



## RESILIENCE FACTORS OF ISLAMIC STATE SUPORTER MOVEMENTS IN INDONESIA: A MIXED-METHODS ANALYSIS

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### Abstract:

Since emerging as a global extremist movement, the Islamic State has expanded its influence in Indonesia, where its supporters persist despite intensive counter-terrorism efforts. IS-related recruitment and attacks have been ongoing since 2014. Through in-depth interviews with 33 convicted or active IS supporters, as well as insights from Indonesian security personnel, including representatives from BIN, BNPT, Densus 88 AT and BAIS, the study has identified thirteen factors that enable these networks to endure. These factors fall into two main categories: nine dominant factors that directly underpin the organisational and ideological survival of the group, and four supporting factors that provide flexibility and localised adaptability. The findings emphasise the importance of shifting counterterrorism strategies from a reactive approach to proactively disrupting ideological, technological and community-based support systems.

**Keywords:** Terrorist, Resilience Factors, Islamic State (IS), Indonesia, Counter-Terrorism Policy, Mixed-Methods

**Titulo en Español:** *Factores de resiliencia de los movimientos de apoyo al Estado Islámico en Indonesia: un análisis con métodos mixtos*

### Resumen:

*Desde su aparición como movimiento extremista global, el Estado Islámico (EI) ha ampliado su influencia en Indonesia, donde sus seguidores perduran a pesar de los intensos esfuerzos antiterroristas. El reclutamiento y los atentados relacionados con el EI se han sucedido desde 2014. A través de entrevistas en profundidad con 33 simpatizantes del EI condenados o activos, así como de las opiniones del personal de seguridad indonesio, incluidos representantes de BIN, BNPT, Densus 88 AT y BAIS, el estudio ha identificado trece factores que permiten que estas redes perduren. Estos factores se dividen en dos categorías principales: nueve factores dominantes que sustentan directamente la supervivencia organizativa e ideológica del grupo, y cuatro factores de apoyo que proporcionan flexibilidad y adaptabilidad localizada. Las conclusiones enfatizan la importancia de cambiar las estrategias antiterroristas pasando de un enfoque reactivo a uno proactivo para desarticular los sistemas de apoyo ideológicos, tecnológicos y comunitarios.*

**Palabras Clave:** *Terrorista, factores de resiliencia, Estado Islámico (EI), Indonesia, política antiterrorista, métodos mixtos.*

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## 1. Introduction<sup>5</sup>

The rise and persistence of the Islamic State (IS), also referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), have dramatically altered the landscape of global terrorism and extremism. Emerging from the socio-political vacuum left by the US-led invasion of Iraq and the subsequent Syrian civil war, IS capitalized on the collapse of state institutions, sectarian conflict, and widespread disenfranchisement in the Middle East. Initially known as Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTWJ) in 1999, the group later merged with Al-Qaeda in Iraq before declaring itself an independent caliphate in 2014 under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This declaration marked not only a symbolic act of rebellion against the modern nation-state system but also an operational shift toward transnational jihadism. Through a blend of sophisticated propaganda, violent spectacle, and recruitment strategies, IS transcended regional boundaries and inspired a network of sympathizers and operational cells across the globe—including in Southeast Asia.

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, emerged as a fertile ground for IS influence despite its long-standing reputation for religious pluralism and moderate Islamic traditions. Indonesia's entanglement with violent extremism predates IS, with roots in Darul Islam (DI) in the 1940s and Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) in the early 2000s. However, the rise of IS represented a critical inflection point in the country's security landscape. By mid-2014, Indonesian nationals began appearing in IS recruitment videos, publicly pledging allegiance to the caliphate and encouraging fellow Muslims to emigrate to Syria and Iraq. Notable figures such as Abu Muhammad al-Indonesi, a member of the Al Muhajiroun network, became prominent in disseminating IS propaganda and providing ideological justification for jihadist violence. These early expressions of support were not isolated incidents but rather a signal of a growing movement that would eventually embed itself in both physical and digital realms of Indonesian society.

Initial expressions of IS support were highly visible, including mass rallies in Jakarta where black flags were raised and IS symbols were openly displayed. However, as government scrutiny intensified, IS-affiliated groups recalibrated their strategies by transitioning from overt demonstrations to clandestine operations. This transformation gave rise to what is known as *Tanzim Siri*—a form of underground organization that allows jihadist cells to operate discreetly. Moreover, the incident of Islamic political mobilization in the DKI Jakarta Governor Election 2016, according to Assyaukanie (2016) shows the tip of the iceberg of Islamic conservatism which has had an impact on religious intolerance that has emerged in the last 15 years in Indonesia. Between 2015 and 2023, Indonesian security forces reported over 2,000 arrests linked to IS-affiliated individuals and groups, along with more than 130 documented attacks. Despite sustained counterterrorism operations led by elite units such as Densus 88 Anti-Terror (AT) and BNPT, IS supporters in Indonesia have demonstrated a notable degree of resilience, maintaining ideological commitment and operational capability through covert communications, decentralized leadership, and strategic use of digital technologies. Furthermore, Widya (2020) stated that the implementation of the deradicalization program in Indonesia was considered less than optimal, starting from limited human resources and the lack of attractiveness of the deradicalization program, lack of coordination between government institutions, and the lack of a comprehensive legal umbrella regarding criminal acts of terrorism, which further supports the strengthening of understanding of the ISIS network.

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The endurance of IS supporters in Indonesia presents a complex puzzle. It raises critical questions about what sustains these movements in the face of state repression, imprisonment, and social marginalization. While much scholarly attention has focused on the roots of radicalization and recruitment, there remains a significant gap in understanding the post-radicalization phase—specifically, the resilience mechanisms that allow terrorist networks to adapt, survive, and regenerate. This study seeks to address that gap by systematically investigating the multifaceted factors that contribute to the sustained presence and activity of IS supporters in Indonesia.

To do so, this research adopts a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative insights from interviews with 33 IS-affiliated individuals and four key informants from Indonesia's national security agencies—including BIN, BNPT, Densus 88 AT, and BAIS. The qualitative phase captures deep narratives of lived experiences, motivations, organizational structure, and ideological beliefs, while the quantitative phase transforms these insights into measurable trends and patterns. The integration of these methodologies enables a comprehensive analysis of the movement's internal and external resilience.

Thirteen resilience factors were identified and subsequently categorized into two broad classifications: nine dominant factors and four supporting factors. Dominant factors include ideological indoctrination, recruitment mechanisms, secure networking, use of social media and encrypted platforms, logistical support, and charismatic leadership. These factors form the operational core of IS supporter activity. Meanwhile, supporting factors—such as transnational linkages, localized community networks, adaptability to changing environments, and symbolic terror acts—enhance the movement's flexibility and responsiveness to state interventions. These two categories are not mutually exclusive but interdependent; they function symbiotically to fortify the IS supporter movement's structure and narrative.

The introduction of digital media technologies, particularly social media and encrypted messaging apps, has redefined the way extremist networks communicate, recruit, and radicalize. IS's propaganda has evolved to target specific audiences, often tapping into localized grievances, identity crises, or feelings of alienation among youth. Moreover, familial and communal social structures, especially in areas with histories of conflict or weak state presence, have acted as echo chambers that reinforce radical ideologies. Understanding these layers of support—both structural and social—is essential to disrupting the longevity of violent extremist networks.

In this context, the study provides not only a mapping of resilience factors but also offers insights into how such factors interact and evolve. The findings aim to assist policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and community-based organizations in formulating more holistic and preventive approaches to countering violent extremism. As IS continues to adapt in a post-caliphate world, it is crucial for counter-terrorism strategies to evolve in tandem, addressing not only the immediate threats but also the enduring systems of belief and support that fuel extremist movements. Exceedingly, the persistence of IS networks in Indonesia is not merely a result of organizational resilience, but also shaped by broader societal dynamics particularly rising intolerance, growing support for political Islam, and the limitations of deradicalization programs in addressing such systemic conditions.

## **2. Methodology**

This study adopts a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach to investigate the resilience factors sustaining Islamic State (IS) supporter movements in Indonesia. Given the complexity and sensitivity of the topic—where operational secrecy, ideological rigidity, and social embeddedness intersect—this methodological choice allows for both interpretive depth and empirical breadth. By beginning with qualitative inquiry and then transitioning into a



quantitative analysis, the study captures not only the lived experiences and subjective meanings attributed by IS affiliates but also the measurable patterns that reveal broader systemic trends.

The research was carried out in two sequential phases:

- Qualitative Phase – involving in-depth, semi-structured interviews with individuals affiliated with IS, as well as corroborative discussions with security agency personnel.
- Quantitative Phase – involving the transformation of coded qualitative data into categorical variables, followed by statistical processing and visual analysis using R Studio.

This design aligns with the methodological insights of Clark (2010) who underscores the value of qualitative-first approaches when exploring complex and under-theorized phenomena such as ideological radicalization and terrorist group resilience. The approach was especially suited to this study's objectives: to uncover the deep structure of IS supporter networks, identify what sustains them, and offer insights that can inform more nuanced counter-terrorism strategies.

### 2.1 Qualitative Data Collection

The first phase involved semi-structured interviews with a total of 33 IS supporters, each selected based on specific criteria including prior involvement in IS-related activities, their level of ideological commitment (e.g., having pledged bai'at), operational role, and regional diversity. These informants were affiliated with IS or IS-linked groups such as Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), Jamaah Anshar Khilafah (JAK), and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT). The sample was designed to ensure coverage across different organizational levels—from grassroots militants and logisticians to ideologues and funders—as well as a wide geographical range, including Java, Sumatera, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and the eastern provinces.

To strengthen the institutional perspective and validate the field-level narratives, the study also included four key informants from Indonesia's national security and intelligence community. These included representatives from the State Intelligence Agency (BIN), National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), Special Detachment 88 Anti-Terror (Densus 88 AT), and the Strategic Intelligence Agency (BAIS) of the Indonesian Armed Forces. Their testimonies provided macro-level insights into IS's evolving tactics, resilience patterns, and state responses.

A detailed overview of the IS-affiliated informants, including their background, case profile, network affiliation, and regional domicile, is presented in Table 1. These case profiles form the empirical backbone of the study, providing an intimate look into the social, ideological, and operational fabric of IS supporter networks in Indonesia.

**Table 1. Research Informant Code and Initials**

Code	Case/ Role	Network	Domicile
MT1	Case 1 : Cimanggis Depok Bomb 2004 Case 2 : Jantho Military Training, Aceh 2010	IS	Bogor, West Java
MT2	Case 1: Brimob Headquarters Attack Plan 2018 Case 2: Amaliyah's Plan for President Jokowi 2020	IS	Depok, West Java
MT3	Case 1: <i>Fai</i> Iron Shop in Purworejo 2014 Case 2: Weapon Ownership 2017	IS	Bogor, West Java
MT4	Case 1 : Thamrin Bomb Funding 2016 Case 2 : Surakarta Police Headquarters Attack 2016	IS	Bogor, West Java
MT5	Case 1 : Assault on Police and Destruction of Police Station Facilities in 2013	IS	Bekasi, West Java



	Case 2 : Thamrin Bomb Funding 2016, Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) Weapons and Soetta Airport Amaliyah Plan 2016		
MT6	Case : <i>Amir</i> of Jamaah Anshorut Daulah (JAD) Malang 2018	IS	Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta
MT7	Case 1: <i>Amir</i> of JAT Klaten/ <i>Amir</i> of Askari JAD Solo Raya Case 2: Chinese Shop Bombing Action 2018	IS	Klaten, Central Java
MT8	Case: Poso Riots (Arrested in Malaysia) <i>Amir</i> of Jamaah Anshorut Khilafah (JAK) Indonesia	IS	Solo, Central Java
MT9	MT8's right hand	IS	Boyolali, Central Java
MT10	Case: The Involvement of Jalin Jantho Military Training 2009 and the Attack on Pasar Kliwon Police Station Solo 2011 (Sigit Qardhawi)	IS	Solo, Central Java
MT11	Figures and donors of JAK Solo Raya	IS	Solo, Central Java
MT12	Case: Bontoala Police Station Attack 2018	IS	Bogor, West Java
MT13	Case 1: Cibiru Bombing 2011 Case 2: Kampung Melayu Bombing 2017	IS	Bandung, West Java
MT14	Case: Attack on Menkopolkam RI 2019	IS	Brebes, Central Java
MT15	Case: Attack on Wakapolres Karanganyar 2020	IS	Semarang, Central Java
MT16	Case: Kampung Melayu Bombing 2017 ( <i>Amir</i> of JAD Bandung)	IS	Bandung, West Java
MT17	Case: Makassar Bombing 2021 ( <i>Amir</i> of JAD Papua)	IS	Balikpapan, East Kalimantan
MT18	Case: <i>Amir</i> of JAD Sumbar	IS	Padang, West Sumatera
MT19	Case: Weapon Ownership JAD Pekanbaru	IS	Riau
MT20	Case: Attack on South Daha Police Station South Kalimantan 2020	IS	Daha, South Kalimantan
MT21	Case: Amaliyah Plan for Rocket Bombs and Tamkin on the West Coast of Ambon 2020	IS	Ambon, Maluku
MT22	Case : JAD Bali Social Media	IS	Bali
MT23	Case: The Aceh Uzlah Case 2019	IS	Pidie Jaya, Daerah Istimewa Aceh
MT24	Case: Makassar Cathedral Church Bombing 2021	IS	Makassar, South Sulawesi
MT25	Case: MIT Sympathizer	IS	Poso, Central Sulawesi
MT26	Case: Attack on South Daha Police Station, South Kalimantan 2020	IS	Daha, South Kalimantan



MT27	Case : JAD Makassar Funding and Weapons	IS	Makassar, South Sulawesi
MT28	Case 1 : Mujahidin Indonesia Barat (MIB) Abu Roban Group 2013 Case 2 : Hiding of UK DPO (Jantho) dan Amir of JAD Nusantara 2017	IS	Bima, West Nusa Tenggara
MT29	Case: JAD Banjarmasin Social Media	IS	Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan
MT30	Case: Banyumas Police Headquarters Attack 2017 (Lone Wolf)	IS	Banyumas, Central Java
MT31	Case 1: Poso Riots 2000 Case 2: Kuningan Bombing 2004 Case 3: Jantho Military Training Facilitator 2010 Case 4: Arms Purchases to the Philippines and Funding for the Thamrin Bombing 2016	IS	Pandeglang, Banten
MT32	Case: Arms Purchase to the Philippines (Failed) 2016/ Amir of JAD Nusantara 2016	IS	Lamongan, East Java
MT33	Case 1: Attempted robbery of a money changer in Manado 2002 and the McDonald's Bombing in Makassar 2002 Case 2: Jalin Jantho Military Training 2010 Case 3: Thamrin Bombing 2016	IS	Makassar, South Sulawesi

Source: Compiled from various sources (2024)

## 2.2 Data Processing and Qualitative Analysis

Following transcription, all interviews were systematically analyzed using a three-step coding process commonly used in grounded theory methodology:

- Open coding was used to identify recurring themes, behaviors, and symbolic language related to resilience.
- Axial coding organized these codes into higher-order categories that highlighted interrelations between ideology, recruitment, operations, and survival tactics.
- Selective coding refined the analysis into a final framework consisting of 13 distinct resilience factors, which were grouped into two broad categories: nine dominant factors and four supporting factors.

This classification enabled the research team to move beyond descriptive summaries and identify structured mechanisms of resilience within IS networks.

The coded data were then compiled and tabulated using Microsoft Excel to determine the distribution of each factor across all 33 informants. These distributions are presented in Table 2, which reflects the proportion of informants associated with each resilience factor. The most frequently cited factors included recruitment (REK), training (PBN), ideological indoctrination (PKI), and network security (PAM). Less dominant but still relevant were supporting factors such as adaptability (KAF), transnational networks (PJT), and local community support (DJL), which played auxiliary roles in enhancing operational flexibility and survival capacity.



**Table 2. The Proportion of Informant Responses across Resilience Factors**

Code	Resilience Factors of Islamic State Supporters Movement in Indonesia													Total
	PKI	REK	DSD	LS	KAF	PTM	PBN	PAM	PJT	KPS	DJL	AT	TKH	
MT1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
MT2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	9
MT3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	11
MT4	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	11
MT5	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	10
MT6	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	10
MT7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	9
MT8	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
MT9	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	11
MT10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	11
MT11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	10
MT12	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	10
MT13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	12
MT14	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
MT15	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	7
MT16	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	9
MT17	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	9
MT18	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	10
MT19	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
MT20	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
MT21	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	9
MT22	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
MT23	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	11
MT24	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	9
MT25	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	9
MT26	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13
MT27	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	6
MT28	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13
MT29	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	8
MT30	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	11
MT31	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	12
MT32	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	11
MT33	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	12
Total	31	32	26	28	10	30	32	31	18	22	19	9	24	

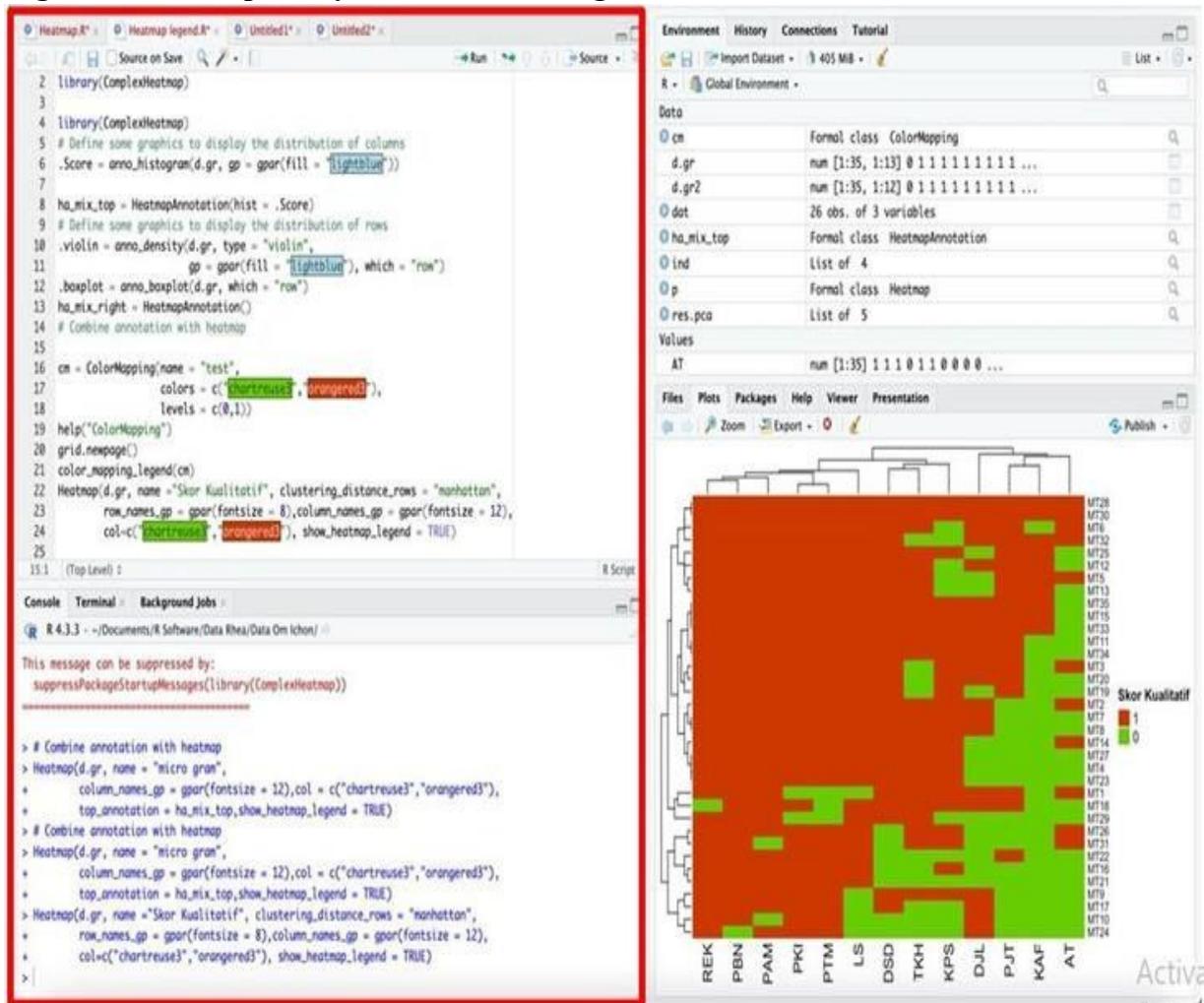
### 2.3 Quantitative Data Processing and Analysis

In the second phase, the categorized resilience factors were translated into binary-coded variables (1 = present, 0 = absent) for each informant, producing a structured dataset. This data was analyzed using R Studio, with a focus on descriptive statistics and visual mapping.

The primary output of this phase was a heatmap, which provided a comparative visual of how individual informants aligned with dominant versus supporting resilience factors. The heatmap allowed for the identification of clusters—such as Group A, characterized by highly structured organizational traits, and Group B, marked by looser, community-based support systems.

This visualization was critical for understanding how different configurations of resilience interact within the broader IS network. For instance, it showed how some informants relied heavily on ideological and digital infrastructure, while others leaned more on kinship, locality, or tactical adaptability.

Figure 1. Heatmap Analysis Data Processing View



### 2.4. Ensuring Data Credibility and Validation

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings, the study incorporated a multi-layered triangulation strategy throughout its design and analysis.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Bryman, Alan (2012): *Social Research Methods* (4. ed), Oxford, Oxford University Press.



First, source triangulation was achieved by including informants from diverse operational roles and hierarchical levels—ranging from high-profile operatives and leaders to marginal supporters and donors. This diversity allowed for the cross-examination of narratives and minimized reliance on singular accounts. Second, the use of methodological triangulation—through the integration of qualitative interview data and quantitative statistical analysis—enhanced the study’s analytical robustness. The qualitative insights provided depth and context, while the quantitative models allowed for the detection of patterns and generalizations across a wider informant base. Finally, theoretical triangulation enriched the interpretation of results by engaging with multiple academic perspectives. Frameworks from terrorism studies, organizational sociology, and criminology were used to analyze how resilience is constructed not only through ideology and violence but also through social structure, leadership dynamics, and adaptive learning.<sup>7</sup>

Together, these triangulation strategies created a rigorous analytical foundation that ensures the credibility of the findings and provides a multidimensional view of IS supporter resilience in Indonesia.

### **3. Results and Discussions**

This study identified and analyzed 13 resilience factors that enable the persistence of Islamic State (IS) supporters in Indonesia. Through the sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach, these factors were categorized into nine dominant and four supporting factors based on informant responses and quantitative analysis. Figure 2 provides a heatmap visualization of these factors, categorizing informants into two groups (Group A and Group B) based on their alignment with either dominant or supporting factors. Additionally, Table 3 details the distribution of responses, showing the percentage support for each factor among the informants.

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on in-depth interviews with 33 IS supporters and four national security experts, supplemented by statistical analysis. The study identified 13 key resilience factors that enable IS supporter movements to survive, adapt, and remain active in Indonesia despite systematic counter-terrorism efforts. These factors were grouped into nine dominant factors—which form the core ideological and operational framework—and four supporting factors, which contribute to tactical flexibility and local adaptability. The results are interpreted through both qualitative insights and quantitative visualizations, particularly the heatmap (Figure 2) and response distribution table (Table 3), which provide a clearer understanding of how these factors cluster across individuals and categories.

#### **3.1 Mapping the Resilience Landscape: A Heatmap Overview**

To provide a systematic and visual understanding of how different resilience factors are distributed among the 33 IS supporter informants, a heatmap analysis was conducted. This heatmap, presented in Figure 2, offers a comparative display of individual alignment with each of the 13 identified resilience factors. Each row in the figure corresponds to a single informant, while each column represents one resilience factor—allowing for an intuitive mapping of patterns, concentrations, and clusters within the dataset.

The visualization reveals two distinct groups of informants, delineated by a horizontal line in the heatmap. The majority of informants—24 out of 33 (Group A)—demonstrated strong alignment with what the study defines as dominant resilience factors. These include high recurrence of recruitment (REK), ideological indoctrination (PKI), network security (PAM), training (PBN), and digital propaganda use (PTM). Informants in this group displayed consistent engagement with core organizational and ideological structures that underpin IS’s

<sup>7</sup> Triangulasi dalam Penelitian Kualitatif, at <http://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/1133/1/triangulasi.pdf>.

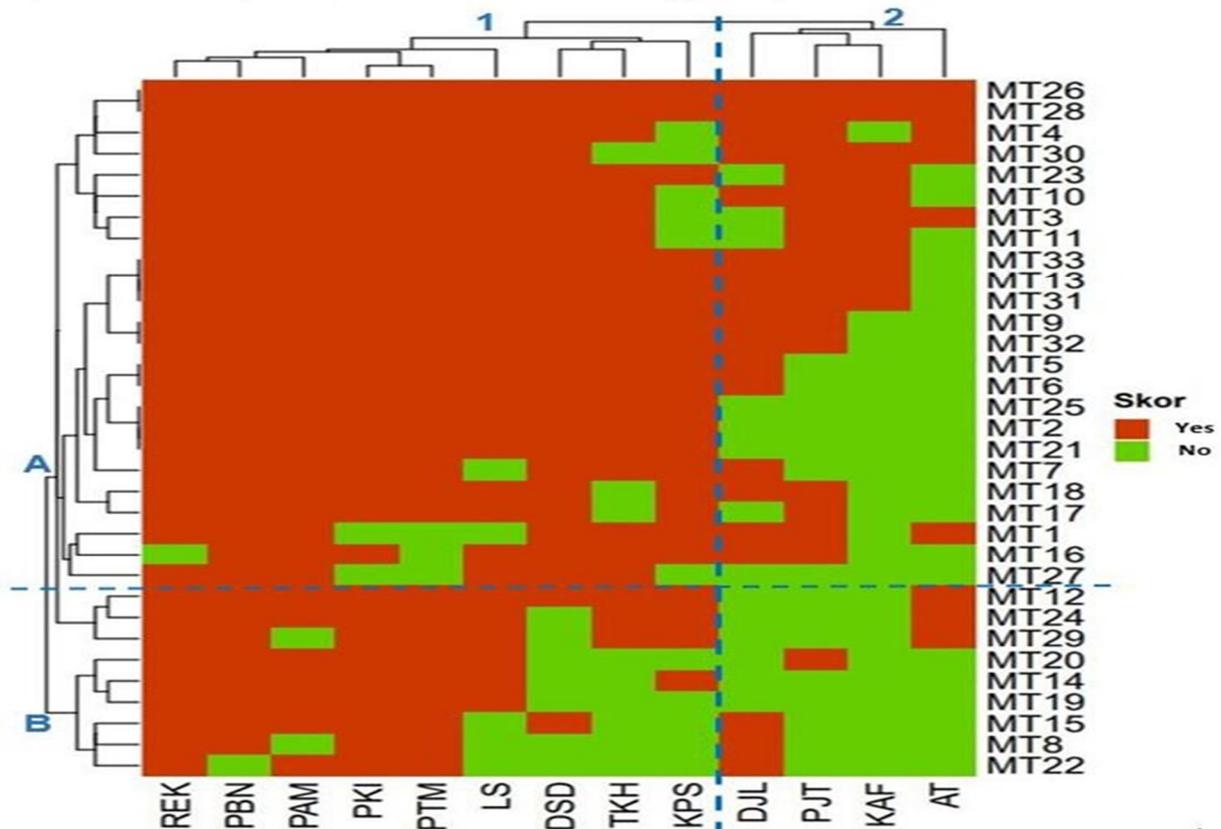
operational continuity. This suggests a centralized, cohesive form of resilience—where adherence to doctrine, disciplined behavior, and structured recruitment channels are integral to long-term network survival.

Conversely, Group B, comprising nine informants, exhibited greater alignment with supporting resilience factors, such as transnational linkages (PJT), local network integration (DJL), adaptability (KAF), and sporadic acts of terror (AT). This group reflected a more decentralized and opportunistic mode of engagement, characterized by context-specific strategies that rely on localized support and flexible adaptation to surveillance, arrests, and leadership losses. While less ideologically intense or formally trained, this subgroup nonetheless plays a crucial role in maintaining IS's reach and survivability in the face of sustained counter-terrorism operations.

The heatmap also allowed for a comparative cross-factor analysis. For instance, many informants who scored high on ideological indoctrination also reported consistent engagement with recruitment and digital media usage, suggesting the presence of a tightly woven ideological-digital ecosystem. Similarly, network security appeared frequently in cases where training and resource support were also present, implying that logistical capabilities are closely linked with operational secrecy.

Another important observation is the occurrence of hybrid informants—individuals who exhibit alignment with both dominant and supporting factors. These cases bridge the structural rigidity of Group A and the tactical agility of Group B. Such hybrid profiles may indicate transition zones within the movement—individuals or cells evolving from structured roles to looser formations, or vice versa. They also reflect the adaptive capacity of IS networks to adjust their configuration depending on external pressure, such as arrests, leadership losses, or increased digital surveillance.

**Figure 2. Heatmap Analysis of Dominant and Supporting Factors**





The spatial clustering seen in Figure 2 validates the central hypothesis of this research: that the resilience of IS supporter networks in Indonesia is not monolithic, but instead emerges from the interplay of institutionalized core systems and flexible peripheral strategies. While some cells rely heavily on formalized ideology and organized infrastructure, others depend more on social embeddedness, transnational inspiration, and agile survival tactics. Together, these layers constitute a dual-layered model of resilience that enhances the longevity and adaptability of the IS movement across the Indonesian archipelago.

This heatmap analysis also aligns with broader trends observed in global terrorism studies, where resilient extremist organizations often balance centralized ideological leadership with decentralized operational models.<sup>8</sup> The ability to operate through both top-down (command and doctrine) and bottom-up (localized and flexible) mechanisms is a key trait of long-enduring insurgencies and jihadist movements.<sup>9</sup>

### **3.2 Proportional Insights: Which Factors Matter Most?**

While the heatmap in Figure 2 provides a visual landscape of how resilience factors cluster across individuals, Table 3 offers a numerical breakdown of the extent to which each of the 13 resilience factors was cited or confirmed across the 33 informants interviewed. This tabular data offers critical insight into the relative prominence and pervasiveness of each factor within the IS supporter ecosystem in Indonesia.

This table reflects both the depth and range of IS's operational resilience. The top five most affirmed factors—recruitment, training, ideological indoctrination, network security, and digital propaganda—each surpass the 90% threshold. These results confirm that IS resilience in Indonesia is anchored in highly organized, disciplined, and ideologically charged practices, which collectively serve to indoctrinate, protect, and expand their networks.

#### **3.2.1 Recruitment and Training: The Movement's Lifeblood**

With 96.96% of informants confirming recruitment (REK) and training (PBN) as central to their involvement, these factors emerge as the most structurally embedded in the IS operational model. Recruitment was not only persistent but multifaceted—combining personal invitations,<sup>10</sup> online propaganda,<sup>11</sup> religious indoctrination,<sup>12</sup> and promises of status or martyrdom.<sup>13</sup> This suggests that IS networks in Indonesia maintain active and decentralized recruitment pipelines even in the absence of centralized leadership.<sup>14</sup>

Training, meanwhile, was described not simply as preparation for combat or violence but as a transformative process—a form of ideological grooming and physical hardening. Informants referred to study groups, online tutorials, and physical training camps like those in Jantho, Aceh. This training reinforced loyalty and built a collective identity around sacrifice,

<sup>8</sup> Gaibulloev, Khusrav, et al.: "How Do the Factors Determining Terrorist Groups' Longevity Differ from Those Affecting Their Success", *European Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 65, n° 1 (August 2020), pp. 1-15.

<sup>9</sup> Stern, Jessica., & Modi, Amit (2010): "Producing Terror: Organizational Dynamics of Survival", *Terrorism, Security and the Power of Informal Networks*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 257-287.

<sup>10</sup> Tabrani, Dedy; Ashgar, Aly (2023): *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD): Tinjauan Ideologi dan Gerakan*, Jakarta, PT Kompas Media Nusantara.

<sup>11</sup> Azman, Nur Aziemah: "The Islamic State (IS): Maintaining Resilience in a Post-Caliphate, Pandemic Environment", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (January 2021), pp. 106–111.

<sup>12</sup> Blomberg, S. Brock, et al.: "Terrorist Group Survival: Ideology, Tactics, and Base of Operations", *Public Choice*, vol. 149, n° 3/4 (December 2011), pp. 441–463.

<sup>13</sup> Mulyana, Yan, et al.: "Power Negara Islam Irak dan Suriah (*Islamic State of Irak and Suriah, ISIS*)", *Jurnal Ilmu Politik dan Komunikasi*, vol. VI, n° 1 (June 2016), pp. 19–36.

<sup>14</sup> Hafez, Mohammed; Mullins, Creighton: "The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 38, No. 11 (September 2015), pp. 958–975.



secrecy, and jihadist ideology.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.2.2. Ideological Commitment and Security

Closely following recruitment and training are propaganda and ideological beliefs (PKI: 93.93%) and network security (PAM: 93.93%). These two dimensions operate synergistically. Ideological commitment provides the justification for clandestine activity, while strict security practices protect the ideological project from disruption.<sup>16</sup>

Network security practices were described in detail—such as the use of encrypted messaging apps, avoidance of digital footprints, and tactical communication codes. These practices have enabled IS supporters to remain operationally functional despite mass arrests and surveillance by state authorities. In short, ideology is the glue that binds the movement; security is the shield that protects it.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.2.3 The Digital Dimension and Community Influence

The importance of technology and social media (PTM: 90.90%) confirms that IS in Indonesia is not merely an offline threat. The movement has embraced digital platforms as an extension of its battlefield. From the dissemination of videos and recruitment materials to virtual meetings and online pledges of bai'at, technology is central to IS's resilience.<sup>18</sup>

In tandem, the social environment (LS: 84.84%)—particularly families, local religious groups, and prison-based networks—acts as an amplifier for IS's ideological and operational messages. Several informants described how family members were radicalized together, participated in attacks, or supported their activities logistically. The strong presence of familial networks reflects how radicalization and resilience are often intergenerational and community-embedded.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.2.4. Resources, Leadership, and Perceptions of Injustice

Support and resources (DSD: 78.78%) also played a vital role, especially in cases where informants were involved in fundraising, logistical planning, or donation-based operations.<sup>20</sup> These ranged from financial contributions collected during religious gatherings to support from foreign sympathizers.<sup>21</sup>

Prominent figures (TKH: 72.73%)—especially charismatic leaders like Aman Abdurrahman—were mentioned as ideological authorities whose fatwas, interpretations, and speeches helped stabilize fractured networks.<sup>22</sup> Their leadership provided not just spiritual guidance but also narrative cohesion, even when groups operated independently.<sup>23</sup>

Political and social instability (KPS: 66.66%) was a motivating factor for many respondents who expressed disillusionment with the state, law enforcement, or what they

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<sup>15</sup> McCauley, Clark; Moskalenko, Sophia: "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 20, n° 3 (July 2008), pp. 415–433.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Wilkinson, Paul (2006): *Terrorism versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response* (Second Edition), London, Routledge.

<sup>18</sup> Putra, M. R. Nugraha, et al.: "Persebaran Konten Radikal Islamic State of Iraq Syria Di Media Sosial Sebagai Ancaman Perang Mindset Pada Generasi Muda", *Jurnal Peperangan Asimetris*, vol. 7, n° 1 (2021), p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> McCauley & Moskalenko, *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Whittaker, Joe: "The Role of Financial Technologies in US-Based ISIS Terror Plots", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, (October 2022), pp. 1–26.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Tabrani & Ashgar, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Precht, Thomas: "Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe", 2007, The Danish Ministry of Justice.



perceived as Western interference in Muslim lands. Such perceptions created fertile ground for IS propaganda to flourish and offered moral and emotional justification for engagement in terrorism.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.2.5. Supporting Factors: The Outer Shell of Flexibility

Moving into the supporting factors, local networks (DJL: 57.57%) and transnational influence (PJT: 54.54%) were moderately cited. These networks helped IS supporters move undetected, find safe houses, or access ideological materials.<sup>25</sup> The transnational component was especially strong in regions like Sulawesi and Kalimantan, where Schulze and Liow (2018) noted connections to networks in the Philippines and Malaysia.<sup>26</sup>

At the bottom of the table are adaptability and flexibility (KAF: 30.30%) and acts of terror (AT: 27.27%). While cited less frequently, their role in resilience should not be underestimated.<sup>27</sup> Adaptability allows IS to mutate its tactics and regroup after arrests or losses.<sup>28</sup> Acts of terror, though less common, serve a symbolic function, galvanizing support, sustaining media attention, and intimidating opponents.

### 3.3 Interpreting the Numbers: Structural vs. Tactical Resilience

The proportions shown in Table 3 underscore the layered nature of IS resilience in Indonesia. The dominance of recruitment, indoctrination, and training reflects a well-organized core, while the presence of local support, adaptability, and transnational links demonstrates an agile and decentralized shell.

However, these structural and tactical capacities do not exist in isolation. They are often reinforced by a broader societal context characterized by rising intolerance,<sup>29</sup> to the extent that deradicalization programs in Indonesia remain challenging.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, this interplay between ideological commitment and societal permissiveness also contributes to deradicalization strategies that tend to focus on individual disengagement while overlooking systemic socio-political support structures.

**Table 3. Proportion of Informant Answers to Factors of Resilience of IS Supporters Movement in Indonesia**

Factors	Code	Answer (Percentage)	
		Yes	No
Propaganda and Ideological Beliefs	PKI	93,93	6,07
Recruitment	REK	96,96	3,04
Support and Resources	DSD	78,78	21,22
Social Environment	LS	84,84	15,16
Adaptability and Flexibility	KAF	30,30	69,7

<sup>24</sup> Muro, Diego: "What Does Radicalisation Look Like? Four Visualisations of Socialisation into Violent Extremism", Notes Internacionales CIDOB, n° 163 (December 2016), pp. 1–5.

<sup>25</sup> Ehrenfeld, Rachel (2003): *Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed—And How to Stop It.*, NewRochelle, NY, MultiEducator Inc.

<sup>26</sup> Schulze, Kirsten E.; Liow, Joseph Chinyong): "Making Jihadis, Waging Jihad: Transnational and Local Dimensions of the ISIS Phenomenon in Indonesia and Malaysia", *Asian Security*, vol. 15, n° 2 (February 2018), pp. 1–18.

<sup>27</sup> Muttaqin, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Hanita, Margaretha (2021): *Ketahanan Nasional: Teori, Adapasi dan Strategi*, Jakarta, UI Publishing.

<sup>29</sup> Assyaukanie, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-9.

<sup>30</sup> Widya, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-50.



Utilization of Technology and Social Media	PTM	90,90	9,10
Training	PBN	96,96	3,04
Network Security	PAM	93,93	6,07
Transnational Network Influence	PJT	54,54	45,46
Political and Social Instability	KPS	66,66	33,34
Local Network Support	DJL	57,57	42,43
Terror Actions	AT	27,27	72,73
Prominent Figures	TKH	72,73	27,27

### 3.4 Dominant Factors: Foundations of Resilience

Building upon the percentage-based interpretation in the previous section, this subsection unpacks the qualitative depth of the highest-ranked factors. The dominant resilience factors identified in this study represent the structural and ideological backbone of IS supporter movements in Indonesia. These nine factors were consistently mentioned by a large majority of informants and received the highest percentage scores in Table 3, indicating their critical role in sustaining the network’s coherence, recruitment capacity, and operational endurance. These dominant factors include: Recruitment, Training, Ideological Indoctrination, Network Security, Digital Propaganda, Social Environment, Support and Resources, Prominent Leadership, and Political and Social Instability.

These elements are not isolated but form a mutually reinforcing system that shapes both the ideological commitment of members and the movement’s ability to survive amidst intense counter-terrorism pressure. The following subsections delve into each factor, unpacking its mechanism, significance, and interactions with other factors.

#### 3.4.1 Recruitment: Expanding the Movement’s Reach

Recruitment (REK) emerged as the most frequently cited factor, with 96.96% of informants identifying it as central to IS's growth and resilience. Recruitment efforts were found to be highly strategic, targeting emotionally vulnerable individuals, disenfranchised youth, and ideologically curious Muslims—particularly through face-to-face encounters, kinship ties, religious study groups (halaqah), and digital platforms.

Recruiters often assumed trusted roles in religious communities or familial structures, enabling them to gradually introduce radical ideas under the guise of religious discourse. In prison, recruitment intensified through peer influence and the sharing of IS materials. These findings are consistent with studies by Hafez and Mullins (2015) who emphasize the importance of social and relational dynamics in radicalization processes.<sup>31</sup>

Recruitment was not only about increasing numbers—it was also about preserving continuity. New members were rapidly socialized into the IS worldview, ensuring ideological loyalty and willingness to participate in operational tasks.

#### 3.4.2. Training: Building Capacity and Loyalty

Also cited by 96.96% of informants, Training (PBN) was revealed to be both ideological and operational. Informants described attending physical camps (such as in Jantho, Aceh), participating in martial arts, weapons handling, and survival training. Some were also trained abroad or by returnees from Syria and the Philippines.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*



What makes IS training effective is its dual function: it equips individuals for tactical operations while reinforcing ideological loyalty. This aligns with The New York Police Department (NYPD) radicalization model, which describes “indoctrination” as both a cognitive and behavioral process.<sup>32</sup> Training rituals often included oath-taking (bai’at), team-building exercises, and lectures on jihad, which helped internalize group norms and a shared mission.<sup>33</sup>

The resilience of IS networks depends in large part on their ability to produce cadres who are not only technically capable but psychologically and ideologically invested in the cause.

### *3.4.3 Propaganda and Ideological Indoctrination: The Core Doctrine*

Propaganda and Ideological Beliefs (PKI) were affirmed by 93.93% of respondents, highlighting the centrality of ideology to IS’s endurance. The indoctrination process is systematic, employing persuasive narratives about global Muslim suffering, religious duty, and the legitimacy of violent jihad.

Informants consistently referenced lectures by radical clerics, such as Aman Abdurrahman, as the foundation of their belief system. Materials included books, videos, online sermons, and translated IS publications such as Dabiq and Rumiya. These were disseminated via Telegram, WhatsApp, and during halaqah sessions.

Propaganda not only served recruitment and indoctrination purposes—it also reframed arrests, martyrdom, and territorial losses as victories or divine tests.<sup>34</sup> This psychological reinforcement helps supporters maintain morale even after major setbacks.<sup>35</sup> This mirrors Kruglanski et al. (2019), who note that radical ideologies often provide meaning and identity for individuals undergoing personal or political crises.<sup>36</sup>

### *3.4.4 Network Security: Shielding the Organization*

Network Security (PAM) was also cited by 93.93% of informants, reflecting IS’s disciplined approach to operational secrecy. Informants described stringent protocols such as using encrypted apps (Telegram, Signal), avoiding digital traces, employing aliases (kunya), and rotating safe houses.

Security was not an afterthought—it was embedded into training and recruitment from the outset. New members were often isolated from the full network structure, limiting exposure in case of arrest.<sup>37</sup> Leaders communicated through cut-outs or couriers, and sensitive materials were rarely stored on traceable devices. This approach reflects findings by Gaibullov et al. (2020), who argue that network longevity in terrorist organizations correlates with their ability to maintain covert communications and secure internal trust.<sup>38</sup> In Indonesia, where police raids and surveillance are frequent, operational security remains a key enabler of IS’s continued survival.

### *3.4.5. Digital Propaganda: A Modern War Tool*

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<sup>32</sup> Silber, Mitchell D.; Bhatt, Arvin (2007): “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat”, New York, The New York City Police Department (NYPD).

<sup>33</sup> McCauley & Moskalenko, *op. cit.*, p. 423

<sup>34</sup> Azman, Nur Aziemah: "Islamic State’s Narratives of Resilience and Endurance", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 12, n° 1 (January 2020), pp. 82-86.

<sup>35</sup> Melki, Jad; Jabado, May: "Mediated Public Diplomacy of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: The Synergistic Use of Terrorism, Social Media and Branding", *Media and Communication*, vol. 4, n° 2 (May 2016), pp. 92-103.

<sup>36</sup> Kruglanski, Arie W., et al. (2019): *The Three Pillars of Radicalization: Needs, Narratives, and Networks*: Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*



The Utilization of Technology and Social Media (PTM) was cited by 90.9% of informants, underscoring its role in modern terrorist resilience. IS has effectively turned social media into a strategic battleground. Platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp were used for recruitment, coordination, and ideological outreach.<sup>39</sup>

Informants noted the ease with which they could access radical content, join encrypted chat groups, and even download manuals for bomb-making or security evasion. The digital ecosystem also enabled diaspora members to stay connected with Indonesian cells and share updates from global jihadist theatres.

Stern and Modi (2010)<sup>40</sup> and Prihandoko and Syauqillah (2020)<sup>41</sup> have similarly noted that internet-based propaganda accelerates radicalization by shortening the time between ideological exposure and behavioral action. In the Indonesian context, the internet allows IS to remain ideologically active and digitally resilient, even as its territorial caliphate collapses.<sup>42</sup>

#### *3.4.6. Social Environment: A Breeding Ground*

Social Environment (LS) was affirmed by 84.84% of informants, revealing the role of families, close communities, and prison circles in reinforcing extremist beliefs. Some informants described growing up in radical households, while others cited family approval or involvement in their recruitment.

The intergenerational transmission of radicalism is a serious concern. In several cases, entire nuclear families participated in attacks or supported terrorist activities. These environments normalize extremist discourse and create a feedback loop that is difficult to break.<sup>43</sup> McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008) emphasize how intimate social environments provide emotional and psychological reinforcement for radical behavior.<sup>44</sup> In Indonesia, these settings often serve as incubators for radicalization and provide resilience against deradicalization efforts. Moreover, these structural foundations also reveal why deradicalization programs, which often focus solely on individual disengagement, are considered by Shodiq and Ismed (2021) to be ineffective in addressing the root causes and stemming the spread of radicalism in Indonesia.<sup>45</sup>

#### *3.4.7 Support and Resources: Fueling the Network*

Support and Resources (DSD), cited by 78.78% of informants, encompass a wide array of logistical elements—finances, transportation, housing, and even food. These were sourced through donations (often via social or religious events), self-generated activities (e.g., theft, robbery), or through criminal networks.

Financial support was described as decentralized yet disciplined—with specific individuals managing the collection and distribution of funds. This enabled cells to remain

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<sup>39</sup> Permana, Indra Martian; Adam, Fadzil: "The Role of the Internet and Social Media in the Spread of ISIS in Indonesia", *Halaqa: Islamic Education Journal*, vol. 5, n° 1 (January 2021), pp. 13-19.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Prihandoko; Syauqillah, Muhamad: "Pattern of Pro-IS Terrorist Financing In Indonesia: Study About The Santoso Group", Proceedings of 3rd International Conference on Strategic and Global Studies (ICSGS) Indonesia, (November 2019), pp. 180-191.

<sup>42</sup> Sari, Hanny Purnama; Syauqillah, Muhammad: "The Role of Translation in ISIS Propaganda: International Online Radicalization Methods and Its Influence on Extremism in Indonesia", *International Journal of Science and Society*, vol. 4, n° 4 (November 2022), pp. 319-336.

<sup>43</sup> "Annual Threat Assessment: Southeast Asia", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 11, n° 1 (January 2019), pp. 1-90.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Shodiq, Moh. Djafar; Ismed, Moh.: "Deradikalisasi Penanganan Terorisme Secara Terintegrasi Di Indonesia", *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum Legalitas*, vol. 15, n° 2 (July 2021), pp. 59-64.



mobile and operational even in resource-scarce conditions.<sup>46</sup> Studies by Dishman (2005)<sup>47</sup> and Piazza (2017)<sup>48</sup> highlight the convergence of terrorism and organized crime, noting that financial adaptability is a key trait of long-lived networks. In Indonesia, this hybridization has helped IS operatives remain functional under financial restrictions.

#### *3.4.8 Prominent Figures: Anchoring Ideological Identity*

Prominent Figures (TKH) were mentioned by 72.73% of informants. These leaders—both in-person and symbolic—served as ideological reference points and sources of legitimacy. Aman Abdurrahman, for example, was frequently cited for his theological clarity and motivational influence.<sup>49</sup>

Such figures not only inspire loyalty but also offer narrative continuity across fragmented cells, especially in Europe.<sup>50</sup> Even when arrested or killed, their teachings continue to circulate digitally and in halaqah discussions.<sup>51</sup> This reflects Jerard's (2015) assertion that charismatic leadership plays a critical role in maintaining group cohesion, especially during periods of strategic uncertainty.<sup>52</sup>

#### *3.4.9 Political and Social Instability: Justifying the Struggle*

Finally, Political and Social Instability (KPS) was cited by 66.66% of informants as a key motivator for joining IS. Grievances included perceived injustice, religious oppression, police brutality, and disillusionment with state institutions. For many, these frustrations were reframed by IS narratives into calls for revolution and divine justice. IS was seen not merely as a militant group, but as an alternative governance model.

Hafez and Mullins (2015)<sup>53</sup> and Younis (2020)<sup>54</sup> argue that structural violence and poor governance are often exploited by extremist groups to recruit and retain members. The Indonesian case supports this, particularly among youth and marginalized communities who feel excluded from national development narratives. Furthermore, these structural foundations is reinforced by Jones (2016) who stated that the controversy surrounding DKI Jakarta Governor Election 2016 provides a lesson in how political and social instability plays a significant role in the development of extremism and intolerance in Indonesia.<sup>55</sup>

### **3.5. Supporting Factors: Enhancing Resilience Through Flexibility**

While the dominant factors outlined in the previous section serve as the structural and ideological spine of IS supporter networks in Indonesia, this study also identified a second tier of supporting resilience factors. Though cited less frequently, these four factors—Local

<sup>46</sup> Vittori, Jodi: "All Struggles Must End: The Longevity of Terrorist Groups", *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 30, n° 3 (December 2009), pp 444-466.

<sup>47</sup> Dishman, Chris: "The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 28, n° 3 (August 2006), pp. 237-252.

<sup>48</sup> Piazza, James A.; Piazza, Scott: "Crime Pays: Terrorist Group Engagement in Crime and Survival", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 32, n° 4 (November 2017), pp. 701-723.

<sup>49</sup> Tabrani & Ashgar, *op. cit.*, p. 4

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Widhyastri, Hany, et al.: "The Influence of Aman Abdurrahman On Pro-Isis Terrorist Networks In Indonesia After The Fall Of ISIS In Raqqa And Mosul In 2017", Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Strategic and Global Studies (ICSGS) Indonesia, (October 2018), pp. 1-13.

<sup>52</sup> Jerard, Jolene: "Terrorism in Indonesia: An Examination of Ten Radical Groups", Dissertation University of St. Andrews, (October 2014).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Younis, Basim M.: "Understanding The Resilience of Violent Jihadi Movement: The Sources of Militant Durability", Thesis Naval Postgraduate School, (December 2020).

<sup>55</sup> Why Indonesia extremists are gaining ground, at <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/why-indonesian-extremists-are-gaining-ground>.



Network Support, Transnational Network Influence, Adaptability and Flexibility, and Acts of Terror—nonetheless play a crucial role in ensuring the operational elasticity and contextual embeddedness of the movement.

These supporting factors enable IS affiliates to remain relevant, responsive, and resilient under pressure, particularly when dominant structures are disrupted. They represent the outer shell of the organization's survival logic: less visible, often decentralized, but indispensable to its long-term persistence.

### *3.5.1 Local Network Support (DJL): Embedded Resilience*

With 57.57% of informants referencing this factor, Local Network Support (DJL) emerged as the most frequently cited among the supporting elements. Informants described a variety of localized support systems—such as extended family members, village-level religious leaders, former members of Darul Islam (DI), or communities with a history of underground Islamist activism.<sup>56</sup>

These networks provided logistical shelter, ideological continuity, and moral support, especially in rural or peri-urban areas with weak state oversight. In many cases, villages functioned as micro-ecosystems of radical resilience, shielding operatives from detection and facilitating recruitment.

This finding aligns with prior studies of Jamaah Islamiyah and DI/TII, which documented the importance of geographic sanctuaries and generational trust networks.<sup>57</sup> Local support also helped sustain post-arrest resilience, as families and neighbors would often protect radicalized members from police or media scrutiny. In this way, IS networks blend seamlessly into communities, drawing strength from existing social structures and making them harder to detect or dismantle.

### *3.5.2 Transnational Network Influence (PJT): Global Reinforcement*

Transnational influence (PJT) was confirmed by 54.54% of informants, many of whom reported direct or indirect links with jihadist networks in Syria, the Philippines, Malaysia, or Turkey. These connections took the form of digital communications, shared propaganda, funding channels, training experiences, or coordination of bai'at pledges.

The influence of regional affiliates such as Abu Sayyaf, Maute Group, and IS-East Asia was particularly significant for respondents from Sulawesi and Kalimantan.<sup>58</sup> Some described learning operational techniques from foreign fighters, or being inspired by video messages from returning Indonesians who had joined IS in the Middle East. This cross-border solidarity reinforces the idea that Indonesian IS supporters are not operating in isolation but are part of a broader transnational jihadist network. This external linkage provides psychological reinforcement and contributes to the perceived legitimacy of their struggle, even in the absence of a formal caliphate. Moreover, transnational linkages create redundancy. When domestic networks are dismantled, international connections offer alternative channels for communication, training, and ideological support—helping maintain the continuity of radical momentum.

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<sup>56</sup> Arrobi, Mohammad Zaki: "The Making of Islamist-inspired Terrorism and Its Counter-terrorism in Indonesia", *Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review*, vol. 3, n° 2 (July 2018), pp. 217-238.

<sup>57</sup> Fealy, Greg; Borgu, Aldo (2005): *Local Jihad: Radical Islam and Terrorism in Indonesia*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

<sup>58</sup> Jadoon, Amira, et al.: "The Emergence of the Islamic State in Southeast Asia. Rising in the East: A Regional Overview of the Islamic State's Operation in Southeast Asia", *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, (July 2020), pp. 9-17.



### 3.5.3 Adaptability and Flexibility (KAF): Tactical Survival

Despite being cited by only 30.30% of informants, Adaptability and Flexibility (KAF) emerged as a critical enabler of long-term survival, especially for fragmented cells or lone actors. Respondents who had experienced police surveillance or the arrest of comrades described how they adapted by altering routines, switching communication platforms, or using non-traditional locations for meetings, such as food stalls or online gaming cafes. Others mentioned rebranding group identities, splintering into autonomous factions, or going completely underground (*tandzim sirri*). This adaptability is not only behavioral but strategic. It allows IS networks to absorb shocks, reconfigure leadership, and adjust recruitment strategies in response to state pressure.

Lindelauf et al. (2011)<sup>59</sup> and Hayden (2013)<sup>60</sup> emphasize this capacity as a key feature of enduring insurgent groups. In Indonesia, where counter-terrorism efforts are increasingly data-driven and aggressive, adaptability becomes a form of resistance—one that prioritizes stealth over spectacle and persistence over expansion. Although less visible than recruitment or ideology, this flexibility helps sustain IS operations under the radar and makes eradication far more difficult.

### 3.5.4 Acts of Terror (AT): Strategic Symbolism

The final supporting factor—Acts of Terror (AT)—was cited by 27.27% of informants. While this figure may seem low, the significance of this factor lies not in frequency, but in symbolic and strategic impact. Informants who referenced this factor typically described acts of violence not as random or impulsive but as carefully calculated responses to political or religious grievances. Attacks such as the 2016 Thamrin bombing or the 2018 Surabaya church bombings were viewed as demonstrations of strength, messages of vengeance, or sacrifices to gain divine reward. Such actions often serve to revitalize ideological commitment, attract global attention, and provoke overreactions by state actors—further feeding IS's narrative of persecution.

Moreover, these attacks act as “performance-based propaganda”, where the spectacle of violence reinforces the group's visibility and psychological dominance. While not all IS supporters participate directly in violence, the existence of such acts functions as a radicalizing echo, reaffirming group identity and inspiring future participation. This “vicarious empowerment” effect has been discussed in literature on lone-wolf terrorism<sup>61</sup> and martyrdom culture.<sup>62</sup> Thus, acts of terror, even when limited in frequency, serve as ideological and operational catalysts within the broader resilience framework.

## 3.6 Interactions with Dominant Factors

Importantly, these supporting factors do not function in isolation. Rather, they act as multipliers of dominant factors, enhancing their reach and impact. For instance:

- Local networks amplify recruitment and indoctrination by embedding ideology in communal settings.
- Transnational links reinforce training and ideological legitimacy by connecting

<sup>59</sup> Lindelauf, Roy, et al.: "Understanding Terrorist Network Topologies and Their Resilience Against Disruption", in Wiil, U.K. (eds) (2011): *Counterterrorism and Open Source Intelligence. Lecture Notes in Social Networks*, Vienna, Springer, pp. 61-72.

<sup>60</sup> Hayden, Nancy K.: "Innovation and Learning in Terrorist Organizations: Towards Adaptive Capacity and Resiliency", Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, (August 2013), pp. 1-24.

<sup>61</sup> Pape, Robert. A.: "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism", *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, n° 3 (August 2003), pp. 343-361.

<sup>62</sup> Schmid, Alex P. (2020): *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness*, The Hague (Netherlands), International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT).



Indonesian cells to global jihadist discourse.

- Adaptability supports network security by enabling evasion and rapid reorganization.
- Terrorist acts boost propaganda impact and operational reputation, reinforcing ideological narratives.

Together, these supporting elements provide the outer armor and regenerative capacity of IS networks in Indonesia—enabling them to retreat, rebound, and reorganize under even the most intense pressure.

### **3.7 Synthesis and Implications**

The findings of this study offer a nuanced and multilayered portrait of the resilience mechanisms that sustain IS supporter movements in Indonesia. By integrating qualitative narratives and quantitative analysis, the research reveals that IS resilience is not the result of any single factor or isolated event, but rather the product of a complex, interlocking system of ideological conviction, organizational discipline, operational secrecy, and contextual flexibility.

At the core of this system are the dominant factors—recruitment, ideological indoctrination, training, digital infrastructure, and network security—each of which forms a foundational pillar of IS’s internal strength. These factors are methodically cultivated and deeply embedded, allowing IS supporters to function as a coherent and committed entity even in fragmented or underground conditions. They provide ideological glue, tactical competence, and institutional discipline needed for survival, replication, and long-term relevance.

Surrounding this core is a second layer of supporting factor-local and transnational networks, adaptability, and symbolic acts of terror—that expand the group’s reach, embed it in social ecosystems, and ensure its continued visibility and perceived legitimacy. While less consistent in their appearance, these factors act as force multipliers: they extend the life cycle of cells, facilitate reconstitution after disruption, and provide psychological and logistical buffers against state pressure.

This dual structure—a rigid center supported by a flexible periphery—mirrors patterns observed in other long-lasting insurgencies and decentralized terrorist movements around the world. The model reflects a blend of hierarchical and networked resilience, where ideological unity and tactical fluidity work in tandem. The heatmap visualization (Figure 2) and factor distribution data (Table 3) support this view, revealing distinct patterns of alignment with dominant and supporting factors across individual informants and regions.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings affirm the need to view terrorist organizations not merely as ideological constructs or operational entities, but as socially adaptive ecosystems. They evolve, mutate, and respond to both internal dynamics (e.g., leadership losses, doctrinal disputes) and external pressures (e.g., arrests, surveillance, geopolitical shifts). In this light, resilience is not an outcome—it is a strategic behavior, cultivated through doctrine, recruitment, learning, and adaptation.

Practically, these insights carry significant implications for counter-terrorism policy and programming in Indonesia and beyond:

- **Holistic Disruption Over Singular Interventions**

Counter-terrorism strategies that focus solely on arresting high-profile figures or dismantling physical cells may yield short-term gains but fail to address the underlying architecture of resilience. For IS supporters, the loss of leaders or safe houses often triggers reconfiguration,



not collapse. Hence, a more integrated strategy is needed<sup>63</sup>—one that targets the entire ecosystem, including ideological production, digital communication channels, financial lifelines, and community-based support networks.

- Community and Family-Centric Approaches

Given the prominent role of family and local networks in recruitment and ideological reinforcement, prevention and deradicalization must engage these social microstructures. Programs that neglect familial and community contexts may unintentionally allow radical ideologies to regenerate. This includes not only supporting disengagement of individuals but also transforming radical-conducive environments into spaces of resilience against extremism.<sup>64</sup>

- Digital Counter-Propaganda and Online Monitoring

The centrality of digital platforms to IS survival demands more robust and dynamic online interventions.<sup>65</sup> While some efforts to monitor and block extremist content exist, IS's adaptability and encryption practices consistently outpace state responses. Strategic counter-narratives, cyber surveillance, and proactive digital engagement with at-risk groups are critical to breaking the feedback loop of online radicalization.

- Adaptive Security Frameworks

The presence of adaptability and decentralized survival tactics highlights the need for flexible and intelligence-driven law enforcement. Static security protocols may fail to keep pace with rapidly evolving cell behaviors. Local intelligence gathering, cross-agency coordination, and community policing models may improve early detection of underground or reemerging cells.<sup>66</sup>

- Transnational Cooperation

With nearly 55% of informants noting transnational influences, it is clear that IS movements in Indonesia are not insular. Regional cooperation—especially with the Philippines, Malaysia, and broader ASEAN counterparts—is essential to disrupting cross-border ideological and logistical flows.<sup>67</sup> This includes intelligence sharing, joint patrols in border regions, and harmonized deradicalization protocols for returnees and deportees.

- Policy Framing and Public Communication

The framing of terrorism in public discourse affects community reactions, support for rehabilitation, and the reintegration of former radicals. Excessive securitization or moral panic can alienate communities, inadvertently pushing them toward protective silence or even sympathy for extremists. Policies should be accompanied by inclusive and informed public communication strategies that focus on prevention (soft approach), not punishment alone (hard

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<sup>63</sup> Bintasari, Nuriyeni Kartika: "Countering Terrorism in Indonesia: A Study of Policy in Counter Terrorism Measures of BNPT", Dissertation, The State University of New Jersey, (May 2022).

<sup>64</sup> Kusuma, Ardli Johan, et al.: "The Construction of the Indonesian Government's Repressive Counter-Terrorism Policy", *Otoritas: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, vol. 9, n° 2 (October 2019), pp. 107-125.

<sup>65</sup> Sari, Benedicta D. A. C.: "Media Literasi dalam Kontra Propaganda Radikalisme dan Terorisme melalui Media Internet", *Jurnal Prodi Perang Simetris*, vol. 3, n° 1 (April 2017), pp. 15-31.

<sup>66</sup> Nujuliyani, Shelvy, et al.: "New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Strategy for Build Positive Peace to Support National Security", *International Journal of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (IJHESS)*, vol. 3, n° 1 (August 2023), pp. 185-191.

<sup>67</sup> Saptono, Yulian Tri, et al.: "Strengthening Regional Security Through The Establishment of The ASEAN Counter Terrorism and Peacekeeping Task Force Led by Indonesia In Collaboration With The United States", *International Journal of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (IJHESS)*, vol. 3, n° 1 (August 2023), pp. 224-234.



approach).<sup>68</sup>

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study set out to investigate the factors contributing to the sustained resilience of Islamic State (IS) supporter movements in Indonesia—an issue of pressing national and regional importance given the persistence of jihadist networks despite years of counter-terrorism efforts. Employing a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach, the research uncovered 13 resilience factors, which were systematically categorized into nine dominant and four supporting elements based on their prevalence, function, and interrelationships.

The dominant factors—including recruitment, training, ideological indoctrination, network security, and digital propaganda—were shown to constitute the core structural and ideological infrastructure of IS networks. These factors reflect the group’s long-term investment in sustaining a loyal base, preserving doctrinal coherence, and developing operational capabilities that can withstand fragmentation, surveillance, and leadership loss. These findings affirm that IS in Indonesia, while territorially dislodged and organizationally fractured, continues to function through deeply rooted ideological and organizational systems. The issues of intolerance, political Islam, and the challenges of deradicalization in Indonesia also play a significant role in this context. Rising intolerance in some segments of society creates a fertile environment for extremist ideologies. Dissatisfaction with government policies and the marginalization of certain groups are often exploited by terrorist networks to recruit new members. Furthermore, the polarized nature of political Islam can exacerbate the situation, with certain groups exploiting social discontent for political gain. Deradicalization challenges in Indonesia are also complex, requiring a holistic, community-based approach to address the root causes of radicalization. In contrast, the supporting factors—such as local and transnational networks, adaptability, and acts of terror—enable these movements to remain agile, locally embedded, and strategically responsive to shifting environments. Though less uniformly present across all informants, these factors act as buffers and reinforcements, allowing IS supporter cells to reemerge, regroup, and repurpose resources under pressure.

The heatmap visualization (Figure 2) and response distribution data (Table 3) illustrate that resilience is not monolithic. Rather, it exists on a spectrum, with some individuals aligning closely with structured ideological systems and others drawing primarily on flexible community or transnational ties. This dual-layered model—of a rigid ideological core supported by an adaptable operational shell—explains how IS supporter movements have endured despite thousands of arrests, leadership decapitations, and increasing digital surveillance. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the evolving literature on terrorism and resilience by framing IS networks as social ecosystems rather than static organizational entities. These ecosystems rely not only on ideology and violence but also on strategic learning, social capital, and narrative control. The resilience observed is thus not incidental—it is constructed, cultivated, and contextually sustained. The practical implications of these findings are far-reaching. They call for more integrated and preventive counter-terrorism strategies that move beyond reactive force and engage with the underlying ideological, social, and digital frameworks that sustain extremism. This includes a stronger focus on family- and community-based prevention, smarter digital engagement, cross-border cooperation, and the development of rehabilitation and reintegration programs that are psychologically informed and socially contextualized.

While this research offers new insights into the architecture of IS resilience in Indonesia, it also opens several avenues for further inquiry. Future studies could explore the gendered

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<sup>68</sup> Arrobi, Mohammad Zaki., *op.cit.*



dimensions of IS resilience, the role of prison networks in radicalization and recruitment, or comparative resilience mechanisms among other extremist groups such as JI or pro-Al-Qaeda factions. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking individual trajectories over time would provide valuable understanding of how resilience transforms across life stages, contexts, and after state intervention.

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