were recommended from among Sungkar's close associates (Solahudin 2011, 204–205). Furthermore, Pondok Ngruki had survived during Sungkar's absence, and underground members of JI constantly recruited from among the organization's students and alumni. Because these students were not limited to members of DI families, JI's network expanded. Yet kinship consisted of important links in order to expand and maintain networks and a sense of community.[9] The 2002 Bali bombings were planned and executed by three brothers—Mukhlas, Amrozi, and Ali Imron—who taught at the Ngruki-related Al Islam school in Lomongan, East Java. Mukhlas married a Malaysian who was a sister of Nasir Abas, a leader of Mantiqi (Region) III. There are ample examples like this.

There are also examples of solidarity and mutual help among widows and orphans of mujahidin who were killed by the authorities. The wife of Dulmatin, a key figure in the 2002 Bali bombings, lived and worked at an Islamic school complex on the outskirts of Solo, where the widow of Imam Samudra, a Bali bomber executed in 2008, and the widow of Urwah, an associate of the aforementioned Noordin, also lived.[10] There are foundations for families of late mujahidin, such as the Infaq Dakwah Center and Yayasan Rumput, which were established by the jihadist media outlets VOA-Islam.com and

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8) Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's book was first published in Indonesian in 2009 by a JI/JAT-related publisher, Jazera, yet some of the activists must have read it much earlier as it was available on the Internet as early as 2004.

9) For how a sense of how community enhances cooperation, see Benkler (2011).

10) "Pindah ke Sukoharjo, Istri Dulmatin Bertetangga dengan Istri Imam Samudra," Detik.com, March 10, 2010, accessed March 31, 2015.

Muslimdaily.net. Abdurrachim Ba'asyir, a son of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, organizes Muslimdaily.net.

Most JI members were recruited from Ngruki or related schools. Militant doctrines were taught at individual study groups led by teachers or senior students. Kinship and school nodes were correlated and overlapping (see Huda Ismail 2007). Several related schools were established by DI families, and some were established by alumni of Ngruki in the absence of such family ties. Ngruki requires students to intern during their final year by teaching at another school. Thus, students spread to a plethora of schools and add to the links, enabling jihadists to expand and maintain their networks. Most Ngruki graduates do not join the organization but can be cooperative when they are asked for the use of such assets as their houses or motorcycles. As will be explained later, Ngruki-related schools became more important as time passed.

IV   International and Inter-organizational Networks

Existing domestic and international injustice systems also created a rich context for the recruitment of Indonesian jihadists. Soon after the political transition as a result of President Suharto's resignation, JI became involved in regional conflicts with the Christian inhabitants of the Maluku Islands and Poso, Central Sulawesi. In these conflicts, the victimization of Muslims was emphasized, and their Christian counterparts were believed to be obtaining financial and material support from transnational Christian movements. JI members worked in these areas with activists from other organizations such as KOMPAK (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis, Action Committee for Crisis Management), a charitable body of DDII.[11]

JI extended its networks to include neighboring countries such as the Philippines and Singapore in addition to Malaysia, where Sungkar and his followers had once been based.[12] On the other hand, JI failed to coordinate with militants in southern Thailand; there are indications that JI had links in Thailand but never succeeded in establishing meaningful relationships in this area. Southern Thailand conflicts were regional and

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11)   JI needed KOMPAK in order to access funds that were donated by the public, given that JI was not a well-established or trusted organization (Solahudin 2011, 252–256). See Van Klinken (2007) for comparative studies of regional conflicts in Indonesia after 1998, and McRae (2013) for the Poso conflict, especially how mujahidin related to local militias.

12)   DI has had small cells in Sabah, Malaysia, since the 1980s; these should be credited for transactions between the southern Philippines and Indonesia. JI itself has also maintained a support base in Sabah since the mid-1990s (see ICG 2007, 13).

autonomous in nature, and militants were less drawn to the global jihad.[13] In the Philippines, JI initially developed connections to probably a few small factions of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and later established links to the Abu Sayyaf Group. JI moved a training camp to Mindanao, an area under the control of the MILF, after political conditions in Afghanistan became unfavorable. JI members traveled between Indonesia and the Philippines to exchange arms and fighting skills. DI and KOMPAK also established contacts and connections with each other in Mindanao. JI cadres Dulmatin and Umar Patek fled to Mindanao in 2003 after participating in the 2002 Bali bombings. As the MILF entered peace negotiations with the Philippine government, JI withdrew its training camp and Dulmatin and Umar Patek subsequently joined the Abu Sayyaf Group. Dulmatin, believed to have returned to Indonesia in 2007, dramatically reappeared and was shot down by police in 2010. Umar Patek was arrested in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in April 2011. He was arrested where Usama bin Laden was killed a few weeks later. Though we don't know how closely they were connected, JI and its extended networks have maintained links to global jihadist networks represented by al-Qaeda. These links reappeared during the recent Syrian war. JI, JAT, and other smaller groups sent "humanitarian missions" and mujahidin to Syria (see IPAC 2014b). It appears that there were several hundred Indonesians fighting there by the beginning of 2015. At the same time, JI's failure in Thailand and limited success in the Philippines reminds us that links cannot explain everything. Ideological differences between groups that reflect local contexts are important factors to explain the limitations of JI's expansion. As discussed later, the Syrian war and the establishment of IS brought about serious divisions among jihadists in Indonesia based on ideological and strategic differences.

JI has also established links to outside groups that do not necessarily share these familial or school connections, as we have seen in the Poso conflict and Mindanao. JI has temporarily cooperated with outsiders for practical purposes. Organizational affiliation and exclusiveness are not necessarily strict, particularly in areas of conflict, where organizational overlap is not unusual. Such overlap has been strengthened as a function of the passage of time. Because JI and its successor JAT, as organizations, are not currently seeking violent solutions, dissatisfied militant members have extended their cooperative efforts beyond the boundaries of these organizations. Jihadists call each other *ikhwan*

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13) JI's former regional chief (the head of Mantiqi I) Hambali was caught in Ayutthaya, Thailand, in August 2003. He attended a meeting with al-Qaeda in Malaysia in 2000. He was the only Southeast Asian detainee in the Guantanamo Bay prison. Terrorism experts such as Rohan Gunaratne and Zachary Abuza have repeatedly warned of the existence of JI members in southern Thailand, but no strong evidence to prove this has been forthcoming. For characteristics of conflicts in southern Thailand, see McCargo (2008) and ICG (2005).

(brother) regardless of organizational affiliation. Indeed, the first internationally recognized 2002 Bali bombing itself was the result of an individual decision made by JI's militant faction, not the official or collective decision of the organization.[14)] The 2003 Marriott hotel bombing in Jakarta was similarly executed by a small group led by the Malaysian Noordin, with some help from individual JI members. Annual bombings against Western targets continued until 2005, and the second Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotel bombings in Jakarta in 2009 were carried out by Noordin's group cooperating with outside groups (ICG 2006; 2009a). After the dissolution of Noordin's group, jihadist militants were further fragmented yet managed to survive by changing to more and more horizontal networks. These paths coincided with the above-mentioned strategies of al-Qaeda proposed by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri.

Besides school and family ties, links and a sense of community among small groups and networks were created during combat experiences primarily in Afghanistan and later in Maluku and Poso. As conflicts in Maluku and Poso almost ceased, Indonesian jihadists have kept base in the former conflict area and held temporary training camps in order to maintain networks, combat experience, and technique.[15)] In addition, the continual crackdowns after the Bali bombings made prison an important place for adding links, as I will describe later in the case of Urwah and Aman Abdurrahman.

V   Noordin's Network and Thereafter

For about six years, the Malaysian national Noordin M. Top dominated the terrorism scene in Indonesia. He led bombing attacks against Western targets or the "far enemy," meaning the United States and its allies, in Indonesia with a clear awareness of fighting a global jihad.[16)] Yet he was "by all accounts . . . not a particularly impressive figure." He

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14) There have been internal discussions on the concept of an individual jihad (*jihad fardiyah*) against the United States. It is commonly understood that collective jihad for defense from the enemy is obligatory for all Muslims. Those who promote an individual jihad consider that jihad against the United States does not require the permission of their organization because the country has aggressively invaded Muslim lands (see Solahudin 2013, 196). The concept of an individual jihad leads to individuals attacking their own government (near enemy), which hinders the activities of jihadists and contributes to US aggression.

15) Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (East Indonesian Mujahidin), led by Santoso, has been active in Poso and sporadically attacks local police. Other small splinter groups such as Mujahidin Indonesia Barat (West Indonesian Mujahidin) claim to support Mujahidin Indonesia Timor.

16) This was based on a theory stating that Muslim regimes would never fall as long as their Western backers kept up their support. This led some jihadists to direct their attention to those backers instead of their own regimes. See Gerges (2009) for the origin of the distinction between the near enemy and the far enemy and how al-Qaeda turned to global jihad.

could not speak Arabic, and his religious knowledge was limited. Nor was he was a skilled orator. However, he had a knack for surrounding himself with devoted followers who possessed skills that he did not, and his ability to elude police for so long enhanced his stature (ICG 2006, 1). In this section, I will highlight three figures—namely, Asmar Latin Sani, Urwah, and Aman Abdurrahman—in order to elucidate the nature of jihadist networks in Indonesia. The three all played important roles yet linked the networks very differently. Asmar and Urwah were closely associated with Noordin, whom Aman was critical of. Aman became increasingly important after the death of Noordin, and he began to create a new kind of network.

Asmar Latin Sani, the 2003 Marriott hotel suicide bomber, had connections to important nodes but was apparently of less personal importance to the network. He attended Pondok Ngruki and was one of hundreds of students who left the school with Abdurrahim Thoyib in 1995 as a result of an internal conflict. The school foundation issued a regulation to limit extracurricular study groups, the so-called *harakah*, which brought about a fierce dispute and serious split within the Pondok Ngruki (Wildan 2013, 200–201). Asmar, along with tens of students, subsequently moved to the Darusy Syahadah school in Boyolali, on the outskirts of Solo in Central Java. The Darusy Syahadah is one of the most important JI-related schools, and it may actually be more important than the Ngruki school. Some of those who were involved in violent operations either graduated from Ngruki before 1995 or left in 1995. Several key operatives teach or study at the Darusy Syahadah. Asmar somehow became a member of Laskar Khos (the network's special forces), led by Noordin. Noordin belonged to JI but coordinated suicide bomb attacks against Western targets without approval from the JI central command. In preparation for the Marriott bombing, Noordin and associates moved to Bengkulu, Sumatra, where Asmar was from. Asmar and other JI members in Sumatra helped Noordin arrange for money and explosives. Asmar was chosen as the suicide bomber who detonated the car bomb in August 2003. A few years after Asmar's death, Gungun, his former schoolmate in Boyolali, married Asmar's sister. Gungun was a younger brother of Hambali, known for his strong links to al-Qaeda and the only Southeast Asian detainee at Guantanamo, the United States' controversial prison camp in Cuba. Gungun was known also for belonging to a Pakistani cell that was led by Abdurrachim Ba'asyir. Asmar was closely linked to very important nodes, but his loss seemed not to damage the network at all. Asmar's case seems similar to what Barabasi describes as the situation of Mohamed Atta, the purported mastermind of the 9/11 attacks:

> Despite his central role, taking out Atta would not have crippled the cell. The rest of the hubs would have kept the web together, possibly carrying out the attack without his help. (Barabasi 2003, 223)

After the first Marriott bombing, Noordin distanced himself from JI and relied more on inter-organizational networks. Urwah, alias Bagus Budi Pranoto, was a key figure in modifying networks by linking Noordin to others. His case typically describes how recent jihadist networks form, are maintained, or collapse.[17] Urwah went to Pesantren Al-Muttaqien, a Ngruki-related school in Jepara, on the northern coast of Java, and proceeded to the Ma'had 'Ali An-Nur college in 2000. The An-Nur college was founded by teachers who had left Ngruki in 1995. He chose the college because he had not been accepted by the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Sciences, a Saudi government-sponsored college in Jakarta. He had educational links to the jihadist network from the beginning, but his choice of An-Nur made a difference. He added links during his involvement in conflicts in Maluku and Poso, where he spent a few months each, probably as a JI member. It was Urwah who connected Noordin to important links outside JI, such as Iwan Darmawan, alias Rois, a head of DI's Banten battalion (See ICG 2006). Urwah was arrested in July 2004, before Noordin carried out the Jakarta Australian embassy bombing in September with help from Iwan and other local JI networks.

By his own account, Urwah was further radicalized in jail, where he spent around three years. In prison, he married a woman introduced to him by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. The families of Urwah and his wife were not involved with DI. Urwah did not participate in the activities of JI or JAT after being released, but he taught at a local mosque and headed a small group probably consisting of around a dozen members. He openly emphasized the need for "terror attacks" in order to fight back against Western, mostly US, aggression against Muslims around the world, which was contrary to mainstream jihadist groups' increasing tendency to give priority to the "near enemy," or their own Muslim regime, which hampered the activities of jihadists and contributed to US aggression. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir even tried to persuade Indonesian political elites to repent for their "sins" before fighting against them.[18] Although Urwah maintained contacts with the leadership of JAT and other existing groups, he often irritated those who refrained from bombing attacks and the publication of Maqdisi's criticism of global jihad that will be mentioned later. Urwah also said during my interview that he wanted to be a martyr soon. For the 2009 hotel bombing operation in Jakarta, Noordin asked for Urwah's help, and Urwah provided his man, Air Setiawan, to assist. Urwah was not directly involved

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17) I interviewed Urwah regularly, two or three times a year, in 2008 and 2009. The following description has been reconstructed from published information and my interviews.

18) Though Ba'asyir calls the current Muslim regime *thaghut* (infidel ruler) and justifies fighting against it, as Aman Abdurrahman describes later in this paper, he wrote an open letter to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and published several books urging political elites to repent. See also Miichi (2007).

in the bombing operation. He remained at his house in Solo as usual until Air Setiawan was shot to death, and then he realized he would be hunted too.[19] He was finally killed by a police squad along with Noordin on September 17, 2009.

It should be noted that organizations have become more fragmented and less important. Networks around Urwah have remained active, but unlike the aforementioned Asmar, Urwah was a capable and important hub. He was like a local bridge, as explained by Granovetter:

> As with bridges in a highway system, a local bridge in a social network will be more significant as a connection between two sectors to the extent that it is the only alternative for many people—that is, as its degree increases. (Granovetter 1973, 1365)

After Urwah's death, his followers dispersed. Some of them joined a group called Hisbah led by Sigit Qardowi. Hisbah carried out minor attacks on small restaurants and bars serving alcohol, more commonly known as "sweeping." Then after Sigit was shot to death by police in May 2011, some of the group members carried out suicide attacks on a police mosque and a Christian church, which invited further arrests and damage to the network. Some Hisbah members fled to join IS in Syria.

Aman Abdurrahman became one of the most important persons among the jihadists in Indonesia after Noordin passed away. An independent jihadist who was never fully affiliated with major organizations such as DI or JI, Aman linked others with weak ties. He was followed by only around 10-odd people who attended his study group on the outskirts of Jakarta at least until 2004. At the same time, however, he was well known among militants and translated many books published by JI-related publishers. His translations include writings of the Jordanian scholar Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who was the mentor of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Maqdisi broke with Zarqawi around 2004 and criticized his strategy of massive suicide bombings in Iraq. He believed that the primary targets of jihad should be Muslim regimes or the "near enemy."[20] Because Noordin admired Zarqawi, Aman's translation was considered to represent criticism of Noordin (see ICG 2010). Aman emphasized that Muslims must fight against the immediate or "near" enemy, the Indonesian government. He believed governments that did not apply Islamic law and oppressed the Islamic movement were

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19) See also "Menelusuri Jejak dan Peran Bagus Budi Pranoto Alias Urwah," Detik.com, August 21, 2009, accessed March 31, 2015.

20) Maqdisi also condemned Zarqawi's takfir of entire groups of people. This view coincided with criticism against Aman Abdurrahman and IS among Indonesian jihadists, as discussed later. Thus, there are twists among ideological and strategic opinions. For Maqdisi's thoughts and his relationship with Zarqawi, see Wagemakers (2012).

kafir (infidel) and *thaghut* (*kafir* rulers, literary false gods).[21] A thaghut is an enemy of Islam who impedes the implementation of Islamic law and leads Muslim masses to the "darkness of *jahiliyya*" (pre-Islamic ignorance).

Having no training or experience in Afghanistan or Mindanao, Aman was taught bombing skills by Harun, a JI member. He was arrested in March 2004 after accidentally setting off a bomb (see ICG 2004). In prison, Aman became popular among those who came from the periphery of militant movements such as East Kalimantan and did not have a leader or mentor. He added links from among the detainees. He was released in 2008 and briefly participated in the newly established JAT because his followers had supported this group while he was in jail. However, "his idea on *takfir* [declaring another Muslim as *kafir*] was not suitable to JAT." Aman was too exclusive and strict to accept other Muslims as "true Muslims," and he often condemned others as kafir.[22] What is important here is that Aman's ties to DI, JI, and JAT were weak, but he definitely had links to other militant groups with many nodes. His personal strength was religious knowledge and a fearless attitude that legitimized attacks. His legal judgment and his recorded speeches were released through Web sites. Eventually his statements became as influential as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's.

In early 2010, Aman emerged as a key person in mediating intra- and inter-organizational disputes through a program known as *lintas tanzim*, which was organized by Dulmatin—who had returned from the Philippines—and his friends to activate a new jihad based on a longer-term perspective than that underpinning Noordin's desperate bombing operations. However, this effort was soon detected by the police and resulted in raids around Aceh and Jakarta. Aman was arrested, and Dulmatin was shot to death in March 2010 (see ICG 2010). This was not the end of Aman, however. His influence again increased in jail. This time it was not through adding personal links; his ideas on legitimate fighting against the government brought about the creation of self-organized networks outside. His fierce sermons in prison were broadcast to other detainees, even in different prisons, through smuggled mobile phones.[23] Several small groups, such as the Abu Omar group and Mujahidin Indonesia Barat (West Indonesian Mujahidin), launched sporadic attacks against police based on Aman's thaghut concept.

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21) There are serious discussions and divisions among jihadists and Salafists on the object of jihad. Though there are differences of opinion among jihadists, they maintain a sense of community as a brotherhood. On the other hand, divisions between Salafi jihadists and Salafi non-jihadists are more profound and intense. Aman Abdurrahman (2012) fiercely criticizes non-jihadi Salafists, who claim the Indonesian government is not thaghut and that they do not have to fight against it. See also Al-Majdi (2012) and IPAC (2014a; 2014b).

22) Interview with a JAT leader, March 6, 2010.

23) Interview with a JAT member, February 6, 2015.

Some of these members were affiliated with JAT or JI, but their continual attacks against police were apparently without order or permission from organizations. Moreover, those who sympathized with Aman formed new groups named Jamaah Aman Abdurrahman (Aman Abdurrahman Community) and Tauhid Wal Jihad (Oneness of God and jihad) in several cities without command from Aman or obvious coordination among them. Jihadist networks in Indonesia evolved to become scattered and self-sustaining webs.

Responding to the proclamation of IS in June 2014, Aman urged jihadists in Indonesia to take a loyalty oath to IS and its caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir followed and ordered JAT members to make a pledge. However, ideological and strategic differences between IS and the al-Qaeda/al-Nusra Front overshadowed Indonesian jihadists. IS attempted to subordinate the local al-Qaeda branch al-Nusra, but al-Nusra rejected IS. Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's chief, tried to calm the dispute, but IS refused to accept Zawahiri's mediation (Mendelsohn 2014). Although started as part of al-Qaeda, IS seeks territorial rule based in Iraq and Syria, which is different from al-Qaeda's global jihad. Ba'asyir's son Abdurrachim did not agree with IS and instead founded Jema'ah Ansharusy Syari'ah. Remnants of JI and Majelis Mujahidin, which Abu Bakar Ba'asyir formerly led, also did not agree with IS and supported rival al-Nusra. They cast doubt on IS's religious credentials as the caliphate and criticized its harsh implementation of criminal law and *takfir* tendency.

VI   Growing Internet Networks and Their Limitations

Jihadists in Indonesia have used the Internet, e-mail, and mobile phones for communication, but until the early years of the twenty-first century print media were much more important for disseminating ideology in the domestic market. Several JI-related printing companies published hundreds of translations of the writings of major Arabic militant ideologues by downloading the original materials from the Internet and translating them into Indonesian. Due to the absence of publication licenses and internal security acts in Indonesia, these companies could publish radical and militant ideology almost freely. They also downloaded and edited videos and sold them as VCDs (see ICG 2008b).

However, the Internet has grown rapidly and been replacing print media. Aman Abdurrahman had published only one thin booklet by 2008, but dozens of his lectures can be read and downloaded on a blog. Even after he was arrested, he made statements through jihadist Web sites. His blog somehow has continued to update his

lectures.[24] Jihadist Web sites cover the latest international news related to the struggles of Muslims and condemn US military aggression. They refer to subordinated Muslim regimes as *boneka* ("puppet" in Indonesian), kafir, *munafik*, and thaghut. Some of these sites are run by individuals who simultaneously operate publishing companies. YouTube has replaced VCDs for disseminating visual content. TV news and interviews of figures such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and the late Imam Samudra, one of the masterminds of the 2002 Bali bombings, began to be posted several years ago after involved individuals learned how the Internet worked and how to utilize its scale-free network. When Imam Samudra and two others were executed in January 2009, a video of their burial ceremony was quickly uploaded to YouTube. In 2010, facing police raids, "al-Qaeda of Aceh" posted a video statement. Santoso, who claims to lead Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (East Indonesian Mujahidin), delivered statements urging a fight with the thaghut Indonesian government and its security authorities. More recently, several recruiting videos for IS were released in Indonesian in addition to "official" videos quickly shared and transmitted. Jihadist Web sites propagate these militant messages by reporting them as news.

The emergence of Facebook and other social network services clearly illustrates the characteristics of scale-free networks. Each member of Facebook has an individual page and links with "friends." The network service offers members the ability to display and update their profiles, send messages, join groups, play games, and so on. Abdurrachim Ba'asyir had more than 3,000 "friends." Moreover, Arrahmah.com, the most popular jihadist Web site in Indonesia, has more than 200,000 "fans" who subscribe to daily updates.[25] That is more than most major news sites in Indonesia.[26] Friends and fans are encouraged to visit jihadist Web sites and view the YouTube videos mentioned above.

Networking on the Internet has its limitations and risks, especially for those who want to hide their activities. Exposing personal networks through social networks can be a risk rather than an advantage. Probably concerned by this, Abdurrachim Ba'asyir had closed his Facebook page by March 2011. Facebook management shut down the

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24) Aman's writings were posted on http://millahibrahim.wordpress.com/ (accessed March 31, 2015). Previously his writings were uploaded to http://www.ashhabulkahfi.com/ (accessed March 28, 2011), when it was a blog. The latter Web site was shut down but reemerged as a news site in 2014 (accessed April 19, 2014) and was shut down again sometime in 2015. The Indonesian government blocked access to Aman's Web site (http://millahibrahim.wordpress.com/) in the country apparently after IPAC (2015) pointed out the government's ignorance about it.

25) Arrahmah.com was founded by Jibriel Abdul Rahman, a leader of Majelis Mujahidin.

26) Among the usual news sites, Merdeka.com (more than 1 million) and Detik.com (372,000) have the most subscribers on Facebook. The numbers of subscribers of other major newspapers and magazines, such as *Tempo* (235,000), *Kompas* (206,000), and *Republika* (137,000), are not very different from Arrahmah.com. *Kompas*'s Web site, kompasiana.com, functions more interactively than other major sites integrated with blogs (all accessed November 2013).

page for Arrahmah.com in January 2014. The Indonesian authorities arrested M. Fachry, editor-in-chief of the pro-IS al-Mustaqbal.net, and blocked the Web site at the end of March 2015. Internet media also reveals the split and rivalry among jihadists. M. Fachry used to work for Arrahmah.com but left it due to differences over jihad strategy. Arrahmah.com, which supports al-Nusra, has repeatedly criticized Aman Abdurrahman (see Al-Majdi 2012; Ali Akram 2015). Accordingly, pro-IS Web sites fought back.

Though acknowledging the risks, jihadists in Indonesia still—or even more often—use social network services for propaganda, internal communication, and discussions. The perpetrators of the Myanmar embassy bombing in Jakarta in May 2013 plotted the attack on Facebook. They were motivated by reading posts by Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, met and talked with other extremists on Facebook, and learned bomb-making on other Internet sites.[27] Indonesians who joined IS in Syria have been in contact with their friends and families at home and share their experiences via Facebook, and WhatsApp, more recently. Yet, as IS realized, the leaking of information through social network sites such as Facebook posts from Syria became less frequent by early 2015.[28] Overall, scale-free networks of the Internet have contributed greatly to jihadist activities in Indonesia rather than limited them. It should be noted, however, that communication and networks in the real world have been much more important. Lone wolves are still exceptional; the great majority of perpetrators have familial, educational, organizational, or friendly links. The Internet is not enough to create a sense of community among jihadists in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This examination of the links and nodes of militant Islamists in Indonesia has demon-strated how militant Islamists expanded and maintained networks, adapted to difficult organizational situations, and survived by switching to new kinds of networks. Links are created through family, education, ideology, and organization. Shared experiences in conflict areas, training camps, and jails are vital. As their organizations were damaged by arrests and police assaults, militant Islamists relied more on informal and inter-organizational networks. Incidents over the past few years, mostly attacks on police, were conducted by small splinter groups. Though militant Islamists in Indonesia have

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27) See "Indonesian Plotted on Facebook to Attack Myanmar Embassy," *Jakarta Globe*, November 6, 2013, accessed March 31, 2015.

28) Interview with a JAT member, February 6, 2015. See also Huda Ismail (2014).

links to JI, JAT, or DI and share a sense of community as jihadists and ideas on changing strategies and targets, there are no hierarchical relations. Their changing forms of networks can explain the persistence and resilience of jihadist networks in Indonesia.

Theoretical and quantitative network analyses have several weaknesses. They cannot explain how Indonesian jihadists developed or changed from hierarchical organizations to vertical networks. They also largely ignore personal strength and ideological differences. JI's inability to expand to southern Thailand cannot be explained through theoretical and quantitative analyses, and the significance of Aman Abdurrahman cannot be fully described by his weak ties. Muslim leaders of important nodes with many links must also have attributes such as outstanding communication skills and strong academic and ideological backgrounds. Scale-free networks of the Internet contributed to spreading militant ideology and enhancing communication among militants, but they did not greatly increase recruitment in Indonesia. Nevertheless, network analysis can be a useful and sufficiently empirical tool if we remain cognizant of its weaknesses.

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