After jihad: A biographical approach to passionate politics in Indonesia

Azca, M.N.

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“[Jihad] was a period of life which was very nice, meaningful, and precious. It was short but rich with meaningful experiences: fighting, hunting animals, travelling…”
(Awod, interview, Solo, 6/12/2007)

“As I walked to the forest the kids escorted me, one of them was hanging on my shoulder, others were in the front of or behind me holding my shirt. When I began to enter the forest, some of the kids released me with tears. I could not bear my own feelings of sadness. They were still standing there watching my every step as I entered the forest…”
(Ayyash, interview, Pekalongan, 18/12/2007)

“When I was in Jakarta I got some decent money every time I preached… you can’t get such angpao [money in envelope] here [in Ambon]. Yet even though the place [for da’wa] is far, my soul feels so satisfied, so calm. It means I have done a lot for many people. When I was in Jakarta, it was money-oriented da’wa.”
(Surahman, interview, Ambon, 4/5/2008)
Introduction

This chapter will present the life story narratives of the post-jihadists who come from an Islamic political activism background. Adapting the categorization of different types of Islamism proposed by ICG (2005b), I define Islamic political activism as Islamist movements with some of the following characteristics: involvement in political process, either directly or indirectly, and generally accepting the nation-state and working within its constitutional framework; articulating a reformist rather revolutionary vision and referring to democratic norms; its characteristic actors being paramilitary and political party activists. There is a degree of variation among them in the use of violence, some basically avoiding its use while others occasionally using it for vigilante action against what they perceive as ‘moral vices’.

Different to the pious and the jihadi Islamic activists who reject democratic principles and political engagement, the political Islamic activists basically accept democratic principles and are actively involved in the political process, either through political parties or other socio-political associations. The political Islamic activists also differ from the two others in their type of group affiliation, as discussed in Chapter 1 While pious and jihadi activism usually applies exclusive affiliation, meaning its members have only a single affiliation to their own group, political activism usually applies multiple affiliations, meaning its members have multiple affiliations to different groups.

Unlike the two previous chapters which present the narratives of (ex) jihad activists who come from a single Islamist network, namely Laskar Jihad (Chapter 4) and Jama’ah Islamiyah (Chapter 5), this chapter will present three post-jihadists who come from different Islamic movement networks, namely, Awod Umar, an activist from the Islamic political party PBB and the leader of its paramilitary group Brigade Hizbullah in Solo, Central Java; Abu Ayyash, an activist from the paramilitary group the Islamic Defender Front (FPI) in Pekalongan, Central Java, and Surahman, an activist from the tar-
biyah movement affiliated with the Khairu Ummah foundation in Jakarta. Although coming from different movement networks, having quite different experiences and jobs during the jihad, they eventually had a somewhat similar trajectory in the post-jihad period: involved in the (new) dynamic of local politics. The way they engage in the dynamics of local politics were, however, not similar. Awod became involved in local politics though a paramilitary group affiliated with the Islamic political party before his participation in jihad; Surahman began to get involved in local politics through a political party in the aftermath of his participation in jihad; while Ayyash became involved in local politics through an Islamic paramilitary group with which he was involved before and continued to be after his participation in jihad.

Through the life story narratives of the post-jihadists trio, I will present my arguments to answer the three main research questions as also conducted in the two previous chapters (Chapter 4 and 5). Furthermore I will use part of the narratives of Jodi and Baghdad, two other life history informants with political activist background, to support and substantiate my arguments in this chapter, particularly on the first stage in the process of becoming a jihadist.

**Brief profiles and the encounters**

- **Awod Umar: the ex bad boy jihadist**

  Awod is a young man of mixed Gujarati and Arabic descent born in Solo in 1980.1) His father is of Gujarati descent while his mother was of Arabic descent, but both were born in Solo, Central Java. He is the second of five boys, one of whom died, from a lower-middle class background. During his childhood, his father spent several years working outside Solo, mostly in West Java, even in

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1) I did a series of interviews with Awod Umar in Solo during both of my fieldwork periods. The first one took place in November 2007 and the last one occurred in December 2009.
Photo 8: A preacher post-jihadist: Surahman, Ambon 2008
Photo: taken by author

Photo 9: A political leader post-jihadist: Awod, Solo 2009
Photo: taken by author
Photo 10: Militia leader, in court: Abu Ayyash, Pekalongan 2009
Photo: courtesy of Radar Pekalongan

Photo 11: A father, at home: Abu Ayyash, Pekalongan 2008
Photo: taken by author
Malaysia. Although having strong foreign ingredients in his blood, Awod has quite successfully adapted to Javanese culture as reflected in his considerable fluency in using high (*kromo*) Javanese language—as mentioned briefly in Chapter 2 as an illustration of the concept of identity.

Raised in a *santri* family, Awod went to Islamic schools from kindergarten to high school. But he was a bad boy during his teenage years so that he dropped out of senior high school in his first year. Although admitting to be somewhat delinquent and often involved in youth brawls, he claimed he never been studied martial arts but was rather a natural born fighter who fights from his own instincts and courage. He related one of his stories of reckless (*nekat*) bravery of when he fought five other youths with his arm in a cast. Naturally he lost and was severely injured. He also claimed he had never been a member of any teenage gang but just joined in fights mainly on his own, either for the sake of his school or *kampong*.

As a street delinquent he admitted he had committed various kinds of bad behavior or the so-called five prohibitions or *ma-lima* in Javanese namely, *maling* (stealing), *minum* (drinking alcohol), *main* (gambling), *madat* (using drugs), and *madon* (womanizing, visiting prostitutes). But with one exception he said: “I have committed *ma-limo* with the exception of *madon*.” Why did he not visit prostitutes? He replied in a normative way: “Because my parents’ teachings, especially my mother, on respect for women.” Awod claimed he had a very close relationship with his mother. The fact that his mother had played the role of a single parent during his early childhood, when his father was working outside Solo, might be one explanation for his close relationship with his mother.

A few months before the fall of Soeharto’s New Order government in 1998 Awod suddenly began to change his behavior, he stopped drinking alcohol. I will discuss the process of his identity crisis in the next section. He shifted his identity gradually and later joined the Brigade Hizbullah, a paramilitary group affiliated with the Islamic party PBB in the *reformasi* era. He had joined paramilitary training held in an army compound in Jakarta during the tense politi-
cal situation under the Presidency of B.J. Habibie.\footnote{It was part of the political turmoil in the early days after Soeharto’s resignation between those political groups, many of them Islamic groups, who supported President Habibie versus those who wanted him to step down and transfer power to a political presidium led by leading opposition figures, including Megawati Soekarnoputri, Abdurahman Wahid, Amien Rais and Hamengku Buwono X, backed by many student movements and the nationalist and leftist groups. For further discussion see O’Rourke (2002) and Hefner (2000).} In 1999, following an internal conflict in the Brigade Hizbullah, he was elected as its chairman—when he was just 19 years old. He went to Ambon in 2000 to join the jihad movement following the religious communal conflict that unfolded in the area. His political career developed quickly, he was elected as chairman of the PBB Solo in 2009—when he was just 29 years old.

I met and began to know Awod in November 2007 when I did my fieldwork in Solo. I was introduced to him by my old university friend, Heri Varia, a former journalist who had become a businessman in Solo—as described briefly in Chapter 3. In that period Awod had joined a local NGO providing legal aid for the poor and becoming the coordinator of paralegal volunteers. The NGO, named Supremasi, was led by a Christian lawyer named Bares Lamhot. The office of the Supremasi occupied the front half of Awod’s rental house in Nuyu, a slum area of Nusukan, Solo. I did a series of interviews with him there, sometimes with some Supremasi volunteers, who were also Brigade Hizbullah activists, around, the interviews sometimes ending after midnight.

Awod is a calm and helpful person. His looked quite fit in keeping with his role as the leader of paramilitary groups and a paramilitary trainer, being a relatively tall person of about 175 cm with a muscular body. During the interviews he usually replied to my questions with quite plain and well-considered answers, straight to the point, without a lot of metaphors or abstract-symbolic language. In his stories he never described himself as crying or shedding tears, even when he was injured or wounded during fights or other terrible situations. During the interviews, he helped me by showing his per-
sonal documentation, including some completed application forms for participating in the jihad movement and some media clippings.

Another important place of meeting was the Gedung Umat Islam (the House of the Muslim Community) situated in Kartopuran, in the heart of the Solo City, also the location of the PBB Solo office. It was a historic place which used to belong to the Islamic party Mas'udi. When I met him there after Friday prayers, a group of young Muslim activists were hanging out there chatting, most of them smoking. Awod was a smoker too. He was always smoking when I interviewed him and usually drinking a cup of black coffee. My last interview with him in December 2009 also took place in that place when he had just been elected chairman of the PBB in Solo. The interview started just about midnight and ended about two hours. Such a practice of meeting in or after midnight is quite common among political Islamist activists—and it also occurred during my interviews with Abu Ayyash, the chairman of the FPI Pekalongan, as I will describe in the next section.

• Abu Ayyash: the ex abangan jihadist

Unlike Awod, Abu Ayyash was born in an abangan family in Pekalongan in 1973, with the Javanese name, Slamet Budiono. More than twenty five years later, after getting married, starting a family and engaging in Islamic activism, he began to use the alias: Abu Ayyash. He is the eleventh of twelve children from a lower class family; his late father was only a primary school graduate who worked as a laborer in a local factory. Some of his brothers and sisters passed away when they were young; he was one the five remaining at the time of my interview with him in 2007-2009. His father

3) My series of interviews with Abu Ayyash took place in different periods of time during both of my fieldwork periods: the interviews began in December 2007 and the last one was in early January 2010.

4) The alias comes from the name of his second child, Cheric Ayyash Ghanusi. The name was inspired by the Islamic leader from Bosnia, Mustapha Cheric, who visited Indonesia in the mid 1990s. Ghanusi is a Turkish variation of the Indonesian name Sanusi. I have no information for the origin or inspiration of the second name Ayyash.
had moved to Jakarta and Belitung to start a small business but the business failed and he returned unsuccessful, bringing nothing to the family but misery. His father had been an activist of the PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, The Indonesian National Party), a secular nationalist party, that was involved in conflict with the communist party (PKI) in Pekalongan in the 1960s. His father passed away in the late 1990s while his mother was still alive, living in the same place as Ayyash and his family in Boyongsari, a slum area in Pekalongan where a prostitution complex used to be located.

The young Slamet Budiono attended public school from primary to high school. Yet he transferred to an Islamic school in early high school. This was probably for practical rather than ideological reasons; unlike the public high school, the Islamic school was located in town, thus saving transport costs. His new school was a private vocational high school managed by an Islamic foundation; it was a second-class school that ran in the afternoon after the morning classes of the regular school had finished. Although his family background was *abangan*, his social environment was colored by strong *santri* traditions, especially NU. He said that he began to learn Islamic teachings, such as reading the Qur’an and simple Arabic, from his childhood, and then became a *santri* as a teenager by carrying out Islamic practices, such as regular prayers and fasting.

Coming from a poor family, the young Ayyash had little privileges; he began his first job as a young teenager. He worked as a parking attendant when he was in first grade junior high school and then became a *becak* (*pedicab*) rider when he was in senior high school for about ten years. Yet his poor family background did not prevent him from having big dreams; the young Ayyash wanted become a prominent poet (his two favorites being prominent Indonesian poets Rendra and Taufik Ismail) or a journalist. Big dreams need big actions. So he decided to migrate to Jakarta in the early 1990s after completing his high school. It was during this period that he had an identity crisis which I will discuss later in his process of become a *jihadist*. 
In Jakarta he joined in a pesantren and became involved with Islamic activism. During this period he met a girl from Purwokerto who eventually become his wife and mother of his children. After marrying in Purwokerto and living there for a while without a fixed job, he returned to Pekalongan and his old job as a becak driver. Following the fall of the Soeharto regime in 1998, he became involved further in Islamic activism in Pekalongan, organizing collective action to close down the prostitution complex of Boyongsari, located just a few hundreds meters from his home. The successful collective action became the embryo of the establishment of the FPI in Pekalongan in 1999 where he became one of its leading activists.

He joined the jihad movement in Ambon in 2000/2001 through KOMPAK and spent four months in a remote village of Ceram Island, Maluku. His career as an Islamist activist grew after that: he was elected as acting chairman of the FPI Pekalongan in 2003, and was elected chairman for the period 2005-2010 and reelected for 2010-2015. Although his career as an activist was quite bright, his economic life deteriorated. The local government following the implementation of a city order bylaw in 2007 closed down his small street stall selling fried snacks or getuk goreng. Ironically this policy was an initiative of the new Major of Pekalongan, Dr. Basyir Ahmad, whose election campaign he had supported in 2005. He took part in a series of social protests against the policy by joining the Forum Komunikasi Pedagang Kakilima se-Pekalongan (FKPK, the Communication Forum of Street Vendors in Pekalongan).

I first met him in a discussion held by an Islamic Study Group in Pekalongan in December 2007, followed by a series of interviews at different periods of time—the last taking place in early January 2010. Different from the public image of the FPI as a vigilante group, Ayyash’s appearance was less imposing: he had a small, skinny body with a thin, scarce, beard. His manner of speech was not aggressive or offensive, quite the opposite: he spoke well in a sophisticated manner, sometimes coloring his language with striking metaphorical symbols. He was also a heavy smoker. During the interviews, he smoked a lot, usually accompanied by a cup of coffee. He writes
poetry some of which have been included in an anthology published by a local group while others have been published in local media, as I will show in the ‘after jihad’ section. He also has a Facebook account and occasionally publishes his poems there.

During the period of my meetings with him, he had no fixed job and continued to struggle to earn money for the family. When I asked him about his job and money to live on, he calmly replied that God sends His blessings in many different ways.5) He and his wife and their five children live in a very modest house belonging to his mother located in the former slum of Boyongsari, Pekalongan. My interviews took place in three different places which reflecting his various activities: his house, the office of a local NGO named PAS (Public Area Service) working on public issues, and the shared center of Islamic organizations in Pekalongan. Two of the interviews began about midnight and ended around 

• Surahman: the sentimental jihadist

Surahman was born to Betawi (indigenous Jakartan) parents in Medan in 1967.6) His father went to Medan for oil-related business as a sub-contractor of the state-oil business company, Pertamina (Perusahaan Tambang Minyak Negara). Surahman said that his father used to be a preman (petty criminal) associated with the Pemuda Pancasila (PP) who had participated in the communal riots in Medan during the 1965-66 chaos, such as anti-Chinese operations led by the army. His father had been assigned to Medan by his boss and had then married the boss’ daughter, Surahman’s mother. Working as a Pertamina contractor, his father became involved in the massive Pertamina corruption practices that occurred under the management

5) I had at least two insights on this issue. When a friend of mine was looking for a house to rent there in 2008, he tried, unsuccessfully, to help her by brokering. On another occasion, I saw him buy bunches of durians for his mother to sell in the small shop at the front of his house. So he attempts to earn money in many ways. Other income came from some local donors sympathetic to his way of life.

6) I conducted a series of interviews with Surahman in two different periods of fieldwork in Ambon: the first in May 2008 and the next in November 2009.
of Lieutenant General Ibnu Sutowo. In 1981, his parents moved to Jakarta, running a new timber business in partnership with a Madurese businessman. Surahman told me his mother had said his father did not want to continue with the Pertamina ‘dirty business’ so he decided to resign and return to Jakarta. Later in his life, his father dedicated his life more to religious activities and da’wa.

Surahman is the second of twelve children, six male and six female. Raised in a santri family, he attended Islamic primary school, continuing to a public junior high school and then vocational high school, all in Jakarta. Coming from a middle class family enabled him to continue on to study accounting at a private accounting academy in Jakarta where he got a diploma. He also studied Arabic at an academy for Islamic da’wa in Bekasi, though he failed to complete the course. He claimed that he learnt Islamic teachings mostly at home, from his father. Although his father had never formally studied in a pesantren, he had learnt from many kyai and eventually become a local preacher, giving regular sermons for women at home. Surahman described his father as a moderate person who could be accepted both by the NU and Muhammadiyah community.

When he was a teenager, Surahman began to learn martial art of the Pencak Silat Sanggar Buana school. Due to his mastery in martial arts, he was selected to compete in the National Sport Festival (PON, Pekan Olahraga Nasional), a national multi-sport event held every four years. In that same period, he also became involved with Islamic activism through the PII (Pelajar Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Student Association) from his years at junior high school. He said it was a turning point in his life; due to his participation in PII training and activities he shifted to become what he termed a “Muslim militant activist”. So, instead of studying for exams, he preferred to read Islamic books by writers such as Imam Ghozali. He also refused to participate in the flag raising ceremony at school because, he said, “it was thaghut (anti-Islamic).” He was then elected PII Chairman in the Pondok Pinang ward in 1984-1985.

7) On corruption in Pertamina during the period, see Maks Kobonbaev (2006).
At the same time he was also elected as chairman of the Islamic section of the religious unit (Rokhis, Kerohanian Islam) of his school’s student organization.

Firstly radicalized by the PII, Surahman eventually found the PII ‘too liberal’ in its application of Islamic teachings. Surahman left the PII and became involved with BKPMI (Badan Koordinasi Pemuda Masjid se-Indonesia) which was led by a rather prominent young preacher named Toto Tasmara. He also then actively participated in da’wa activities through the Institute of Da’wa Khairu Ummah led by Ustad Ahmad Yani, his own uncle. It was during this period that he went to Maluku to participate in jihad mobilization through PKPU da’wa program in 2001. He continued to stay in Ambon, extending his contract with the PKPU and was eventually recruited by the PKS as one of its leaders in the Maluku province. I first met him in April-May 2008 when I did my first fieldwork in Maluku. I got his name and contact details from Muzakir Assagaf, the Chairman of the PKS Maluku, after having interviewed him. I had two interviews with Surahman in 2008 and another in November 2009 during my second fieldwork.

Surahman is a friendly and energetic person who easily befriends new people. He looks like someone who enjoys meeting people and talking with them. During the interviews, he replied my questions frankly and talked in a fast but relaxed manner. His job as a preacher has perhaps given him the skill to easily talk and express his ideas and emotions. His leading position in PKS Maluku was reflected during my second interview, when he made calls to some PKS activists who had become members of parliament just to seek some information or confirm data. He also did not hold back any personal information, such as how he had two wives and how he

8) The BKPMI was founded in 1997 in Bandung as a unit of activities under the West Java MUI under the leadership of KH. E.Z. Muttajien. In 1993 BKPMI transformed into the BKPRMI (Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Remaja Masjid Indonesia) in the Sixth National Meeting of the BKPMI held in the Asrama Haji Pondok Gede, Jakarta. During the Meeting, a consensus was achieved to place the BKPMI as an autonomous unit of the Dewan Masjid Indonesia (DMI, the Council of Indonesian Mosque). See more at http://bkprmi-ing.890m.com/print.php?type=N&item_id=1.
managed them, as I will present later in this chapter. My relationship with him quickly grew closer because our shared PII network. He also invited me to join him attend the PII anniversary held in Maluku on 4 May 2008, which he attended with Sudarmo, the former chairman of PKS Maluku. Surahman’s role at the end of the event was to lead the closing praying session. His personal character as a sentimental person was reflected in the way he delivered his task, moving the audience by building a mood of melancholy through his trembling voice, almost shedding tears, during the prayers.

On becoming a jihadist

As I have explained previously in Chapters 4 and 5, I will concentrate on ‘radical reasoning’ in explaining how informants in this chapter became jihadists. I start by discussing the identity crisis experienced by informants at different stage of their life by referring to Erikson’s notion on identity crisis which usually applies to the age of adolescence and young adulthood. Suggesting that personal growth and societal change, as well as the identity crisis in individual biography and present-day crises in historical transformation cannot be separated because the two help to explain to each other, Erikson argues that identity crisis may happen in different stages of the life cycle.

Following Erikson, as with the life story narratives of the Salafi jihadists in Chapter 4, I begin by arguing that all the political jihadists in this chapter experienced crisis identity in the period of political crisis in Indonesia from the early 1990s. During the period Uhlin (1997: 155) calls the ‘pre transition period’, Soeharto shifted his political strategy by embracing Islamic groups as reflected in his support for the establishment of the Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se Indonesia (ICMI, the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) in 1990 (Hefner 2000: 159, see also Liddle 1996). This was a turning point that provided a major impetus to the rise of Islamist movements which had began to happen from the early 1980s. The

As reflected in the life story narratives of the informants in this chapter, their personal identity crisis happened during a period of political crisis: in the early 1990s for both Ayyash (in his early phase of migration to Jakarta) and Surahman (when he became more radicalized and eventually found the PII to be ‘too liberal’) and in 1998 for Awod (when he suddenly wanted to abandon his ‘bad boy’ culture). Although the three informants experienced an identity crisis in different ways for different reasons at different periods of time, by following McGuire (2002: 62-68, see also Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi 1975: 65-68) I argue that it happened in the same period of personal development, namely in the rites of passage to adulthood: in late adolescence for Awod (b. 1980) and Ayyash (b. 1973), and in the early twenties for Surahman (b. 1967). In the three cases, identity crisis was followed by ‘cognitive opening’ as suggested by Wiktorowicz which led them to adopt a new perspective of more radical Islamic activism: joining a paramilitary group Brigade Hizbullah in the case of Awod, engaging with the BKPMI in the case of Surahman, and becoming involved with Islamist movements concerned with transnational Islamic issues in the case of Ayyash.

I will begin with Awod’s story. In an interview, he narrated his personal identity crisis which became the turning point of his identity shift as follows: “A few months before the fall of Soeharto, I suddenly made a promise to stop drinking alcohol. I don’t know why. But it was clearly neither due to somebody’s advice or because I had got in trouble or some other action. Perhaps, it was just because I wanted to be different (tampil beda).” Although his friends complained and confronted him and accused of him of not being loyal to them, Awod stayed true to his word: “I have never taken back my own words; it is my character. I have never drunk alcohol again after that…” (Interview, Solo, 6/12/2007).

It maybe that the teenager Awod was unaware and did not understand the major social and political changes that were taking place in his environment during the period. In the late Soeharto period, the
social and political atmosphere had escalated and uncertainties were rife, including tension between the so-called Islamic groups versus the secular nationalist groups (see Hefner 2000, O’Rourke 2002, and Sulistyo 2002). Just a few months after Awod’s promise to change his behavior a gigantic historical change happened in Indonesia: the resignation of President Soeharto after 32 years in power.

Awod was then exposed to the new wave of reformasi bringing freedom of political parties and freedom of political expression. More than 200 new political parties emerged during the post 1998 period, although eventually only 48 were allowed to participate in the 1999 political election, the first democratic election since 1955. It was also an era of the emergence of the repressed: “politik aliran” as reflected in the (re)emergence of several Islamic political parties who used Islamic symbols as political tools in contest with many others who badged different kinds of symbols and attributes, ranging from religious to socialism and nationalism. Amidst such heavy traffic of religious and political symbols and attributes, Awod was thrown into uncertainty and forced confront his own self and identity, and answer the questions “who are you?” and “who do you associate with?”

Awod became fascinated by a symbol with which he felt quite familiar, the crescent and the star. He had seen it placed in the small sate restaurant belonging to his father where other parties also put their posters and stickers in different designs, sizes and colors. But his imagination and attention was mesmerized by the symbol in green and yellow of the Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB - Crescent and Star Party), the new face of the party Masyumi (Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia, the Democratic Assembly of Indonesian Muslims). Masyumi won the second biggest share of votes in the 1955 election only slightly behind the PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia) although both had the same number of parliamentary seats, namely

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9) The concept was originally developed by Geertz (1960) in his seminal work The Religion of Java. He basically argues that political parties are divided based on certain mass bases, embedded in the social milieu. For a discussion on recent developments of politik aliran in Indonesian politics see Ufen (2006).
57 (Feith 1962; Ufen 2006). In Solo, however, the picture had been very different: the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) had won the most (57.33%) votes, followed by PNI with 30% and Masyumi with 11.10% (Feith 1999; Sulistyo 2003).

That same year in 1998 Awod asked his surprised father if he could accompany him to attend a PBB event held in Kartopuran, the previous headquarters of Masyumi. Awod said that he did not feel confident to attend by himself: he still felt that he was viewed as a delinquent and therefore someone strange to attend an Islamic political party event. What had happened to Awod?

It probably stemmed from a mixture of his rising sense of uncertain identity in the hectic political days and his heightened sensitivity to former political and religious symbols. It was a time of schismogenesis; drastic changes in environment, producing a deep crisis between the autobiographical self and identity. Schismogenesis processes are often the result of a ‘circle of panic’, which Bhaba (1994 as quoted by Marranci 2009: 20) explains as ‘the indeterminate circulation of meaning as rumor and conspiracy, with its perverse, physical effects of panic.’ It was such a mood colored by politik aliran that Awod labeled a ‘red threat’: a revival of the conspiracy of Nationalism-Secularism-Communism against Islamic forces during the Habibie period. What happened to Awod could be seen as a process of ‘cognitive opening’ as suggested by Wiktorowicz (2005: 85) which usually occurs following a identity crisis, thus leading to increased receptiveness to the possibility of new ideas and world views.

Awod eventually joined the Brigade Hizbullah, a paramilitary group affiliated with the PBB. While his first step was a sort of reinvention of his personal identity as a Muslim, by abandoning his habit of drinking alcohol, he moved further by inventing a new collective identity as a Muslim activist and eventually a movement identity as an activist of the Brigade Hizbullah, an Islamic paramilitary group associated with a group with a long history back to the nationalist struggle: the Laskar Hizbullah.  

10) In his keynote speech entitled Confronting Secularism and Communism (Meng-
the Brigade Hizbullah, for Awod was a further sign that he had left the bad old days of the *ma-lima*.

Unlike Awod, Ayyash had a sort of identity crisis when he migrated to Jakarta in the early 1990s after completing high school and seeking work. Living in a metropolitan city, far from his family and hometown, he began to miss his old life in the cozy, religious atmosphere of Pekalongan. Here follows his narrative:

> When I started to live in Jakarta, I had the feeling of losing something…a feeling of loss because it was not easy for me to do *ibadah* (observe religious worship), because I did not hear the *adzan* (call to prayer) for there was no *musholla* (prayer houses) around my place of stay… I [sometimes] began to weep… some days later, when I was on the way back [home], I found a nice mosque where I then joined, staying and learning [Islamic teachings] there…. (Interview, Pekalongan, 17/12/2007)

After having had on-and-off of job for several weeks, moving from one place to another, from one friend to another, Ayyash eventually ended up staying in the Islamic Boarding School complex of *Al Mukhlisin*, located in Penjaringan, North Jakarta. It was a boarding school especially for migrants; most of its pupils were non-locals looking for jobs in Jakarta. It was the branch of a *pesantren* belonging to Nur Muhammad Iskandar SQ, a well-known Islamic cleric affiliated with the NU who managed a big *pesantren* *As-Shidiqqiyah* in Kedoya, West Jakarta. It was an interesting place because it teaches not merely religious studies but also business practices to its pupils. In addition to his learning process in the *pesantren*, he also began to engage with broader Islamist movements concerned with transnational Islamic issues. He related that he took part in some events held...
in the Al-Azhar mosque in Kebayoran Baru and the DDII headquarters in the Kramat Raya Street concerning the war in Bosnia.

A period of identity crisis which took place in his early period as a migrant worker in Jakarta in his late adolescence was probably a critical turning point in his life. While his collective identity as a Muslim had developed in his childhood, it was consolidated when he was far from the santri town of Pekalongan. His involvement in events held by radical Islamic movements in Jakarta on transnational Islamic issues, like the Bosnian war, led to ‘cognitive opening’ as suggested by Wiktorowicz (2005). Although it was unclear whether he had joined any particular Islamic movement in Jakarta, he began to become a freelance Muslim activist who was actively involved in events concerning Islamic transnational issues. The significance of this phase was reflected in the use of Bosnian and Chechen war heroes as the names of his children\(^\text{11}\) as well as in his later life trajectory of joining jihad.

While his critical turning point of becoming a Muslim activist happened when he was a migrant worker in Jakarta, another big step in his career as an activist took place later in Pekalongan in the wake of reformasi. As a major political change, reformasi brought about dramatic shifts which caused a deep crisis and simultaneously political opportunity for many individuals. Following the collapse of the Soeharto regime, voices for local reform were also echoed in Pekalongan, in the call for closure of the prostitute complex in Boyongsari—just a few hundred meters from Ayyash’s house. The popular image of Pekalongan as a santri\(^\text{12}\) town was utilized as a

\(^{11}\) The Bosnian war has a special place in his imagination. His respect and admiration for the Bosnian Islamic leader, Mustapha Ceric, inspired him to name his second child: Ceric Ayyash Ghanusi. All his children were named after prominent Muslim figures from different parts of the world. The third son, Tufail Lamal Tambusai, was named after Sultan Tambusai, a Western Sumatran Minangkabau Islamic hero. The fourth daughter, Syamila Dina Ayu Kristina, was named after Syamil Basayaf, a Chechen Muslim hero, and Kristina was the Chechen capital. The fifth daughter, Hansa Khalida Ziya, was named after Khalida Zia, a woman leader from Bangladesh, and Hansa - a poet and a mother of many jihadists.

\(^{12}\) Two most important features of Pekalongan are batik (traditional textile product) and santri (strong Islamic tradition). The names of these features have also been
symbolic weapon to remove the long-standing prostitute complex in Pekalongan. Ayyash played an active and vital role in mobilizing support for the campaign by joining an anti-prostitution alliance involving local elite figures from various religious, social and political groups. As the result of wide support and constant efforts by various Islamic movements, the complex was finally closed down in 1999. The successful role played by Ayyash in the “Boyongsari project” placed him in a special position, both among local inhabitants and the general population of Pekalongan, particularly among Muslim activists. For the local inhabitants, he was seen as a local Muslim leader with courage, leadership, and networks; for outside Muslim activists, he was seen as a strong local resource and contact person for further da’wa and Islamic activism.

Following the successful networking and actions of the ‘Boyongsari project’, Ayyash took part in establishing the Front Pembela Islam (FPI, the Islamic Defender Front) in Pekalongan. Like the Boyongsari project participated in by several Islamic groups, the same broad alliance joined in establishing the FPI in Pekalongan. By taking part in the FPI, his movement identity was transformed from turned into acronym slogans – the city of Pekalongan with the slogan BATIK town and the district of Pekalongan as SANTRI town. BATIK is an acronym of Bersih (clean), Aman (safe), Tertib (well-ordered), Indah (beautiful) and Komunikatif (communicative). While SANTRI is an abbreviation of Sehat (healthy), Aman (safe), Nyaman (comfortable), Tertib (well-ordered), Rapi (neat) and Indah (beautiful).

13) Among FPI Pekalongan initiators were Ahmat Lutfi, an HMI activist who was a Radar Pekalongan journalist, Ustad Mustaqim, Ustad Ibnu Soleh, Ustad Nugroho, and Ustad Tahirun. During the initial stages, they conducted extensive consultations with Pekalongan social and religious leaders, both those linked with civil society groups such as the traditionalist Nahdhatul Ulama and the modernist groups of Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad but also those who linked with Islamic political parties such as the PPP, PAN, PBB, and PK. The local FPI was founded and declared public at the end of 1999 in the Al Irsyad Meeting Hall in Pekalongan. In its first four years the FPI centered its activities at number 60 Bandung Street, the house of the late ustadz Gaffar Ismail, a well-known preacher and religious figure. The place functioned as the center of Islamic activities by different groups and organizations, including Keluarga Besar PII (Association of Alumni of PII). From information based on interviews with Abu Ayyash and other Muslim activists in Pekalongan, in December 2007.
a ‘freelance’ Muslim activist to an activist of the FPI, the notorious vigilante paramilitary group.14)

Compared to Awod and Ayyash, identity crisis was less significant in the narratives of Surahman. While his involvement with the PII in junior high school period seemed to happen relatively smoothly, some turbulence occurred later following internal tension within the PII that led him to conclude that PII was ‘too liberal’ in applying Islamic teachings. Although not clearly narrated, it seemed likely that he began to embrace a new perspective of Islamic teachings more radical than before; a sort of identity crisis followed by cognitive opening happened to him. Moving out from ‘the young radical’ PII he joined ‘the more committed to true Islam’ BKPMI.15) Surahman’s trajectory resembles like that of Taufan who left the HMI and joined the Salafi (Chapter 4) and of Hendro who left HMI and eventually engaged with the JI (Chapter 5).

Unlike Awod and Ayyash, who had a special engagement with the dynamics of Islamic movements during the political transition, there was no such story in Surahman’s narratives. Older than the two others (in 1998 he was 31 year-old, while Awod was 18 and Ayyash was 25), Surahman it appears became a somewhat established young preacher activist among the Islamic circles of Jakarta. He claimed to endorse the reformasi movements although he was not involved in any particular actions and movements. His critical turning point happened later in 2000, following a series of reports regarding the violent conflict in Maluku, which eventually led him to make the decision to join jihad in Maluku. Yet this took several steps.

When the religious conflict broke out in Maluku and the news of Muslim persecution was widely circulated in the media and other

14) For further readings on the FPI, see van Bruinessen (2002), Yunanto (2003), Jamhari and Jahroni (2004), Fealy (2004), and Jahroni (2008).

15) H. Abdullah Suad Lubis in a series of article ‘Jalan Menuju Konflik Horisontal 6’ alleged that the BKPMI had been accused of involvement in Imran’s Komando Jihad group that hijacked a Garuda flight in 1981. The accusation was not substantiated. But he describes the increase of Islamic militant movements during the period, as reflected in the Usroh’s movement. See http://wongpamulang.multiply.com/journal/item/169 (12 August 2010).
sources, Surahman became overwhelmed with feelings of solidarity with the *umma* (Muslim community). As a preacher, he expressed *moral emotions of solidarity* by choosing the conflict as one of the topics in his preachings and sermons. He even sometimes made the call for *jihad* to his audience. He recalled that when he gave a sermon during the *Idul Adha* prayer he talked about the misery of fellow Muslims in the Maluku conflict. While preaching and discussing the tragic violent incidents affecting Muslims in Maluku he admitted he often shed tears. Eventually his preachings and his calls for *jihad* echoed in his mind and led to a series of questions interrogating his own commitment for real actions such as: *What have you been doing to help your desperate fellow Muslims in Maluku? Why did you make the call for jihad for others but not for your self?*

Following a period of personal reflection, Surahman made the decision to join jihad. What happened to him and how to explain his decision to join jihad?

I argue that his decision to join jihad was an *act of identity*, a sort of response to *schismogenesis*, drastic changes in environment, which took place during the Indonesian transitional period, producing a deep crisis between the autobiographical self and identity. One of the most dramatic events during the period was the eruption of the ‘religious war’ in Ambon and Poso, Eastern Indonesia that led to ‘moral shocks’ producing *moral emotions of solidarity* and eventually leading to him to join jihad. By joining jihad he left behind a comfortable life as a preacher in the capital city of Jakarta to start a new life in the tiny remote town of Tual, Southeast Maluku. He was married with one small child at the time. His wife initially refused to join him there, but eventually followed him to Maluku. After staying about a month in Tual, she returned alone to Jakarta.

Surahman’s story of becoming a jihadist sounds similar to the narrative of Dr. Fauzi who joined jihad through Laskar Jihad (Chapter 4). In his considered decision to join jihad Fauzi, a politician, distinguished between politicians (who talk a lot about jihad but never take action) and *agamawan* (who talk about jihad and simultaneously take action). While Fauzi’s decision to join jihad was an *act*
of identity to resolve his crisis identity by transforming himself from ‘politician’ to agamawan, ‘man of religion’, in the case of Surahman we could say he transformed himself from ‘jihad preacher’ to ‘jihad actor’. Yet the difference between the two was: Fauzi took part in the real combat during jihad while Surahman played his role exclusively in da’wa in Tual, Southeast Maluku, which was quite calm in the period. On the other hand, Fauzi spent only one month in the field while Surahman spent more than two years in the area before eventually deciding to stay on until the present.

A stronger case of ‘moral shocks’ was narrated by Awod after reading the news and watching the video of the massacre of hundreds of Muslims in Tobelo, North Maluku. He recalled that the news portrayed “how Muslims were severely attacked, murdered and tortured... thus they need our [help].” He also referred to the metaphor of the unity of Muslims as a single body, as the Prophet says, “If one part of the body hurts, the rest of the body will also suffer.” So the moral shocks produced strong moral emotions of solidarity inducing Awod to take action: jihad. He was, furthermore, motivated to join jihad in Maluku after hearing that Muslims in Maluku were seriously in need and desperate since the Christian militias had almost reached and taken possession of the Al-Fatah mosque, the Muslim headquarters in Ambon—news that, was actually somewhat exaggerated. The way Awod responded to the news also reflected his status as a leader of an Islamic paramilitary group trained to fight and, therefore, with greater responsibility to take action to help fellow Muslims in desperate need. He, however, related a humble account of what he did in the jihad: “At least I was in Ambon and gave a hand, although just as one of the number [of people who were in fighting]…”

Awod’s jihad can be seen as part of a series of acts of identity during the political transitional period as schismogenesis, a period of deep societal crisis. His first act of identity happened before the reformasi era, by shifting from a bad street boy to be a (better) Muslim starting with stopping drinking alcohol. He continued by abandoning all the ma-lima, the five kinds of moral misconduct, after joining the Brigade Hizbullah, an Islamic paramilitary group. His next act
of identity was his decision to join jihad, to participate in the Maluku religious conflict which he perceived as a holy religious war. Thus, his jihad participation can be seen as part of a series of efforts to resolve his identity crisis by establishing a new movement identity as a Muslim activist.

Yet, his journey to jihad in Ambon did not run smoothly. His mother, the main figure in his life, initially did not support his participation. Fortunately his father took a ‘neutral’ position, neither endorsing nor rejecting his decision. His Islamic activist fellows were also divided between pro and contra. He recalled some rhetorical questions from some of them: “Do you want to die? Do you want to surrender your only life?” Yet, although his mother disapproved and his friends discouraged him, Awod decided to follow the call of his conviction: “Every bullet bears the name of the person it will kill. We don’t need to be afraid of death: our destiny has been written by God!” Awod portrayed himself as a passionate person: “I would get sick if I failed to do my will…” His mother eventually gave her permission after observing his determination. He was also still bachelor at that time which gave him more independence to make such a decision.

Other examples of ‘moral shocks’ were stunningly narrated by Jodi and Baghdad, two other jihadists of different social backgrounds: Jodi was a dropout scholarship student in the Netherlands while Baghdad was newly graduated from an Islamic college in Yogyakarta. Joining jihad in different areas in different periods (Jodi went to Afghanistan in 1991 while Baghdad went to Ambon in 1999-2000), the two experienced strong moral shocks which eventually led them to join jihad although they did not have any personal contacts in the area of jihad. In the case of Jodi, an ex PII activist in high school, the story began when he read a newsletter entitled *Afghan* shown him by his friend, an Indonesian who was studying in the Netherlands. He was shocked after reading the news and looking at the picture portraying how the Soviet Union troops had bombed a market in Afghanistan causing the death of many Muslims, including the elderly, women and children. Suddenly he thought, “it was intolerable ruthlessness!” while he felt a sort of guilt: “I had a nice
life in the Netherlands whereas many fellow Muslims in Afghanistan were living in misery.” So, he thought that he had to take action, eventually deciding to join jihad in Afghanistan, even without knowing any people in the ground! There was, of course, a very long story behind his decision to join jihad, but in short: it happened against a background of ‘identity crisis’ after his failure to complete his bachelor degree in aeronautics in the Netherlands with a scholarship from Indonesian government.

A very different story was narrated by Baghdad, a young NU activist and graduate of the state Islamic college in Yogyakarta who was also a leader of Syadziliyah Qadiriyah Naqshabandiyah Sufism in Jagat Mulya (pseudonym) in East Java. Following news reports of the Ambon conflict, Baghdad experienced moral shocks: the conflict was very serious, many people had been killed, but there had been no adequate response. In addition to the news, he also claimed to receive mystical whispers and calls to go to Ambon to help solve the conflict. Baghdad said he had been told by his deceased grandfather and some wali (the saints) to make the trip to Ambon to take the name of Allah (he recalled reciting the name of God three times: “Allah, Allah, Allah”). He also formulated a rational reason for his jihad participation: to help resolve the conflict by giving feedback from the field to President Abdurrahman Wahid, the Indonesian President at the time who also an NU leader. With financial assistance from a circle of young NU activists in Yogyakarta he eventually went to Ambon. He met and joined with a young Ambonese, his brother’s friend who had been studying in Surabaya and returned to help his family, in the port of Surabaya before the ship left for Ambon. Unlike Jodi, I failed to detect any sign of ‘identity crisis’ from Baghdad’s narratives. The strongest driving force behind his decision to go to Ambon seemed to be the ‘mystical call’ and his passion for intelligence matters: to discover ‘the real players’ behind the conflict which he saw as being orchestrated by the pro-Soeharto forces.

Different from Awod, Jodi and Baghdad who were single, Ayyash was married with two children when the conflict erupted in Maluku. Yet a headline of the Islamic newspaper _Republika_ on
the tragedy of Tobelo, North Maluku, passionately ignited ‘moral shocks’ in him. He even still roughly remembered the headline title, “Eight hundred Muslims massacred in one night”. The news had, to quote Jasper (1998), “implie[d] a visceral, bodily feeling” which raised a strong sense of moral emotions of solidarity to take action: jihad. Portraying himself as a sentimental person who had no experience of using weapons in battle, Ayyash narrated that the news led him to profound reflect on moral responsibility: “what could we do for our fellow Muslims who were in such a tragic situation?” He thought that such a moral duty and responsibility would haunt him until his death if he did not take concrete action to help his fellow Muslims. He imagined that God would question him in his after life: “what were you doing when your Muslim fellows were in such a tragic situation?”

Yet, Ayyash was a husband and father of two small children at the time. In short, he did not have the “biographical availability” to join in ‘high-risk’ activism—to quote McAdam (1988). As a high-risk activist, joining the jihad movement to Ambon was, perhaps, a trip of no return. Most difficult of all was that his second son, Cherica, was just a tiny baby, only months old. His wife, although wishing him to stay and take care of his family with two little children, let him make his own decision as head of the family—a reflection of the patriarchy tradition. After being troubled for several days over making such decision, at the last minute he eventually decided to join the jihad. It could be seen as act of identity, in the context of schismogenesis and identity crisis that had happened to him during the period, so that the action was made to resolve the deep crisis between his autobiographical self and identity as a Muslim—by referring to Marranci (2006, 2009). It could also be seen as one of the epiphanies, the turning point moments in life, “which leave marks on people’s lives. In them, personal character is manifested. They are often moments of crisis. They alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person’s life,” as Denzin (1989: 70) argues. It can be seen as both: an act of identity through which he altered his life meaning structure: becoming a jihadist was seen as more
important than his duty and responsibility as a husband and a father of two little kids.

He related the touching story of his departure for jihad: it was about midnight when he began left his home, leaving behind his lovely wife and two beloved kids. His heart was trembling as tears fell heavily from his eyes. Yet he had confidence in his decision: to journey towards jihad in the path of Islam! Thus, it was a midnight journey for jihad!

The narratives of jihad experiences

Before presenting the life story narratives of the political jihadi trio, I will give a brief summary of their participation in the jihad movement (see Table II in the appendices). All of them went to Ambon-Maluku; two of them returning home, namely Awod Umar and Abu Ayyash, while Surahman stayed on in Ambon until the present. Both Awod and Ayyash spent less than one year in Maluku: six months for Awod and four months for Ayyash. During the jihad period Awod was based in Ambon, although he made some trips to some other places including Saparua Island. On the other hand, Ayyash was posted to Ceram Island whereas Surahman was assigned to stay in Tual, Southeast Maluku. Awod mainly had a combat role: staying and safeguarding the border between Muslim and Christian areas, taking part in battles, and providing training to local militia. Ayyash’ duty was mainly to provide education programs for children while Surahman’s job was da’wa activities. Although the informants had a variety of roles and experiences as well as period and duration of jihad, they shared ‘radical experiences’ which informed their later lives. The ‘radical experiences’ were the consequence of their involvement in a violent conflict situation as well as in jihad activism.

I will show briefly through the life story narratives below, how their different kinds of jihad experiences have become ‘a pivotal event’ in their lives by creating a new movement identity as a jihad
activist and marking their lives with the ‘signpost’ - “after jihad”—which becomes their credential for their later life trajectoriest as political activists.

• **Awod: the fighter jihadist**

Awod said that he went to Maluku alone, financing himself, after feeling disappointed with the complicated bureaucracy of mobilization for the jihad. He joined KOMPAK later after arriving in Ambon. He also said that he arrived in Ambon not long after the attack and burning of the Pattimura University in July 2000. So it was a period of high tension in the conflict when a state of civil emergency had been declared on 22 June 2000 following the destruction and Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) headquarters and armory storage in Tantui. It was also a period with plenty of clashes and attacks by Muslim militia on Christians following the arrival of thousands of Laskar Jihad troops in Ambon since May-June (Azca 2003).

From his early days in Ambon Awod was posted in the Air Kuning ward, the frontier of the Christian area, where many local Muslims had chosen to leave the area. He said that in the beginning only a few people dared to stay on but later many more people joined them. During the interview he expressed his feelings of relief and happiness at the warm welcome shown him in Ambon by local Muslims. “I felt I had a very nice life when I was there because my presence was useful to many people. For instance, I contributed to the revitalization of the Air Kuning ward by staying there [when many people had left].”16) His narrative was colored by a sense of pride and significance for his bravery to stay living on the border, revitalizing the abandoned area of Air Kuning.

Awod also told of his meaningful experience of helping a child who had been shot in battle in Ambon. Because the boy was severely

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16) It was not clear if the place was the JI House as mentioned by ICG (2005c). The KOMPAK’s office was located in Waihong, and Awod narrated that he had been there before coming to Air Kuning.
bleeding and needed emergency medical treatment, he carried him from the location to a village about 4-5 hours away. “It was one of my most meaningful experiences in Ambon,” he said. Although being based in Ambon, Awod took part in some battles outside the Island, including Saparua Island, a predominantly Christian location where Muslims were badly attacked. He said that he spent about two months in Saparua. He also said that he took part in some battles together with Umar Al-Faruk, the notorious alleged Al Qaeda member, and his father-in-law, Haris Fadillah alias Abu Dzar, the commander of Laskar Mujahidin. He also claimed to take part in the battle when Abu Dzar was killed in the Siri-sori village of Saparua in 2000.\(^{17}\) As the consequence of his bravery and his participation in several battles, many local people, including women, praised him and even served his daily needs such as cooking his meals and washing his clothes.

Another meaningful experience was his story of inability to provide help in battle. Awod explained that he had joined a militia group who had come from Ambon to provide support to Muslims in the Ihamahu village in Saparua. There was a rumor that Muslims in the village would be massacred on 25 December 2000, a repeat in memory of the massively violent incident in Tobelo, North Maluku, which had taken place one year earlier. On their way to Ihamahu they had to pass through Christian villages. However, they failed to get through when the local Christian militia blocked them so they then retreated. Awod narrated that one member of the group had brought a walkie-talkie handheld transceiver so that they could communicate with the Ihamahu Muslims who were sheltering in a local mosque. The news from Ihamahu was frightening: “Please help us, or else we’ll be killed like in Tobelo…” Awod said that he and the other Muslims were very sad because they could not do anything.

Besides taking part in battle, he also played the role of trainer on paramilitary training for local militia. As the leader of the Brigade Hizbullah Solo who had been trained in paramilitary training, his

\(^{17}\) According to ICG (2002: 19, footnote 85) the death of Abu Dzar was recorded and produced in a VCD made by the Solo branch of KOMPAK under Aris Munandar. The battle took place on 26 October 2000.
The Narratives

presence in Maluku was useful and helpful for the local militia. Yet, in between combat and training, Awod also spent time enjoying the natural beauty of Maluku by travelling, swimming and hunting in remote areas. When I asked him to reflect on his jihad period in Maluku, he said “it was a period of life which was very nice, meaningful, and precious. It was short but rich with meaningful experiences: combat, hunting, travelling…” (Awod, interview, Solo, 6/12/2007)

He also said that as a heavy smoker he continued to smoke even in battle. He told that there was a break in the midst of battle when some smokers were hanging out, including the son of Abu Dzar, the brother-in-law of Umar Al-Faruk.

In his stories, Awod narrated the ‘radical experience’ of his jihad participation in some violent conflict situations: staying on the frontier of conflict and taking part in battle. Yet, besides the narratives filled with terror, horror, and fear during jihad, he also spoke of his feelings of pride, honor, satisfaction and usefulness during his jihad participation. Interestingly, he also said that jihad participation included fun and joy, such as when travelling, swimming, and hunting in the forest. The way he told his stories seemed to me to reflect his memories of jihad participation as moments of joy and pride rather than episodes of fear and terror. For me, it reflects both his previous trajectory as a bad street boy and his later trajectory as the leader of an Islamic paramilitary group with the reputation of bravery.

• Ayyash: the teacher jihadist

Ayyash joined jihad in Maluku in 2001 with a group of six FPI activists from Pekalongan through KOMPAK. During the interviews, he said that they did not use particular symbols and banners for jihad mobilization. Yet it was certain that Said Sungkar, a senior FPI Pekalongan member, played an important role in helping them to go to Maluku to join the jihad. He also said that Sungkar went back and forth to Maluku several times to send logistics and accompany the jihadists. Spending four months in Maluku, Ayyash was
posted in quite a remote area of the western part of Ceram Island given the main responsibility of education, especially for children.

So his jihad narrative was quite in contrast to Awod. Instead of taking part in clashes or other paramilitary training activities, most of his narratives were about religious activities, da’wa, and particularly children’s education programs. Of course, during his stay in Ceram Island, the atmosphere of violent conflict was still high and tense. He stayed in a Muslim village named Tanah Koyang, which was on the border with the Christian village Aryati but separated by two villages which had been damaged due to conflict and abandoned by their inhabitants. One of his narratives of conflict was the Christians’ attack on his village. It was during the fasting month of Ramadhan, so that the Muslims were resting after fajr when some Christian militia entered the village. After reports were received from some farmers that the ‘enemy’ had penetrated into the area people were mobilized and a clash followed.

Yet most of Ayyash’s stories were about religious activities such as tadarrus (Al Qur’an recitation), tausiyah (religious preaching), and collective prayer. When I asked him about his most meaningful experience during his jihad period, he told stories of holding education programs for local children. The fact that Ayyash had left his two infant children far away in Pekalongan seemed likely to have colored his feelings and emotions during his jihad period. One of his most interesting stories was close and intimate relationship with local children. It was also a meaningful period which left its mark in his life by his taking on the alias: Abu Ayyash, meaning the father of Ayyash, his second child.

Interestingly, his first impression after arrival was of strong mystical traditions in the area. He gave the example, that during Ramadhan when the fast is broken when it turns dark, the locals instead just come inside, close the door and windows and then start breaking the fasting. He also identified some local customs ‘contaminated’ by Christian culture such as, having dancing parties at night and liquor parties after takbiran (celebrating Idul Fitri). His observations led
him to jump to the conclusion that “perhaps, the eruption of conflict is a warning from God to them.”

After finding such strong evidence of syncretism among the local people, he focused his activities on trying to make the local kids feel closer to the mosque through story telling. For example, he held frequent story telling sessions on the history of the prophets, their close companions, and their struggle to establish Islamic society. He also spoke to them about how wonderful heaven was and how frightening was hell. His warm enjoyable approach seemed to be successful in winning the hearts and minds of the children. Feeling attracted by his stories and story-telling sessions, some children even joined him sleeping in the local mosque. He told them many stories before bedtime. An extract follows from his narrative (Ayyash, interview, Pekalongan, 18/12/2007):

We tried to bring Islamic values close to the language and symbolic world of children. At dawn, after the fajr prayer, we trained them to march while singing nasıyd to keep their Islamic spirit burning. I felt being really part of them. Then, in the middle of the day, after returning from school, even before removing their school uniform, some already came to us, asking for play and fun. Sometimes we made a trip to the forest, searching for birds or just playing with them.

How close and intimate his relationship with the local kids was reflected in their response when Ayyash was ordered to move to another place. They got upset and protested to his mas’ul (leader) asking Ayyash to be returned to them. “I was so surprised when I learned that the kids had held a demo asking me to be sent back to them,” he recalled the event trembling. Unfortunately, the order remained unchanged so Ayyash had to go to his new assignment up in the hills one late afternoon. Here is an excerpt from the narrative (Ayyash, interview, Pekalongan, 18/12/2007):

As I walked to the forest the kids were escorting me, one of them was hanging on my shoulder, others were in the front of or behind me holding my shirt. When I began to enter the forest, some of the kids released me with tears. I could not bear my own
feelings of sadness. They were still standing there watching my steps as I entered the forest…

After spending four months in Maluku, mostly in the West Ceram area, he went back to Pekalongan. Before leaving the area, he met the kids for a farewell occasion. He claimed that by that time the kids were already tougher and more ready to say goodbye. He said that he had tried to convince them that it was not their last meeting. “We will meet again, insya Allah. If not here, we will meet again in heaven if you are all good and practice ibadah regularly…” The kids replied humorously: “Hurrah, we going to heaven!”

Although quite contrast to Awod’s narrative, Ayyash also had ‘radical experiences’ from being in the land of jihad, experiencing a deep and profound relationship with the children from the conflict area. It became a ‘pivotal event’ which shaped his life in the post-jihad period, as I will discuss in the next section.

• Surahman: the preacher jihadist

Surahman joined jihad through PKPU (Posko Keadilan Peduli Umat, the Justice Command Post for Caring for the Umma), a humanitarian unit of the Tarbiyah movement, linked to the Partai Keadilan (PK, the Justice Party) which later became the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS, the Prosperous Justice Party). His reason for joining jihad through the PKPU was because it was a group with programs of sending da’wa activists to the land of jihad. Another of his reasons was that the PKPU had developed a network with the Institute Khairu Ummah19) where he had been previously affiliated.

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18) He said that he had a sort of ‘contract’ to join jihad for four months. It was the standard period for married persons in the network he joined. Other networks may have applied different periods.

19) Kotarumalos (2007: 90) suggests that Khairu Ummah was a proxy of PK which was founded in 1989 by several tarbiyah activists such as Yusuf Supendi, Muklis Abdi, Abdul Muadz, Rosihan Anwar dan Rahmat Santoso. They were preachers who frequently gave sermons on campus. Some of them were Middle East alumni, while others were IAIN and LIPIA graduates. Their preaching activities spread as far as Jakarta, East Kalimatan, Riau, NTT and Papua.
Unlike Awod and Ayyash, his jihad trip to Maluku was relatively well managed and well prepared. He had a three-month contract as a da’i with the PKPU and received a monthly salary. He went to Maluku in September 2000 in a group of seven persons who were later distributed to different areas. He was assigned by the PKPU to a post in Tual, a small town far from the capital city of Southeast Maluku, together with another jihad fellow. Tual was in a remote area part of the Kei Islands, located far from Ambon and closer to Papua. The conflict that occurred in Tual in March 1999 resulted in about 200 being killed and tens of thousands fleeing. It stopped after three months. ICG (2007b: 1-2) suggest that the conflict resolved quickly because “the area was relatively homogeneous ethnically and strong customary (adat) mechanisms bridged the religious divide.” So when Surahman went to the area in late 2000 the situation had returned to normal: it was no longer a story of conflict and violence.

Coming to the land of conflict with his wife was not a simple matter for Surahman. When they had just arrived in Ambon in September 2000, the atmosphere of conflict was quite high and his wife began to worry and frequently broke into tears. When they then moved to Tual, a remote and quiet place, another problem emerged: his wife felt lonely especially when Surahman went out preaching or giving sermons. One of the major difficulties of working as a preacher in an area like Tual was the distances between the various places of da’wa. Surahman gave an example. If he went from Tual to Banda Eli, a place located in Kei Besar, he had to wait five days before the next boat could bring him back. After trying to live for a month of loneliness in Tual, his wife decided to return alone to Jakarta, prompted also by news that their only child was sick in Jakarta.

As a man who liked travelling, Surahman enjoyed his time in Tual. He had some challenging experiences, include the ‘little’ accident of falling from a boat during a storm in the middle of the sea. Luckily, he was okay and did not think much of this. His major concern was when he had to miss a prayer when he was traveling to a remote area. He gave the example of a mosque in Aru Island, which was only used once a week for Friday prayers.
When I asked him about his most meaningful experience while doing jihad in Maluku, he answered “I felt my soul was satisfied” (kepuasan hati). Here follows an extract from his narrative (Surahman, interview, Ambon, 4/5/2008):

When I was in Jakarta I got some decent money every time I preached, but I didn’t feel the same. You can’t get such angpao [money in envelope] here. Yet even though the place [for da’wa] is far, my soul feels so satisfied, so calm. It means that I have done a lot for many people. When I was in Jakarta, it was money-oriented da’wa. It was not right, it affected our sincerity.

Although his jihad narrative seemed ‘less radical’ compared to Awod and Ayyash, his life trajectory in the post-jihad period suggests the opposite: he decided to go back to Maluku only few months after completing his duty in the area and then stayed on. So his jihad experience has become a ‘pivotal event’ shaping his life trajectory in meaningful ways: from metropolitan preacher to local preacher, eventually, becoming a local politician, as I will discuss in the next section.

The ‘after jihad’ narratives

In this section I will present and discuss the after jihad narratives of the political jihadist trio. As mentioned earlier, in different ways all of them were involved in the (new) dynamic of local politics in the post-jihad period. In the case of Awod Umar, he continued to engage in politics through the Brigade Hizbullah, the paramilitary group affiliated with the PBB Islamic party. However, he also played a critical role in local politics through his extended-networks, such as an alliance of Islamist movements in Solo as well as a local NGO working on legal issues. In the case of Abu Ayyash, he became engaged in local politics through his FPI leadership by giving political endorsement during the election for mayor in Pekalongan in 2005. Later he joined in a mass protest against local government policy on street vendors through a Pekalongan association of street vendors. In
the case of Surahman, he became involved in local politics in Maluku following his appointment as one of the leaders of PKS Maluku in 2004. He also successfully arranged a political coalition in Tual which led to the election of the PKS candidate as vice district head during the local elections.

I argue that jihad experience influences the life trajectory of the actors in combination with two other main factors, namely, their personal background and profile, and their engagement with different social networks prior, during and after their jihad participation. As discussed previously in Chapter 2, I distinguish three different kinds of social networks associated with the post-jihadists, namely: the core-network, a network through which they join jihad; the tactical-network, a network of jihadist networks which occurs temporarily during the jihad period; and the extended-network, an extension of networks which develop in the aftermath of jihad. I use the concept of social network with two meanings: first, the social network as the link between concrete actors through specific ties as articulated by a ‘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 furthermore argue that the core-network, the network through which jihadists join the jihad, is the key network which acts as the ‘ideological network’ for the jihadists. In the case of the political post-jihadists trio they each had different core-networks, namely the Brigade Hizbullah for Awod, the FPI for Ayyash and the Tarbiyah movement for Surahman. However, as a consequence of their multiple affiliations patterns of membership, their relationship with the core-network was relatively less strong than the pious and the jihadi activists who had exclusive affiliation. This distinction between exclusive affiliation and multiple affiliations follows the framework argued by Della Porta and Diani (1999: 119-20). In the cases of the political post-jihadists, I contend that the dynamics of extended-networks played an important role in shaping their life trajectory in the post-jihad period.
I also argue that jihad experience brought the political-jihadists meaningful credentials in the post-jihad period. Participation in ‘high-risk’ jihad activism has enhanced the credibility of their movement identity as Muslim activists both within the core-network and their extended-networks. As I will show in the next section, the political jihadist trio each climbed their activism career ladder in the post-jihad period: Surahman was appointed as vice chairman of PKS Maluku from 2004, Abu Ayyash was elected chairman of the FPI Pekalongan for two consecutive periods (2005-2010 and 2010-2015), and Awod Umar was recently elected as the chairman of the PBB Solo in 2009.

• Awod: the paramilitary leader and the paralegal

The main thread of Awod’s narratives in the post-jihad period is the combination between his political party activism, particularly as the leader of the Brigade Hizbullah, and his involvement at the KBH (Kantor Bantuan Hukum, Legal Aid Office) Supremasi, a local NGO working on legal issues. As I have argued, his participation in ‘high-risk’ activism of jihad has brought him meaningful credentials as a political activist and leader of a paramilitary group, both within and outside his own party. In short, in the post-jihad period his movement identity and social reputation as a Muslim activist has developed beyond his core-network, the Brigade Hizbullah and PBB, and gained prominence among Muslim activists in Solo. Interestingly, however, his image and reputation as a Muslim activist has not hindered him from crossing the boundary of his religious identity as indicated by his involvement in a local legal aid NGO led by a Christian lawyer. For Awod, cooperation with non-Muslims is acceptable as long as it can help to achieve common goal: social justice! On the other hand, he still believes that syaria’ also leads in the same direction as reflected in his sustained commitment as a PBB activist.

I will present my argument on the link between jihad experience, social background, social networks and life trajectory by discussing Awod’s life story narrative in the post-jihad period in four
episodes. First, he consolidated his movement identity and leadership within his core-network of Brigade Hizbullah by mobilizing and facilitating his fellow Muslims to join jihad. Second, he extended his social network by taking a leading role in ‘sweeping operations’ conducted by an alliance of Muslim militia in Solo under the banner of Koalisi Umat Islam Surakarta (KUIS, Coalition of Muslim Communities in Surakarta20). Third, he extended his social network by taking part in anti-corruption movements in Sukoharjo, which eventually led to his involvement in the KBH Supremasi. Fourth, he extended his social network by giving political endorsement toward the ‘secular candidate’ during the mayor election in Solo in 2005.

**Episode One:**  
_Mobilizing Fellows to join Jihad_  

After spending six months in jihad in Maluku in 2000, Awod returned to Solo, sharing his narratives of meaningful experiences in jihad to his fellow Brigade Hizbullah members and persuading them to follow his trajectory. As the Brigade Hizbullah leader he successfully persuaded some of them and facilitated nine members to join jihad in Maluku. Most of them joined the jihad through KOMPAK, except one who joined through Laskar Jihad, due to a lack of resources. “What was most important was being able to join jihad; it was not a big issue through which network they joined,” he explained. His reason for mobilizing his fellows, interestingly, sounded personal rather than heroic. “I had meaningful experiences there because I had been very useful to many people; it was such a pleasant feeling. When I came back to Solo, I persuaded my fellows to join jihad because I didn’t want them to miss such a wonderful opportunity…”

Awod’s narrative of jihad was confirmed by Udin and Muslih, two Brigade Hizbullah activists who joined jihad in Maluku following Awod. I met them in Awod’s rental house which was also the office of KBH Supremasi during my fieldwork. Udin was Awod’s close

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20) Surakarta is more familiarly known as Solo, the name Surakarta however is often used in formal and official documents to refer to this same city in Central Java.
friend who also joined in Supremasi. Although Awod and his fellows did not join jihad in the same period, they shared the same meaningful experience of jihad which eventually tied them in a strong bond of Islamic activism. Awod’s tie to the core-network became stronger following his marriage with a female PBB in 2001/2002. I contend it was a critical period of his consolidation with his core-network, especially within the Brigade Hizbullah.

Episode Two: Commanding a ‘Sweeping operation’ and Being a Prisoner

Besides his position as leader of the Brigade Hizbullah, Awod’s status as ‘an Ambon alumnus’ raised his reputation as a Muslim activist in Solo. He also became involved in the DDII as a functionary in the department of youth and in the MMI as a functionary in the training department of the paramilitary division of the Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia.

He also frequently participated in collective actions held by the alliance of Islamic movements in Solo. In the fasting month of Ramadhan in 2005 he was appointed to lead a sweeping operation conducted by KUIS, an alliance of Islamic militias in Solo. The target of the operation was the Warudoyong café located in Solo Baru, Sukoharjo. He explained it had been identified as a target for selling liquor during Ramadhan despite a major public call (himbauan) from Islamic leaders not to sell liquor during Ramadhan as the gesture of respect toward Muslims in Solo. Unfortunately, the action led to a riot where a man wearing a PDI-P T-shirt was badly attacked by some of the over 400 strong mob. The incident was shot and broadcast on the national TV station Metro and the incident soon became politicized.

Awod, as the leader of the action, and two other coordinators were arrested by the police and the case was brought to court. During the approximately one month-long trial Awod was held in police custody. The judge found him guilty but gave him a light sentence: six months probation (hukuman percobaan). Instead of discouraging him, the case encouraged him to become further involved in Is-
Islamic movements. He explained that during the trial process he felt that God had helped him by reducing his sentence. He mentioned that two of the five prosecution witnesses were not able to appear in court; one fell sick and had to go to Jakarta for treatment, another died in a traffic incident on the way to court. For him it was a sign that he was on the right side and God was on his side. “I was treated unjustly [by the police] and God’s power helped me: making the impossible become possible…”

He also said that he had a good time in custody: “it was just like a vacation,” he said smiling recalling the incident in the interview. Here is an extract from his narrative on his term in jail (Interview, Solo, 15/11/2007):

There were many stressed people in custody; some of them felt sad and regretful over their own wrongdoings, some of them felt victimized and treated unjustly. In such situation, I usually attempted to help them by chatting with them to prevent them having negative thoughts, or, even worse, actions. It was my duty as a Muslim to conduct da’wa there. So, I persuaded those who were not praying to start praying; I taught those who were not able to read the Al-Qur’an …And I am still in touch with some of them until now.

So, instead of a cell in hell, it sounded that Awod’s time in custody was another form of Islamic activism. Even more so, during his term in custody a new idea of social activism blossomed. Following a series of discussions with other detainees, including a university professor who had been jailed for corruption, the new idea developed to establish a social foundation protecting the rights of prisoners. Although the foundation had not yet been established at the time of the interviews, it was agreed it would be named: Yayasan Pijar Anak Bangsa (The Citizen’s Flame Foundation).

Thus, I contend that Awod’s short period in custody was a meaningful period for two reasons: on the one hand, it has enhanced his credibility as a Muslim activist among Islamist movements, and on the other hand, it was a fruitful opportunity to develop his extended-network.
Episode Three: Taking Part in the Anti-Corruption Movement

In addition to his growing reputation as a Muslim activist, Awod has not limited his social network to merely Islamist groups. This was evident in his involvement in the anti-corruption movement in Sukoharjo. He became involved on hearing of the threat made towards the leader of the movement, Bares Lamhot, a lawyer and local NGO leader. Lamhot is a Christian lawyer who has long been engaged with community advocacy issues, previously with the well-known progressive NGO named PADMA (*Pusat Advokasi Masyarakat*, Center of Community Advocacy). Lamhot was threatened by a group of local *preman*, allegedly linked with the subdistrict head for his role in the anti-corruption movement and was coerced to end the movement. Lamhot did not give up but looked instead for wider moral support and ‘protection’.

One of Lamhot’s friends contacted Awod as the leader of the Brigade Hizbullah, told him the story and asked for help (Interview Heri Varia, Solo, 10/2007). Awod agreed and demonstrated his moral and political support by taking part in a mass rally conducted by Lamhot and his networks. Awod and his Hizbullah fellows did not only provide moral support but displayed their ‘power’ by joining the action riding in the special Brigade Hizbullah open jeep. The clear message was sent to the public: Brigade Hizbullah was supporting Lamhot and friends, so anyone threatening violence should beware. The message worked: the threats against Lamhot ceased and the corruption case ended in victory for the anti-corruption movement: the public money that had been embezzled was returned to the public funds (Interview Lamhot, Solo, 4/2008).

Following the case, the relationship between Awod and Lamhot grew closer. Lamhot invited Awod and his friends to join his NGO, the KBH *Supremasi*, working on legal aid issues. Awod eventually decided to join, together with some other members of the Brigade Hizbullah. Since they were not legally trained, they worked as paralegal volunteers. From 2006 Awod was appointed as the NGO’s
The Narratives

coordinator of volunteers for Solo and the surroundings, include Boyolali, Karanganyar, Sragen and Sukoharjo. As a legal aid NGO, Supremasi provides legal aid and associated legal assistance largely to the poor.

The involvement of Awod, the leader of the quite notorious Brigade Hizbullah, in a local NGO led by a Christian lawyer, raised some questions which I confronted him with during the interview: “Did you have any protests or complaints from other Muslim activists?”

He replied by asking another question: “What’s wrong? What’s odd? I don’t see anything odd…” Here follows his arguments (Interview, Solo, 15/11/2007):

...because we are doing muamalah (human relations), it’s nothing to do with aqidah (theology). When we do muamalah, we are free to do business with anybody, that’s my contention. I have explained to some friends with common sense and objective reasoning: I know Bares is somebody who is concerned with social issues (kesosialan); that’s how it is.

Awod made an interesting and clear distinction between muamalah and aqidah in this case. Thus, for him, there is no prohibition for doing muamalah with people from different religions. It is an inclusive way of thinking since the domain of muamalah is very wide; it could cover anything except things that are classified as the domain of aqidah. Such an inclusive way of thinking facilitates the further development of his extended-network as reflected in his political choice and behavior in the next episode.

Episode Four:
Endorsing the Secular Candidate

Awod demonstrated such flexibility during the election of the Solo Mayor in 2005. PBB, his party, had made a coalition with the National Mandate Party (PAN) to endorse the candidacy of Ahmad Purnomo and Istar Yuliadi. Interestingly, Awod and his Hizbullah fellows took a different stance: endorsing the candidacy of Joko Widodo and Hady Rudiyatmo, the pair who had been nominated
by the nationalist-secular party PDIP (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, the Indonesia and supported by the PKB. He presented a pragmatic rather than idealistic reason for the choice: based on political calculations in Solo, the coalition with the PDI-P as the biggest party was crucial to achieve political victory. On the other hand, he also admitted to being interested in the figure of Joko Widodo who was non-partisan, clean and professional. 21) Another important factor, although not mentioned by Awod, was the ‘Heri Varia factor’, the consultant of Joko Widodo during the campaign. 22)

Awod’s political calculations were eventually proven to be true: Joko and Rudy were elected as Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of Solo for 2005-2010. 23) The victory of their candidates, however, did not seem to result in many apparent political or economic benefits in the life style of Awod and friends. Varia also eventually resigned from his position as special-staff of the new Mayor Joko Widodo, which meant loss of access to the top person of Solo.

Awod’s story indicated his open-minded and pragmatic approach as a politician. He also had the courage to make the political choice to oppose the policy taken by party leadership. Through his actions he developed further his extended-network. The fact that he was not punished by the PBB for his political rebellion indicated at least two things: he played politics in a smart way and he had strong political support from the stronghold of the party, especially from the Brigade Hizbullah, his core-network. Probably these two factors eventually led him to be elected as the chairman of PBB Solo in 2009. 24)

21) The Joko Widodo leadership was widely appreciated by the public, as reflected in his election as one of the smart and clean Heads of District by Tempo Magazine in a special edition in 2008: “10 Men of the Year 2008.”

22) Through his personal approach, Varia persuaded Awod and his fellows to give support to Joko Widodo during the election. He also provided Awod personal access to Joko. Conversations with Heri Varia and Awod Umar, Solo, November 2007.

23) Joko-Rudy were elected as the Solo Mayor and Deputy Mayor after being voted by 99,747 people, followed by Purnomo-Istar by 79,213 votes. See: http://us.detiknews.com/index.php/detik_read/tahun/2005/bulan/06/tgl/28/time/061803/idnews/391254/id-kanal/10 (14 August 2010).

24) In the Mayor Election in 2010, the PBB under Awod’s leadership joined a coalition of small parties to support Eddy S Wirabhum-Supradi Kertamenawi who were nomi-
• Abu Ayyash: the militia leader and the poet

The ‘after jihad’ life of Abu Ayyash in certain way appears somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, his reputation as a Muslim activist has been prominent, especially following his role as the acting chairman of the FPI Pekalongan executive body in 2003, followed by his election for 2005-2010 and his recent reelection for 2010-2015. As the FPI Chairman, his name often appeared in the media, especially the new local newspaper Radar Pekalongan. He became a local celebrity. However, on the other hand, his economic life deteriorated, particularly following the sudden closure of his street stall selling getuk goreng in early 2007 due to the change of local government policy regarding street vendor management. He and his family live in an old house mostly constructed from weakened and rotten timber and bamboo located in a former slum area of Boyongsari. It looked a bit better when I made the last visit in late 2009: the front side of the house had been partially renovated and rebuilt from cement blocks. Ayyash said that it had been done by the social program of bedah rumah (fix the house).

His poor economic conditions did not prevent him from having a colorful and energetic social and religious life. He is a person with strong passions when it comes to religion. He stood up to defend the FPI when it was blamed and some groups even asked for its disbandment following the violent incident involving the attack by some FPI activists of some members of the Bhineka Tunggal Ika Alliance on 1 June 2008 in Monas Square, Jakarta.25) He also commanded a “security sweeping operation” action by the FPI toward a shop and liquor storage in Batang in 2008 which led to a violent incident. As a result, he and other two FPI activists were brought to court

25) A group of Islamic organizations in Pekalongan, mainly from the NU camp, organized a mass action to express their desire to disband the FPI following its violent action in Jakarta. See Suara Merdeka, 6 June 2008, Ormas Islam Pekalongan Minta FPI Dibubarkan.
and sentenced to six months jail (Radar Pekalongan, 28/8/2009). Being jailed did not stop him from conducting da’wa. He successfully converted his fellow prisoners from aliran kepercayaan (Javanese mysticism) to devout Muslims and taught them to read Al Qur’an. When he and his fellows were released from jail, FPI activists greeted and cheered them as heroes.

I will present my argument on the link between jihad experience, social background, social networks and life trajectory by discussing Ayyash’s life story narrative in the post-jihad period in five episodes. First, was the early period immediately after his jihad participation until his election as the acting chairman of FPI Pekalongan. Second, was the period of his early engagement in local politics through FPUIS by endorsing the candidacy of Basyir Achmad-Abu Almafachir in the 2005 Mayor election. Third, was the period in 2007 when he became the ‘victim’ of a local change in policy regarding street vendors and he joined a mass protest against the policy. Fourth was the period when he led a security sweep of a liquor shop and storage in Batang which eventually brought him to jail. Fifth was the period after his release from prison.

Episode One:
Becoming the FPI Leader

On his return from Maluku to Pekalongan, Ayyash continued his activism with the FPI Pekalongan. Besides a number of stories of his engagement with the jihad movement in West Ceram, he also bore a new identity after his jihad period: the alias Abu Ayyash—meaning the father of Ayyash, his second child who was just a few months old when he left for jihad. It was a new chapter in his life: as the more committed Muslim activist Abu Ayyash. Many more people began to forget his original name: Slamet Budiono and nickname Nano. In addition to the FPI, Ayyash was also involved in the PPMI (Perhimpunan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia), an Islamic labor movement led by Egy Sudjana.
There were five other FPI activists from Pekalongan who joined jihad in the same cohort as Ayyash. As the consequence of their shared jihad experiences, they developed strong emotional bonds among them and have became the core activists of FPI Pekalongan, together with Said Sungkar, a senior FPI member and the chairman of the FPI Pekalongan advisory board (dewan syura) in 2005-2010. During the conflict period, Sungkar had been actively involved in mobilizing Islamic activists to join jihad in Maluku and Poso. Sungkar is one of the founders of FPI Pekalongan, and is a leading ideologue and a key FPI hub to wider Islamist networks as briefly discussed in Chapter 3.

Following internal troubles due to the previous chairman, ustadz Nugroho, being unable to carry out his functions properly, Ayyash was elected as the acting chairman of FPI Pekalongan in 2003. It is interesting to notice that Abu Ayyash, a modest man and only a high school graduate, was elected as the FPI Pekalongan leader. The fact that he was then officially elected as its chairman of FPI in 2005 and reelected for the next term of 2010-2015 indicated that his leadership was seen as quite successful. As is the case of Awod, I contend that Ayyash’s participation in jihad in Maluku and his status as a ‘Maluku alumnus’ gave him credentials for his leadership role in the FPI. After assuming and consolidating his leadership in the FPI, Ayyash expanded his role by becoming involved in the dynamics of local politics.

**Episode Two:**

*Playing A Role in Local Politics*

Ayyash began to become involved in local politics through the FSUI (Forum Silaturahmi Umat Islam, Communication Forum of Muslim Community) Pekalongan, a network of a number of Islamic groups in Pekalongan including the Nahdhatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Al Irsyad, HMI, PII and FPI. Prior to the 2005 mayoral election in Pekalongan, FSUI held a discussion regarding Muslim politics in Pekalongan. They came to the conclusion that the Muslim community should be actively engaged in the election through the
FSUI. Following a series of discussions and debates, include some ‘fit and proper test’ sessions by inviting the prospective candidates. The FSUI eventually decided to endorse the candidacy of Basyir Ahmad-Abu Almafachir; Ahmad was the chairman of the Golkar party Pekalongan while Almafachir was the chairman of NU Pekalongan. Besides being a medical doctor of Arabic descent, Ahmad is also an Islamist activist and the former chairman of Al Irsyad Pekalongan. Following the endorsement decision, some FSUI activists were involved in campaigning for these candidates during the election which ended in their successful election: Ahmad-Almafachir elected as Mayor-Deputy Mayor of Pekalongan in 2005.

What was interesting behind this successful political project was that the FSUI was initiated and mainly driven by young Muslim activists, including Aris Kurniawan, Muhammad Isrizal, and Ayyash himself. Both Kurniawan and Isrizal were former PII activists and they then become the leader of the alumni association of PII (KB-PII) Pekalongan. Aris Kurniawan, the chairman of PII Pekalongan in 1987-89, took the position of FSUI secretary until recently. Since the FSUI leadership was managed through a presidium, the role of secretary was crucial in driving the dynamics and direction of the organization. It was through this network of young Muslim activists that Ayyash began to engage with the dynamics of local politics in Pekalongan. The close relationship between Ayyash and Kurniawan developed since 1999 when the FPI Pekalongan had just been founded and the KB-PII gave space for the FPI to have an office at 66 Bandung Street Pekalongan, where both the PII and KB-PII were based. Kurniawan then became a PAN activist and was elected as secretary of PAN Pekalongan.

Through this period, Ayyash further expanded his social networks and began to be involved in the dynamics of local politics in Pekalongan more intensively. His good relationship with Aris Kurniawan was crucial in maintaining and expanding the network, especially in dealing with local politics. On the other hand, his close relationship with Said Sungkar warranted his strong position within the core-network of FPI.
Episode Three:
Fighting Against the Mayor Policy

The new leadership in Pekalongan under Basyir Ahmad and Abu Almafachir launched several good programs which eventually won awards by various institutes and bodies. However, their policy on restructuring street vendors was confronted by mass protest in Pekalongan. Among the protesters were Ayyash, who had become a victim of the policy after his small kiosk was moved by the officers of local government police (Polisi Pamongprja). In his efforts to protest the policy he joined in establishing the Forum Komunikasi Pedagang Kakilima se-Pekalongan (FKPK, the Communication Forum of Street Vendors in Pekalongan). It was an interesting step because it was a class and interest-based movement rather than a religious one. One of the critical collective actions they took was to hold a mass-action participated by hundreds of ex street vendors rallying to the local parliament and expressing their protest at the policy of local government. Ayyash took a leading role in the action together with Aris Kurniawan who worked in Public Area Service (PAS), a local NGO. Interestingly, both Ayyash and Kurniawan had been supporters of Basyir during the election two years before.

Since Basyir’s government did not respond properly to the protest, Ayyash and the group of protesters launched an action to close the north coast road, one of the major roads in Java. Tensions escalated and a calculated scenario of confrontation developed. Ayyash said that Basyir claimed the case had been manipulated and politicized by the political party, implicitly accusing Kurniawan and

26) Among the awards were for housing for the poor by UN Habitat, community-based garbage management by the Department of Public Works, and bureaucratic reform by the Ministry of State Apparatus.

27) PAS is previously an abbreviation of Posko Amien-Siswono, a political group who supported the candidacy of Amien Rais and Siwono Yudohusodo in the 2004 presidential election. In the post 2004 election it transformed to be a local NGO working on public area issues, although closely linked to PAN (National Mandate Party). A news on the action by PAS was made available at Aris’s blogspot: http://ariscenter.blogspot.com/2008/10/kebijakan-pemerintah-kota-pekalongan.html as part of his political campaign for his candidacy for provincial parliamentary set in the 2009 election. He, however, failed to get elected.
From Jihad to Local Politics

PAN. In such a deadlock, a breakthrough in negotiations was interestingly initiated by Said Sungkar, the chairman of advisory board of FPI and simultaneously an Al Irsyad activist. He proposed hold a dialog through the FSUI. “We are all in a brotherhood; what the hell is the party. The party can be disbanded someday, but not our brotherhood,” Ayyash recalled the way Sungkar persuaded him and his friends.28) The dialog then happened: Ayyash and his groups requested the government to review the policy while Basyir requested they not close the road. Both two sides agreed. But, for Ayyash, the protest group lost his way since government continued with business as usual as the morale of the protesters began to drop.

Through this period, Ayyash moved beyond the traditional boundaries of Islamist movements by taking part in a street vendor protest based on class and interest. However, his core network remained powerful thus he was prevented from continuing to confrontational stages.

**Episode Four:**
**Leading a ‘Sweeping’, Being a Prisoner**

FPI has been prominent as a militia group that frequently carries out what they call ‘sweeping operations’ or security sweeps of places of ‘vice’, especially led by the paramilitary group *Laskar Pembela Islam* (LPI, Islamic Defender Troops) (Jamhari and Jahroeni, 2004; Yunanto, 2003, Jahroni 2008). Ayyash quite often led such actions, for instance an action to ban the New Year Party planned to be held in Pekalongan in 2005. By using the excuse of the recent earthquake tsunami which had happened in Aceh, the FPI insisted on banning any form of New Year celebrations in Pekalongan even though the organizers agreed to turn the event into collective prayers and mobilized solidarity fund for Aceh. “If you want to run the event, it’s up to you, but our masses are ready to conduct sweeping. Let the

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28) The quote originally in Javanese reads as follows: “Dewe kih sedulur kabeh; opo partai? Partai kih iso bubar, tapi seduluran kan ora bubar.”
police be the referee [for the clash],” he told the organizers as quoted by Jawa Pos (2 January 2005).

But a ‘sweeping operation’ held on 27 August 2008 led to a different story: a period of imprisonment. The action, which targeted a shop and liquor storage belong to Kwi Ren Jie alias Cece located in R. E. Martadinata Street in the district of Batang, led to violence. As a result, Ayyash and two other FPI activists were brought to trial and sentenced to six months jail (Radar Pekalongan, 28/8/2009). Why did he conduct such violent actions? What was the ideological view and conviction behind such actions? He answered such questions in his 38 page hand-written defense entitled Membuka Mata Hati (Opening the Conscience).

He situated what he had done as part of “the struggle to uphold the Islamic faith (aqidah) and simultaneously fulfill the rights and responsibility as a citizen to defend the state (bela negara) through amaliyah or eradicating vices.” (2009: 2). He argued that his action which was based on “the logic of power” (logika kekuatan) should be understood as an option in the context of the collapse of law due to collusion between certain personnel of the state apparatus (oknum-oknum) and agents of vice (2009: 4). He refused the allegation that his actions were expressions of anarchism and an infuriated soul (kebengisan hati), calling them instead expressions of firm attitudes (ketegasan sikap) and robust principles (ketegaran prinsip) (2009: 6). He furthermore asserted: “Islam is the religion of peace, but it does not mean weakness against vices. Islam is the religion of tolerance, but it does not mean silence toward the domination of wrongdoings” (2009: 8-9).

Living in jail for six months did not stop him from conducting da’wa. By using his skills and capability to conduct rukyah, a spiritual method of healing, and his human approach to conduct da’wa, he successfully approached Koret, a petty criminal and a follower of Javanese mysticism, and converted him into a devout Muslim. Ko-

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29) The original quote: Islam adalah agama damai, tapi bukan berarti pasrah kepada kemaksiatan. Islam adalah agama kelembutan, tapi bukan berarti diam terhadap merajalelanya kemungkaran.
ret was the leader of a youth group in the remote village of Toso, in Batang, Central Java, who was jailed for leading collective lynching with three other friends of a preman family. Koret and his friends became pupils of Ayyash in jail. During his period in jail Ayyash also wrote several poems, for his beloved mother and children as well as about his new friend and pupil in jail, Koret.30)

Ayyash is a unique profile, both the leader of Islamic militia group and a poet. Two of his poems were included in the book Antologi 101 Puisi tentang Kota Pekalongan published in 2008. A prominent poet born in Pekalongan, Taufik Ismail, mentioned him in his foreword: “Feeling anxious due to of the many advertisement billboards and banners in his surrounding, Abu Ayyash, the chairman of FPI Pekalongan, expressed his anxiety in the poem Langitku (My sky).” When Radar Pekalongan reported the verdict of his case entitled Six Months Sentence for Abu Ayyash Cs (30/01/2009), it also printed his poem on the front page alongside a picture of him in Islamic dress, including skull cap and selendang (scarf), smiling while holding onto the bars of the cell. The poem, which explained metaphorically his ‘sweeping’ court case, was entitled Sajak Dua Berhala (A poem of two idols).31)

Through the ‘sweeping’ action and the consequent six-month imprisonment, Ayyash has developed and further consolidated his identity as an Islamist activist. A period in prison provided him ample opportunity to reflect on his own experience with Islamist activism and to formulate some profound arguments for their actions—as presented in his pledoi (court defense). On the other hand, his experience in prison has sharpened his sense of justice due to “illegal but licit” practices of extorting money from prisoners at any every occasion, including visits by family and friends.32) He claimed to have

30) I was given some pages of his handwritten poems.
31) Another article published on the same date by Radar Pekalongan entitled “Ayyah is making poems in jail” (30/1/2009) implied that through the poem Ayyash was attempting to display an ironic view of the case. While Ayyash was doing ‘sweeping’ action, similar sort of action had been conducted by the police to seize illegal liquor as commonly happened before Id Fithri.
32) Interview in Pekalongan, 5 November 2009.
meaningful experiences from interacting with different personalities and characters in prison who all had problems with the law. Finally, Ayyash utilized his period in jail as a way to expand his social network, as is evident in the case of Koret and friends.

Episode Five:
On Release From Prison

It was a special Friday for Ayyash. After spending six months in the Rowobelang prison, Batang, on Friday morning the 27th of February 2009, Ayyash and two other FPI activists were released from jail. Hundreds of FPI activists from Batang and Pekalongan, who had been waiting outside the prison complex since early morning, expressed their relief and happiness by cheering their release shouting “Allahu Akbar”. Soon they moved in a convoy of cars and motorbikes to Ayyash’s house in Boyongsari, Pekalongan, accompanied by police car. A sort of ceremony and a mass preaching had been prepared in Ayyash’s house attended by hundreds of FPI activists and sympathizers wearing their Islamic dress and attributes. In a press conference with journalists, Ayyash said that he would still not stop carrying out ‘sweeping’ against vices. The event itself was quite unique given the location of Ayyash’s house just a few hundred meters from the ex prostitution complex.

I contend that his period in jail led to social pride rather than shame. As Jasper (1997: 83) suggests, spending time in jail may be seen as a ‘badge of honor’ for some groups of activists. With such a ‘badge of honor’ he looked become more confident in doing his da’wa and social activism. Another factor which I observed to crucially build his self-esteem and social role was his capability and skill in the spiritual method of healing which called ruqyah. It was

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33) The description is based on news published by Radio Kota Batik, 27 February 2009, entitled “Ketua FPI Dibebaskan” mixed with my conversation with Ayyash. In a photo provided with the news, some of Ayyash’s house appears and it has been renovated with a medium-sized FPI sign placed on the front wall.

34) Al Iedan (2006: 23) defines ruqyah as a method of healing based on Al Qur’an and As Sunnah to heal spiritual illness or other sickness caused by the bad influence of ‘ain
by using this skill and method that Ayyash succeeded in winning the sympathy and respect of Koret by exorcising the bad spirits from his body, which caused him to bleed from his mouth. Even on the day of his police arrest Ayyash asked permission to go to Petung Kriono, a remote place in the District of Pekalongan about 30 kilometers from Pekalongan, to perform ruqyah. As a consequence, three policemen accompanied him by car there till 10pm before returning to the police station to start his interrogation. During one of my interviews, he was called by somebody seeking his help in conducting ruqyah.

It seems likely that Ayyash has some qualities which make him quite exceptional as an Islamist activist: he is a militia leader, a preacher, a poet and a healer; a person with multiple capabilities and social identities. In addition to his attachment with the FPI as his core-network, he has also developed quite a large extended-network: the FSUI, the local NGO PAS, KB-PII, as well as his personal relationship with many social and political activists, including the Mayor of Pekalongan. During my last interview in Pekalongan on 1 January 2010, he was dealing with a land dispute involving a poor family and local government. The case was advocated by a local freelance activist, Bahruddin, who is an ex PII activist. Ayyash was attempting to facilitate a dialogue between the two sides by utilizing his good relationship with the Mayor, Basyir Ahmad, as well as his position as the FPI leader. The case was still running, and the results were still unpredictable, as is the life trajectory of Abu Ayyash, the leader of the FPI Pekalongan.

**Surahman: the preacher and the politician**

The “after jihad” life of Surahman seemed not much different from the jihad period: he continued working as a da’i while simultaneously running a small shop and a small motorbike taxi business. His new life trajectory as a politician seemed to be the fruit of his hard work and successful job as a preacher during the (post) con-

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(evil eye) of man and jin, magic, and other physical illness.
lict period in Maluku. As the consequence of his successful da’wa in Maluku, particularly in Southeast Maluku, he was recruited as a politician by PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) in the province of Maluku. In fact he had gone to Ambon for the jihad as a da’i through the PKPU (Posko Keadilan Peduli Umat), the humanitarian agency that was part of the Tarbiyah movement with a strong link to the PKS. Therefore, it was as if he was just moving into a different room in the same house: from da’wa to politics. These two realms can be distinguished conceptually but can blur in reality, especially for the PKS that calls itself the “da’wa party”.

I present my argument on the link between jihad experience, social background, social networks and life trajectory by discussing the life story narratives of Surahman in three episodes of the after jihad period. First was the crucial episode of crucial shift from da’wa activities in Maluku on a temporary and ad hoc basis to a living there with a fixed address. Second was the episode of his shift from da’wa activism to political activism. Although less problematic from an institutional point, such identity transformation can have particular and meaningful effects depending on the subjectivity of the actor. Third was the episode of Surahman’s new role as a non-local politician as he continued to play his role as a da’i. It is unclear if there are any problems or tensions between his social role (as a politician and preacher) and his non-native social identity.

Period One: Choosing Maluku as the new field of life

After finishing his first term working as a da’i in Maluku in late 2000, Surahman said that he felt pity for the people of Maluku for their lack of religious teachings. His reflection was particularly based on his experience of da’wa in remote areas of Southeast Maluku, particularly in Tual Island and its surroundings. Thus he decided to apply for an extension of his stay, living and doing da’wa in Maluku to the PKPU. It was not an easy matter. As he had been born and raised in a Jakarta Betawi family, his wife quickly expressed
her disagreement: “why should we live so far away from Jakarta?” His mother also expressed her concerns and disapproval: “don’t go to live in such a dangerous place, you could be killed there...” But Surahman convinced his mother by saying that death is in the hands of God, thus it could happen anywhere. “My life is in the hands of Allah, not in your hand, Mother,” he argued conclusively. He said that he was very passionate at that time, and his parents knew well that if he already had the determination to do something it would be very difficult to stop him.

He eventually returned to Maluku for a longer period in 2001, still posted in Southeast Maluku. He said that in that period, many PK activists, even its functionaries, were smokers and did not pray regularly. He expressed his sad feelings concerning this state of affairs. The PK leadership in Maluku asked him to conduct intensive da’wa for internal groups of its activists. He then began by studying the PK da’wa curriculum and making personal approaches by meeting and gathering with many activists and functionaries. He began his work by building a strong foundation in the core-network of PK activists.

As a non-native, he started by studying the local values and traditions of Tual from a leading adat (customary law) figure who, interestingly, was a Golkar activist. Golkar, a military-sponsored party, has been a very powerful political force in Tual, even until the present. Surahman’s status as a non-partisan preacher was an advantage in the period. He learnt a lot about various aspects of adat Tual, include its concept of social stratification with its highly hierarchical caste-like system. By learning about Tual traditional beliefs and values Surahman began to develop his strategy for da’wa, such as by taking into account the social status of people he met and talked with. He also tried to keep the topics of his preachings and sermons relevant and up to date. As a result, many people became interested in his preachings and sermons and he began to receive many invitations from local people. Here he began to develop his extended-network.
He also attempted to develop his social networks in Tual by building contacts with the local elites. In cooperation with the local police chief, for instance, he held regular preaching programs for kids. Surahman made use of his network with Islamic publishers in Jakarta, such as Gema Insani Press, Rabbani Press and Al Kautsar, and asked them to send their ‘social books’ to Maluku. These books were then distributed to local elites for free for expanding their cooperation.

Through this period, it seemed that Surahman had been quite successful in learning the local culture and developing his extended-networks, particularly among the local elites. He was also able to mobilize support from his networks among Jakarta-based Islamic publishers, partly linked with his core-network of the Tarbiyah movement which thus improved his reputation among local elites. It was this combination of consolidation in both his core-network and extended-network which provided him a strong base for further success in da’wa and, eventually, politics.

Periode Two:  
From Da’wa to Businessman and Political Activist

In 2003, as a consequence of the good progress of his da’wa programs in Tual and its surroundings, Surahman was asked by the chairman of the PK Maluku, Sudarmo, to move to Ambon Island. This was perhaps a promotion for his successful job in Tual while, at the same time, part of the leadership consolidation in the wake of the 2004 elections. Living in the capital city of Ambon, one of the biggest cities in eastern Indonesia, meant economic demands since his PKPU salary was less than sufficient. Thus, he began to run a motorbike taxi small business. In the aftermath of the protracted violent conflict, in response to the collapse of public transportation inside the city, motorbike taxis had become very popular in the city of Ambon. He bought five motorbikes from a good business contact in Jakarta through a credit scheme. In addition, his second wife also had a small business selling clothing.
“I used the salary from the PKPU, which was paid once every three months, firstly to buy clothing, then the profits from the clothing business we used for daily needs,” he explained. The business improved gradually, enabling them to open a clothing shop and political party attributes, enabled him to buy a house in BTN Kanawa, Ambon, in 2004 and to buy ticket to go on the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) for him and his first wife in 2010 (Interview, Ambon, 20/11/2009).

Although living in Ambon he remained involved with da’wa and political issues in Tual, since he had developed a vast social network in the area which had become his political capital. So he went back and forth from Ambon to Tual at least once a month. The distance between the two locations is quite far, it takes a whole day by ship. A private plane is available but once or a few times per week and it is very costly. His specific engagement in Tual was terminated in 2004 when he was assigned to handle da’wa and political issues in the broader area of Maluku, including Seram and Buru. “I made trips to many places in Maluku even much more than the PKS chairman,” he claimed in an interview.

In the 2004 elections PKS achieved a great victory by winning five seats in the provincial parliament from only one seat in the 1999 election. A similar achievement was reached in the city of Ambon as described by Kotarumalos (2007: 1): from 1,455 votes and zero seats in parliament in 1999 to 12,714 votes and four seats in parliament in 2004. The huge PKS success in Maluku was certainly linked to the success of its da’wa activities, considered the very heart of PKS as the “da’wa party”. In the aftermath of the 2004 election, Surahman was elected First Deputy of PKS Maluku in charge of cadre development. His main job and responsibility was to take care of and to develop the quality of PKS cadres. Since PKS claims itself to be a cadre-based rather than mass-based party his position was crucial from the point of view of PKS as a political institution.

During the interviews, Surahman did not explicitly discuss his feelings regarding the shift from da’wa to politics. I think the blurred distinction between the two in daily life, as well the similar nature
of the PKS and PKPU from within, led him not to feel any major changes. Although from the outside the name and structure of the two institutions are dissimilar, in practice both work very closely, overlapping and intertwining each other’s roles and actions.

**Period Three:**
*The Politics of Being a Local Politician*

How did Surahman, of Betawi Jakarta background, play the role of a political actor against the emerging trend of the primacy of ‘putra daerah’ (the son of the soil) in local politics? From its early foundation and development within the PKS (previously the PK) the role of non-Ambonese people has been quite important. Yet Katarumalos (2007: 106) stated the PK in Maluku was founded by former da’wa activists from local Ambonese universities such as University of Pattimura, University of Darussalam and the State Academy of Islamic Studies of Ambon. Among the local PK founders were Ahmad Zaki, Muhammad Fathoni, Muhammad Kasuba and Sudharmo. Interestingly, Sudharmo, of Javanese descent, was then elected to be the first chairman of the PK Maluku executive board. The important role played by non-Ambonese people was also reflected in the election of KH. Azis Arbi, a da’i originally from Jakarta (a Betawi), as the chairman of the PK advisory body. He was a graduate from King University of Medina, Saudi Arabia, who had been elected member of national parliament in 2004 and then lived in Jakarta. Later in 2006 Sudharmo was replaced by Muzakkir Assegaf, a young Ambonese activist of Arabic descent who graduated from Makassar.

Against the backdrop of the crucial role played by non-native activists and the rising primacy of the ‘local’, Surahman quite deliberately adopted some ‘rules’ symbolically expressing the supremacy of the local. Surahman, for example, urged the PKS members of parliament to wear jackets made from Maluku traditional textile during their ceremonial sessions. During the 2009 election he had ordered

35) I have no information on Zaki and Fathoni, but Kasuba is a local Malukan whereas Sudharmo is of a Javanese descent.
special batik uniforms with Maluku traditional motifs from the batik center of Pekalongan, Central Java. He also promoted the use of local terms in naming PKS activities or facilities, such as maren (a local word meaning to work together) to name the PKPU clinic in Tual. He said that PKS should adopt more local terms and symbols in order to be able to integrate with the local community. “Don’t do things that make us perceived to be extremist or terrorist; it’s dangerous!”

Having been involved in many activities at the grassroots level, Surahman learned a lot about the importance of appreciating local culture, and even religious pluralism. In order to embrace various groups in society and expand both da’wa and political influence, the PKS Maluku has made some progressive efforts to accommodate non-Muslims as its candidates. During the 2009 election, following the permit given by the Dewan Syariah (the judiciary board), two non-Muslims were selected as PKS political candidates although neither were elected. Surahman also claimed that the PKS Maluku had also asked the Dewan Syariah PKS to decide on the legal status of non-Muslims as functionaries and candidates in the predominantly non-Muslim area. Surahman was once asked by a PKS activist in Tual if it were permissible for him to provide assistance to the church because some of his family and relatives were Christians and they supported him during election. Surahman replied firmly that it was justified: “Antum (you) should help their church because antum were supported by them as well.”

By being a local politician not in his area of origin, Surahman apparently learned how to adapt local culture and traditions to his involvement in politics. His large extended-network has also influenced him to be more sensitive and adaptive to local issues and development. Through his wide experience in conducting da’wa in the highly pluralistic area of Tual and its surroundings Surahman seemed to be trying to play politics in a moderate way by relaxing the boundaries of collective group and identity rather than fixing them.
Conclusion

I have provided in this chapter the life story narratives of the political jihadist trio in three stages: before, during, and after the jihad period and through their narratives I have presented my arguments on the three main research questions. I will end this chapter by highlighting some important research findings as reflected in the life story narratives of the JI jihadist trio.

How did they become jihadists? Through the life story narratives of the political jihadist trio, I have argued that they become 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 different actors in the same period of personal development, namely in the rites of passage to adulthood: in late adolescence for Awod and Ayyash, and in his early twenties for Surahman. Their personal identity crisis, interestingly, took place during the period of political crisis: in the early 1990s for both Ayyash (when he began to feel alienated in the early phase of his migration to Jakarta) and Surahman (when he became more radicalized and eventually found the PII to be ‘too liberal’) and in 1998 for Awod (when he suddenly wanted to abandon his ‘bad boy’ culture). Following a period of identity crisis, they experienced ‘cognitive opening’ where they began to adopt the new perspective of more radical Islamic activism: joining the paramilitary group Brigade Hizbullah in the case of Awod, engaging with the BKPMI in the case of Surahman, and becoming involved in Islamist movements concerned with transnational Islamic issues in the case of Ayyash.

The next critical step for their decision to become a jihadist was the presence of ‘moral shocks’ aroused by the news of persecution of hundreds of Muslims in religious violence incidents, either in Maluku or in Poso. However, the impact of moral shocks on them was different: it impacted quite directly on Awod and Ayyash who were eventually moved to join the jihad; it impacted on Surahman as a mirror-effect of his own preachings and sermons which called on
people to join the jihad. I argue that their decision to become a jihad-ist can be seen as *act of identity* because it happened in the context of, or in response to, drastic changes due to the political transition in Indonesia. However, it had a different significance for the informants: it was an action to confirm his identity as the leader of an Islamic paramilitary group for Awod; it was an action to fulfill his moral and eschatological duty as a Muslim for Ayyash; and it was an action to fulfill his own words and calls to others as a preacher for Surahman.

**What did the jihad experience mean to the actors?** I argued that the jihad was experienced as a ‘radical experience’ bringing about ‘a pivotal meaning structure’ to the actors that organizes the other activities in a person’s life. As shown through the life story narratives of the actors, the jihad experience as a pivotal event was reflected in different ways to them: in the “the battle fronts” narratives of Awod; in the “teacher for children of the conflict” narratives of Ayyash; in the “preacher in a remote area” narratives of Surahman. Although the informants had a variety of roles and experiences, as well as period and duration, during the jihad period, I argue that they all had ‘radical experiences’ which shaped their later life trajectories. In the cases of the political jihadists, jihad participation had particular meaning producing special credentials for the participants in this ‘high risk’ activism.

**How did the jihad experience influence their lives?** I argue that jihad participation as a ‘radical experience’ informed the later life trajectory of the 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 has influenced their choice of life-trajectory in the post-jihad period. In the case of informants in this chapter, their core-network was different, namely the Brigade Hizbullah for Awod, the FPI for Ayyash and the Tarbiyah movements for Surahman. Their tactical-network was also different: KOMPAK for Awod
and Ayyash and the PKPU for Surahman. Their extended-network was also variable following the nature of multiple affiliation membership.

In the case of Awod, in addition to his engagement with other Islamist movement, include the MMI, DDII and an alliance of Islamist movements in Solo, he was also involved with a local legal aid NGO led by a Christian lawyer. In the case of Ayyash, in addition to his engagement with other Islamic movements, including the FSUI and PPMI, he also joined in establishing the Forum Komunikasi Pedagang Kakilima se-Pekalongan (FKPK), a social movement based on class and economic interests rather than religious ones. In the case of Surahman, as a Muslim politician living in a predominantly Christian area, he has engaged with many inter-religious and multicultural issues. Based on his experience at the grass root levels, he endorsed a ‘pluralistic policy’ to allow non-Muslims to be functionaries and parliamentary candidates through his Islamic party, PKS.

Finally, all the three of them played a bigger role and were promoted as leader of their Islamic groups: Awod was elected as the chairman of PBB Solo in 2009; Ayyash was elected as the acting chairman of FPI Pekalongan in 2003 and then elected as the FPI chairman for two periods (2005-2010 and 2010-2015); and Surahman was appointed as the deputy chairman of PKS Maluku in 2004 until the present.***