



Jemaah Islamiyah's Proliferation Strategy: Understanding Strategic Transformation and Counterterrorism Enforcement by Densus 88 Anti-Terror in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the strategic transformation of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) toward non-violent approaches under Para Wijayanto's leadership. Following the arrest of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Para Wijayanto became JI's most influential figure. He returned to Indonesia after finishing military terrorism training in Moro, the Philippines. In the hands of Para, JI's type of struggle tends to infiltrate subtly, devoid of a violent goals, and rely solely on social and da'wah. Using a qualitative method based on interviews and literature review, this research identifies key factors driving the shift from violent extremism to socio-religious infiltration through da'wah activities. The findings reveal that JI's strategy reflects adaptive survival mechanisms in response to state repression from the passed time, while still maintaining latent militant capacity. The study

contributes to counterterrorism; particularly to the law enforcement officers conducted extensive soft power operations to be cautious of the rise of JI's preaching movement.

Keywords

Proliferation; Jemaah Islamiyah; Terrorism; Da'wah.

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I. Introduction

The strategic recalibration within Jemaah Islamiyah, particularly following the Bali bombings, underscores a critical adaptation to the evolving counterterrorism landscape in Indonesia. The acknowledgement by Para Wijayanto (popularly known as Ustdaz Para) of the significant changes implemented during his tenure as Amir, in response to the extensive arrests following the Bali bombing, reveals a calculated effort to navigate a period of organisational crisis.¹ His statement, "I made many changes because I took office at a difficult time. So you could say JI collapsed at that time because almost 400 (members) were arrested," encapsulates the pragmatic shift towards a less confrontational approach, emphasising preaching and community engagement as primary tools for disseminating JI's ideology and expanding its influence.

However, limited studies examine how JI strategically shifts toward non-violent proliferation and how law enforcement adapts to this transformation. Its dynamics create an environment where resistance towards Islamic groups outside their immediate sphere becomes prevalent, hindering the collective effort to promote tolerance and understanding. As for many Indonesian Islamic scholars are actively engaged in addressing religious moderation through various channels, including government interactions, community engagement, educational initiatives, and online platforms.

¹ Nurlaila, N. (2018). Radikalisme di Kalangan Terdidik. In *IQ (Ilmu AlQur'ann) Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* (Vol. 1, Issue 2, p. 266). <https://doi.org/10.37542/iq.v1i02.19>

Some factors have driven to the shift of JI's strategy such as emphasises ideological and political goals, a move that leverages external factors to solidify its influence. The group's capacity to adapt its structure and strategies has been crucial to its continued existence. Understanding Jemaah Islamiyah necessitates a thorough examination of its foundational documents, such as the General Guide for the Struggle of Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyah (PUPJI), which elucidates the group's administrative framework, religious tenets, and operational methodologies.² Such a transformation requires careful scrutiny to pre-empt unintended radicalisation or exploitation of these organisations by extremist elements.

Also, evolving strategies of Jemaah Islamiyah present a complex challenge, particularly concerning the potential for unwitting co-option of Islamic mass organisations like Muhammadiyah, whose objectives may intersect with JI's revised approaches.³ It represents a critical vulnerability, given the significant influence and reach of Indonesian Islamic organisations, which are among the largest globally, yet often exhibit limitations in their comprehension of terrorism-related issues among both leaders and members. The current strategic repositioning within Jemaah Islamiyah represents a subtle but significant shift that may not be immediately apparent to the broader Indonesian Muslim community. Despite, challenge of promoting Islamic moderation within organisations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama is further complicated by the rise of conservative groups that exert influence and limit respect for differing perspectives. The goal is to ensure that Muhammadiyah members and sympathizers maintain a firm distance from the covert da'wah models employed by groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah. Recognizing the complex interplay of factors contributing to individuals' susceptibility to extremist narratives is crucial, moving beyond simplistic assumptions about ideological motivations.

² Pavlova, E. (2007). From a Counter-Society to a Counter-State Movement: Jemaah Islamiyah According to PUPJI. In *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (Vol. 30, Issue 9, p. 777). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100701501984>

³ Oak, G. S. (2010). Jemaah Islamiyah's Fifth Phase: The Many Faces of a Terrorist Group. In *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (Vol. 33, Issue 11, p. 989). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2010.514697>

Previous investigations have scrutinized the motives behind acts of violence, particularly emphasizing the role of ideological factors and group dynamics.⁴

Another factor is the ubiquitous accessibility of the internet and social media platforms has fostered new pathways for radicalization and recruitment, empowering terrorists to engage a global audience and galvanize support for their agendas. The ease with which individuals can now communicate, regardless of their location, has greatly assisted terrorist acts.⁵ However, despite the intensity of terrorist acts declining, the spread has been increasing across the globe.

Another significant factor contributing to the changes JI's strategy is the growth of radicalism in Indonesia is the spread of extremist ideologies, especially those promoting a strict and literal interpretation of Islam. This has been facilitated by the proliferation of the internet and social media, which have provided new platforms for the dissemination of radical propaganda and the recruitment of new members.⁶ The social and economic marginalization of certain groups also plays a crucial role in the rise of radicalism in Indonesia. Poverty, unemployment, and inequality have created conditions conducive to the growth of extremist groups, particularly among young people who feel excluded from mainstream society.⁷ However, this narrow understanding of Islam, accompanied by a passionate spirit to make rapid changes, can trigger the occurrence of religious fundamentalism and radicalism, which are the origins of terrorism in the name of religion.⁸ It is important to note that religious radicalism can also occur through the educational process, and Islamic educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools, have been suspected of teaching fundamentalism and radicalism to students. To address the issue of radicalism in

⁴ Post, J. M. (1987). Rewarding Fire with Fire: Effects of Retaliation on Terrorist Group Dynamics. In *Terrorism* (Vol. 10, Issue 1, p. 23). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108708435644>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Nurlaila., *Op. cit.*, 297

⁷ Aryani., *Op. cit.*, 296

⁸ Kosim, M., Kustati, M., & Samad, D. (2021). Deradicalization-Based Aswajasi Education and Minangkabau Local Wisdom in Syaikh Sulaiman's Thought. In *Al-Tahrir Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* (Vol. 21, Issue 1, p. 73). <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v21i1.2703>

Indonesia, a multifaceted approach is needed that addresses the underlying political, social, economic, and ideological factors.

Furthermore, the Indonesian National Police's Special Detachment 88 Anti-Terror (Densus 88 Anti-Terror) has been at the forefront of efforts to counter terrorism, enforcing Law Number 5 of 2018, which addresses the eradication of criminal acts of terrorism. However, a deeper understanding of the interpersonal motives that drive individuals to engage in extremist activities is essential for developing effective counter-terrorism strategies.

The apprehension of four individuals and the fatal shooting of two others by the Police Special Detachment (Densus) 88 Anti-Terror in Lampung during mid-April 2023 unveils a crucial juncture in the strategic trajectory of Jemaah Islamiyah, prompting a re-evaluation of the group's operational paradigms and its implications for regional security.⁹ This event challenges the prevailing perception of JI's strategic shift towards non-violent means, highlighting the organization's latent capacity for armed violence and training, thereby underscoring the intricate nature of counter-terrorism efforts in Indonesia. The acknowledgement of religious motives and orientations in acts of radicalism and terrorism, often propagated by mass media, further complicates the landscape.

The role of state sponsorship in bolstering terrorism cannot be overlooked. Certain governments have been implicated in providing support to terrorist groups as a means of furthering their geopolitical ambitions or destabilizing rival nations.¹⁰ Such state sponsors may furnish funding, training, and secure havens, thereby enabling terrorist groups to execute operations with relative impunity.¹¹ However, state sponsorship is not always helpful to terrorist groups.¹² It is crucial to acknowledge that terrorism is not a spontaneous occurrence but rather a calculated endeavour undertaken by purposeful actors,

⁹ Kilcullen, D. (2005). Globalisation and the Development of Indonesian Counterinsurgency Tactics. In *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (Vol. 17, Issue 1, p. 44). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310500431521>

¹⁰ Carter, D. B. (2012). A Blessing or a Curse? State Support for Terrorist Groups. In *International Organization* (Vol. 66, Issue 1, p. 129). University of Cambridge. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818311000312>

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

whether acting individually or as part of organized groups.¹³ The proliferation of terrorism as a strategy is a complex phenomenon that involves numerous factors and motivations, requiring a comprehensive approach to address the root causes, including political, economic, social, and ideological aspects.

As for the literature review that the application of radicalization theories in counter-terrorism and policy-making underscores a nuanced interplay between theoretical frameworks and their operationalization in real-world settings. However, the translation of these complex academic models into evidence-based policies remains challenging. Simplistic or linear interpretations of radicalization continue to dominate many policy frameworks, limiting program activities and at times leading to unintended consequences such as stigmatization or community alienation. There is broad recognition that integrated, interdisciplinary approaches—incorporating social identity, rational choice, and ideological perspectives—offer a more holistic understanding that can better inform intervention design. Some models show promising results, particularly when integrating psychological counseling, vocational training, and community engagement within multi-agency frameworks. Yet, robust empirical evidence supporting the long-term impact of many counter-radicalization and deradicalization initiatives remains scarce, largely due to methodological limitations including a lack of rigorous evaluations and clearly articulated theories of change.

Multi-agency collaboration and civil society involvement are widely acknowledged as critical to successful counter-radicalization efforts, fostering trust, knowledge sharing, and legitimacy. Scholars distinguish between the theoretical ideal of "multi-agency" partnerships, where entities gather to address a shared problem, and the operational reality of "inter-agency" work, which often demands a "fusion and melding of relations" to function effectively.¹⁴ Thereby, facilitating a deeper understanding of how multilevel determinants influence

¹³ Chuang., *Op. cit.*, 300

¹⁴ Dresser, P. (2019). "Trust your instincts – act!" PREVENT police officers' perspectives of counter-radicalisation reporting thresholds. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 12(4), 605–628. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2019.1595344>

violent radicalization.¹⁵ However, governance challenges persist, including institutional fragmentation, resource constraints, and uneven coordination across sectors. Policy transferability emerges as a complex endeavor requiring culturally sensitive adaptations and attention to local socio-political realities. The literature identifies significant gaps in understanding operational dynamics of multi-agency governance and calls for more empirical research on collaboration efficacy and community engagement. Overall, the evidence base advocates for contextually informed, ethically grounded, and interdisciplinary strategies that integrate theoretical insights with practical considerations to enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of counter-terrorism policies.

The organizational adaptation of the proliferation of radicalism reveals a multifaceted and interconnected landscape in which strategic leadership, organizational culture, operational processes, governance structures, and complex adaptive system principles collectively shape adaptive capacity. Moreover, embedding values such as transparency and accountability within the organizational culture can significantly enhance resilience, enabling firms to withstand external pressures while maintaining alignment with their strategic goals.¹⁶ Leadership emerges as a central driver, particularly transformative, adaptive, and dynamic leadership styles, which facilitate strategic foresight, innovation adoption, and the alignment of strategy with operational realities. Adaptive culture often mediates leadership's influence, emphasizing its role as a transmission mechanism that translates strategic intent into resilient organizational behavior. However, the dynamic interplay between leadership and culture is complex, with hierarchical and risk-averse cultures frequently impeding adaptation, underscoring the necessity for cultural renewal alongside leadership transformation.

¹⁵ Rousseau, C., Hassan, G., & Oulhote, Y. (2017). And if there were another way out? Questioning the prevalent radicalization models. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 108. <https://doi.org/10.17269/cjph.108.6233>

¹⁶ Mahmudah, D. S., & Indriyani, N. D. (2025). *From Strategy to Adaptability: How Strategic Leadership Shapes Organizational Resilience via Adaptive Culture*. <https://doi.org/10.63416/mrb.v3i2.391>

Organizational theory is both a potent facilitator and barrier to adaptation, with open, trusting, and learning-oriented cultures enabling agility and resilience, while rigid, traditional, and siloed cultures constrain adaptive responses. Culture also mediates operational outcomes by fostering innovation, employee engagement, and knowledge sharing, though sector-specific dynamics demand contextual tailoring of cultural interventions. Operational adaptation centers on continuous learning, innovation processes, and flexible organizational designs, supported by leadership endorsement and cultural readiness. Yet, empirical research on operational change often remains fragmented, particularly in covert or extremist contexts where secrecy restricts learning mechanisms.

Advanced theoretical frameworks drawing on complex adaptive systems and antifragility extend explanations of adaptation beyond resilience, emphasizing emergent transformation and growth through disruption. These frameworks inform adaptive leadership and iterative learning cycles but require further empirical validation, especially in high-threat and extremist settings. Nevertheless, their transferability to radical contexts remains underexplored. Overall, the literature converges on the imperative of integrated, systemic approaches that synergize leadership, culture, operational learning, and governance within complex adaptive frameworks to build resilient, antifragile organizations capable of thriving amid the challenges posed by radicalism proliferation.

The literature emphasizes the vital function that community-based initiatives play in preventing radicalization and countering terrorist ideologies. Educational programs emerge as a foundational element, enhancing critical thinking, civic engagement, and social inclusion among youth. As research indicates, these collective efforts not only build social cohesion but also create a robust support network that can effectively counter the isolation often exploited by radical groups.¹⁷

¹⁷ Thach, R. (2023). Society Resilience in Post-Conflict: An Examination of Social Cohesion and Recovery Strategies in War-Affected Regions of the Middle East. *Journal of Asian Multicultural Research for Social Sciences Study*, 4(4), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.47616/jamrsss.v4i4.467>

Grassroots movements contribute substantially by building social capital, trust, and inclusive networks that counter isolation and extremist narratives. Interfaith cooperation, community policing, and the empowerment of marginalized groups, especially women and former extremists, characterize these bottom-up efforts. However, challenges such as limited coordination, capacity constraints, and sustainability concerns persist, indicating the need for stronger integration with formal institutions and comprehensive evaluation mechanisms. This indicates that local government policies have a significant, yet varied, impact on community-based prevention efforts.

Multiagency collaboration among governmental bodies, educational institutions, civil society, and grassroots actors enhances policy effectiveness by pooling resources, fostering trust, and facilitating early detection and intervention. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is vital in creating sustainable and holistic prevention frameworks. Effective partnerships enhance legitimacy, resource sharing, and inclusivity, with gender-sensitive approaches further strengthening program outcomes. For instance, enhancing the capacity of local governance bodies to absorb community aspirations and respond effectively can significantly improve participation and resource allocation, ultimately leading to more resilient societal structures.¹⁸

Trust and social cohesion are foundational, enabling communities to resist extremist ideologies and participate meaningfully in prevention efforts. Persistent barriers, including political dynamics, resource limitations, and historical mistrust, underline the need for ongoing commitment, transparency, and culturally competent engagement.

In sum, the radicalization theory, the organizational theory, and community-based initiatives, when embedded within supportive and adaptive policy environments and characterized by participatory, inclusive, and collaborative approaches, hold significant promise for preventing radicalization and countering extremist ideologies. Future research should aim to address

¹⁸ Febriyana, S., Habibi, M. M., Yani, A., & Christover, D. (2025). Optimizing Community Aspiration Processes by Village Consultative Bodies. *Academia Open*, 10(2).

<https://doi.org/10.21070/acopen.10.2025.11431>

methodological gaps, evaluate long-term impacts, and explore interdisciplinary frameworks to optimize these localized prevention strategies.

II. Method

The research employed qualitative methodology, which is understood as the methodology that focuses on the understanding and interpretation of complex social phenomena, for the detailed examination of the strategic changes that have been undertaken by the organization known as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and for a critical evaluation of the counterterrorism measures that have been implemented in response to these changes. The methodological framework was mainly geared towards the collection and subsequent analysis of rich, in-depth qualitative data: the main method of data collection was the conducting of extensive interviews with informants who have a significant amount of knowledge and insight into the inner workings and ideological underpinnings of the JI movement.

In addition to these interviews, which are intended to elicit thorough and nuanced replies, the researchers conducted an exhaustive analysis of the academic and gray literature that is relevant to the JI movement, thereby providing a rich contextual foundation for the study. In addition, the researchers had extensive consultations with the leadership of Densus 88, Indonesia's anti-terrorism unit, and more specifically, the intelligence and prevention directorates, providing an important operational and institutional context for the research findings. This study also uses descriptive qualitative method which is appropriate to examine and explain the phenomena of strategy adjustments in a religious organization such as Jemaah Islamiyah.

This multi-pronged approach allowed for a detailed and nuanced understanding of the shifting strategies of JI, especially in its notable transition to non-violent proliferation, and how law enforcement agencies such as Densus 88 have adapted and responded to these important shifts in strategy. In addition, the research uses a triangulation approach in using several data sources and research methods to ensure a thorough and rigorous knowledge of the JI's strategic moves and the counterterrorism measures used against them. The data collection was mostly

based on in-depth interviews with informed informants and constituted the basic aspects of the study.

The interviews were rich in qualitative detail, and were further enhanced and validated by a thorough examination of the existing literature on the JI movement. This allowed the researchers to cross-reference and corroborate the information gathered from the informants with existing academic and research findings. Besides the interviews and literature review already mentioned, the research also involved extensive interviews with the leadership of Densus 88 Anti-terrorism, particularly its intelligence and prevention directorates, which gave an institutional and operational perspective that was invaluable. By merging informant interview perspectives with official views from Densus 88 and previous academic work, this dual approach enabled the study to employ a triangulated methodology, which ultimately led to the development of a robust and multi-dimensional understanding of the strategic shifts taking place within JI.

III. Result & Discussion

The study of Jemaah Islamiyah necessitates a comprehensive understanding of its evolving proliferation strategies, particularly concerning the shifts in its objectives from its inception to the present day.¹⁹ This research endeavours to analyze these strategic adaptations against the backdrop of social and religious dynamics within Lampung Province, Indonesia, aiming to unearth the subtle traces of JI's evolving approach. Lampung Province holds a distinctive position in JI's strategic calculus, as highlighted by Ustadz Para, a central figure within the organization currently incarcerated, who identifies the province as easily accessible and possessing significant potential for furthering JI's agenda.

¹⁹ Oaks., *Op. cit.*, 297

The province's accessibility and perceived potential make it a crucial location for examining the nuances of JI's operational and recruitment strategies.²⁰

The investigation into social and religious phenomena within the Muhammadiyah community in Lampung is pivotal to understanding the role of modern religious organization in Indonesia in mitigating religiously motivated violence. Muhammadiyah's awareness of its inherent connection to politics and society underscores its commitment to cultural and community-based engagement, prioritizing community empowerment over state-centric approaches to governance.²¹ Muhammadiyah's emphasis on community governance through citizen empowerment, including political channels, distinguishes it as a vital actor in shaping Indonesia's socio-political landscape.²² Muhammadiyah possesses a structured program encompassing ideological, political, and organizational dimensions, which serves as a cornerstone for cultivating robust leadership within the organization, effectively shaping the character and direction of its members.

Strategic Shift of JI organization orientation

Understanding the ideological underpinnings and organizational structure of JI is crucial for comprehending its operational strategies, membership recruitment processes, and overall development as a terrorist network. Jemaah Islamiyah has undergone multiple transformations in its structure and strategies since its establishment, demonstrating a remarkable

²⁰ Tukiran, T., Rajab, M., & Mas'ud, I. (2024). Building an Islamic Economy Towards Golden Indonesia 2045. In *Al Ilmu*. (Vol. 1, Issue 3, p. 23). <https://doi.org/10.62872/sxr7rd67>

²¹ Basyir, K., & Ja'far, S. (2020). The Emergence of New Religious Movements and Threats to Social Harmony in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. In *Religio Jurnal Studi Agama-agama* (Vol. 10, Issue 2, p. 140). Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya. <https://doi.org/10.15642/religio.v10i2.1428>

²² Pavlova., *Op. cit.*, 298

ability to adapt and endure over time. The organization's adaptability has been critical to its continued existence. Examining the evolution of JI's influence in Indonesia and its strategic shifts is vital to understanding its survival as an organization, highlighting the interplay of internal and external factors in driving these changes.²³ The phenomenon of ideological shifts within individuals and organizations represents a complex interplay of personal beliefs, societal influences, and strategic adaptations. Ideology, deeply embedded in individual and collective identities, provides a framework for understanding the world and guiding actions.

The *Pancasila* ideology, with its hierarchical structure where each principle animates the subsequent one, offers a model for understanding the systematic nature of belief systems. This suggests that alterations at the foundational level can trigger cascading changes throughout the entire ideological framework.²⁴ Shifts in an individual's ideology can occur due to a multitude of factors, including personal experiences, exposure to new information, socio-political changes, and economic conditions.

Radical ideologies often find fertile ground when individuals seek meaning and purpose in the face of social upheaval or personal crises. The use of religion to legitimize actions is a common thread in radical movements.²⁵ Understanding these shifts requires examining the individual's pre-radicalization experiences, self-identification processes, indoctrination, commitment, and potential engagement in violence.²⁶ Organizations, similarly, adapt their strategies in response to internal and external pressures to achieve their objectives.

²³ Oaks., *Loc.cit.*

²⁴ Akmal, Z. (2020). Pancasila Ideology and Rational Argumentation. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200529.293>

²⁵ Nurlaila., *Loc. cit.*

²⁶ Chuang., *Loc.cit.*

The case of *Jemaah Islamiyah* exemplifies how an organization's ideology and strategies evolve over time.²⁷ JI's history, marked by shifts in structure and strategies, demonstrates an ability to adapt for survival. Founded by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, originally from NII, JI emerged from differing views on establishing an Islamic state. JI's vision of *Iqomahuddin* (upholding religion) and its mission of *Iqomatuddaulah Islamiyah* (establishing an Islamic government) reflect a desire to create a *Daulah Islamiyah*. This pursuit of an Islamic state necessitates the exercise of power and authority, requiring a form of governance to ensure the comprehensive implementation of Islamic principles.

JI's evolution involves internal factors that initiate strategic shifts towards ideological and political focuses, while external factors exploit and solidify these shifts. The group's history can be divided into phases, with potential for a future phase involving peaceful political participation. Understanding JI's transitions requires considering the socio-political context in which it operates, as well as the motivations and beliefs of its members. The recognition of religious motives in acts of radicalism and terrorism is often highlighted, with jihad frequently invoked as a justification for violence.

However, the path to radicalization is multifaceted, with no single element explaining why individuals embrace violence. Radical ideologies have unfortunately infiltrated educational institutions, posing a threat to the existing social order.

It is crucial to investigate the specific conditions and influences that contribute to ideological shifts within organization like JI, as well as the broader implications for regional stability and security. *Jemaah Islamiyah* strategically leverages its interpretation of Islamic doctrine to justify its pursuit of an Islamic state, employing various means to achieve its objectives. The organization's foundational doctrine, known as *manhaj*, encompasses the principles of faith,

²⁷ Oak., *Loc. cit.*

hijrah, and *jihad*, drawing from the Indonesian Ulama Council's legacy but adapting it to emphasize a more directed explanation within the General Guidelines for The Struggle Al Jamā'ah Al Islāmīyah (PUPJI) framework.²⁸ Within the PUPJI, jihad manifests as a tandem approach, integrating both *askari* (military) and *ulama* (religious scholars) elements, reflecting the significant influence of Afghan alumni who modelled the organization's structure after their experiences in the Afghan *jihadi* movement.

This influence is evident in the organization's structure, mirroring military organizational systems and prioritizing programs such as sending mujahideen to foreign military camps, including those in Morocco, and dispatching leadership to Libya for advanced military education and training, aimed at developing militant military cadres. The establishment of *Ma'had Aly* serves the purpose of cultivating militant ulama, representing a strategic approach to fostering ideological alignment alongside military capabilities.

Initially, Jemaah Islamiyah's strategic focus heavily favoured paramilitary development under the leadership of Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, prioritizing the *askari* aspect of their operations. However, subsequent events, particularly the first Bali bombing, precipitated a shift in organizational structure and strategic orientation.²⁹

Para Wijayanto's Role and Leadership

Following the Bali Bombing, Ustadz Adung assumed leadership and initiated structural changes within the organization, but his tenure was cut short by his arrest a year later, leading to Abu Rusdan's succession. Following a period of instability marked by security concerns, Ustadz Zarkasih introduced revised operational guidelines and temporarily suspended the PUPJI, recognizing its limitations in addressing the prevailing challenges.

²⁸ Pavlova., *Loc. cit.*

²⁹ Oak., *Loc. cit.*

The PUPJI, conceptualized as a "state that already has territory and power," proved inadequate for navigating complex and precarious situations, prompting a strategic overhaul. Zarkasih's new framework, Total *Amniyah* System Total of Solution (TASTOS), encompassed four critical domains: da'wah proselytization), education, *tajnid* (paramilitary recruitment), and *tajhiz*, reflecting a comprehensive approach to strengthening the organization. *Tajnid*, focusing on paramilitary activities, aimed to mitigate security threats by providing clandestine support to individuals pursued by law enforcement, including sheltering fugitives and offering assistance to their families upon arrest. This strategic adaptation played a crucial role in Jemaah Islamiyah's resilience following the setbacks incurred after the initial Bali Bombing, demonstrating the organization's capacity to evolve in response to adversity.

However, Zarkasih's tenure as leader was cut short after two to three years due to his apprehension, leading to Ustadz Para assuming leadership. Ustadz Para maintained the suspension of PUPJI, fearing its potential to revert the movement to a predominantly military approach, and instead complemented TASTOS with the *Tamkin* strategy, incorporating the concept of *siyasah sar'iyah*. This addition reflected Para's observation that military solutions alone were insufficient to address the multifaceted problems faced by JI, drawing inspiration from the Prophet Muhammad's emphasis on political solutions such as dialogue and negotiation. *Siyasah sar'iyah* aimed to broaden JI's appeal and facilitate recruitment beyond individuals with paramilitary inclinations, marking a significant shift in the organization's strategic orientation. JI's evaluation of *siyasah sar'iyah* involved examining Abu Mush'ab As-Suri's "Da'wah Muqowamah," a book analyzing jihadist movements over seven decades, identifying three key areas for consideration: *manhaj* evaluation and tandem betel. This strategic shift highlights JI's adaptive capacity and willingness to reassess its approach in response to internal observations and external analyses. The organization's capacity to evolve has ensured its survival.

The transformation in Jemaah Islamiyah's approach has sparked considerable debate regarding the organization's potential acceptance of Pancasila, the foundational philosophical theory of Indonesia, and the concept of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, where national unity serves as a paramount substantive value. The importance of unity within Indonesia's diverse society cannot be overstated, considering the nation's vast archipelago and multitude of ethnic, cultural, and religious groups. Indonesia's founding fathers chose *Pancasila* as the nation's ideological foundation, finding a middle ground between secular nationalism and the desire for an Islamic state.³⁰ *Pancasila's* five tenets—belief in one God, humanity, unity in diversity, democracy, and social justice—represent this negotiated settlement. This principle acknowledges the presence of diverse belief systems within the Indonesian population and ensures the freedom of individuals to practice their respective religions and rituals under their faith. The state is obligated to protect all religions embraced by Indonesians.³¹ This decision reflects a deliberate effort to accommodate both religious and nationalist sentiments, encapsulating the spirit of compromise that shaped the nation's identity.

The intricate nature of *Pancasila* lies in its capacity to function as a "political resultant," born from the convergence of diverse perspectives during Indonesia's independence preparations. These figures championed the idea of a secular state grounded in *Pancasila*, arguing that a religious state, such as an Islamic one, would be incompatible with Indonesia's pluralistic society, encompassing various cultures, faiths, and ethnicities. The state should remain neutral with regard to its citizens' faith, and should not be dominated by a single

³⁰ Asrori, A. (2016). Contemporary Religious Education Model On The Challenge Of Indonesian Multiculturalism. In *Journal Of Indonesian Islam* (Vol. 10, Issue 2, p. 261). Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jiis.2016.10.2.261-284>

³¹ Makin, A. (2017). 'Not a Religious State.' In *Indonesia and the Malay World* (Vol. 46, Issue 135, p. 95). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2017.1380279>

religion.³² The discourse surrounding Pancasila often involves navigating the delicate balance between religious values and national unity, especially in the context of a religiously diverse society.

The *Pancasila* embodies a compromise, acknowledging the significance of religious values while upholding the principles of inclusivity and equal citizenship. The third tenet of *Pancasila*, the principle of Indonesian unity, underscores the nation's unwavering commitment to preserving national unity amidst its inherent diversity, encompassing a multitude of languages, ethnic groups, interest groups, cultures, political ideologies, and religions. *Pancasila* serves as a guiding principle, fostering a collective sense of purpose and shared identity among the Indonesian people as they strive towards prosperity and happiness.³³ *Pancasila* embodies the recognition and appreciation of the diverse elements within Indonesian society, emphasizing the necessity of a unifying instrument to bind the nation together. The promotion of unity and integrity through the third precept highlights the importance of these concepts for the Indonesian nation, given its unique social and cultural composition.³⁴

The Soft vs. Hard Power Approach

The shift in *Jemaah Islamiyah's* strategy necessitates an examination of the group's evolving understanding of concepts such as *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Muslim Brotherhood) and its implications for interfaith relations within the Indonesian context. Pancasila is more than just a political ideology; it is a way of life that unites the Indonesian people and provides guidelines for society to achieve prosperity and inner and outer happiness through *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Mendrofa, S. T. (2021). Pancasila sebagai pemersatu bangsa negara Indonesia. In *MITZAL (Demokrasi Komunikasi dan Budaya) Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan dan Ilmu Komunikasi* (Vol. 6, Issue 2, p. 167). <https://doi.org/10.35329/mitzal.v6i2.2676>

³⁴ *Ibid.*

(Unity in Diversity). Examining Jemaah Islamiyah's potential shift in strategy requires a comprehensive understanding of *Pancasila* as the bedrock of Indonesian national identity, as well as the delicate balance between religious values and national unity within the nation's diverse society. The persistence of Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia, despite its official ban, presents a complex challenge to the state's rational security calculations and counter-terrorism strategies.

The organization's continued existence, even in a clandestine manner, raises questions about the effectiveness of legal prohibitions and the underlying factors that contribute to its resilience. The unwavering stance of senior JI members, who resist calls for disbandment and view the organization's activities as an ongoing struggle, underscores the ideological commitment and collective ownership that sustain the group. This collective ownership, rooted in the belief that JI belongs to all members and requires collective agreement for dissolution, complicates efforts to dismantle the organization through individual defections or leadership changes. The continued operation of JI, despite the ban, suggests a disconnect between the state's legal pronouncements and the on-the-ground realities of the organization's structure, ideology, and operational capabilities.

The state's response to this situation necessitates a nuanced understanding of JI's motivations, internal dynamics, and external support networks, as well as a comprehensive strategy that combines law enforcement measures with ideological counter-narratives and socio-economic interventions. Indonesia's counterinsurgency approach is derived from the 1950s in suppressing *Darul Islam*, the forerunner of some modern Indonesian terrorist and insurgent groups, including *Jema'ah Islamiyah*. Understanding the administrative structure, religious principles, organizational development, membership recruitment, and operational strategy of Jemaah Islamiyah is essential to counter the group.

The evolving perspectives of individuals like Ustadz Para, who underwent a transformation in his views on the JI movement after his arrest, highlight the potential for ideological shifts and the possibility of reintegrating former members into mainstream society. Para's admission of wrongdoing and his desire to return to life as an ordinary citizen, embracing his responsibilities and coexisting peacefully, presents a contrasting narrative to the unwavering stance of some senior JI members. This divergence in perspectives underscores the heterogeneity within the organization and the potential for leveraging disillusionment and ideological re-evaluation as tools for counter-radicalization.

The public's confusion over Para's changing views reflects the complexities of dealing with individuals associated with terrorism, where personal transformations and ideological shifts can challenge preconceived notions and complicate policy responses. The state's ability to capitalize on such transformations and create pathways for disengagement and reintegration is crucial in weakening the appeal of JI and preventing the recruitment of new members. Recognition of the religious motives and orientations of acts of radicalism and terrorism often preached by mass media. The religious motive in the context of Islamic radicalism is often referred to as the term *jihad*.

It is the act of seeking Allah's blessings. The focus on Lampung as a strategic location for JI activities reveals the organization's calculated approach to recruitment and expansion, considering geographic proximity, historical ties, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Lampung's proximity to Java, its history of Javanese migration, and its economic development challenges make it a fertile ground for JI's recruitment efforts. The ease of communication between Lampung and Java, coupled with the presence of Lampung residents studying in Java, facilitates the spread of JI's ideology and the establishment of networks.

The selection of Lampung and Medan as targets suggests a strategic approach of starting with relatively easier targets, reflecting a pragmatic assessment of operational capabilities and resource constraints. Socio-political

changes and economic conditions are considered to be a number of factors why a person becomes radical. Religion is used as a legitimacy for every action carried out. At present, radical ideology has penetrated the world of education. This calculated approach highlights the need for targeted counter-terrorism efforts that address the specific vulnerabilities and socio-economic factors that make certain regions more susceptible to JI's influence.

The state's rational response to JI necessitates a multi-faceted strategy that encompasses law enforcement, deradicalization programs, and socio-economic development initiatives. Law enforcement efforts should focus on disrupting JI's operational capabilities, dismantling its networks, and prosecuting individuals involved in terrorist activities. Deradicalization programs should aim to address the ideological underpinnings of JI's extremism, promote alternative narratives, and facilitate the reintegration of former members into society. Simultaneously, addressing the socio-economic grievances and vulnerabilities that make certain regions susceptible to JI's influence is crucial in preventing the recruitment of new members. Jemaah Islamiyah has shifted its structure and strategies several times since its inception, and its ability to evolve over time has ensured its survival. Explaining JI's historical evolution in four phases, it concludes by considering possibilities for a "fifth phase" of peaceful political participation. This comprehensive approach requires collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities to build resilience against extremism and promote a more inclusive and tolerant society.

IV. Conclusion

Law enforcement officers conducted extensive soft power operations to address the growth of the JI's da'wah movement after the arrest of the new *Amir* of JI in 2019 and early 2023. For instance, researchers observed the 'loss of allegiance' by JI members in Bandar Lampung in 2022. Defecting from extremist groups is uncommon and may transpire for numerous reasons, such as personal

disillusionment, shifts in ideological convictions, or a wish to dissociate from violent actions. In certain instances, ex-members of extremist organizations may engage in deradicalization programs or seek assistance from counselling and therapeutic services to eliminate entrenched views and behaviour. Securing allegiance from extremist factions can be arduous, and individuals may encounter social ostracism, intimidation, and various types of resistance from the group and its adherents. It is crucial to acknowledge that it is never too late to renounce extreme views and behaviour, and services exist to assist individuals seeking to disengage from such groups. Law enforcement and Densus 88 play a crucial part in executing this reasonable endeavour. Ustadz Para exemplifies an individual transformation and plays a crucial role in altering JI's jihadist rhetoric. Research on Jemaah Islamiyah's proliferation strategy identified many preventive measures necessary for raising awareness among all stakeholders, including both state and non-state actors, as follows: 1) Enhancing national debate forums with academic institutions and religious and community organizations to elevate awareness of anti-diversity exclusionary conduct. 2) Implement organized training for Special Detachment 88 Anti-Terror police troops to refine their capabilities and skills in the early identification of potential violent threats. The university environment serves as a strategic ally, particularly for academic personnel engaged in security sector research and humanitarian assistance, ensuring that educational principles are implemented in practical applications.

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