After jihad: A biographical approach to passionate politics in Indonesia

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Photo 2: Salafi annual gathering, reconsolidating solidarity: Bantul, 2007

(Photo: taken by author)
In the evening, we had no more bullets. You know the situation was that the Sirisori Islam [village] is surrounded by 22 [Christian] villages. So we were under siege…. Thus, the bullets which were being shot from here [a Christian village] could reach there [another one]…. A companion then cried: “Oh Allah please help us….”

(Taufan, Ambon, 22/4/2008)

The most meaningful [experiences were] when we were gathered together…, learning religion together…, I had the feeling that our ukhuwah Islamiyah (Islamic solidarity) was very strong…, yes, we felt like we were becoming a single body… when we got sick, others gave us help, gave us food, and so on and so forth…

(Adang, Poso, 25/3/2008)

For those who were used to vice, they would most likely feel okay. But I didn’t get used to it. It was true that before joining the da’wa ahlussunnah [Salafi] I got used to it, because I did not know the [Salafi] rule. But after my hijra [joining the Salafi], [I knew that] it is not allowed, so that I did not feel good at heart.

(Adang, Poso, 25/3/2008)

“I was shocked and trembling [that Laskar Jihad was disbanded]. I also regretted that I had done [wrong] things so far…”

(Reza, Yogyakarta, 4/4/2008)

“I wish my life will end in an undisputed land of jihad, either in the holy land or in the holy war, either in Moro or in Afghanistan…”

(Fauzi, Yogyakarta, 17/2/2008)
Introduction

This chapter will present and discuss the narratives of non-local Muslim fighters (jihadist) who joined the jihad in Maluku and/or Poso through Laskar Jihad (LJ), a paramilitary wing of the Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wal Jama’ah (FKAWJ, Communication Forum of the Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet). As discussed briefly in Chapter 1, Laskar Jihad was part of the Salafi or the Wahabi-Salafi movements which gained considerable prominence during Indonesia’s political transition (Hasan 2002; Noorhaidi 2005; van Bruinessen 2002). Laskar Jihad was the largest and the most well-known group and had successfully mobilized more than five thousand non-local jihadists to participate in the religious communal violence that took place in eastern Indonesia, namely in Ambon-Maluku and in Poso-Central Sulawesi, during the early stages of the Post-Soeharto period.

Laskar Jihad is categorized here as an example of pious Islamic activism characterized by its main concern, namely to safeguard the Muslim identity, Islamic faith and moral order against the forces of non-Muslims, and by its lack of interest in gaining political power.1) Besides having a different worldview, different types of Islamic activism also have different kinds of affiliation pattern to the group, following the distinction proposed by Della Porta and Diani (1999: 119-20), as discussed in Chapter 1. Pious Islamic activists, like jihadis, tend to have exclusive affiliation, thus usually affiliating only to their own group. In a few cases, some of their activists had linkages and affiliation with certain particular groups which had either developed prior their affiliation to their key group or were considered to be aligned, or at least not in contradiction, with their movements. They are unlike adherents of political activism who commonly have multiple affiliations. Different types of affiliation patterns have a significant influence on the actor’s life trajectory and role in society in the post-jihad period.

1) I have adapted the categorization into three main types of Islamism or ‘Islamic activism’ as suggested by ICG (2005b) in a report on Islamism. The reason for the adaptation was discussed in Chapter 1.
The Laskar Jihad, as a Salafi movement, can be seen as a religious sect which is characterized as a “strict religious organization, demanding complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to the distinctive lifestyle of its members” as suggested by Noorhaidi (2005: 161). While Noorhaidi observed the movement during the jihad mobilization period, I found similar characteristics during my fieldwork in the post-jihad period. As will be presented later, this research found the Salafi post-jihadists tend to live in a ‘holy kampong’, a sort of ‘enclave community’ characterized by ‘enclave culture’ as also observed by Noorhaidi (2005). I will discuss this issue in the last section of this chapter.

In this chapter I will present and discuss the life stories of four post-jihadists who joined jihad through the Laskar Jihad, namely, Taufan, Adang, Reza and Fauzi. They come from different social backgrounds, had different roles and experiences during jihad, and took different life trajectories in the post-jihad period. Taufan (born in 1976) comes from a middle class abangan family in the small town of Blora, Central Java, graduating in political science from the prestigious Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta. He went to Ambon, was recruited as part of the special paramilitary forces (Paku, Pasukan Khusus) of the LJ, but then shifted to lead FKAWF Maluku after contracting malaria. After living for more than two years in Ambon, he decided to stay on after the disbandment of the LJ. Unlike Taufan, Adang (born in 1982) was just a graduate of a vocational high school in Kuningan, West Java, where lower class peasant family of Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) background, lives in a rural area. Adang went to Poso, spending more than a year mainly in the da’wa and public communication section of the LJ, before returning to his hometown following the disbandment of the LJ. Later,
Photo 3: Under construction: Abu Bakar Ash-Shidiq Mosque, Ambon
Photo: taken by author

Photo 4: Ad hoc and rough: Baabul Iman Mosque, Poso
Photo: taken by author
after failing to get a proper job and feeling unhappy with his new life in Java, he returned to Poso and married a local girl and now works part time in the Poso city fire brigade.

Reza and Fauzi both come from Yogyakarta and returned home after the jihad, but their social backgrounds and life trajectories are very different. Reza (born in 1981) was a second year student at the UGM Faculty of Engineering when he decided to join jihad through the LJ in 2001. He comes from a middle class Muhammadiyah family from Jepara, Central Java, who moved to Yogyakarta for study in senior high school. After spending more than a year in Ambon, he returned to Yogyakarta, leaving university and choosing to study in a small pesantren in the rural area of Muntilan, Central Java. Although from a similar Muhammadiyah middle class family, Fauzi (born in 1956) was more senior than Reza: he was a medical specialist and also Chairman of PPP Islamic party in Yogyakarta when he joined jihad in 2000. Going to Ambon as the member of a medical team, he joined in battle and was sustained minor injuries. After spending only a month in Ambon he returned to Yogyakarta and later, following internal conflict in the party, he ‘officially’ left the political party. While continue to be involved in Salafi activism, Fauzi later returned to the political party by endorsing his wife as a candidate during the 2009 election.

Through the life story narratives of the four post-jihadists, I will present my arguments to answer the three main questions of this research—as presented in the first chapter, namely, first, “how did they become jihad actors?”; second, “what did the jihad experience mean to the actors?”; and finally, “how did the jihad experience influence the life trajectory of the actors in the post-jihad period?” I will structure my arguments in four sections: first, the brief profiles of the jihadists and my encounter with them; second, the narratives of how they become jihadists; third, the narratives of their jihad experience; and finally, the narratives of “post-jihad”.

Before discussing the life story narratives of the four post-Jihadists, I will present a macro narrative of the roles played by the Laskar Jihad in the Ambon and Poso conflict, respectively. The
macro narratives will provide a social context to understand and to analyze the life story narratives of the post-jihadists which will be discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

A tale of jihad in two troubled towns

The LJ troops came into the respective areas at different periods of the conflict: they began to embark in the port of Ambon in April-May 2000 and landed in Poso more than a year later in June 2001. They arrived in huge numbers in Ambon, approximately 3,000 people in some contingents, when Muslims in Ambon were in despair. It was a period when the Ambonese Christians launched massive counter attacks in the aftermath of the attack and burning of the old Silo Church in the city of Ambon on 26 December 1999. The massacre of hundreds of Muslims in Tobelo, North Maluku, a few days after the Silo incident, was part of the series of bloody counter attacks by the Christian militias. Thus, the arrival of the LJ troops in Ambon was welcomed and greeted with enthusiasm by Muslims in Ambon and its surroundings. A contrasting picture unfolded when they arrived in Poso in June 2001.

Here follows the narrative of Abim, the current leader of the Salafi community in Poso, who took part at two different moments of the jihad movements in the two areas (Interview, Poso, 16/3/208):

The arrivals of the LJ troops were welcomed in very different ways by people in Ambon and Poso. When arriving in Ambon, we were welcomed with high enthusiasm by the people: so many people greeted us along the streets. Thus, we felt proud and touched. A different situation happened in Poso; people just ignored us. Even, before the arrival of the LJ, flyers had been circulated to disgrace us; saying that the LJ was a tool and the agent of the government; “they are all intelligence agents.” The flyers said, “Thousands of LJ members will come to Poso; do not welcome them because they are government agents.”

4) The original quote is: “Kedatangan LJ ke Ambon dan Poso sangat berbeda dari
Rafik, a local youth leader, who was actively engaged in seeking LJ’s arrival in Poso to come to Poso,3 confirmed Abim’s story. The night before the mass gathering to be held in the Poso stadium to welcome the arrival of the Laskar Jihad, he and his Islamic local colleagues worked hard to scrub various anti LJ graffiti from the stadium wall (Interview, Poso, 20/3/2008).

The LJ troops arrived in Poso quite late. The peak of the violence in Poso had occurred one year earlier. Over a two week period from late May to early June in 2000 the Christian militia had attacked the Islamic boarding school “Walisongo” and massacred hundreds of Muslims, including women and children, who were hiding in a mosque (McRae 2008: 91-115, see Chapter 1). In order to launch counter attacks and take revenge, local Muslims received support a few weeks later from the outside mujahidin who had begun to enter the area, mostly associated with the Laskar Mujahidin (LM).6 Though the number of newcomers was not huge—estimated to be only a few hundred in different contingents, far smaller when compared to the approximately three thousand strong group of LJ who

5) One of the locals who played a critical role in mediating and persuading the LJ to come to Poso was Luki Lasahido, a local Muslim activist and politician who graduated from the Islamic University of Indonesia (UII), Yogyakarta. Through his network, he made some efforts to ask the LJ to give help to Muslims in Poso. Rafik is a close friend of Luki Lasahido (Interviews with journalist in Palu and Poso, 15 March 2009, also with Rafik in Poso, 20 March 2009).

6) The distinction between the two is just a simple division of the non-local jihadists in the communal conflicts in Ambon and Poso. While Laskar Jihad is a single group, the so-called “Laskar Mujahidin” consisted of several militia groups which were linked to different movements, such as KOMPAK (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akitat Krisis), DI/NII (Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia), JI (Jamaah Islamiyah), Hidayatullah, KPPSI (Komite Persiapan Penangakan Syariat Islam), etc. Although there were differences between the groups, they shared some commonalities and at times frequently worked together. On the other hand, tensions between the Laskar Jihad and “Laskar Mujahidin” frequently occured on the ground. See Noorhaidi (2005) on the Laskar Jihad, and ICG (2005c) and Fealy and Borgu (2005) on the Laskar Mujahidin.
went to Ambon in April-May 2000—their arrival considerably affected the course of the conflict.

One of the important factors which made their role significant during the conflict was that they arrived at a time of crisis with quite powerful teams. The Poso Muslims by this stage were feeling shame, fear and indignant anger after the massive and deliberate attack by the Christian militias and this had ignited a high passion for revenge. Although the size of the Laskar Mujahidin troops was not huge, they included members with warfare skills and experiences, having either being trained in Afghanistan or in Mindanao, the Southern Philippines. They were also equipped with quite good weapons, including some of the military standard. Hand-in-hand with the local youth militias, they then launched counter-attacks on the Christian villages allegedly responsible for or behind the assault.

The Laskar Mujahidin’s involvement at a critical period of the conflict in Poso granted them a special position which allowed them to build bases in some places in Poso. The Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) built their base in the Tanah Runtuh area of the Gebangrejo ward, the home of a leading local Muslim figure Haji Ahmad (a pseudonym). Haji Ahmad is a retired official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Poso who also held a senior position in the local office of the Indonesian Religious Scholars Council (MUI, Majelis Ulama Indonesia) and ran an Islamic boarding school located in the area. Ahmad’s profile gained prominence from early on in the conflict, particularly when he decided to remain in the city during the worst of the May-June 2000 violence—when many local leaders fled.7)

Another important Laskar Mujahidin group was the Mujahidin KOMPAK, which arrived in Poso in August 2000 and established its base in the Kayamanya ward, nearby to Gebangrejo. The Mujahidin KOMPAK was led by Fauzan, a jihadi activist from Jakarta who also a top JI member who had joined the jihad in Afghanistan in 1987-1990 with the fifth cohort along with Nasir Abbas8).

7) Interview in Poso, 17 March 2008; McRae 2008: 136-137.
8) Nasir Abas is a former Chief of JI Mantiqi III which covers the area of Sabah,
Fauzan arrived in Poso with four other members of KOMPAK who were veterans of the Maluku violence, their main duties being to deliver KOMPAK’S humanitarian aid and to recruit and train local mujahidin. Fauzan is a life story informant of this research, whose narratives will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In short, the LM’s presence was already felt over a wide area, especially in Poso before the LJ arrived. Another important fact: was that the LJ came toPoso with a much smaller number of troops than in Ambon. It was estimated about 3,000 members of Laskar Jihad arrived in Ambon compared to a few hundred in Poso.\(^9\) Furthermore, their roles in the real battles in Poso were also questioned.\(^{10}\)

Thus, the differently timed arrivals of the troops to the respective areas eventually led to their playing different roles during the course of the conflict and, eventually, in its aftermath. The important role played by the LJ in Ambon during the conflict was indicated by its legacy of activities and programs which remain active until today, particularly in the field of education and da’wa. When the LJ and the FKAWJ were disbanded in early October 2002, the Salafis in Maluku established a new foundation to manage the programs and facilities formerly run by the FKAWJ. This foundation, established in early 2003, was called the Yayasan Abubakar Ash-Shiddiq or the Abubakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation. Its objective is “to reorganize and to manage da’wa activities of the Salafis in Maluku as well as to

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East Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Mindanao. After being arrested by the police on 18 April 2003 in Bekasi, West Java, he left theJI and became a police partner working to help the police for counter-terrorism. He published a book entitled Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah: Pengakuan Mantan Anggota JI (Disclosing Jamaah Islamiyah: A Testimony of an Ex Member of JI) in 2005. In a sort of autobiography, Abas wrote his trajectory led him to join jihad in Afghanistan and Mindanao and become involved with the NII and JI. The book concludes with his reasons for leaving the JI.

9) There were different estimates f the number of Laskar Jihad deployed to Poso as reviewed by McRae (2008: 160). The ICG (2004a: 14) estimates 100-150 men, Sangadji (2004: 26) estimates 500 and Hasan (2006: 205) approximately 700.

10) McRae (2008: 161-162) discusses the controversy over the LJ’s role in violence in Poso. He mentions a local Muslim combatant sympathetic to the LJ who described the group as less militant than the mujahidin who came in Poso in 2000. Noorhaidi (2005: 208) discusses the issue by concluding that “Viewed from this [combat] perspective, Laskar Jihad’s achievement in the Moluccas was, in many ways, strikingly limited.”
take care of any assets that used to belong to the Salafis.” (Interview with Taufan, Ambon, 22 and 25 April 2008; interview with Abdul Wahab Lumaela, Ambon, 26 April 2008; Budiyanto 2006: 64) The Yayasan consisted of three divisions, namely, the division of da’wa and education, the division of facilities and equipment, and the division of financing.11) As reflected in its structure, da’wa and education are the core business of the foundation.

The somewhat strong profile and vast societal network of the Abubakar Foundation was shown in its core leadership. In addition to Taufan, who is an ex Laskar Jihad activist and a life story informants of this research, there were two local leading figures, namely Abdul Wahab Lumaela12) and Nasir Kilkoda. Lumaela is a Muhammadiyah activist who was the acting Chairman of the Badan Koordinasi Pemuda dan Remaja Masjid (BKPRM, Coordinating Body of Youth Activists of Mosque) and the Secretary of Forum Silaturahmi Umat Islam (FSUI, Coordinating Forum of Muslim Society) of Maluku Province. Kilkoda is a senior official of the Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal Daerah (BKPM, the Coordinating Body for Local Investment) of the Maluku Province. The wide network of the Abubakar Foundation is also obvious from the involvement of local businessmen, such as Haji Nurdin Fata and Pak Erwin. During my fieldwork under strong leadership which combined the migrants, local leaders and businessmen, the Abubakar Foundation was in the midst of building a big two-storey mosque located in the Salafi housing complex in the formerly known as Kampong Kisar and newly renamed as “Kampong Muhajirin” in Batu Merah Atas, Ambon.

11) It was a slimmed down version of the old structure of the FKA WJ which had been comprised of five divisions: education, special forces, financing, health, and public relations (Budiyanto 2006: 34)

12) Lumaela is a graduate of the Faculty of Syari’ah of the State Institute of Islamic Studies of Sultan Alauddin Makasar. He is one of the sons of the Raja, the traditional local leader, of Keitelu Village, the oldest Muslim village in Maluku. He was elected Raja of Keitelu following the death of the last Raja, Ir. Abdullah Lumaela, a diplomat in the Foreign Affairs Department, but he refused to take the seat for religious reasons. “Many traditional beliefs and traditions are not compatible with Islam according the Salafist,” he argued. Due to his refusal, there is still no Raja of Keitelu until the current day (Interview in Ambon, 26 April 2008).
This picture in Ambon contrasted strongly with that of the Salafi living in Poso. They lived temporarily in the Sayo ward, in an area owned by a local businessman and being lent to them during the conflict. This is perhaps why most of the twenty or so houses there were of an ad hoc, temporary construction, with timber rather than steel frames. Similar features were also found in the mosque, located in the same area. Here my are fieldnotes:

The *Baabul Iman* mosque of the Sayo ward, Poso, is located in approximately 12 x 20 meters square, built completely of rough timber with a roof consisting of a mixture of traditional coconut fiber thatching (*rumbia*) and zinc. All the walls are also built of rough timber. The floor is not polished but of a rough texture, covered by several small pieces of old, tired faded carpets of different hues. A medium-size whiteboard is located to the rear of the mosque, and there is a huge bookshelf containing only a very few old books. There is also a smaller whiteboard hanging on the wall with the title “Laporan Keuangan Masjid” (Mosque Financial Report) written on it, which is used to note down the amount of donations to the mosque. But it appears not to have been updated for quite a long time. It is blank.

The condition of the Baabul Iman mosque of Sayo, Poso is in stark contrast with the Abubakar mosque of Kisar, Ambon. The former has aged and is very modest, its functions having diminished along with the decline of the conflict. Perhaps if its founders leave the area it will become empty and deserted. The Ambon Abubakar mosque is a very new one, in fact still under construction. When finished it will be a massive two-storey building, with completely steel framework, approximately 20 x 20 meters square. If the Baabul Iman is a mosque of the past, the Abubakar mosque is a mosque of the future. They reflect the different destinies of the ex LJ Salafi communities in the two areas.

I argue that the contrasting views of the life story narratives of the ex LJ activists and the Salafi community in Ambon and Poso in the post-jihad period are in response to their different arrival times and roles during the conflict which eventually led to different community profiles, societal networks, and public roles. In short, differ-
ent planting times produced different kinds (and different qualities) of crops during the harvest period. Let us move to the life story narratives of the actors.

**Brief profiles and the encounters**

- **Reza: the student jihadist**

  I will start with Reza,\(^{13}\) one of the informants in this chapter whom I had known for years before the fieldwork. As I described at some length in Chapter 3, my long acquaintance with him did not guarantee his easy approval for the interview. My relationship with him, as researcher and informant, was significantly influenced by his relationship with Rahmi (a pseudonym) his aunt, my colleague at UGM. It was through her that I had first come to know him some years before my fieldwork began.

  Reza was born in December 1981 in Jepara, a middle-sized town in Central Java, famous for its fine wooden furniture. He is the oldest son of two from a middle class *santri*\(^{14}\) family. When he was a child, his father worked for Medco, a private national oil company, in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, while he lived in Jepara with his mother. Living in Kauman, a *santri* part of town, he was raised under the influence of the Muhammadiyah, a modernist Islamic movement. His grandfather was a local cleric and a leading Muhammadiyah figure in the area. His mother worked as a teacher in a Muhammadiyah kindergarten where he studied. Later he and his mother joined his father in Balikpapan and lived there until he finished primary school. Then he moved to Yogyakarta to study, from

\(^{13}\) I conducted a series of interviews with Reza during my first fieldwork; twice in January 2008 and twice again in April 2008. I met and talked with him casually in December 2009 when I did my second fieldwork.

\(^{14}\) A discussion on the concept of *santri* and new *santri* was done by Yon Machmudi (2008: 69-103) in an article “The Emergence of the New Santri in Indonesia” published in *Journal of Islam Indonesia* volume 02, number 01.
From Jihad to “Holy Kampong”

junior high school to university, staying with his mother’s younger sister, Rahmi, who was a UGM student at the time, in the Kauman ward, the home base of Muhammadiyah.

Recalling his early childhood in Jepara, Reza explained he was a naughty boy. Although his mother was a kindergarten teacher, he was well known as “the naughtiest boy in the school.” His mother came from a military family with a strict discipline in educating children, including Reza. He recalled that beating was a common practice in his family, especially by his mother. “If I caused any trouble, or came home late, my mother would beat me. She would use a clothes hanger or kitchen utensil, to beat me. So, my legs have got accustomed [to the blows].” (Interview, Yogyakarta, 12/1/2008)

Following family traditions, Reza went to Muhammadiyah schools in Yogyakarta. According to Rahmi, Reza was a good boy as a teenager, spending most of his time either at school or home. As a young man from a Muhammadiyah background, he was a big fan of Amien Rais, the Muhammadiyah leader at the time. Why was that? “Perhaps, it was because of his analysis and courage [in criticizing the government]. Perhaps, it was because of my friends’ influence.” (Interview, Yogyakarta, 12/1/2008)

After graduating from Muhammadiyah High School I in Yogyakarta, one of the best schools in the town, he was selected as a student at the Faculty of Engineering at UGM, a prestigious university in Indonesia, in 1999. It was later in his third year of study in 2001 that he joined in the jihad movement to Ambon.

I began to know Reza, through Rahmi, a few years before he joined the jihad. Although I had met him, I had never had any deep personal conversation with him. We would just briefly meet when he came to my office to visit Rahmi or when I visited her house where he was staying. So we just know to each other from a distance. I remembered him as a trendy and good-looking young man, usually wearing t-shirt and jeans. It was not a surprising that the girls loved him. Rahmi also told me that he was a big fan of Metallica, an American heavy metal rock band, with a poster of the group on his bedroom wall.
After a long period of time, perhaps eight years, we eventually met again in the morning of 23 December 2007 in the UGM mosque in Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta. As I described in some detail in Chapter 3, it had taken me about six months to finally meet him!

It was a very different Reza I met that morning. He was wearing an above ankle-sarong and a white long gown with a large, loose shabby jacket in reddish brown on top. The black skull cap he wore on his head nicely complemented his fresh complexion and long, thick beard. He greeted me with assalamualikum and shook my hand warmly. He was still the good-looking guy with the nice smile he used to be. But it was hard to imagine him now as the big fan of Metallica.

After our first meeting, we had a series of four interviews, approximately one hour long each, although one only lasted about thirty minutes. In my second fieldwork in 2009, I had three short meetings with him, including one during a tabligh akbar given by Ustadz Luqman Ba’abduh on “Tips on how to educate your children not to become terrorists” in November 2009. Reza and his friends opened a stall selling Salafi books at the event.

Although we had already had several meetings and interviews, and he was generally quite relaxed and open during the interviews, I felt there was still some kind of veil, some kind of cultural barrier between us. It was reflected, for instance, in his choice of meeting or interview venues. Although we lived quite close, about 1 - 2 kilometers away, on the north side of Yogyakarta, he preferred to meet in the UGM mosque—located more than 4 kilometers from his place and even further from mine. I had once suggested we meet at his place, which was much closer, but he did not respond to my suggestion.

I speculate there are two possible reasons for his reluctance to meet and be interviewed at home or nearby: first, personal and family privacy; second, ‘communal privacy’. What I mean by ‘communal privacy’ is a sort of ‘cultural border’ where outsiders, meaning non-Salafis, are not welcome to intrude. I had never been inside Reza’s home since he never invited me, but Rahmi did provide some possible family reasons for his reluctance. She told me that Reza
and his family was staying in a sort of *rumah petak*, a small house the size of a studio apartment, with the one main divided into three: a living room, bedroom, and kitchen/bathroom. It was located in a compound of *rumah petak*, mostly occupied by Salafis. So: it was a kind of Salafi enclave which I will discuss further in this chapter.

### Taufan: the ‘fresh university graduate’ jihadist

Unlike Reza, Taufan\(^\text{15)}\),\(^\text{15)}\) comes from an *abangan* family in Blora, a small town in Central Java, where he was born in 1976. His father was the village head, while his mother was a primary school teacher. Both were members of Golkar (*Golongan Karya*), a state-sponsored political party which was founded during the early period of the authoritarian Soeharto regime. Taufan is the third of five children from a middle class family in rural Central Java. Although growing up in an *abangan* Muslim family, he began to invent a new personal and collective identity as a **santri** when he was in elementary school by practicing Islamic rituals such as praying five-times a day as a consequence of what he called “environmental factors” (*pengaruh lingkungan*). He further invented a **movement identity** for himself as a Muslim activist by participating in youth Islamic activism at a local mosque in the town of Blora, and, later, by taking up its leadership position when he was in high school. His leadership career began by his assuming leadership of some local groups, including **Karang Taruna**, a state-sponsored youth organization at the village level, and **OSIS** (*Organisasi Siswa Intra Sekolah*, Internal School Student Organization).

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\(^{15)}\) I conducted life-story interviews with him on three occasions, in different places and times in Ambon, beside some casual conversations, including when I attended an internal meeting of Sala fi activists on the transmigration program. The first interview took place in the Abubakar mosque, in Kisar, Kebun Cengkhih on 22 April 2008. The second and third interviews both took place on 25 April 2008, but at different times and places; in the afternoon in Al Ma’ruf mosque in Batumerah and in the evening at his home in Kisar, Kebun Cengkhih. I had another interview during my second fieldwork in Ambon in November 2009.
He said that both NU and Muhammadiyah influenced his religious traditions as a teenager. He attended regular Islamic sermons given by NU clerics whilst simultaneously participating in religious activities held by the youth wing of Muhammadiyah (IRM, *Ikatan Remaja Muhammadiyah*) in Blora. Although Taufan shifted from *abangan* to *santri* and even began to engage with Islamic activism while he was in Blora, he was not yet radicalized. This is indicated by his application to study at the *Taman Taruna Nusantara*, a secular, prestigious senior high school, founded by the military to recruit bright students, located in Magelang, Central Java. He, unfortunately, failed the final selection stage.\(^{16}\) He told how his shift from *aban-gan* to *santri* was eventually followed by his parents applying Islamic norms and rules, such as conducting regular prayers. After finishing senior high school in Blora, Taufan left town to study at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (Fisipol) of UGM in Yogyakarta in 1995.

Taufan was one of the brighter students among his peers. He finished his study in four year in 1999 with a thesis on the political behavior of the Islamic community with the case study of Pesantren Krapyak, the well-known NU boarding school in Yogyakarta. During this period he became involved in some Islamic movements, including the HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam*, Islamic Student Association), before eventually becoming anchored in Salafi activism. After graduating from UGM, he applied to be a lecturer at the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta (UMY) but did not succeed. He also worked as a sales person in an electronic company in Yogyakarta for a few months before eventually deciding to join jihad movement in Ambon in early 2000.

Although we went studying in the same faculty of UGM, I began to know Taufan when I was conducting my first fieldwork in Ambon in April 2008. The first time we met by coincidence. It was Sunday morning around 10 a.m., 20 April, when I visited the

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\(^{16}\) He told me jokingly that his failure was most likely due to his trouble listening and understanding an English question asked by one of the members of selection committee. Because he failed to understand the question, the interviewer asked him to leave the room, and being nervous he made another mistake by turning to the left instead of the right. He said he had ear problems from childhood (Interview in Ambon, 22/4/2008).
'joint work’ program held by the local Salafi community to build a mosque in the Salafi housing compound located in the Kisar ward, later renamed as *Kampong Muhajirin*. On site I was introduced by *Pak* Erwin, a senior local Salafi activist, to Taufan, the Chairman of the Abu Bakar Foundation, who led the program. He was wearing a black skull cap, above-ankle trousers and a light blue Adidas brand t-shirt. When I mentioned my status as an UGM Fisipol lecturer he quickly replied “I am also an alumnus of Fisipol UGM, from Government Science.” The conversation quickly became smoother since we knew some people in common, including a female peer who had become a lecturer in my department.

After the meeting I had a series of meetings and interviews with Taufan, and I attended mass prayers and sermons in the Salafi mosques, either in Batumerah or in Kampong Muhajirin. It was also through his kind help and introduction that I could interview Anshor, ex LJ activist from Kendal, Central Java, who married a local girl and works as a street vendor in Ambon. I was frankly quite impressed by Taufan and other Salafi fellows in Ambon for their kindness, openness, and trust in helping me do my research among them. Taufan and other Salafi fellows were very kind and helpful in sharing information and giving me access to some of their activities, including allowing me to participate in an internal Salafi meeting on the ‘transmigration program’ held in the house of a Salafi activist who works in the transmigration office of the Maluku Province. With their help I was able also to attend the wedding of a Salafi *ustadz* who married a local girl in the Gemba village in Ceram Island.

• **Adang: the high school graduate jihadist**

Adang\(^{17}\) was born in Kuningan, a medium-sized town in West Java, in 1982. Unlike Reza and Taufan, he comes from a lower class

\(^{17}\) I did a series of two life-history interviews with Adang on 24 and 25 March 2008 in Poso. Another interview was done when I did the second fieldwork in Poso in December 2009.
family in a rural area with a Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)\textsuperscript{18} background. He is the fourth of five children born to a peasant father and a mother who worked as a petty trader in the local market. Leading a peasant household of a traditionalist NU Islamic background, his parents maintained some traditional beliefs, popular among farmers, such as santet (witchcraft) and the myth of Dewi Sri\textsuperscript{19} or the goddess of rice and fertility—which later become a source of dispute between him and his parents. Adang went to public schools from primary to senior high school, finally graduating from a vocational high school in electronic communications in his home town, Kuningan. Whilst at high school he began to engage with Salafi activism under the influence of his school peers. Later in 2001 he joined the jihad to Poso.

Adang became my life history informant as the result of some incidents. My prospective informant was initially Abu Abim, the leader of the Salafi community in the Sayo compound in Poso. We had an initial meeting and he basically agreed to be my informant. The meeting took place on the evening of 16 March 2008 in the house of Pak Jufri, a senior local Salafi activist who lives in the compound, attended by four Salafi activists including Adang. After briefly explaining my research topic, objective and plan, I asked for Ibrahim’s endorsement and willingness to be my informant. He agreed and even, later, introduced me to the Salafi activists who attended his sermons in the mosque. Yet he was a very busy person. Besides being the leader of the Salafi community in Poso, he was also the husband of four wives and the father of several children who all lived in the compound—though in separate houses. Due to

\textsuperscript{18} Nahdlatul Ulama is Indonesia’s largest Islamic organisation, well-known for its traditional character. In the book \textit{Nahdhatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia} published by Monash Asia Institute in 1996, the editors (Greg Fealy and Greg Barton) seek to discuss important aspects of its behaviour, ideology, and its relationship with the state and other internal power structures. Noorhaidi (2005) observed that there were very few members of the Laskar Jihad with an NU background.

\textsuperscript{19} Sumintarsih describes in \textit{Dewi Sri Dalam Tradisi Jawa} (Dewi Sri in the Javanese Tradition) that the myth and tradition of Dewi Sri has survived in the peasantry, particularly in Java. The symbolism of the tradition is manifested in the rituals of marriage, of agriculture and space-use order. \textit{Jantra} Vol.II, No.3, 2007. For a Sundanese version of Dewi Sri, see [http://www.sunda.org/sundanese/myths.htm](http://www.sunda.org/sundanese/myths.htm) [accessed on 28 July 2010].
his schedule he canceled several appointments we had made for interviews at the very last moment. I only managed to have one, 40 minute interview with him.

In between the canceled interviews with Abu Abim, I met Adang in the *Baabul Iman* mosque, where I would stay in the compound, which was located just next to his house. I told Adang about the story which is why, perhaps feeling sorry for me, he finally agreed to be my life story informant. My first interview with him took place in the *Baabul Iman* mosque on 24 March 2008 for less than an hour. The second interview, the next day, happened by pure coincidence after Abu Ibrahim suddenly canceled his interview with me. I was waiting for my local contact to pick me up from the Sayo compound that evening when I met Adang who was about to leave for work. After hearing that Abu Ibrahim had just canceled our appointment, he offered me the opportunity to interview him at his workplace, the Poso city fire brigade office. Thank God.

He then drove me on his modest, old motorcycle to the office. We spent about one hour and half for the interview which took place in the *mushalla*, a small mosque, situated at the back of the office. My last interview in December 2009 also took place in the same place.

Adang was a quiet, polite person; he was not an overly expressive extrovert individual. Even his pleasant smile, I felt, was carefully managed. He also kept his distance from me, refusing, for example, to narrate his battle tales for moral reasons (“I worry it would damage my sincere soul by telling the tales to others”). I also only had limited opportunities to meet and interview him. This is why I categorized my interviews with him as *quite successful* (see the category in Chapter 3). It seemed to me that Adang was one of the rising stars among the Salafi activists in Poso. He gave a sermon in Friday prayers in the *Babul Iman* mosque, as well as taking the position as *imam* in one of the *isha’* prayers, while I was there. He also looked to be quite close to Abu Abim, the leader. Besides attending the first meeting in the place of *Pak* Jufri, he was also the partner of Abu Ibrahim when they were played badminton in the compound.
• Fauzi: the ‘doctor-cum-politician’ jihadist

Fauzi\(^{20}\) was born in Yogyakarta in 1956 from a hard-core Muhammadiyah activist family. His late father, Abdul Razak Fachruddin, was the National Chairman of Muhammadiyah from 1968 to 1990. He is the sixth of the family’s seven children who grew up in the Muslim urban suburb of Kauman, Yogyakarta, the heart of the Muhammadiyah movement. Thus his personal and collective identity as a Muslim was developed from his early childhood. He also went to Muhammadiyah schools from primary to senior high school in Yogyakarta. On his childhood and adolescence, he described himself as a fighter (\emph{tukang kelahi}) with strong deeply anti-Chinese feelings. He also portrayed himself as a rebel by referring to his grandfather, \emph{Kiai} Fachruddin, who stood down from his position as religious patron in the Pakualaman Palace in protest against its collaborative policy with the Dutch Colonialists. Thus when he was a student in the UGM medical faculty, instead of being active in Islamist organizations he preferred to become involved with the nationalist student movement organization of the GMNI (\emph{Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia}). The reason was that he did not like the ‘bossy’ attitude of some senior activists of HMI whom he had known. In 1995 he graduated from UGM as a medical specialist and was then elevated as the Chairman of the Islamic political party \emph{Partai Persatuan Pembangunan} (PPP, the Development United Party), in Yogyakarta from 1997 to 2001.

During the late Soeharto period, Fauzi became a loyalist and special aide of Amien Rais, then the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah National Board, when the latter launched his political campaign against the Soeharto regime. But Fauzi eventually became disappointed with Amien Rais following his decision to found a new pluralistic political party \emph{Partai Amanat Nasional} (PAN, the National Mandate Party) instead of joining or establishing a new Islamic par-

It was the early period after the fall of Soeharto and the beginning of the *reformasi* era. Following his disappointment with Amin Rais, he began a new trajectory of Islamic activism by engaging in a closer relationship with Ja’far Umar Thalib, the leading cleric of the Salafi movement who later became the Commander of Laskar Jihad. Fauzi invited Thalib to give a sermon at the weekly session held at his home in Yogyakarta since 1998.21) When the Ambon conflict erupted in January 1999 and the Laskar Jihad was then established in early 2000, he provided a lot of support, both financially and politically, before eventually joining the movement in late 2000.

I had known Fauzi several years before conducting my fieldwork, especially when I had a series of in-depth interviews with him in 1999 for a previous research project on pluralism in Yogyakarta.22) He had not yet joined jihad at the time though he already had a typical Salafi appearance: wearing a white skull cap and above-ankle trousers with a long beard. The interviews took place in his small house located in Jetisharjo, near the Code River in the city center of Yogyakarta. I first learnt about his participation in jihad from my good friend Hery Varia, a former journalist and Ali Usman, a Muslim activist and later Chairman of the Ngruki Alumni Association, during my fieldwork in Solo in 2007. Briefly following a series of calls and exchanged SMS, I was able to meet him in a house situated in a middle class compound in Solo in mid January 2008. It was a short but pleasant meeting, accompanied by a cup of hot coffee and snack. He had only a faint memory of our first interview years ago. After listening to my brief introduction of the research project, he expressed his willingness and interest to be interviewed. We agreed

21) Ja’far Umar Thalib gave a regular sermon in Fauzi’s house every Friday evening for about two years, until 2000. After becoming busier with many activities related to his position as a Commander-in-Chief of Laskar Jihad, Ja’far delegated the sermon to one of his trusted lieutenants, namely Muhammad Umar al-Sewed. The regular sermon every Friday evening in Fauzi’s house continued to happen until 2008 when I did my fieldwork.

to meet again later in Yogyakarta, in the home of his first wife, the Solo house being the home of his second wife.

During my first fieldwork I had a series of three in-depth interviews with him in a house located in an upper-middle class complex in Godean, on the outskirts of Yogyakarta. There was a tennis court in the compound with a security guard at the gate of the complex. Fauzi’s house was one of the biggest: a two-storey house built on a two-lot area of land, approximately of 300 meters square. In front of the house, there was a similar-sized plot of land for a large garage able to hold more than four cars and several motorbikes. The interviews were usually accompanied by a cup of hot coffee, snacks, and, even nicer, dinner meals. In between the interview, we prayed together with Fauzi, leading the prayers. There was another permanent menu item at all the sessions: a box of Ji Sam Soe kretek (clove-scented) cigarettes. Fauzi said he had failed to stop his habit of smoking and drinking coffee. He said that he had once told Ja’far Umar Thalib: “Ustadz, please prohibit me from doing many things but not these two things: smoking and drinking coffee“.

I also attended the weekly sermons held in his house on 7 March 2008, after the interview. According to Fauzi, this practice was begun by his late father in 1980s. The sermons then moved to his house in Jetisharjo and then to his current house in Godean, in west Yogyakarta. The changing preachers invited to the sermon reflected his shift of religious views. Up to 1998, the preachers varied from liberal Muslim artist and man of culture, Emha Ainun Nadjib to philosopher and scholar of Islamic mysticism, Damardjati Supadjjar. From 1998 the preachers were exclusively Salafi. Ja’far Umar Thalib was the first, replaced by Muhammad Umar as-Sewed and then recently Afifi Abdul Wadud.

My relationship with Fauzi became quite close and personal. Besides discussing personal matters like his relationship with his second wife, he also related in some detail his involvement in political affairs from behind the screen. Probably my background as a Muslim activist and my good relationship with some of his close friends led him to trust me. It was a lucky coincidence that I knew
one of his trusted friends in politics from when he was still active in politics. This trust was manifested when Fauzi called his friend and then handed his mobile to me to chat with him. Yet he was a busy person, so it was not easy for him to keep his interview appointments with him. So my biggest challenge in interviewing him was his limited time for interviews.

**On becoming a jihadist**

As presented in Chapter 2, I suggested that all the informants in this research became jihad actors after experiencing what I call ‘radical reasoning’. By ‘radical reasoning’ I mean a set process involving both cognition and emotion through either ‘moral shock’ (Jasper 1997, 1998, see also Jasper and Poulsen 1995) or ‘cognitive opening’ (Wiktorowicz 2005) or both which eventually led to jihad as an act of identity (Marranci 2006, 2009). Radical reasoning often occurs in the context of, and as a response to, identity crisis (Erikson, 1968) experienced by the actor. I suggest that the decision to join jihad involved radical reasoning because it ruptured the ‘normal’ daily life of the actors: they took part in a deadly violent conflict, putting their own lives at huge risk, leaving families and relatives—sometimes job and occupation—far away, and being prepared to face harsh experiences and even suffering.

I will use the life story narrative of the informants to support and explain the above argument on how they decided to join the jihad movement and become jihad activists. I begin by discussing the identity crises experienced by the informants in different stages of their life. By identity crisis, I refer to Erikson’s (1968: 16-7) notion as “a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation,” which usually applied to adolescence and young adulthood. Erikson has furthermore argued that personal growth and societal change, as well as identity crisis in individual biography and present-day crises in historical transformation cannot be
separated because the two help to delineate each other. Identity crisis, hence, may also happen at different stages of the life cycle.

Following Erikson, I start by arguing that all the informants experienced crisis identity in the period of political crisis in Indonesia from the early 1990s. In what Uhlin (1997: 155) called the ‘pre transition period’, Soeharto shifted his political strategy by embracing Islamic groups and giving support to the foundation of the *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se Indonesia* (ICMI, the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) in 1990 (Hefner 2000: 159). This turning point represented a major blow to the Islamist movements that had begun to rise since the early 1980s. The crisis reached its peak in 1997-1998, referred to by Bertrand (2004) as the ‘critical juncture’ in modern Indonesian history.

As reflected in the life story narratives of the informants in this chapter, their personal identity crises happened during this political crisis period: in 1996 for Taufan (in his second year at university), in 1998 for Fauzi (following his disappointment at the founding of the new ‘pluralistic’ political party National Mandate Party or PAN, by his political mentor, Amien Rais), in 1999/2000 for Adang (in his second year of high school) and in 2000 for Reza (in his second year of university). Although the four informants experienced identity crises in different ways for different reasons, they then became involved with Salafi activism and eventually decided to join jihad through Laskar Jihad. Following McGuire (2002: 62-68, see also Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi 1975: 65-68) I argue that their identity crisis happened at two different periods of personal development, namely, in the rites of passage to adulthood (in the cases of Adang, Taufan and Reza), and in middle age (in the case of Fauzi). In all the cases, identity crisis followed by ‘cognitive opening’ as suggested by Wiktorowicz led them to adopt new perspective of Islamic Salafism. Following their involvement with Salafism they were eventually moved to join jihad by the combination of two main factors: ‘moral shock’ at the news of Muslims persecution and/or the fatwas issued by Salafi clerics stating the obligation to do jihad.
I will start with Adang’s story. His identity crisis began in his second year of high school in Kuningan, West Java, following his exposure to a new version of Islamism, namely Salafism. Born and raised in an NU household with strong traditionalist Islamic traditions in the Windusengkahan ward, Kuningan,23) Adang was surprised and quite shocked to discover a puritan version of Islam, that was critical of the many syncretic strands of the faith he used to follow and which urged women to wear cover their whole body, including the entire face except for the eyes. His participation in Salafism was influenced by his school friend Hasan who persuaded him to attend a center of Salafi activism, Darus Sunnah, located in the city area of Kuningan, less than 10 kilometers from his home ward. The encounter began with his borrowing and reading Islamic books available in the Darus Sunnah library, followed by his attending regular Salafi sermons held in the center.

It began with curiosity. I just followed the activities because Hasan often asked me to join. I was initially curious about who they were they because the females wore the veil. Although it contradicted [my traditional faith], I went on studying while praying to God for guidance. I eventually learnt that they had a valid understanding of Islam based on sunnah (Interview, Poso, 24/3/2008).

Such a ‘cognitive opening’ as suggested by Wiktorowicz (2005: 85) is a critical step taken by activists through which they may join an extremist Islamic group. This usually occurs following a crisis that may have unsettled their certainties, including their identities, making them more receptive to the possibility of new ideas and world views. Yet, while many people experience ‘cognitive opening’ in different ways and contexts, only a few then join the movement. Wiktorowicz suggests that, “Those who are most likely to be drawn to a movement…. find these interpretations and their representative

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institutions wanting... [thus] religious seekers extend their search for meaning to perspectives outside the mainstreams.” (2005: 86)

A quite similar process happened to Taufan and Reza in their early university period. For Taufan, moving from the small town of Blora to Yogyakarta, a center of student activism made a major impact on his life. He said that he had become a sort of ‘garbage bin’ (tong sampah) during his first eight months in Yogyakarta, studying different Islamic schools of thought on campus. He even admitted to being “almost stressed” (hampir stres) as a consequence of confronting and studying various, sometimes contradictory, Islamic schools of thought. He claimed he took part in Tablighi Jama’a activities as well as those of the HMI and Jama’ah Shalahuddin, the Islamic student unit of UGM. Having been involved with the HMI for about two years, he decided to leave for the profound reason: “there was a satanic culture in HMI.” What he meant by ‘satanic culture’ was such habits as late night discussions which led to the fajr prayer being skipped later and discussions on religious philosophy leading to radical conclusions such as “carrying out religious rituals with the motive of entering the heaven was a sign of syîrk (idolatry or polytheism).” (Interview in Ambon, 22/4/2008)

During such a crisis of identity, Taufan actively sought a meaningful and satisfactory belief system which eventually he found in the Salafi teachings. How did he eventually end up with the Salafi movement? He related that the process of becoming a Salafis took place in gradually, by reading some Salafi books, then participating in regular preaching programs by the Salafis near his boarding house, eventually going to the Salafi pesantren led by Ja’far Umar Thalib. Yet he related that one of the critical incidents that influenced him to join the Salafis was when he was ‘defeated in discussion’ on tawhid (the Islamic doctrine of monotheism) by one of his boarding house friends. After learning that this friend regularly attended the preaching sessions of Thalib, he also began to attend Thalib’s sessions. While he said his involvement in Salafi activism began in his second year in Yogyakarta, it intensified in his last year of study at UGM.
For Reza, though his cognitive opening similarly occurred in his early university study, it was quite a personal and emotional beginning. He related that it was the death of people close to him, especially his aunt and an old teacher, which led him to think about studying religion in preparation for the next life. Thus, he joined a cohort of four university friends who went around seeking “the right Islamic teaching”. They were student activists during the period, one of them was even secretary general of the Executive Board of the UGM Student Council. They attended different kinds of Islamic sermons, by preachers such as Hizbut Tahrir, Jama’ah Tabligh, Ikhw-anul Muslimin, but eventually anchored himself in the Salafi activism (Interview in Yogyakarta, 20/1/2008). So, although it started with his personal troubles, he shared his ‘crisis of identity’ with his peers to seek a new and more meaningful belief system. But why did they eventually decide that Salafi teaching was the best?

According to Reza, he became convinced to become a Salafis following his participation in a daurah (intensive religious session) given by ustaz Abdurrahman Lombok held in Magelang. He was impressed by the teachings given in the daurah because “all the arguments had a strong religious basis” (semua ada dalilnya). He recalled that Islam was metaphorically depicted as the ‘wellspring’ which began to flow from the Prophet Muhammad and his early companions (salafus shalih) and continuously flowed through the channel up to the present time. He explained that there were many corruptions that had distorted Islam’s purity along the way from its original form up to the present. He quoted a hadith that says “every hundred years there will be a man born to purify Islam, back to its purity as in the period of the Prophet and his early companions” (Interview in Yogyakarta, 20/1/2008). He said that it is the duty of the Salafi clerics to bring back the purity of Islam

 Luckily I met Naufal, a pseudonym, one of Reza’s cohorts in the search for “the right Islamic teaching” at university. He was

24) Naufal was involved in helping the Salafi publication during the conflict period, though he did not join in the conflict. During the period, his appearance was that of a Salafi activist: with above ankle trousers and a long beard. During the conversation he
actually my junior in the sociology department at UGM. He said that for them the most interesting Salafi doctrine was its principle of non-hizbiyya or non-partisan politics. Noorhaidi (2005: 143) explains da’wa hizbiyya as “Islamic movements that are perceived to prioritize politics over the purification of the individual Muslim’s religious beliefs and practices.” Naufal explained that the doctrine of non-hizbiyya was very relevant to their experience as student activists who had observed bitter contestation and rivalry among Islamic movements in campus. He said that da’wa hizbiyya activities were confronted by the Salafi activism (Interview, Jakarta, 16/11/2009).

Fauzi’s story is unique because his identity crisis happened in adulthood when he had quite a settled social and professional life: he was simultaneously the Chairman of an Islamic political party in Yogyakarta and a medical specialist in his early 40’s. The turning-point in his life occurred when the long-time activist, his political mentor, Amien Rais, decided to resign from his leadership in the Muhammadiyah to found a new ‘pluralistic’ political party. “I was deeply disappointed by that,” Fauzi said. He admitted that he used to be a big fan of Amien Rais when the latter was a committed Muslim activist. So Fauzi’s identity crisis arose when he lost the role-model figure of Muslim activist that he had previously personified in Amien Rais. Then he found a strong and flamboyant character in the figure of Ja’far Umar Thalib, a young Salafi preacher.

Fauzi invited Thalib to give the weekly sermon at his house in Jetisharjo, Yogyakarta. Although he had the public image of a fiery speaker, in his sermons Thalib spoke more about the ethical conduct of the Prophet Muhammad based on the book Adabul Mufrod. Fauzi was impressed and studied more about Salafi teachings from Thalib for about two years through the weekly sessions which were mainly focused on personal morality and ethical conduct. When Thalib later became busy following the establishment of the Laskar Jihad in early 2000, the sermons were taken over Muhammad Umar as-Sowed, told me that it was part of his fieldwork research for his bachelor thesis on the Ambon conflict. After graduating he became a lecturer at the Airlangga University, Surabaya, and is currently doing his doctoral program in Japan (Interview in Jakarta, 16/11/2009).
Thalib’s lieutenant. What factors led him to convert from Muhammadiyah to Salafism?

Fauzi claimed he was disappointed at classes held by Muhammadiyah clerics since they did not refer to major original sources and references in Islamic teachings but relied more on modern sources and references. He was attracted and later satisfied by the Salafi clerics because they always referred to the major original sources of Islamic teachings, especially the Qur’an, hadiths and other books. He was also disappointed with Muhammadiyah for abandoning discussion of some core matters such as takhyul (superstition) and bid’a (misguided innovation) which were eventually taken over by the Salafis.

His further and deeper engagement with Salafism, especially through weekly sessions with Ja’far Umar Thalib for two years from 1998 to 2000, eventually led him to join jihad in September 2000. His close relationship with Thalib kept him informed with the establishment of Laskar Jihad from the very beginning. As the leader of a political party he claimed to endorse its establishment through various ways, political and financial. But it was not enough for a highly committed man of action like Fauzi. Especially after he learned from the news that a massacre had taken place in Tobelo, North Maluku, resulting in the murder of up to 3,000 Muslims.25) Thus, he decided, “I had to retaliate!” (Interview, Yogyakarta, 7/3/2008).

This was a ‘moral shock’ as suggested by Jasper (1997, see also Jasper and Poulsen, 1995). According to Jasper (1997), ‘moral shocks’ occur when an unexpected event or piece of information raises such a sense of outrage in a person that s/he becomes inclined toward political action, whether or not s/he has acquaintances in the movement. “Whether the underlying image is a state of shock or an electrical shock, it implies a visceral, bodily feeling, on a par with vertigo or nausea. Strong emotions should flow from this,” Jasper contends (1998: 409).

25) The real number of Muslim casualties was actually much lower than he mentioned, but at least 500 people were killed. A more detailed description of the violent incidents, including the dispute regarding the number of casualties is presented in Chapter 1.
His reply “I had to retaliate!” in response to the news of the Muslim massacre in Tobelo reflects his identity crisis which eventually led him to do jihad as an *act of identity*. I follow Marranci’s (2009b: 20) notion of an act of identity being a “self-correcting mechanism in a response to drastic changes in environment, producing a deep crisis between the autobiographical self and identity.” *Jihad as act of identity* is also reflected in Fauzi’s explanation of his decision to join jihad, by making a distinction between the politician and man of religion (*agamawan*): “a politician talks a lot about jihad but never takes any action; man of religion talks about jihad and simultaneously takes action” (Interview, Yogyakarta, 7/3/2008). By doing jihad, Fauzi implemented a self-correction of the crisis between his autobiographical self and identity: moving from being a ‘politician’ to becoming a ‘man of religion’.

In different ways and forms, such ‘moral shocks’ were also narrated by Reza and Adang, but not by Taufan. After being involved with the Salafi activism for several months, Reza was moved to join jihad following his participation in a *daurah* held in the Gedung Amal Insani, Yogyakarta. He related that the event was held to campaign for jihad in Poso, in the aftermath of the recent violence that had taken place in that area. As explained in Chapter 1, it seems probable that the massive violence which took place in May-June 2000 resulted in more than two hundred people being murdered, mostly Muslims, mainly in the area of the Walisongo Islamic boarding school, located in a suburb of the Poso district.26) During the *daurah* the tragic situation in Poso was exposed through an investigative report produced by a team sent to the area, complete with pictures shown of badly suffering Muslims persecuted by Christians. Reza recalled that he was moved join jihad after attending the session which had the effect of a ‘moral shock’ on him.

Like Reza, Adang also related that he was moved to join jihad after hearing the stories of Muslim persecution by the Christians.

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26) For a detailed description and discussion of this episode, see McRae (2008), Chapter 3 in particular.
Alongside news from the media, Adang also heard the first-hand story of locals who had fled from Ambon and testified before Laskar Jihad activists in Kuningan. The news and stories of Muslims persecution brought about ‘moral shocks’ that fed feelings of solidarity toward fellow Muslims in agony in the area. Such feelings were furthermore amplified by the fatwas made by Salafi clerics from the Middle East who declared a status of jihad to help fellow Muslims in Maluku as the individual duty for Indonesian Muslims.

Both Reza and Adang mentioned and highlighted the fatwas\(^{27}\) in their decision to join jihad—something almost absent from Fauzi’s interview. Both also were insisted on joining jihad although their parents did not give them permission. Arguing his decision to join jihad without his parents’ approval, Adang compared the religious status of jihad with the five daily prayers: both are the individual duty of every Muslim. “If it’s fardhu kifaya (collective duty), we need approval [from the parent]. If it’s fardhu ‘ain like the five daily prayers, but then the parents do not give their approval, how could we judge the parents then? I don’t mean to say that they were unbelievers…” (Interview, Poso, 24/03/2008). For Adang, his attachment to the Salafi community, for him an expression of his very strong commitment to Islam, was much more important and powerful than his attachment to family. Thus, it was an act of identity, a statement of his ultimate commitment to Islam, through Salafism. The falling tears and cries of his parents failed to prevent him from participating in jihad. It was a similar scenario for Reza: the arrival of his mother from Sulawesi also did nothing to stop his journey for jihad.

Taufan’s path of ‘radical reasoning’ was somewhat different to the others. In his narratives, he did not mention a process of ‘moral shocks’ in his decision to join jihad. For him, the main factor that influenced him to join jihad was the fatwas for jihad issued by some leading Salafi clerics from the Middle East. During the interviews, he claimed that he had not heard many stories of the conflict itself.

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\(^{27}\) Noorhaidi (2005) discusses the issue of the jihad fatwas in his dissertation, especially on pages 117-123.
What really mattered for him was his loyalty and commitment to Salafi activism and, eventually, obeying the fatwas. So, it was a ‘cognitive opening’ which really mattered to him. His attachment and submission to Salafism, produced in him a Salafi identity, and it was his shared and reciprocal emotions with the Salafi community that guided him to his next actions, including his participation in the jihad movement. Thus for him, participation in jihad was an act of identity: a statement of loyalty and commitment to Islamic identity, through Salafism.

The Narratives of jihad experiences

What did the jihad experience mean to the actors? For the actors, the jihad experience was—to use Sartre’s term—‘a pivotal event’. A ‘pivotal event’ is an episode in one’s life that brings about “a pivotal meaning structure that organizes the other activities in a person’s life” (Denzin 1989: 64-7).

I argue that jihad participation was a ‘pivotal event’ for the actors because of two key elements: first, the nature of ‘high-risk’ activism, which involves a high level of ‘costs’ and ‘risks’, thus producing powerful meanings to the actors through the high level of emotions invested it; and second, the use of religious symbols and meanings during the events, as reflected in the use of the term jihad, producing powerful symbolic effects which become embodied in the actors. The combination of the two elements lead to the production of “a pivotal meaning structure” as reflected in the use of the marker or a signifier referring to the movement participant as a jihadist or a jihad actor/activist or mujahid (Arabic: plural, mujahidin). Furthermore, jihad participation also marks the life phase of the jihad actor/activist by symbolically making the distinction between before and after the jihad as will be discussed in the next section.

Before presenting the life story narratives of the four jihadists, I will briefly summarize their participation in the jihad movement (see Table II in the Appendices). Three of them went to Ambon-
Maluku, namely Taufan, Reza, and Fauzi, only one went to Poso: Adang. Three of them spent more than one year in the conflict area, namely Reza, Adang and Taufan—the last even spending more than two years during jihad. Fauzi only spent one month. Three of them fought in battle during the conflict, namely Taufan, Fauzi and Adang—although the last person refused to relate any details. Reza’s role was mainly to educate children. Taufan and Fauzi went to jihad in 2000 while Reza and Adang arrived in 2001.

Although the informants had a variety of roles and experiences as well as arrival times and duration of jihad, they all had ‘radical experiences’ which informed their later lives. The ‘radical experiences’ were the consequence of their involvement in a violent conflict situation as well as jihad activism. I will show briefly through the life story narratives below, how their different kinds of jihad experiences became ‘a pivotal event’ in their lives by creating for them a new *movement identity* as a jihad activist and marking their lives with a ‘signpost’: “after jihad”—through enhancing their attachment and identification as a Salafi activist.

**Taufan: the ‘fighter-cum-manager’ jihadist**

Of the four jihadists, Taufan spent the longest period in jihad: he arrived in Ambon with the first cohort of the Laskar Jihad troops in May 2000 and then decided to stay on following the disbandment of the Laskar Jihad in October 2002. As a consequence of his long period of jihad participation, he was present and even took part in some critical events in the period, such as the massive attack on the Mobile Brigade (Brimob) Police Headquarters in Tantui in June 2000, the burning of the Pattimura University in July 2000, and many other smaller incidents either in Ambon or in Saparua Island. During his term Taufan took different roles and jobs, from *da’wa* to education to combat. He was also selected as a member of the special Laskar Jihad paramilitary forces, called *Pasukan Khusus or*
The Narratives

Paku for short.\(^{28}\) So, his special status as a Paku member was a sort of *tactical identity*—to use Jasper’s (1997) term.

During the interview, he even proudly claimed that some members of the Paku were very disciplined and capable of fighting even better than the regular military. Yet Taufan admitted that during most of the battles the leading roles were played by members of the security forces who took partisan roles by siding with the Muslim militia. The task of the Laskar Jihad troops, even Paku members like him, was to merely bring fuels to set alight when the attack had already begun. They also helped to bring weapons to the battle which were then used by the security forces personnel when the fighting began. His narratives confirm the contention that the Laskar Jihad only played a minor role during battle as argued by McRae (2008: 161-162) and Noorhaidi (2005: 208).\(^{29}\)

Taufan, however, was one of the very few Laskar Jihad activists who were involved in real battles during his jihad period. As observed by Noorhaidi (2005: 205) in his extensive fieldwork research and interviews conducted with more than a hundred Laskar Jihad members, only two informants claimed to have engaged in real battles.

Here is Taufan’s account of his participation in a real battle in Sirisori Islam Village,\(^{30}\) Saparua Island (Interview, Ambon, 22/4/2008):

The attack on Sirisory [Islam] began at 3pm… [and lasted] until night. Maybe as it was the end of the month, that was God’s will, it was completely dark because there was no moonlight at all. Oddly *Obet* [Christians] would sometimes yell *Allahu Akbar* while launching attacks, though their voices sounded odd…. The Laskar [Jihad] was about 55 people while KOMPAK was

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\(^{28}\) *Pasukan Khusus* was a special Laskar Jihad paramilitary force designated for combat tasks. It consisted of less than a hundred members. See Noorhaidi (2005: 205).

\(^{29}\) From the interviews with more than a hundred members of Laskar Jihad, Noorhaidi (2005: 205) found only two informants who claimed to have engaged in real battles.

\(^{30}\) The Sirisori Village in Saparua Island which was located close to Ambon Island was divided into two parts based on the religion of its inhabitants: the Sirisori Islam and the Sirisori Kristen.
about twenty, but the KOMPAK guys had more weapons.... One of the
KOMPAK guys was shot dead when launching a counter
attack.... By evening, we had no more bullets. You know the
situation was that the Sirisori Islam [village] is surrounded by
22 [Christian] villages. So we were under siege.... Thus, the bul-
lets shot from here [a Christian village] could reach there [an-
other one].... A fellow then cried: "Oh Allah please help us...."
Through the handy-talkie, the Obet [Christians] launched a psy-
war: "We are inviting [new forces]... we are launching a long
term attack." ... Thank God, at about midnight they eventually
withdrew their forces. When things turned calm, we prayed: "Oh
Allah, please send your help before dawn." We were so exhaust-
ed. Thank God, they did not return until dawn...

It is very interesting to notice how he narrated his experience
of taking part in battle in such a way which reflected closeness with
the ‘divine’, even explaining how the ‘divine’ was invited to become
involved, and then participate, in different dramatic stages of the vio-
lent conflict. Taufan’s tale of his experience in the conflict engages
William James’ (1982: 42) notion of religion as “the feelings, acts,
and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they ap-
prehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consid-
er divine.” Thus, participation in violent conflict could be seen as an
instance of religious experience from the point of view of the actor:
violence as a means to reach what they perceive and feel as ‘divine.’
It was also fascinating to pay attention to how he constructed a narra-
tive identity as a “soldier of God” during the battle. By constructing
such an identity, Taufan transformed his collective identity as a Mus-
lim or a Salafi activist to a transcendental level of ‘divine’.

After he caught malaria in March 2001, which drastically
weakened his physical stamina and endurance, Taufan withdrew
from being a member of Paku. From then on he was assigned to
deal with the managerial affairs of the Maluku FKAWJ office in
Ambon, and was eventually elected chair. Among the main FKAWJ
programs during his leadership were news publications and organiz-
ing fund raising programs. Such jobs gave him ample opportunity to
develop his social networks, through his engagement with various
kinds of people, including the elites, both inside and outside Salafi groups. It marked the shift in his narrative identity from ‘soldier’ to ‘manager’ during the jihad. He had kept his managerial and leadership job until the FKA JW and Laskar Jihad were eventually closed down in early October 2002.

Jihad participation as ‘a pivotal event’ which shaped his life trajectory was then reflected in his decision to stay on in Ambon post-jihad: a shift from ‘God’s warrior’ to ‘Godly manager’ who was taking care of da’wa, education and other programs of the Salafis in Maluku.

• **Reza: the ‘teacher’ jihadist**

Reza arrived in Ambon in late 2001 in a cohort of about 80 people and then left the area following the disbandment of the Laskar Jihad in October 2002. He initially joined the mobilization for jihad in Poso but the destination then shifted to Ambon. The narratives of Reza were representative of many, if not most, of the Laskar Jihad activists, namely little or no battle experience during jihad. During the jihad, his main task was educating local youth and children, especially in the natural sciences and mathematics. Yet he had some experience of being involved in tense and fearful situations as a consequence of his presence during the violent conflict in Ambon. He also developed an intense reciprocal emotional relationship with both the Salafi fellows who joined jihad as well as local youths and children who participated in his education programs.

In the first month he was deployed at the campus of the state-owned Islamic Academy of Ambon in the Air Kuning ward, situated on the hill-side of Ambon Island. The location functioned as the training and education camp for Laskar Jihad members in Ambon, especially those who had just arrived. As described in his narratives, some of the Laskar Jihad activists did not have a long and intensive engagement with Salafism, so that they need further education in Salafi teachings. After spending about a month in Air Kuning, he was deployed to Ahuru, at the frontline facing the strong Christian militia base of Karang Panjang.
During his term in Ambon, the conflict was de-escalated so that direct clashes with Christian militias were actually quite rare. A state of civil emergency had been declared in June 2000 following the collapse of the Mobile Brigade (Brimob) Police Headquarters in Tantui, Ambon. In response to the increasing partisanship of security apparatus members, the national government had sent its special military troops the Battalion Gabungan or the Yon Gab31) to deal with the conflict in Ambon from August 2000 (ICG 2002d; Azca 2003). It was why during his jihad period in Ambon, Reza observed some tensions and clashes between the Laskar Jihad and the security forces, especially the Yon Gab, that included a clash between the Laskar Jihad and the security apparatus in Ahuru where the mosque dome was shot at sporadically by the security forces. Here he recalled the mood of those very moments (Interview, Yogyakarta, 4/4/2010):

…the most fearful time was after isha’…the bullets being shot by the snipers were passing through the window of the kitchen, bang! It was very loud and made us all afraid and nervous. It was followed by a series of shots, bang-bang-bang, with the bullets fired and their sounds passing through the trees and leaves…

At another time, Reza recalled that the situation in Ambon was increasingly tense prior to, and in the aftermath of, the tabligh akbar given by the Commander-in-Chief of the Laskar Jihad, Ja’far Umar Thalib, in the Al Fatah mosque of Ambon in April 2002. The event was deliberately held to coincide with the anniversary of the RMS (Republik Maluku Selatan, the Republic of South Maluku), the Maluku separatist movement. During the tabligh akbar, Thalib delivered a fiery speech with a strong condemnation and ultimatum to the

31) The Joint Battalion (Yon Gab from Battalion Gabungan) consisted of 450 personnel recruited from the special forces of all three services, namely the army Kopassus, the navy Marines, and the airforce Paskhas. The first Yon Gab troops arrived in Ambon on 9 August 2000 (ICG 2002d: 11). Unlike the other troops who had been deployed in small groups in many areas and, in many cases, sided with the local people, the Yon Gab was concentrated and ‘isolated’ in order to reduce or even eliminate the possibility of ‘contamination’. Its function, as told by Mada Yasa was: “as a tactical command unit and was only to be used in certain emergency situations” (The Jakarta Post, 14 August 2000).
government to resolve the conflict and to arrest the Christian leaders they claimed responsible. Otherwise, Thalib daringly threatened to mobilize and command the Muslim militia to launch massive attacks on the Christians (Eriyanto 2002; Azca 2003).

Reza recalled the mood and the situation at that time (Interview, Yogyakarta, 4/4/2008):

In the aftermath of the tabligh akbar the mood was tense, especially in the city and around the Al Fatah mosque. Many acang [Muslim militias] came in, carried out bombings, and then there were many shootings. At that time we considered the security apparatus as our enemy so that we hated them. It was, perhaps, the outcome of either a particular doctrine, or mood, or opinion, that we saw the forces as our enemy rather than the Christians. Naúdhubillah.32)

He was also posted to Talake, situated in downtown Ambon City. It was quite a safe area, next to the Perigilima ward, where the Ambon City Police Headquarters was located. His main job was in education, providing lessons to local youths and children who had no normal education since many local schools had collapsed over the conflict. As a university student in the UGM Faculty of Engineering, Reza was good at teaching and providing tutorial sessions to children in the natural sciences, such as physics and chemistry, and mathematics. His pupils were mostly from junior and senior high schools. Although he did not take part in battle during the jihad, Reza had a strong feeling of pride and self-esteem for his role. This was apparent in his claim that even though the number of students

32) Naúdlubillah means asking for God’s protection from doing such things. It reflected his post-jihad views, after learning the self-reflections and self-criticisms from some Salafi clerics regarding the mistakes that had occurred during jihad, including disobedience and hatred of the state apparatus. One of the systematic reflections and self-criticisms was articulated by Muhammad Umar as-Sewwed in his foreword ‘Rujuk kepada Kebenaran adalah Ciri Ahlus-Sunnah’ (Back to the Truth is a Character of Ahlus Sunnah) for a translated book entitled Meredam Amarah terhadap Pemerintah, Menyikapi Kejahatan Penguasa menurut Al-Qur’an dan As-Sunnah (Overcoming Anger against the Government, How to Deal with Atrocity by the Ruler According to Qur’an and As-Sunnah) by Syaikh Abu ‘Abdirrahman Fauzi Al-Atsari published by Pustaka Sumayyah in 2006.
who joined his special tutorial lessons was very small (less than ten), yet most of them were among the best students in school. It was meaningful for Reza, a young Salafi activist.

His last post was in the Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu (SDIT, the Integrated Islamic Primary School) in Air Kuning, Ambon. Reza was assigned to be a teacher in the school until he returned to Yogyakarta following the disbandment of the Laskar Jihad in October 2002. He recalled some important steps he took before leaving Ambon during the interview. He explained that all the Laskar Jihad activists were called to gather in Kebun Cengkhih, the headquarters, include those who had been posted in far and remote locations. Then ustaz Yasiruddin, one of the leading Salafi figures in Ambon, read the policy issued by the supreme religious board of FKAWJ, namely the Advisory Board, to disband the FKAWJ and its paramilitary wing Laskar Jihad from then on. Many of those present wept in response to the dramatic disclosure to disband the Laskar Jihad, including Reza himself: “I was shocked and trembling. I also regretted that I had done [wrongdoing] things up to this far…” (Interview, Yogyakarta, 4/4/2008)

The next memorable moments were the ‘farewell ceremony’ held in the Slamet Riyadi Port of Ambon. As a result of the strong affective bounds which were developed during the jihad period, a big crowd of local Muslims gathered in the port of Ambon to farewell the hundreds of Laskar Jihad activists who were about to leave and return home. Reza recalled that many people were weeping, especially the pupils, who had joined the Salafi schools and tutorials, and their parents. Some of them even handed in souvenirs, or gifts, or money to the returning jihadists. Reza recalled that he was given two pearl wall decorations by parents of his former pupils, while another parent gave him some amount of money. One of the parents even asked him to stay on in Ambon. These were memorable moments and meaningful experiences for the young Salafi activist which lasted the rest of his life. It was the combination of the ‘pivotal event’ of his jihad experience and the social network of the Salafis which shaped his life trajectory in the post-jihad period, including his ‘radi-
The Narratives

cal decision’ to quit university and choose to study Islamic teaching in a small pesantren in Muntilan, Central Java.

- **Adang: the ‘public relation’ jihadist**

  Adang initially intended to join the jihad movement in Ambon but he was eventually sent to Poso. He spent more than a year in Poso, from August 2001 until the closing moments of the Laskar Jihad in October 2002. He was mainly posted in the Bonesompe ward, the center of Laskar Jihad activities in Poso, which coordinated the other posts including the wards of Sayo, Tolana, and Tokorondo. His mainly worked in the public relations section, mostly delivering and distributing the *Bela*\(^{33}\) daily news and *Bulletin Al Jihad* weekly news which was published every Friday. He was then assigned to work with the *Suara Perjuangan Muslim Poso* (SPMP, the Voice for Struggle of the Poso Muslims), the ad hoc radio station managed by the Laskar Jihad. The most frequent radio programs were broadcasting the recitation of Al-Qurán, he said. As one of the announcers, he said he occasionally played the role of news reader or host of the dialogue program.

  In addition he claimed he took part in the combat (“*terjun di lapangan*”). However, he refused to tell the story of his battle experiences. “I can’t tell the stories to protect my own soul... [because of] my worry for losing my sincerity [for doing the jihad]...,”\(^{34}\) he explained the reason (Interview, Poso, 25/3/2008). He also claimed that it was actually his favorite activity during jihad “for the sake of God” (“karena Allah”).

  Here we come to the issue of violent experience, the sacred, and silence. Silence is one of the critical issues in the study of vio-

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33) *Bela* was an abbreviation of *Berita Laskar*, or the Holy Forces News, but the word itself means defense. According to Adang, both *Bela* and *Bulletin Al-Jihad* were published as one-page bulletins. I have no information of how regularly they were published, especially the daily one.

34) The original statement is: “Saya tidak bisa menjelaskan karena menjaga hati.... khawatir tidak ikhlas.....saya pikir cukup tahu begini pengalaman saya...” (Interview, Poso, 25/3/2008).
lence (Hastrup 2003) and of oral history (Leydesdorf 1992). Interestingly the silence that occurs here is not mainly linked to the issue of suffering or trauma of the victims, as commonly observed in existing studies, but rather the issue of sincerity, the moral purity of motives and actions and their relation to the sacred or the divine, from the point of view of the perpetrators. Yet, we should be careful in drawing a distinction between victims and perpetrators in the violent conflict situation since, as suggested by Nordstorm and Robben (1995: 8), particularly in the front lines of violent conflict, the distinction between the two are “much more volatile and inchoate, with violence being constructed, negotiated, reshaped, and resolved as perpetrators and victims try to define and control the world they find themselves in.”

When I asked Adang about what were his most sacred experiences during jihad, he mentioned two things: the combat (he uses words “the unexplained battle experience”35)) and the *ribat* (guarding the security post located in the border with Christian area). His reason was: “there was only a thin line between life and death if we were attacked… Because death was felt close, so we were suggested to pray frequently to God.” (Interview, Poso, 25/3/2008). Here we can bring the issue to the discussion on the link between violence and religious experience as discussed previously.

During the interview Adang said that one of his most frightening moments during his jihad was taking part in *ribat*. *Ribat* is basically the security job of being posted in or around a security post which was commonly located on the borderline with the Christian areas. During *ribat*, Adang said, those who were working were divided into two groups on duty alternatively: if one was on duty, another could take a rest or sleep. One time when he was off he fell asleep. But he was suddenly woken up by a series of very loud shots which spontaneously led him to run away and hide in a water channel. It later turned out to be a funny story when he and other jihadist

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fellows eventually learnt that the shootings were targeted far from the security post. Although it sounds odd, fear and fun sometimes come close to each other interweaving during such violent conflict situations.

Interestingly Adang narrated a different story when I asked him about his most meaningful experiences during the jihad.

The most meaningful [experiences were] when we were gathered together..., learning religion together..., I had the feeling that our *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic solidarity) was very strong..., yes, we felt like becoming a single body... when we got sick, others helped us, fed us, and so on and so forth... During the learning session (*ta’lim*), the most meaningful moment was when I was memorizing *hadits* and Qur’an verses..., during the *ta’lim*, I was able to acquire much new knowledge and eliminate my ignorance..., I miss such moments; it was very meaningful to me...

Adang’s narratives reveal that his participation in jihad could develop strong *affective reciprocal bounds* among those involved. Such emotional experiences of collectivity and togetherness of the community of Salafis in Poso remained strong and long-lasting in his life. It was one of the main reasons he eventually decided to return to Poso after he went home and spent a few months with his family and relatives in West Java.

• **Fauzi: the ‘doctor-cum-fighter’ jihadist**

Like Taufan, Fauzi was among the very few of the Laskar Jihad activists who had taken part in real battles. Yet Fauzi originally joined jihad as a member of the FKAWJ medical team (from September to October 2000). His special position was reflected in mode of travel to Ambon: he went to Ambon by plane on the same flight as Ja’far Umar Thalib, the Commander of the Laskar Jihad. However, his elite status did not hinder him from taking part in a real battle and becoming a foot soldier. His involvement in the battle was driven by the news of an attack by Christians on two Islamic villages in
Saparua Island, the Iha Village and the Sirisori Islam Village, which resulted in four Muslims being killed. As a member of the medical team and as a fighter Fauzi decided to come to the battle area. Here is part of his narrative (Interview, Yogyakarta, 7/3/2008):

I [we] were in seven, including two other medical doctors and two medical staff…. I brought several Molotov bombs…. At about 4 p.m., the fighting spirit of the Muslims drastically declined, especially after four Muslims were killed. Thank God, I spontaneously went to a mosque and made a sort of sermon through the loudspeakers: calling for all Muslims to revive the spirit for jihad! ...I just behaved like a crazy man… I acted as if I were Umar Ibn al-Khattab when he had done the thing during a Friday prayer sermon36)...

What did you speak about?
[I talked] about the primacy of jihad, about jihad as the ultimate worship to God… Fortunately, Muslims eventually stood up [for the battle] again.

During the battle, Fauzi was suffered a minor shot to his buttocks. His wallet was damaged but he was fortunately safe—though with a small injury.

How could you explain that?
Wallahu a’lam37)… I witnessed myself someone who was safeguarding ustaz Ja’far being shot in his chest; his jacket was damaged, but he was okay. Subhanallah, a lot of miracles happened there. Perhaps, it was because we were ikhlas (sincere)… It was also because of faith. As Allah says in a verse: in tans-hurullah yanshurukum (if you help Allah’s religion, Allah will definitely help you).38) If we make a sacrifice to Allah, Allah will repay with the things beyond our rational calculation…

36) There is a famous story in the history of Islam about the role played by Umar Ibn Khattab, the second khalifa, who commanded the Islamic troops who were on a mission far away in Persia when he was giving the Friday sermon in Medina. Umar, the story goes, suddenly had the vision that the troops were about to be attacked by the enemy, so he commanded the troops to go to the hill. Thus, in the middle of the sermon, Umar suddenly started shouting: “To the hill!” Such a story can be found in http://www.sahaba.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=85 [31 July 2010].

37) An Arabic term, meaning: Only God knows the truth.

38) Al-Qur’an surah Muhammad: 7.
During the battle, amidst the shootings and the bombings, the narratives of sacred or seemingly miraculous incidents are quite common. It reminds me of the notion of ‘religious sensation’ described by Birgit Meyer as the feeling and inducement of a particular kind of excitement, in which “the inducement is produced by *sensational forms* that make the transcendental *sense-able*” (2006: 8; emphasis in original). Meyer furthermore suggests religious sensations are “about human encounters with phenomena of events that appear as beyond comprehension, in a word: a sublime, that induces… a simultaneous sense of *beauty* and *terror*.” While it should be admitted that it is beyond the objective of this dissertation, it would be interesting to elaborate further on narratives such as Fauzi’s as examples of religious sensation from taking part in jihad movements.

Fauzi, furthermore, narrated that during the battle the sacred and the profane were sometimes fascinatingly blurred and blended. Claiming himself to be a rational man who trained as a medical doctor but simultaneously a man of religion committed to jihad, Fauzi narrated his experiment to test a ‘religious myth/belief’ in practice during his jihad participation in Ambon. There was a kind of ‘mythical belief’ widely held among the jihadists that a Muslim who was killed during jihad smells like an Arabic perfume. Fauzi wanted to test if such a belief was true. So, when he was carrying out an examination of the bodies of four Muslims killed in battle, with a crack in one of their heads, Fauzi put his finger into the brain, the centre of the nerve system of human being, and then sniffed it. “It did not smell like perfume, but it did not stink as normal; it was just plain,” he said (Interview, Yogyakarta, 7/3/2008).

It is, of course, the deep personal bodily experience of the jihadist Fauzi which is not verifiable. And verifiability is not the case here. Anyhow, the case shows convincingly how highly passionate his jihad experiences were and their deep impact on his life. When I asked him to reflect on the meanings of his jihad experiences, he replied: “Doing jihad in Ambon was the greatest pleasure I have ever had in worship in my life compared to anything, either *shalat* or *hajj* or *umrah* or anything else” (conversation, Solo, 15/1/2008).
The narratives of after jihad

In this section I will present and discuss the after jihad narratives of the four jihadists who had joined the Laskar Jihad. As indicated in the previous section, they took different pathways in the post-jihad period. Taufan decided to stay on in Ambon and became a leader of the Yayasan Abubakar Ash-Shiddiq, a Salafi foundation in Ambon. Adang had returned to his family in Kuningan, West Java, but following some troubles he decided to return to Poso, staying there up to my fieldwork: marrying a local girl and working as a part-time member of the fire brigade. Reza returned to Yogyakarta, but instead of completing his university degree he chose to study in a Salafi pesantren in Muntilan, Central Java, and now works as a Salafi publisher in Yogyakarta. Fauzi also returned to Yogyakarta, but he took the maverick trajectory of a Salafi activist. After having left his political party in 2001, he recently began to re-engage with politics. He also refused to blame Ja’far Umar Thalib and, furthermore, developed closer links with the At-Turats, a Salafi network that had previously opposed the mobilization for jihad.

I argue that the jihad experience influenced the life trajectory of the actors in combination with two other main factors, namely, their biographical traits, and their engagement with different social networks prior to, during and after their jihad participation. In my analytical framework, I distinguished three different kinds of social networks associated with the post-jihadists, namely: core-network, a network through which they join jihad; tactical-network, a network of jihadist networks which occur temporarily during the jihad period; and extended-network, an extension of networks which developed in the aftermath of jihad. I use the concept of social network in two meanings: first, social network as the link between concrete actors through specific ties as articulated by ‘realist’ view; and second, social networks as “phenomenological realities” and “networks of meaning” as suggested by phenomenologist, such as White (Diani 2003: 6; Passy 2003: 27).

I argue that the core-network, the network through which jihadists join the jihad, is the most important network which acts as
the ‘ideological network’ for the jihadists. In the case of the four post-jihadists their core-network was similar, namely the Salafi movement, as manifested through the FKA JW and Laskar Jihad. In a sect-like group of the Salafi, their membership affiliation type is exclusive affiliation, meaning those who joined the group usually only belong to their own group. It is in contrast to multiple affiliations which is common to political Islamists. I follow the distinction between exclusive affiliation and multiple affiliation proposed by Della Porta and Diani (1999: 119-20). Of the four post-jihadists, Dr. Fauzi, was an exceptional case- a Salafi jihadist with the social background of a political Islamist who had developed a wide social network before his involvement with the Salafis. Thus, his attachment with the core-network of Salafism was quite loose compared to the others activists and this was in fact reflected in his life trajectory in the post-jihad period.

Of the four post-jihadists, Taufan developed the strongest affective bounds with the core-network as indicated by his long term jihad participation in Ambon for more than two years as well as his leadership position. His strong link with the core-network influenced him to stay on in Ambon following the disbanding of the Laskar Jihad in October 2002. His long period of jihad participation and leadership position during jihad, especially as the chairman of the FKA JW Maluku before its disbandment, had granted him the opportunity to develop tactical-networks during the jihad and later extended-networks in the post-jihad period. His tactical-networks were mainly local leaders, some of whom eventually, engaged with the Salafism and became his extended-networks, especially following the establishment of the Abubakar Foundation in Ambon in the post-jihad period. It was a combination of both his leadership capacity and his engagement with a variety of social networks which eventually led Taufan to be elected as the chairman of the Abubakar foundation.

Adang and Reza, on the other hand, developed comparable relationships with the core-network in terms of their duration of jihad participation and their roles during the jihad. They both joined the jihad for more than a year and their main roles were non-combat;
education for Reza and public relations for Adang—perhaps, including some involvement in battle for Adang. They both also returned to their hometowns following the break-up of the Laskar Jihad and from then on, their life trajectory began to deviate. Adang eventually decided to go back to Poso following his turbulent period, firstly in his hometown Kuningan and then in other cities where he moved on searching for work. His decision to return to Poso can be seen as an indication of his strong link to the core-network of Salafism, which was relatively less visible in his home area of West Java, so that he decided to return to Poso, where both the core-network and his memorable passionate experiences of jihad were alive. On the other side, Reza remained in Yogyakarta and developed a stronger link with the core-network of the Salafis which was strong in his surrounding. His decision to go to the Salafi pesantren instead of continuing his study at the university also reflected the primacy of the Salafi network over his family network.

Finally, Fauzi has not yet developed a strong link to the core-network of Salafism. In addition to his short period of jihad participation, his social background as a political activist and wide social networks contributed to his weak relationship with the core-network. The fragmentation of the Salafi network in the post-jihad period has also weakened his links with the core-network since he had a strong personal relationship with Ja’far Umar Thalib, the abandoned Salafi leader. His short period of jihad participation also limited his tactical-network. On the other hand, he has developed very wide extended-networks which he had begun to build long before his engagement with Salafism. The combination of all these factors with his strong personality eventually led him to be a ‘maverick’ Salafi post-jihadist.

• Taufan: the ‘manager’ post-jihadist

There was no dramatic shift from the jihad period to ‘after jihad’ for Taufan; he continued to stay on in the same place, Ambon. Although the area remained the same, there was a big difference: the huge number of Salafis had left the area after the Laskar Jihad was
The Narratives
disbanded in October 2002. Several hundred, several thousand, of
the ex Laskar Jihad activists have left Ambon and returned to their
hometowns, mostly to Java. Only a very few of them decided to
stay: “less than ten people,” Taufan recalled by counting his fingers.
And he was one of the rare birds.

Why did he decide to remain in Ambon in the post-jihad pe-
period? He explained that one of the main reasons was that some lead-
ing local Salafi figures asked him to remain in Ambon to take care
of social and da’wa programs previously managed by the Maluku
FKAWJ. In March 2001, Taufan was elected Chairman of the Ma-
luku FKAWJ after he left the Paku due to malaria. Under his leader-
ship, he claimed he focused on education and da’wa programs for
the local Salafis and wider community. So he felt responsible to take
care of the programs when he was asked to do so by some leading
local Salafi figures. It was a critical turning point, an epiphany to use
Denzin’s (1989: 70) term, in his life: the beginning of a new passage
in his life influencing his decision to remain in Ambon.

Unlike Reza and Adang who were surprised and shocked by
the decision to demobilize the FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad, Taufan was
not. As the leader of the Maluku FKAWJ he had a wide network
among the core-network of the Salafis and had previously been ex-
posed to some critical issues, including criticism of the flaws of the
FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad under the leadership of Ja’far Umar Thal-
ib. Even more, only a few weeks before the decision to disband the
Advisory Board of the FKAWJ in Yogyakarta on 5 October, he at-
tended a Salafi leadership meeting in Jakarta and made a trip to other
cities in Java. Yet he admitted to still being a little bit surprised to
know that the decision was eventually made to close down both the
FKAWJ and the Laskar Jihad. “When the decision to disband [was
informed] many ikhwan shed tears, I was… just relaxed. If that was
the fatwa made by ulama, let’s just follow it,” he said (Interview,

Taufan is quite a calm person. During my series of interviews,
he also remained calm and quite carefully managed his emotions. So
he explained that he did not express passionate emotions in response
to the dramatic changes occurring to the Laskar Jihad. For him, loyalty and commitment toward the fatwa made by ulama is one of the ultimate values of a Salafi—an attitude which was also reflected in his decision to join jihad. However, in the aftermath of the demobilization of the FKA JW and the Laskar Jihad the situation in Ambon was quite complicated and the problems were not small. Here is his narrative:

When [almost] everyone went away, all the remaining issues were delegated to me as Chairman of the Maluku FKA JW …. including all the assets. [But] The Laskar had hundred of millions of debts, so all the assets were sold to pay the debt…. [M] ost [of the assets] were logistics stuff… like the damaged cars, also ghanimah39) stuff, like the kerosene tank car…

In the post-jihad period, in early 2003, the Salafi community in Maluku founded the Abubakar ash-Shiddiq Foundation to manage their activities and programs—as mentioned in an earlier section. Taufan was eventually elected as its chairman. It seemed to be a continuation of his role as Chairman of the Maluku FKA JW from early 2001. It could also be seen as recognition by the local Salafi activists of his leadership among them and his strong position in the core-network of the Salafis.

Although experiencing a drastic decline of its human resources, the Abubakar Foundation attempted to continue the programs and activities inherited from the Maluku FKA JW especially in education, da’wa and health services. As described by Budiyanto (2006: 43-54), the Taman Pendidikan al-Qur’an (TPQ, Qur’an Learning School) which spread throughout the Ambon Island during the conflict dramatically declined in numbers to a few, including the TPQ Al-Manshurah in Batu Tagepe, Ambon. Besides the TPQ, the Abubakar foundation also managed to run the kindergarten Tarbiyatul Awd Al-Manshurah (formerly named the TKIT Al-Manshurah) and the primary school Madrasah at-Thaifa Al-Manshurah (formerly named the SDIT Al-Manshurah). It also transformed the Radio

Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku (SPMM, the Voice for Struggle of Maluku Muslims) 105.5 FM which was well-known during the conflict into the Radio Suara Tauhid (the Voice of Tawhid) 106.5 FM. It also changed the name of the Ahmed Clinic Medical Team into the Poliklinik Ahlussunnah. In addition to education and da’wa programs, Taufan also manages a small shop, located in the Ambon city market, belonging to the Abubakar Foundation which sold various goods, from herbal medicine to Arabic clothing and perfumes.

In the course of the time Taufan married a local girl and had two little children when I was doing my fieldwork. He already had his own house in the Salafi compound of the newly renamed “Kampung Muhajirin” in Kebun Cengkih, Ambon. It was quite a compact house about 5.5 x 11 meters situated on a 12 x 15 meter plot of land. When I came by his place one evening in late April 2008 for an interview, the house was not yet completely finished. The living room wall was not yet painted. I could not see the exterior properly because it was dark; there was no adequate lighting in the surrounding area. The road along the complex was also not properly surfaced so it was bleak after rain.

Although he led a modest life, Taufan played an important role in post-jihad Maluku, at least among the Salafis. It was under his leadership that the Salafis in Maluku were planning to expand their da’wa by engaging with the transmigration program run by the local government. The issue was being discussed by the Salafis in Ambon during my fieldwork. I had the rare opportunity to take part in an internal meeting of the Salafis discussing the program. The meeting was interestingly held in the house of an official of the Department of Transmigration of the Maluku Province who was also a Salafi, in Kebun Cengkih, Ambon.40) Although the Salafi joint-transmigration program was eventually not successful, as Taufan related during my second fieldwork in Ambon in late November 2009,

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40) In casual talk after the meeting, it was reported that the idea to organize and mobilize Salafi activists to take part in the transmigration program was initially raised in April 2008, when ustaz Ayip Syafruddin and Abu Ghifari (the boss of the Ghuraba honey brand) made a visit to Ambon and the surrounding area.
it was fascinating to observe how the local Salafis attempted to develop an extended-network in the post-jihad period, including with the local government.

Another interesting feature of the extended-network of the Salafis in Ambon was their good relationship with the local security forces. In contrast to the tense relationship with the security forces during the late period of the Laskar Jihad (as reflected in Reza’s narratives), they rebuilt a new relationship with a new spirit of cooperation, especially in the war against ‘terrorism’. As described by Budiyanto (2006) they held a collaborative session with the local government and the security forces to discuss a book written by the former vice-commander of the Laskar Jihad, ustadz Luqman bin Muhammad Ba’abduh on blaming terrorism. Ustadz Wahab Lumaela also told me that when a group of Salafi activists went to Yogyakarta to attend the Daurah Nasional in 2009, the local police helped by providing them with a letter of notification—because the event was held not long after the bombing of the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta and strict scrutiny was applied during the period especially for those of an Islamic Salafi background.

The development of the Salafi movement in Maluku in the post-jihad period was also noticeable. According to Taufan, the current number of Salafi families in Ambon was estimated to be about 600 while the number in Maluku was approximately 1,000. This made Ambon the city with the biggest Salafi community in Eastern Indonesia as claimed by Taufan. The magnitude and dynamics of the Salafis in Maluku was reflected in their participation in the Daurah Nasional held in Yogyakarta in 2009 which was attended by more than 100 Salafi activists and they travelled by plane—in contrast only five people came from Poso.

• Adang: The ‘casual fire brigade’ post-jihadist

Unlike Taufan, Adang had left the land of jihad (Poso) following the demobilization of Laskar Jihad in October 2002. He said he left Poso feeling a blend of sad and happy emotions. He felt happy
because the security situation of Poso had been quite safe during the period. It made some Laskar Jihad activists begin to get bored and wish to return home—and some had even left without permission. On the other hand, he said he felt sad because he would be separated from his Salafi friends after having lived together for more than a year. There was no dramatic farewell ceremony from Poso as related below by Reza leaving Ambon.

Away from his home for more than a year, Adang began to miss his parents and family. The son and his parents agreed to meet him when he disembarked from Poso at the Tanjung Priok Port, Jakarta. Unfortunately, due to a sudden change, he and the group were disembarked in Surabaya, and they went home to Kuningan by train and bus. So when he got home, his parents had not yet returned. After being worried by the lack of news from Adang, they were finally reunited: the return home of the rebellious jihadist! Adang described how they wept as they hugged him tightly. He said his journey home from jihad indicated a change of him, a change in him (Interview, Poso, 25/4/2008):

> When I first arrived back in Windusengkahan, people did not recognize me because of my long hair and bigger body. My female cousin then hugged me weeping—although she was not my mahram.

Not only his body and hair but his interior life had been transformed by his jihad experience: a self transformation from a simple village boy to a more committed Salafi activist with stronger passion for pristine Islam. His identification and attachment to Salafism as the core-network was significantly enhanced during the jihad. Thus, the ‘honeymoon’ period with his family and environment did not last long. He began to feel alienated living in a rural area with strong syncretic Islamic traditions, in sharp contrast to the purity of Salafism. Adang recalled that his happiness at the family reunion did not

41) Mahram is a legal Islamic term that basically refers to a close relative. For strict Muslims physical contact is not encouraged between non-mahram. For simple explanation of the concept, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahram](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahram) [2 August 2010].
last longer than a month. He also began to get bored with his daily job helping his parents with household as well as farming tasks. Unlike Reza who returned to Yogyakarta, a stronghold of the Salafi movement, Adang lived in a rural area of Kuningan, where Salafism was alien. He also missed his religious mentor, ustadz Abim, who was staying on in Poso—even bringing two of his wives to the area.

After staying at home for weeks, Adang went to the capital city of Jakarta and neighboring Bekasi to look for work. Although having applied for many jobs and having several jobs’ interviews over about six months, he was unsuccessful. Under such pressure he decided to take up work as a construction laborer in Jakarta. After learning about his job his parents ordered his brother to ask him to go home. His parents were sad and shed tears: “Why did you leave home just for such a low class job?” (Interview, Poso, 25/4/2008)

Work was, actually, only one of his problems. The more profound problem was his troubled feeling of living in a “polluted, contagious, dangerous” environment—to borrow the terms of Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2003: 36) to describe how the ‘enclave culture’ views cultures outside its own arena. Jihad’s experience implanted a sort of puritan Salafi ideology in his own mind, feelings and body. Living in a place surrounded by ‘vices’ made him unhappy and troubled not only his feelings but also his body. As he said in an interview (Ambon, 25/4/2008): “I got tired of seeing so many ma’šiah (vices) there [in Java]. My eyes got sick of seeing the vices.”

What kinds of vices did he refer to? Here is his narrative (Interview, Poso, 25/4/2008).

There were many kinds of vices, like dating women; because there is no such thing as dating according to Islam. Then, many women wore sexy and skin-tight dresses. They seemed to reflect what the Prophet says: “they get dressed but they are basically naked.” If we look at their awrah\(^{42}\) deliberately, it will become our vice, our sin.

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\(^{42}\) An Arabic term used within Islam which means “the intimate parts of the body, for both men and women, which must be covered with clothing.” Exposing the awrah is unlawful in Islam and is regarded as a sin. The exact definition of awrah varies between
What kinds of feelings did you have?
Yes, I didn’t feel good…. If your heart felt calm, it meant you had done something good; but if you felt worried about being found out by others, it meant you had done something bad … For those who became accustomed to vice, they would probably feel okay. But I didn’t get used to it. It was true that before joining the da’wa ahlussunnah [Salafi] I was used to it, because I did not know the rules. But after I did hijra [by joining the Salafi], [I knew that] it is not allowed, so that I did not feel good at heart.

Not feeling happy or at home either in his hometown or in the big city of Jakarta, his imagination and memory brought him back to Poso, a small town on the seashore of Central Sulawesi, where he had stayed for more than a year in a modest and pious Salafi community. He began to think of returning to Poso. It was a turning point, an epiphany, in Adang’s life. According to Denzin (1989: 70) epiphanies are “interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people’s lives… [they] are often moments of crisis [which]… alter fundamental meaning structures in a person’s life.” He claimed to have had a happier life in Poso, living in a sort of ‘holy kampong’ of the Salafi community in the area. His wonderful memories of jihad called him back. His parents initially rejected his plan to go back to Poso. Besides feeling afraid and worried about possible conflicts occurring in the future, like many parents, they did not want their son to live far away from them. After a series of long and tough discussions lasting about two months, his parents eventually gave him approval to return to Poso.

After living for about six months in Java, mostly in the west, Adang went back to Poso in April 2003, beginning a new chapter in his life. Before leaving for Poso, he had contacted ustadz Abim, his religious mentor, who was the leader of the Salafis in Poso. So it was a journey back to his core-network of the Salafi community, the ‘holy kampong’ where he has developed strong affective bounds

with his Salafi fellows, both locals and migrants who had stayed on in the area, such as his Salafi mentor: ustadz Abim.

Back in Poso, Adang initially returned to his previous duty as a teacher in the Islamic kindergarten and an announcer for the Islamic local radio station which had belonged to the Laskar Jihad during the conflict. He then married a local girl from a Salafi family, a pupil of one of ustadz Abim’s wives. His father-in-law is a Salafi of Buginese, South Sulawesi background, who works in the local Poso city fire brigade. Through the help of his father in-law, Adang was recruited to work part-time in the Poso fire brigade. He works three 24 hour days a week. He claimed to refuse an offer to be recruited as a public servant at his work because he was unwilling to be part of a government not based on Islamic law. “Please do not dispose of syariah only because you want to get what you want to,” he suggested in an interview (Poso, 25/4/2008).

When I met Adang in Poso in 2008 he had moved into the Salafi compound of the Sayo ward, living in a modest house with his wife and a three-year old daughter. His father-in-law and his mentor, ustadz Abim, also lived in the same compound. Besides working in the fire brigade, Adang also taught in the TPA (Qur’anic Learning School) in the Sayo ward. Giving the weekly Friday sermon in Salafi mosques in Poso moving from one mosque to another was another job for him. He had formerly run his own small business selling clothes but stopped in 2007 without any clear explanation. Taking part in a syirkah, a sort of joint-venture business with other Salafis, selling various items like non-alcohol perfumes, siwak (traditional Arabic wood for tooth brushing), sandals, et cetera was another side-job.

Although living modestly on the outskirts of a small town of Poso, Adang had high ambitions for his future: studying Islamic teachings overseas, particularly in Yemen. In order to achieve his dreams, he prepared himself through self-study programs at home, such as learning Arabic, reading classical Salafi textbooks, and memorizing Qur’anic verses.
Like other Salafi in the compound, Adang and his family lived modestly in puritan fashion, not watching television or listening to radio, etc. He also admitted he had no particular social engagement with any surrounding communities, unless the local authority called for collective activities such as cleaning up the roads and the environment. As common among the Salafis, Adang rejected to participate in any political elections. When I asked him for his opinion on the concept of implementing syariah bylaw as happened in some areas, he admitted he had not studied the issue. But he raised doubts that such a policy would benefit the Muslim community.

When I asked him about the modest life and conditions of the Salafi community in Poso, he referred to the life histories of the companions of the Prophet who lived more than one thousand years ago (Interview, Poso, 25/4/2008). He said that their lives were:

…like the companions of the Prophet, who mostly lived modest and underprivileged lives. There was importance [to be modest people], as the Prophet says “modest people would be more likely to enter the heaven rather than the wealthy people, because the wealthy will be asked how did they get their possessions and what their possessions had been used for. If their possessions had been used for nothing, they will be barriers rather than assets for them in the after life…

In other words, for Adang, modesty is a sign of piety, even perhaps a sort of collective identity of the Salafis who live in an ‘enclave community’ in Poso. This picture is very different from that of the Salafis in Ambon as presented earlier.

• **Reza: the ‘dropped out’ post-jihadist**

Like Adang, Reza was among the hundreds, even thousands, of ex Laskar Jihad activists who returned home in October 2002. Yet unlike Poso, large crowds of locals held a sort of farewell ceremony in the Port of Ambon before their departure. So, Reza went back to Yogyakarta with a nice memory of his meaningful participation of jihad in Ambon. Reza was also lucky because Yogyakarta was a
strong Salafi base, so that he was supported by a robust Salafi network in the post-jihad period. Thus, even though the FKAWJ and the Laskar Jihad had been disbanded, he remained associated with the Salafi core-network in Yogyakarta.

Soon after returning to Yogyakarta, Reza was confronted with an important question: would he continue his studies at the Faculty of Engineering of UGM? Although he had been on ‘study leave’ for more than a year without official permission, it seemed likely that he could have retained his status as a university student and still be entitled to continue the study. His aunt, Rahmi, had also contacted a senior lecture at his faculty to help him continue his studies. But the key question was did Reza want to continue his studies? Did he still have the passion to continue? Or had he changed his mind and passion from studying technology to Islamic teachings? It was a critical moment, a time of epiphany, “interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people’s lives...are often moments of crisis [which]... alter fundamental meaning structures in a person’s life” as Denzin (1989: 70) defined, which eventually shapes the rest of his life.

During the interview, Reza seemed quite ambiguous regarding this issue. In reply to a question on the matter, he said he did not want to continue his study in the post-jihad period. But in another answer, he said that he took about three months before making the decision to leave university. Anyhow, his decision to leave university was a critical moment which shaped the next episode of his life story.

From his narratives, I identified two factors which influenced him to make the decision: the family and the Salafi community. The family network pushed him firmly back to the university, because he was half-way towards finishing his study. After completing university he could study another subject following his own interests. But the Salafi network drove him into another direction. However, he said that among his fellow Salafis there were various opinions regarding this issue, some in favor of continuing study while some others not. Following a series of discussion and consultation for about three months with his parents and family, he finally decided to leave the university.
Why did he finally decide to leave university and go to a *pesantren*? “I was worried I would get [bad] influences from my old cohort of friends on campus…,” Reza said in an interview (Yogyakarta, 4/4/2008). For me, his answer reflected the construction of an imaginary boundary of his life story: *before* and *after* the jihad. By expressing his concerns over the potentially (bad) influence of his *old cohort of friends* on campus, Reza considered his *pre-jihad* network of peers to be less *pious*, or possibly even dangerously contagious, for his new life *after-jihad*.

I also argue that his decision to prefer studying at a *pesantren* rather than university can be seen as an indication of two things: first, the primary role of the Salafi community as the *core-network* in his post-jihad period; and second, his consolidation of identity as a Salafi as the consequence of his jihad participation. Reza’s decision to quit from university was a reflection of the primacy of the Salafi network over his family network in shaping his life trajectory in the post-jihad period. It was not the first time this happened since it had also occurred prior to his participation to Ambon. However the superiority of Salafi community as the *core-network* was not the single factor which lead to his decision but it was in tandem with the consolidation of his collective identity as a Salafi as the consequence of his jihad participation. When I asked him what the most important influence from his participation in jihad on his life in the aftermath, he replied in somewhat uncertainly: “Perhaps, courage.” (Interview, Yogyakarta, 4/4/2008) Interestingly, what he meant by courage was that after his jihad period in Ambon he had more courage and was more confident to wear the Salafi dress, including the robe and *sari*ong. So, what he meant basically was the increasing courage and confidence to express his identity as a Salafi.

Reza initially planned to join the Salafi *pesantren* in Depok, West Java, near the University of Indonesia campus. Since that pesantren program was not ready yet to commence, he moved to join a pesantren in the rural area of Muntilan, Central Java, led by ustadz Abdurrahman Lombok. He joined the pesantren for almost two years from early 2003 to late 2004. Although located in rural area, the
pesantren was quite well-known among the Salafis, as indicated by its students originating from all over Indonesia, including Aceh, Maluku, and Kalimantan. The pesantren was basically free so that the facilities in the pesantren were quite modest. He described his modest life at the pesantren as follows: the daily food menu was steamed rice with vegetables without any other side dishes; the quality of drinking water was pretty bad, a bit muddy and smelly. As a person from a middle class family background, it was quite hard to live this modest life in the pesantren. He claimed he spent most of his time in the pesantren learning Arabic and reading the basic Salafi teaching texts. As a consequence of his deteriorating relationship with his family, he admitted he rarely left the pesantren for a family visit.

After completing his studies at the Muntilan pesantren, Reza worked as a casual teacher in the TPQ (Al-Qur’an Learning School for children) of the Al Anshor pesantren in Watussalam, Sleman, the center of Salafi activism in Yogyakarta. Rahmi told me that at one particular period after jihad, Reza worked as a casual street vendor in the mosque after the Friday prayer session. During a series of conversations with me Rahmi expressed her concern over her nephew: a young man who used to have bright life prospects but chose to live modestly as a Salafi activist.

In 2006 Reza married a girl he met through the Salafi network and had two kids when I met him in 2009. During our last conversation in late 2009 he said that he had just got a new job in the Pustaka Salafiyah, a new Salafi publishing house owned by Pak Hendrata, a businessman and Salafi activist and located near the Al-Anshor pesantren. He also has a casual job selling various Islamic herbal medicines and food supplements, including honey and habatus saud-a (black cumin or nigella sativa). Although he worked hard to earn money, his financial situation was still at a subsistence level. Rahmi told me that when his youngest fell ill and had to be treated in hospital, he still needed financial assistance from the family.

During our series of meetings and interviews Reza looked happy and healthy, and always had a nice smile on his face. In our last conversation after Friday prayers in the Al Anshor mosque in
late December 2009, I told him I thought he was beginning to look stocky. He confirmed my observation. He said he was more than 20 kilograms heavier than he was at university ten years earlier. I hope this is a good sign for his life.

• **Fauzi: the ‘maverick’ post-jihadist**

   After joining the jihad for one month in Maluku from September to October 2000, Fauzi returned to his ‘normal life’ in Yogyakarta, working as a medical specialist and returning to his role as the PPP Chairman of PPP for the province of Yogyakarta. Although spending only a month in the Maluku jihad, Fauzi had the dramatic experience of taking part in the real battle in Saparua Island, and even being shot and slightly injured on his buttocks. It was a rare experience among those who joined the jihad through Laskar Jihad as also observed by Noorhaidi (2005, also Hasan 2006). Furthermore, he had also the unique experience of having the ‘ecstatic experience’ of spontaneously giving a sermon in the middle of the battle when the fighting spirit of the Muslims had drastically declined.

   Both his involvement in the battle and his ‘ecstatic sermon’ were exceptional like his unique social profile as a Salafi politician. All these factors eventually led to his peculiar life trajectory in his post-jihad period. I call him a ‘maverick’ post-jihadist. Why maverick?

   Fauzi status as a ‘maverick’ post-jihadist is reflected in his life trajectories and life story narratives as a Salafi activist in the post-jihad period. It began from his background as a political activist, and even chairman of a political party, during his jihad participation. It was odd from a Salafi perspective, because participation in partisan politics (*hizbiyya*) is considered unlawful. Noorhaidi (2005: 143) explained *da’wa hizbiyya* as “Islamic movements that are perceived to prioritize politics over the purification of the individual Muslim’s religious beliefs and practices.” After his involvement in the Ambon jihad, Fauzi remained active in politics until August 2003 when he
was fired from leadership due to internal conflict. Following that he made steps to leave from the political party.\textsuperscript{43}

After his jihad participation, Fauzi’s continued involvement with Salafi activism including holding a weekly Salafi sermon at his house—a practice which began in 1998. However, Fauzi also maintains an uncommon personal habit for Salafis, namely smoking! Our series of meetings and interviews from early 2008 to late 2009 were always accompanied by both one (or two) packets of cigarettes, especially the \textit{Ji Sam Soe kretek} (clove-scented cigarette), and a cup or more of hot black coffee. While there is no firm legal ruling on drinking coffee among Salafi clerics, smoking is clearly forbidden by a fatwa made by leading Salafi clerics.\textsuperscript{44} Yet Fauzi, despite his alleged commitment to Salafism, admitted he could not yet stop smoking. As a heavy smoker, he consumes more than one (sometimes two) packets of cigarettes in a day. He claimed nobody could force him to stop smoking, including Ja’far Umar Thalib when he was the Commander of Laskar Jihad.

The next indication of his maverick nature was his response to fragmentation among the Salafis following the disbanding of the FKA JW-Laskar Jihad. While most of the Salafi activists and ustadzs left and dismissed Ja’far Umar Thalib from their network, Fauzi maintained a good relationship with him. He even moved further by inviting an ustaz from the Al-Turats Salafi network, who opposed the mobilization and the establishment of Laskar Jihad, to preach regularly at his home. When I asked him how he responded to internal friction among the Salafis, he replied jokingly saying that it was part of the rivalry among the Arabic descent people. So he claimed

\textsuperscript{43} Fauzi was fired from his leadership in August 2003 following internal conflict in his party, the PPP, especially as the result of his rejection of the new leadership elected at the National Congress (\textit{muktamar}) held a few months before. He accused the leadership of being corrupt and brought the corruption cases to the police. Fauzi accepted his dismissal and was cited by the press saying “I will quit from any political party, including PPP. I will then focus on studying religion.” \textit{Suara Merdeka}, 2 September 2003, ‘Ketua PPP DIY Diberhentikan’.

\textsuperscript{44} Smoking is forbidden because it may cause physical damage and bad smells. The fatwa is available in the ‘official’ Indonesian Salafi website at: \url{http://www.salafy.or.id/salafy.php?menu=detil&id_artikel=427} [accessed on 2 August 2010].
that he did not let himself get involved further in the conflict. Yet he was implicitly sympathetic to Ja’far Umar Thalib as reflected in his comment about Thalib’s engagement in the *Dhikr Akbar* as a sign of his maturity in religious thinking.\(^{45}\)

His loose relationship with the Salafi *core-network* was reflected in his attitude and relationship with *jihadi* activism. While the majority of Salafis tend to view and respond to *jihadi* activists with hostility, Fauzi does not. Although he did not accept their doctrine on *jihadism*, he expressed his appreciation toward the ‘spirit’ behind their actions. It was reflected in his view on Imam Samudra during my conversation with him in Solo (15/1/2008): “I admire Imam Samudra for his ability not to fall in love with the ‘worldly life’. While most of people run to grab the ‘world’, he had the courage to take a different direction.” He also told me that he twice visited the late Imam Samudra and other *jihadi* fellows when they were in the maximum security prison in Nusakambangan. On his second visit he brought his wife with him to teach her to be ready if someday he made the decision to ‘abandon the worldly life’.

Another part of his maverick nature was also reflected in his continuous involvement in political issues, although through ‘unofficial’ and ‘indirect’ ways. During the interview, and particularly in casual conversation, he narrated some of his involvements in political affairs from ‘behind the screen’. An example of his ‘unofficial’ involvement in political affairs was his recommendation that some former PPP activists be recruited as the functionaries of some new political parties prior to the 2009 political election. He told me that some leading national politicians contacted him to join the leadership of some new political parties, including the Hanura (*Hati Nurani Rakyat*, People’s Conscience) and the Gerindra (*Gerakan Indonesia*

\(^{45}\) *Dhikr Akbar* is the Sufi-like activity of chanting ‘the names of Allah’ held in a mass gathering led by the renowned public preacher, Muhammad Arifin Ilham. Thalib’s participation in the program was criticized by many Salafi *ustazs* as a deviation from the Salafi *manhaj*. See Noorhaidi (2005: 227).
Fauzi refused to join but recommended some of his PPP loyalists to be recruited by the parties. He even took the step of endorsing his (first) wife, Uun Ilmiyatin, as a candidate for parliament in the 2009 elections through the secular party, Gerindra, a newly founded political party, led by retired army general Prabowo Subianto. Ilmiyatin was listed on the Gerindra list of candidates for the province of Yogyakarta. Fauzi supported the candidacy of his wife by carrying out informal campaigns and mobilizing his social networks, especially former supporters of the PPP. Unfortunately, his wife was not elected. However, such practices were extremely uncommon among the Salafis, for two main reasons: first, his direct involvement in political election; and, second, Fauzi’s endorsement of a female figure, namely his wife, as a political candidate for parliament.

How could such maverick actions and maneuvers be conducted by Fauzi, a Salafi post-jihadist?

Back to my argument on the important role of social networks, I argue that Fauzi was able to lead such unconventional way of life as a Salafi post-jihadist because of the interlinkage of two main factors: his extensive networks before jihad and his maintenance of Salafi networks in the post-jihad period. As described previously, Fauzi was a strong public figure and political leader with vast social networks before his engagement with Salafism and his participation in jihad movement in Ambon. So rather than submitting himself to the Salafi core-network, he took the Salafi network as one of his extended-networks in the post-jihad period. On the other hand, while continuing his social and political roles, Fauzi maintained his engagement with the Salafi network and continued identifying himself as a Salafi. This was manifested in his personal behavior and appearance such as growing his beard long and wearing a long, white

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46) Both parties were led by retired military generals during the Soeharto period. Hanura was led by retired General Wiranto, former Chief-in-command of the Armed Forces, while Gerindra was led by retired Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto, the former commander of the Special Army Forces (KOPASSUS) and the Reserved-Army Forces (KOSTRAD).
gown in his daily life. He also continued to hold weekly sermons in his house by inviting a Salafi cleric as the sole preacher. Due to his self identification with Salafism, even though it was peculiar, he was seen by some of the Salafi groups, including the At-Turats Salafi network, as part of the Salafis. In addition, he also had plenty of social and economic resources that helped him carry out his peculiar choices and ideas as a maverick Salafi post-jihadist.

Finally, how meaningful was the influence of his jihad participation on the rest of his life? He said that he had no doubt that “jihad is the ultimate worship to God.” He told me that he had a personal wish to end his life in jihad: “I have a wish to end my life in an undisputed land of jihad, either in the holy land or in the holy war, either in Moro or in Afghan….” (Interview, Yogyakarta, 17/2/2008)

Conclusion

I have presented in this chapter the life story narratives of four post-jihadists who joined jihad movements through Laskar Jihad in three different stages: before, during, and after the jihad period. Through their narratives, I have presented my arguments on three main questions of this research as introduced in the first chapter. I conclude this chapter by highlighting some research findings and making a reflection on ‘holy kampong’ of the Salafi community in the post-jihad period.

How did they become jihadists? Through the life story narratives of the four informants, I argue that they became jihadists after experiencing a process of ‘radical reasoning’. I have demonstrated, through a micro-sociological approach, that it began with a period of identity crisis which happened in different ways for the different actors at two different life stages: early adulthood (for Taufan, Reza and Adang) and middle age (for Fauzi). Following a period of crisis identity, they experienced ‘cognitive opening’ where they began to embrace Salafi teachings and furthermore to take part in Salafi activism.
The next critical step was the presence of ‘moral shocks’ induced by the news of persecution of hundreds of Muslims in religious violence incidents, either in Maluku or in Poso, which eventually moved them to join the jihad movement. Yet not all of them experienced such ‘moral shocks’, as narrated by Taufan, a Salafi activist from Yogjakarta. For him, it seemed probable that a sort of ‘short-circuit’ linked his attachment to Salafism with jihad participation, facilitated by the jihad fatwas made by Salafi clerics. Essentially the cognitive process was more crucial for him than affective one.

I also argue that their jihad participation can be seen as act of identity, or a “self-correcting mechanism in a response to drastic changes in environment, which produced a deep crisis between the autobiographical self and identity” as argued by Marranci (2009: 20). For Fauzi, jihad as act of identity was reflected in his narrative of making a distinction between the politician and man of religion (agamawan) before joining jihad. As a politician during that time, as a result of profound self-reflection he stated that a politician is a ‘man of talk’ while an agamawan is a ‘man of action’. By joining jihad, Fauzi made a self-correction in the crisis between his autobiographical self and identity: shifting from ‘politician’ to ‘man of religion’. In the cases of Reza and Adang, jihad as an act of identity were reflected in their decision to submit to religion, through Salafism, as superior over their attachment to their family. Thus, in spite of their family’s disapproval and rejection of their joining jihad, they continued to do so. In a different case, jihad can also be seen as act of identity for Taufan. For him, participation in jihad was the moral consequence of his attachment to Salafism, by following the fatwas made by leading Salafi clerics. So, for Taufan, jihad is also act of identity, as a statement of loyalty and commitment to Islamic identity, through Salafism.

What did the jihad experiences mean to the actors? I argue that the jihad experience is interpreted as a ‘radical experience’ that brings about ‘a pivotal meaning structure’ to the actors that organizes the other activities in that person’s life. As shown through the life story narratives of the actors, the jihad experience as a pivotal event
is reflected in different ways: in the “from the battle front” narratives of Fauzi and Taufan; in the “teacher of children in the conflict” narrative of Reza; in the “security personnel on the border” narrative of Adang. Although the informants had a variety of roles and experiences, as well as period of stay and duration of jihad involvement, I argue that they shared a ‘radical experience’ which shaped their later lives. The ‘radical experience’ was the outcome of their involvement in a violent conflict situation and simultaneously of jihad activism. The ‘radical experience’ enhanced their attachment and identification to collective identity as Muslims and to movement identity as Salafi activists.

How did the jihad experience influence their life? I argue that the jihad experience influenced the life trajectories of the jihad actors in combination with two main factors, namely their biographical traits and their social networks. Through an analytical framework of three different kinds of social networks, namely, core-network, tactical-network and extended-network, I have shown that the dynamic engagement of informants with different social networks influenced their choice of life-trajectory in the post-jihad period. In the case of the informants in this chapter, their core-network was similar, namely the Salafi movement, while their tactical-network and extended-network were variable, depending on their social background, profile and personality.

In the case of Taufan, his intensive and extensive engagement with the core-network of the Salafi movement in Ambon led him to remain in Ambon. After spending more than two years in Ambon, both as a member of the ‘elite forces’ of Laskar Jihad and as the Chairman of the Maluku FKAWJ, Taufan developed both his tactical and extended-networks which eventually led him to be elected as a leader of the Salafi foundation in the post-jihadi period.

In the case of Adang, his decision to return to Poso after spending more than six months in West Java reflected the crucial role of jihad experience as ‘a pivotal event’ in shaping his life trajectory. It could also be seen as an indicative of his strong link with the Salafi core-network, as both the network of actors and ‘network of mean-
ings’, which did not seem to be available to him in his own environment in West Java.

In the case of Reza, his post-jihad choice to study at a Salafi pesantren rather than continue his university study reflected his jihad experience as ‘a pivotal event’ in affecting his life trajectory. It was also a sign of the supremacy of the Salafi network as his core-network over his family network. In the case of Dr. Fauzi, his ‘maverick’ trajectory in the post-jihad period was a consequence of his loose links to the Salafi core-network and the important role of his vast extended-networks developed long before his engagement with Salafism. Yet, he maintained his engagement with the Salafi network and continued to identify himself as a Salafi, thus seeing himself still part of the Salafi network.

On ‘holy kampong’. I argue that engagement in an ‘enclave community’ or ‘holy kampong’ is one of the most interesting features of the ‘after jihad’ life style of the Salafis presented in this chapter—with the exception of Fauzi. Although living in different areas, either remaining in the (post) conflict area or returning to their hometown, they eventually chose to live in a so-called ‘enclave community’ or a ‘holy kampong’, a sort of exclusive community with a distinct pattern of behavior, dress, and social relationships—a phenomenon also observed by Noorhaidi (2005, also Hasan 2006). Such a life style was strikingly reflected in the narratives of Taufan and Adang who live in Salafi compounds in Ambon and Poso respectively. Reza, although taking a different trajectory by returning home to Yogyakarta, also lives in a similar small Salafi complex in the north of Yogyakarta. As an additional case, I also mention below the narrative of Nizam, a Laskar Jihad activist from Pekalongan who returned home after his jihad participation in Ambon.

The term ‘enclave community’ here is inspired by Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2003) who use the term ‘enclave culture’ to describe the call to return to a primary identity proposed by contemporary religious fundamentalist movements. Almond and collaborators (2003: 33-37) argue that in the so-called ‘enclave culture’ the funda-
mentalists usually build a ’wall of virtue’ based on moral values.  

This imaginary wall works to separate the saved, free and morally superior enclave from the morally corrupted outside society. In a stark contrast to the community of virtuous insiders, the social life beyond the enclave is perceived as a “polluted, contagious and dangerous” area. As suggested by Noorhaidi (2005: 184) in his analysis of ex Laskar Jihad activists in Indonesia, the notion of enclave is linked to the issue of space in its symbolic and social meanings.

The ‘Kampong Muhajirin’ by the Salafi community in Maluku and a similar Salafi compound in Poso are striking examples of such enclave communities. As described briefly in previous section, the Salafi communities in Ambon and Poso have built a housing compound for those affiliated with the Salafis. In Ambon, it is located in what was formerly known as the Kisar ward but was then newly renamed ‘Kampong Muhajirin’, situated in Batumerah Atas, near the city area of Ambon. When I made a last visit in November 2009 the compound of 140 houses was inhabited by about 100 families, including two senior local Salafi figures, Pak Erwin and Ustadz Wahab. In addition to clean water, electricity and telephone installation, a new asphalt road had also been built by the local government passing through part of the compound. Because there were many more people who wished to stay in the area but no more space available, they had plans for another Salafi housing complex to be built in Kampong Jawa, Wayame, Ambon.

In Poso, besides the old compound located in the Sayo ward, the Salafi community in Poso has begun to build a new compound

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47) Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2003: 30) make use of the term ‘enclave’ as an apt metaphor for the call and emphasize it as “the primary impulse (at least at the leadership level) that lies behind the rise of the tradition to forestall the danger of being sucked into the vortex of modernity”.

48) The building of the new road is probably due to the member of provincial parliament, Lutfi Sanaki, having built his house near the compound. Some Salafi activists living in the area suggested it was the result of his successful political lobbying that the new road was built.

49) According to Taufan, there was already 50 people listed as future occupants for the land in Wayame, including an Ambonese Salafi activist who lived in the Netherlands and wished to return home (Interview, Ambon, 20/11/2009).
located in the Tolana ward, on the outskirts of Poso, situated in the middle of farming land quite far from the center of population. When I visited the site in December 2009, there were less than five people settled in the compound, including Ustadz Abim with his families. Proper facilities like surfaced roads, electricity, clean water and telephone connections had not yet been installed. In the near future, some Sala fi's living in the Sayo ward will probably move in to the area, including Adang, as he told me during the interview.

Although there is a sharp contrast in terms of strategic location and proper facilities between the Salafi compounds which have been built in Ambon and Poso, the two shared the feature of Salafi ‘holy kampong’ or ‘enclave community’. The remarkable feature of both compounds was the dress-code applied to all the dwellers, namely for men the jalabiyya or long Arabic style white robe with a skullcap and women the niqab or Arabic style black robe with a veil to cover their face. During my fieldwork I observed some young girls wearing the black niqab, complete with veil, both in the compound of ‘the Kampong Muhajirin’ and the Sayo ward. It was the narratives of some former Laskar Jihad activists in the post-jihad period: shifting from their participation in ‘holy war’ to starting a new life in a ‘holy kampong’....

Nizam’s narrative also revealed an interesting feature. Living with his wife and two children in an ordinary kampong located in the Kandang Panjang ward, of Pekalongan, on the north coast of Central java, near to his parent-in-law’s house, Nizam’s house manifested almost physically a ‘wall of virtue’. The house looked odd: from the front all that could be seen was just a white painted wall about 7 meters long and 3 meters high with two doors, a big and small one in bright green. There were no windows at all. There were only two small ventilation holes next to the big door but covered by a zinc plate so that no-one could see inside. There was a small button to ring the bell. It seemed likely that the house was formerly the garage of the house. Entering inside I could see some rooms along the left side of the house, which measured about 20 meters from the front to
the back. There was also an empty space of about 3 meters wide on the left hand side.

The erection of such a ‘wall of virtue’ based on Salafi moral values was also reflected in Nizam’s decision to ‘home school’ his two children. In 2005 he decided to withdraw his children from the Ma’had Islam primary school which they used to attend. His father works as a teacher in the same school. So why did he decide to withdraw his children from the school? “Because the school prioritizes general subjects over religious ones,” Nizam argued. As a consequence, he said, the children had little time to learn religious teachings at home, especially prior and during the exams. As he planned to send his children to Salafi boarding school at high school level, he decided to teach them himself with programs and subjects he considered more important and more useful to them as prospective pupils of a Salafi boarding school. Thus, Nizam began to build a sort of ‘wall of virtue’ for his children from their early childhood so that they have begun to live in such a Salafi ‘enclave culture’.

Interestingly, I found a contrasting tendency in choice of residence among the post-jihadists who were political Islamic activists. As I will present and discuss later in Chapter 6, two of them even live in a slum area well-known for crimes and being a criminal haunt. I cannot make meaningful comparisons regarding the post-jihad choice of residence between the Salafi jihadists and the Jama’ah Islamiyah jihadists discussed in the next chapter—who share a preference for exclusive affiliation—because two of the three informants are still serving time in prison. ***