



THE CHALLENGE OF TERRORISM REGENERATION: What Schools Do Terrorist Offenders Select for Their Children?

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Abstract: Children's education plays a crucial role in preventing radicalization. By fostering analytical thinking and encouraging an evidence-based approach, education can help children develop the ability to discern and challenge extremist narratives. This study aims to investigate the terrorist offenders' children's education in Indonesia through qualitative and quantitative research designs. By interviewing terrorist prisoners, holding discussions with former prisoners, and reviewing legal documents of terrorism cases such as profiling and assessment reports, this study tries to identify the regeneration of terrorist networks in Indonesia. The study examines the schools terrorist offenders (as decision makers) select for their children. The findings of this study show that only 18% of prisoners' children are sent to schools not associated at all with terrorist organizations. In comparison, prisoners hide 29%, 14% are sent to schools less affiliated with terrorist organizations, and 13% are in schools very affiliated with terrorist organizations. This indicates distressing information that the indoctrination of youngsters persists within terrorist networks in Indonesia. Moreover, there are correlations between several independent (e.g., offenders' sentences, risk levels, and affiliations) and dependent variables (e.g., children's trauma, categories of school, orientations, and school networking). The study may help predict the continuation and recurrence of terrorism.

Keywords: terrorism; children; education; extremism; radicalism; school.

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Introduction

TERRORISTS' IDEOLOGY carries a significant threat to global peace and security. Its supporters employ violent means to propagate their misrepresented beliefs, targeting innocent civilians and spreading fear. Terrorist extreme ideology refers to the acceptance and implementation of radical beliefs that rationalize the use of violence and terror to reach ideological objectives. It often arises from complex socio-political contexts and can be driven by numerous factors such as religious fundamentalism, political grievances, or ethno-nationalist aspirations.¹ These ideologies exploit vulnerable individuals, indoctrinating them with a distorted worldview that justifies violence against innocent people. Studies have shown that people are drawn toward these ideologies due to a combination of personal, social, and ideological factors.² Personal/subjective grievances, feelings of marginalization, and a longing for identity and belonging can make individuals prone to extremist recruitment tactics. Additionally, social media and online platforms play a significant role in the distribution of extremist ideologies and facilitating recruitment.³

In terms of manifestations and tactics, extreme terrorist ideology is often displayed through acts of terrorism, including bombings, assassinations, and hostage takings. These acts are planned to instill fear, create chaos, and advance the ideological objectives of the perpetrators. Furthermore, the use of propaganda and radicalization strategies benefits sustaining and expanding the influence of extremist ideologies.⁴ The deliberate targeting of civilian populations emphasizes the disregard for human life and the complete brutality associated with these ideologies. In terms of global impact, the consequences of terrorist extreme ideology are far-reaching and devastating. Immediate effects include loss of life, physical injuries, and psychological trauma inflicted upon victims.

¹ Alex P. Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021).

² John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2020).

³ J. M. Berger, *Extremism* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2021).

⁴ Simon Cottee, *The New Extremism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

Moreover, the perpetuation of extremist ideologies can contribute to social divisions, the erosion of trust, and the proliferation of violence within affected communities.⁵ At the broader level, terrorist activities can destabilize nations, disrupt economies, and foster a climate of fear and insecurity globally.

Indonesia has faced the issue of terrorist offenders, facing significant challenges in countering their actions and preventing future attacks. A range of factors, including religious extremism, political grievances, and separatist aims, often drive terrorist offenders in Indonesia.⁶ Socioeconomic grievances, religious fundamentalism, political marginalization, and the influence of extremist ideologies spread through online platforms have been identified as significant drivers.⁷ Furthermore, the historical context of conflicts, such as in Poso and Ambon, has left long-term grievances that can fuel radicalization.⁸ The majority of the offenders in Indonesia hold a radical interpretation of Islam inspired by ideologies such as Salafi jihadism. The magnetism of these ideologies lies in the promise or notion of a utopian society, the rebuilding of the Islamic caliphate, or the addressing of perceived social injustices. Terrorist offenders in Indonesia engage in various recruitment strategies to increase their influence. The formation of secret/underground networks has aided in the recruitment of vulnerable individuals who are sympathetic to extremist ideologies.⁹

Despite significant progress, Indonesia continues to face challenges in dealing with terrorist offenders. These challenges

⁵ A.W. Kruglanski et al., "Terrorism's Persistent Appeal," *Annual Review of Psychology* 72 (2021): 785–811.

⁶ A.J. Jongman, *Contemporary Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Motivations, Capabilities, and Responses* (New York: Routledge, 2020); R.A. Nasution, "Typology of Indonesian Terrorism Offenders and the Motivation behind the Terrorist Acts," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 8, no. 2 (2020): 167–96.

⁷ A.M. Ali, *The Rise and Fall of the Indonesian Jihadi Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁸ E Bakker and de Graf B, "Justification of Violence among Homegrown Jihadists: A Comparison between Indonesia and the Netherlands," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 5 (2019): 2–24.

⁹ D.A. Ranard, "Exploring the Social Media Usage of Indonesian Pro-ISIS Extremist Groups," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 2 (2019): 179–200.

consist of the ever-evolving nature of extremist ideologies, the development of new recruitment methods, and the risk of foreign fighters returning from conflict regions.¹⁰ Moreover, socioeconomic aspects such as poverty, inequality, and lack of education can contribute to the vulnerability of individuals to extremist ideologies in Indonesia. Research has shown that many offenders come from marginalized backgrounds, lack educational opportunities, and have experienced social exclusion.¹¹ Moreover, the involvement of women and children and the use of family networks in terrorist activities highlight the evolving nature of terrorist offender profiles in Indonesia.¹²

The study on the indoctrination of terrorists' children in Indonesia holds substantial importance in comprehending the multifaceted impact of terrorism on society. These children often experience tremendous challenges that can influence their beliefs, behaviors, and future trajectories.¹³ Moreover, the experiences of children living with terrorist offenders can have profound psychological and emotional consequences. Witnessing violence, loss, and traumatic events can lead to long-term psychological scars.¹⁴ Growing up in an environment where violence and radical beliefs prevail, these children may be exposed to indoctrination

¹⁰ E Bakker, T Choudhury, and I Duyvesteyn, "The Long Tail: The End of the Jihadi Terrorist Threat in Indonesia?," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15, no. 1 (2021): 71–78.

¹¹ S Rahmat, "The Processes and Experiences of Radicalization and De-Radicalization among Indonesian pro-ISIS Returnees," *Journal of Terrorism Research* 8, no. 1 (2017): 1–13. See also Mundi Rahayu, "The Discourse of Radicalism and Family Roles in Standing against Radicalism Represented in Garin Nugroho Film 'Mata Tertutu,'" *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 20, no. 1 (2020): 105–19, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v20i1.5790>.

¹² R. Gunaratna, T.S. Tan, and R. Sukma, *A Woman's Place in the Jihad: Exploring Gender and Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2019); Zora Arfina Sukabdi, "Terrorism Risk Assessment to Children: A Study in Poso," *Journal of Psychology and Behavior Studies (JPBS)* 1, no. 1 (2021): 47–64, <https://doi.org/10.32996/jpbs.2021.1.1.7>.

¹³ Sukabdi, "Terrorism Risk Assessment to Children: A Study in Poso."

¹⁴ J. Glover, L. Devine, and J. Hawdon, "The Social Ecology of Child Victims of Terrorism: Understanding Exposure, Trauma, and Psychosocial Adjustment," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 51 (2020): 101397.

and radicalization processes.¹⁵ These children may be at risk of perpetuating extremist ideologies or becoming victims of recruitment by terrorist groups themselves.¹⁶

Children's education plays a crucial role in preventing radicalization and countering the influence of extremist ideologies. By providing quality education that promotes critical thinking, tolerance, and understanding, societies can empower children to resist the allure of radicalization. Quality education equips children with critical thinking skills, enabling them to critically question and evaluate information. By fostering analytical thinking and encouraging an evidence-based approach, education can help children develop the ability to discern and challenge extremist narratives.¹⁷ Critical thinking empowers children to analyze propaganda, identify logical fallacies, and resist manipulation by extremist ideologies. Understanding the social dynamics and challenges they face upon reintegration into mainstream society can inform the creation of inclusive programs that promote their acceptance, education, and vocational opportunities.¹⁸

Against this backdrop, this study examines the regeneration of terrorist networks. On one hand, being the child of a person convicted of terrorism may expose the child to violence and radical beliefs. This is supported by some findings that terrorist groups implement extreme ideologies and authoritarian practices, including dictatorship-like parenting, to indoctrinate and radicalize their children.¹⁹ On the other hand, being the child of a

¹⁵ A Silke, "The Intergenerational Transmission of Terrorism," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 175–91.

¹⁶ P.R. Neumann, "Children of the Caliphate: A Sobering Analysis of Children Born onto the Islamic State Battlefield," 2020.

¹⁷ F.M. Moghaddam, *Education for Critical Thinking in A World of Misinformation. In Global Education Policy and International Development* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

¹⁸ A. Kundnani, B. Hayes, and A. Smith, "The Children of Islamic State: The Ongoing Impact of Trauma, Displacement, and Brainwashing" (King's College London, 2019).

¹⁹ C. N. Altier, M. B., Thoroughgood and J. G. Horgan, "Turning Away from Terrorism: Lessons from Psychology, Sociology, and Criminology," *Journal of*

terrorist offender may not always expose the child to violence and radical beliefs since the father has been detained at a correctional center/exposed to rehabilitation programs/learned from mistakes. Hence, children's schooling can also be a hope/prevention tool against extremism/terrorism (breaking the cycle of violence within terrorist offenders' families) as education fosters analytical thinking, encourages evidence-based approach, and helps children develop the ability to discern and challenge extremist narratives.²⁰ The null hypothesis of this study is that being the children of terrorist offenders does not always expose them to radical beliefs/extremism, so they still have a chance to join schools unaffiliated with terrorism networks. The alternative hypothesis is that fewer children (below 50%) have a chance to join schools unaffiliated with terrorism networks.

Studying the upbringing/education of terrorists' children is crucial for comprehending inter-generational ideological transmission, the perpetuation of terrorist networks, and the psychological impact and trauma they endure. Moreover, studying these children's experiences can aid in the development of preventive measures to address the underlying factors that contribute to their vulnerability to extremist influences. In other

Peace Research 51, no. 5 (2014): 647–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314535946>; J. Glover, L. Devine, and J. Hawdon, "The Social Ecology of Child Victims of Terrorism: Understanding Exposure, Trauma, and Psychosocial Adjustment," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 51 (2020): 101397; John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-Radicalization Programs," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 2 (March 11, 2010): 267–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546551003594748>; Wawan Edi Prastiyo and I Ketut Rai Setiabudhi, "Children Involvement in Terrorism Activities: Perpetrator or a Victim? (A Study in the Circle of Violence)," *PADJADJARAN Jurnal Ilmu Hukum (Journal of Law)* 8, no. 2 (2021): 213–31, <https://doi.org/10.22304/pjih.v8n2.a3>; A. Speckhard and K Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs* (Advances Press, 2012); Sukabdi, "Terrorism Risk Assessment to Children: A Study in Poso"; Max Taylor and John Horgan, "A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Process in the Development of the Terrorist," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no. 4 (2006): 585–601, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550600897413>.

²⁰ Moghaddam, *Education for Critical Thinking in A World of Misinformation. In Global Education Policy and International Development*.

words, this study may also help in predicting the continuation of the cycle of violence, breaking the cycle, and developing effective reintegration and preventive strategies. By detecting terrorist offenders' children's experience of indoctrination and potential paths to violent extremism, counterterrorism practitioners and children's experts may collaborate to propose important policies and/or design appropriate interventions for these children to avoid radicalism and promote their resilience/positive development counteracting any negative impact of their upbringing. Furthermore, this study also aims to understand the correlations between several variables of interest, including parents' risk levels, sentences, prisoners' affiliations, categories of schools chosen by parents, school networks, children's trauma, and the ideological orientation of schools.

This study has mixed both quantitative and qualitative design of the study and involved terrorist offenders in several correctional centers in Indonesia as participants. As terrorist offenders as parents are the ones who 'control' decisions on the schools for their children, this study investigates terrorist prisoners' children's education set up by their parents. Thus, this study examines the experiences, vulnerabilities, and potential pathways to radicalization of offenders' children. By interviewing terrorist prisoners in Indonesia in schools they set up for their children, this study tries to investigate how the regeneration of terrorist networks operates. The novelty of this study lies in the mapping of terrorist offenders' choice of schooling for their children in Indonesia, as there is limited information/study about this matter due to the nature of terrorist groups/networks' spread of ideology (working in undercover).²¹

Literature indicates that terrorist organizations utilize extreme ideologies and authoritarian tactics, similar to dictatorial parenting, to indoctrinate and radicalize their young children.²²

²¹ Wawan Edi Prastiyo and I Ketut Rai Setiabudhi, "Children Involvement in Terrorism Activities: Perpetrator or Victim? (A Study on the Circle of Violence)," *PJIH* 8, no. 2 (2021): 213–31; Kirsten E. Schulze, "The Surabaya Bombings and the Evolution of the Jihadi Threat in Indonesia," *CTCSENTINEL* 11, no. 6 (2018): 1–6.

²² Altier, M. B., Thoroughgood and Horgan, "Turning Away from Terrorism: Lessons from Psychology, Sociology, and Criminology"; John Horgan and Kurt

Their upbringing within these environments is characterized by strict control, manipulation, and indoctrination, aiming to foster adherence to their extremist ideologies. Authoritarian parenting within these contexts involves the imposition of rigid rules, severe discipline, controlling behavior, instilling absolute obedience to authority figures, and the suppression of independent thinking.²³ Children raised in such environments are subjected to intense indoctrination from an early age, where critical thinking and alternative viewpoints are actively discouraged or even punished. These children are isolated from diverse influences and education systems that might challenge the extremist ideology, ensuring their exposure solely to the group's doctrines.²⁴ These children are deprived of autonomy and critical thinking, and their psychological development is stunted as a result.²⁵ One of the key elements of dictatorship parenting within terrorist groups is the use of fear and intimidation to maintain control. Children are

Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of de-Radicalization Programs," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 2 (2010): 267–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546551003594748>; Speckhard and Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs*; Taylor and Horgan, "A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Process in the Development of the Terrorist."

²³ Altier, M. B., Thoroughgood and Horgan, "Turning Away from Terrorism: Lessons from Psychology, Sociology, and Criminology"; Horgan and Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of de-Radicalization Programs"; Speckhard and Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs*; Taylor and Horgan, "A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Process in the Development of the Terrorist."

²⁴ A Berko, "The Radicalization Process and Indicators of Terrorism among the Population," *International Studies* 18 (2015): 179–92; John Horgan, "Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2, no. 4 (2008): 3–8; Speckhard and Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs*.

²⁵ Speckhard and Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs*.

subjected to harsh discipline and punishment if they deviate from the group's prescribed behavior or express dissenting views. This creates an atmosphere of fear and reinforces adherence to the extremist ideology, as children become afraid to challenge the authority of the group. Moreover, indoctrination plays a pivotal role in shaping the beliefs and values of these children.²⁶

Terrorist groups exploit the vulnerability and impressionability of children by distorting their perceptions of the world and forming trauma, often through propaganda, distorted religious teachings, and exposure to violent materials. They also manipulate parental figures or authority figures within the organization to exert control, promoting an environment of fear and unquestioning obedience.²⁷ Parents from terrorist groups often coerce children from an early age into military training, teach extremist propaganda, and encourage them to idolize violence as a means of achieving the group's goals.²⁸ The consequences of indoctrination are multifaceted and severe. These children are at risk of perpetuating violence and extremism as they grow older, posing a threat to themselves and society. Moreover, children raised under authoritarian parenthood in terrorist groups experience psychological trauma, emotional distress, and a distorted worldview that glorifies violence and justifies heinous acts. Furthermore, these children are stripped of their innocence and manipulated into becoming potential recruits or perpetrators of violence, perpetuating cycles of radicalization and conflict.²⁹

²⁶ Horgan and Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of de-Radicalization Programs."

²⁷ Berko, "The Radicalization Process and Indicators of Terrorism among the Population"; Horgan, "Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation"; Speckhard and Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs*.

²⁸ Horgan and Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of de-Radicalization Programs"; Speckhard and Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs*.

²⁹ Speckhard and Akhmedova, *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & Martyrs*.

While research in this area is challenging due to limited access to affected people (including children) and regions and the secretive nature of terrorist groups, studies on the impacts of authoritarian parenting in other contexts emphasize the detrimental effects on child development, mental health, and social integration. Children exposed to such coercive upbringing are at risk of long-term psychological and emotional harm, as well as perpetuating extremist ideologies.³⁰ Nevertheless, education and teaching of children are critical aspects of their development and in countering unfavorable upbringing. Parents' decisions about their children's education are influenced by a range of factors, including educational philosophies, socioeconomic status, cultural values, and community expectations.³¹ Parents' decisions about education can have significant powers on children.³² Moreover, parents' decisions can influence a child's motivation, self-esteem, future educational choices, and career paths.³³

For methods, this study applied both quantitative and qualitative research designs to understand the indoctrination that happened to the children of terrorist offenders in Indonesia and the correlation between variables. The study interviewed parents (Terrorist offenders) as decision-makers for the lives of their children.

The investigated independent variables are prisoners' *Sentences* (IV1), *Risk levels* (IV2), and *Affiliations* (IV3). The dependent variables are children's *Categories of school chosen by parents* (DV1), *School networking chosen by parents* (DV2), *Trauma*

³⁰ Speckhard and Akhmedova.

³¹ Diana Baumrind, "The Influence of Parenting Style on Adolescent Competence and Substance Use," *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 11, no. 1 (1991), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431691111100>; J. Ell, "School Choice as Cultural Capital," *Educational Policy* 20, no. 1 (2006): 141–55; S.L. Pong, L Hao, and E Gardner, "The Roles of Parenting Styles and Social Capital in the School Performance of Immigrant Asian and Hispanic Sdolescents," *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 4 (2005): 928–50.

³² Horgan and Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of de-Radicalization Programs."

³³ W.C. Man and L.H. Bikos, "Educational and Vocational Aspirations of Minority and Female Students: A Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 78, no. 2 (2000): 186–94.

(DV3), and *Ideology orientation chosen by parents* (DV4). The study's null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between the independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variables (DV). The primary data source is from interviews with prisoners.

This study involved 64 terrorist prisoners (59 males and five females), 10 former prisoners (9 males and one female), and former prisoners' wives (10 females) as participants. The participants ranged in age from 20 to 51 years old. The prisoners were housed in several prisons across various cities and islands in Indonesia, including Nusakambangan Island, Bogor, Bandung, Semarang, and Yogyakarta. The prisoners' risk levels ranged from low to high risk, with sentences ranging from 3 years to death sentence. Their affiliations were Jamaah Ansyarud Daulah (JAD), Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), and Negara Islam Indonesia (NII). Table 1 describes the demographic data of the prisoners interviewed.

Table 1. Data of the Prisoners Interviewed

Characteristics	Category	Total	Percentage
Age of Prisoners	20-30 Years	7	10%
	31-40 Years	21	30%
	41-50 Years	31	44%
	> 50 Years	10	14%
	N/A	1	1%
Correctional Centers	Batu	6	9%
	Permisan	4	6%
	Karanganyar	13	19%
	Pasir Putih	12	17%
	Besi	11	16%
	Kembangkuning	5	7%
	Narkotika Gunung Sindur	10	14%
	Khusus Gunung Sindur	2	3%
	LPP Semarang	1	1%
	LPP Yogyakarta	2	3%
	LPP Bandung	2	3%
	N/A	2	3%
Prisoners' Sentences	< 3 Years	2	3%
	3-5 Years	41	59%
	5,1 – 10 Years	9	13%
	10,1 – 20 Years	3	4%
	For life	7	10%
	Death Sentence	5	7%
	N/A	3	4%

Prisoners' Risk Levels	Low	30	43%
	Medium	5	7%
	High	28	40%
	Under assessment	4	6%
	N/A	3	4%
Prisoners' Affiliations	Jamaah Anshorud Daulah	40	57%
	Jamaah Islamiyah	12	17%
	Others	5	7%
	Under assessment	11	16%
	N/A	2	3%
Prisoners' Occupation Before Detained	Employees	11	16%
	Business	37	53%
	None (No Occupation)	15	21%
	Others	5	7%
	N/A	2	3%

The seven researchers in this study conducted interviews, FGDs (Focused Group Discussions), and reviews of legal documents of prisoners/participants and their families/children. Before data collection, technical meetings were held online with the National Police and correctional officers to arrange the detailed preparation of this study. The arrangement of preparation, correspondence, and agencies' security screening took more than six months, as there were bureaucratic steps and technicalities to be completed in conducting this study. Access to the prisoners was given by the National Police (The Unit of Special Detachment 88) and Correctional Centers under several circumstances, such as no pictures of prisons/facilities and faces of prisoners being published on social media; all researchers needed to sign a commitment letter of confidentiality and integrity, documents would be reviewed only on "the spot"/during data collection at prisons (not to be brought home/outside prisons), and not using the data of this study for other purposes. Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) on the 22nd of May, 2023.

All prisoners agreed to participate in this study after being approached by law enforcement agencies (e.g., correctional officers and police). Verbal consent was obtained from prisoners for participation in this study. Prisoners went voluntarily to the

interview room. This also shows their willingness to participate in this study. The interviews and reviews on legal documents of prisoners (e.g., profiling and risk/need assessment reports) were held from June to July 2023 and explored information on prisoners' visions and missions for their children, education planned for their children, children's trauma, concerns, ideology, finance, affiliation, school orientation, and wishes/hopes. The interviews were held in Batu, Permisan, Karanganyar, Pasir Putih, Besi, Kembang Kuning, Gunung Sindur, Semarang, Yogyakarta, and Bandung correctional centers. Interview guidelines can be found in Table 2. During the interview, prisoners avoided answering some questions by not responding, distracting researchers, or changing the subject (a strategy known as '*taqiyya*' in terrorist networks); hence, researchers categorized this behavior as 'hiding information.' Furthermore, the FGD/Focused Group Discussion was held on the 10th and 11th of August 2023 by involving former terrorist prisoners and explored information about the former prisoners' visions and missions on their children, children's education, trauma, concerns, ideology, finance, affiliation, school orientation, and wishes/hopes.

For analysis, the researchers in this study used descriptive statistics, reviewing frequencies and matrices of variables (with *Chi-squares*) to investigate the correlations between variables (Table 2). Children analyzed in this study were the ones under 18 years old, following the formal definition of "child" by the Indonesian Government. This study also applied content analysis of former prisoners' statements during FGD.

Table 2. Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent Variables (IV)	Dependent Variables (DV)
Prisoners' sentences (IV1)	Categories of school chosen by parents for children (DV1)
Prisoners' risk levels (IV2)	School networking chosen by parents (DV2)
	Children's trauma (DV3)
Prisoners' affiliations (IV3)	School's ideological orientation chosen by parents (DV4)

Discussion

The findings of this study have shown that in terms of prisoners’ commitment to comply with government rules and regulations, unfortunately, not all children (N=211) are registered in the government information system: only 81% of children (171 of 211) are registered in government population administration information system, and only 78% (164 of 211) have birth certificates (Table 3).

Table 3. Offenders’ Children in Indonesian Population Information System

Characteristics	Category	Total	Percentage
Children who are mentioned in the family ID card	Have	171	81%
	Do not have	11	5%
	Under registering process	11	5%
	Unknown by the prisoners/fathers	9	4%
	N/A (Unknown by officers)	9	4%
Children who have birth certificates	Have	164	78%
	Under registering process	15	7%
	Unknown by the prisoners/fathers	14	7%
	Do not have	9	4%
	N/A (Unknown by officers)	9	4%

Offenders’ Children’s Schooling

In terms of schooling, only 80 children (38%) are sent to schools not affiliated at all with terrorist organizations. In comparison, 62 children (29%) are covered/hidden by prisoners, 29 (14%) are sent to schools less affiliated with terrorist organizations, and 28 (13%) are in schools very affiliated with terrorist organizations (Table 4). These results reveal concerning evidence that the indoctrination of children continues within terrorist networks in Indonesia. Furthermore, only 77 of the total children (36%) are directed to discontinue the cycle of extremism

throughout their education as they are sent to pro-government/moderate schools. The findings have shown that the alternative hypothesis of this study is proven, where less than 50% of prisoners' children have a chance to join schools unaffiliated at all with extremist networks. Sixty-eight children are in primary school, 48 are in preschool, and 41 are in junior high school; 47 children are sent to state/government schools, and 45 are sent to *Pesantren*/Islamic boarding schools (Table 4).

Table 4. Offenders' Children's Schooling

Characteristics	Category	Total	Percentage
School networking	Not affiliated with terrorist organizations	80	38%
	Hidden	62	29%
	Less affiliated with terrorist organizations*	29	14%
	Very affiliated with terrorist organizations**	28	13%
	N/A	12	6%
School's ideological orientation for children	Hidden	95	45%
	Pro-nation/non-extremism	77	36%
	Extremism	39	18%
Children's school levels	Primary school	68	32%
	Preschool	48	23%
	Junior high school	41	19%
	Hidden	21	10%
	Senior high school	20	9%
	Kindergarten	13	6%
Categories of school	Hidden	50	24%
	State school	47	22%
	<i>Pesantren</i>	45	21%
	<i>Kuttab</i>	35	17%
	Homeschooling	24	11%
	Madrasah	10	5%

*: intelligence information and communities suggest its affiliation with terrorism networks, yet no police report/forensic evidence

** : intelligence information, communities, and police/forensic evidence report its affiliation with terrorist networks

Qualitative data analysis reveals that former offenders have chosen specific ways of life and educational approaches for their

children. The quotes of former offenders as participants are described in the following statements:

“We avoid schools that teach Pancasila (Indonesian’s Constitution, which promotes unity in diversity among believers) for our children. Lessons about Pancasila are rubbish, non-Islamic”. (Participant 1 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion).

“My child was put in Pesantren to concentrate on his study. ... [] All of my children study in tahfiz school. ... [] My wife was supporting my children when I was in prison. She works as a teacher and does little business, such as selling snacks on a small counter at school. ... [] My children are very affected by my detainment. Child number three had the worst effect; she got trauma and was treated by my wife. My child heard that I was in prison from her friend. My neighbor then made the children feel better by bringing them to nice places they like to entertain them. I am glad nice neighbors surround us”. (Participant4 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion)

Offenders’ Children’s Supports

In terms of guardian and financial support, 171 children (81%) reside with their mother or father while their parents are incarcerated, and 182 children (86%) continue to receive financial support from their parents (Table 6). Furthermore, 68 children are directed by the prisoners to have certain professions (e.g., business people, doctors, engineers), whereas 25 children are directed to follow the path of their parents, which is to be religious militants (Table 5).

Table 5. Offenders’ Children’s Guardian and Financial Supports

Characteristics	Category	Total	Percentage
Children’s guardians	Father/Mother	171	81%
	Teachers in boarding school	18	9%
	N/A	10	5%
	Grandfather/Grandmother	6	3%
	Uncle/Aunty	2	1%
	Extended Family	2	1%
	Prisoners’ religious network	2	1%
Financial support for children	Father/Mother	182	86%
	N/A	13	6%
	Grandfather/Grandmother	7	3%
	Extended Family	4	2%
	Uncle/Aunty	2	1%
	Prisoners’ religious network	2	1%
	Scholarship	1	1%

Prisoners' wishes for children	Being a professional	68	32%
	N/A	48	23%
	Getting financial aids	44	21%
	Scholarship	26	12%
	Being activist/militants	25	12%

The results of qualitative data analysis suggest that the arrest of former offenders can lead to financial difficulties within the family. The quotes of former offenders as participants are described in the following statements:

"I have just got married for one year, then I was put in jail. My parents-in-law disapproved of my marriage, so I was struggling to convince my family that I was a good person... [] I was arrested in a mosque after I prayed Asr under the case of helping Noordin M Top. At first, I was mixed with other prisoners, but then I got my cell. I got a 14-year sentence... [] I have five children. We are struggling with money to support my children. Our business is up and down; it is not easy. The police or Densus 88 helps us in financial aid. ... [] I would like to say that the issues after release are two: finance and reintegration, as people reject us... cos we are labeled as a 'terrorist family'.... [] Government's assistance needs to be more sustainable as we are still struggling". (Participant1 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion)

"The biggest challenge is when our child was sick, no financial aid. However, I am glad all children are doing good at schools. ... [] I have never known my husband's activity. I talked to the police without tension, and there was no argument; everything was smooth... [] My struggle is in financial issues, to be honest. However, I never complain. I believe there will be a way out for my problems by God. ... [] Another issue is the lack of a father figure for my children, I think". (Participant5 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion)

Offenders' Children's Trauma

In terms of children's trauma, forty-two children of terrorist prisoners experience trauma due to arrestment and bullying from friends and neighbors, while ninety-eight children are not suffering from trauma. The results of qualitative data analysis show that former offenders have had challenging experiences during arrest, which affect children's trauma. The quotes of former offenders as participants are described in the following statements:

"My husband was arrested when he was riding a motorbike with me and my child. The motorbike fell in front of people on the street, and my child was crying, and it left trauma to my child. However, my neighbors are nice, they support us mentally". (Participant 14 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion).

"My son has anger management issue as he cannot accept his father being in jail." (Participant 6 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion).

"My child found out that I was arrested by her friend at school; they said, "Is your father arrested? At prison?" She was shocked, in trauma, and became a quiet kid ever since." (Participant 8 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion).

"We have a good relationship with police; thus, I do not see my children have trauma. ... [] During arrestment, the police were operating very silent, fast, and no drama in the neighborhood. I think that is the key, so my children experience no trauma." (Participant 9 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion).

"My son initially was a nice, well-behaved boy. However, since I had been arrested, he got bullied by other boys, and then he started to be very aggressive; he likes to fight. Now that I am out of jail; I try to calm him down to make him less aggressive." (Participant 3 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion).

"My daughter is easily sick after her father was arrested. Initially, she was a strong child who rarely fell ill. Now it is like her body's immune system does not function well; she easily gets flu and cough." (Participant 11 of FGD/Focused Group Discussion).

Correlations between Variables

Based on statistical evaluation, the findings show that there is a positive correlation between lengths of *Sentences* and 1) *Categories of school chosen by parents*, 2) *School networking chosen by parents*, 3) *children's Trauma*, and 4) *School's ideological orientation chosen by parents*. Moreover, there is a positive correlation between prisoners' *Risk levels* (of reoffending) and 1) *Categories of school*, 2) *School networking*, and 3) *School's ideological orientation chosen by parents* for children. Further, there is a positive correlation between prisoners' *Affiliations* and 1) *Categories of school*, 2) *School networking*, and 3) *School's ideological orientation chosen by parents* for children.

Table 6. Statistical Analysis for Variable of Sentences and Categories of School, School Networking, Trauma, and School's Ideological Orientation

Variable of Offenders	Variable of Children	P-value	Contingency Coefficient	Conclusions
Sentences	Categories of school	0,004	0,479	There is a positive

				correlation
	School networking	0,001	0,439	There is a positive correlation
	Trauma	< 0,001	0,502	There is a positive correlation
	School's Ideological Orientation	< 0,001	0,567	There is a positive correlation
	Categories of school	0,02	0,4	There is a positive correlation
Risk levels	School networking	< 0,001	0,432	There is a positive correlation
	School's Ideological Orientation	< 0,001	0,513	There is a positive correlation
	Categories of school	< 0,001	0,463	There is a positive correlation
Affiliations	School networking	< 0,001	0,489	There is a positive correlation
	School's ideological orientations	< 0,001	0,538	There is a positive correlation

Studying the children of terrorist offenders in Indonesia is vital for gaining insights into inter-generational transmission, understanding the psychological impact and trauma they endure, breaking the cycle of violence, and developing effective reintegration and preventive strategies. By comprehensively examining their experiences, vulnerabilities, and potential paths to radicalization, it becomes possible to implement targeted interventions that promote resilience, foster positive development, and contribute to the overall prevention of terrorism in Indonesian society. This research did not involve direct interaction with children. Instead, it relied on in-depth interviews with incarcerated terrorist offenders to understand their familial circumstances, including the conditions and environments

experienced by their children. The analysis focused on correlating offender characteristics, such as sentencing, risk levels, and ideological affiliations, with contextual variables related to their children, including school type, networking, trauma exposure (as reported by the parents), and the ideological orientation of the educational institutions attended.

This study is conducted to investigate the regeneration of terrorist networks or the spread of ideology to terrorist offenders' children. This study is aimed to understand the selection of schools made by terrorist prisoners for their children. On one hand, being the child of a person convicted of terrorism may expose the child to violence and radical beliefs. However, being the child of a person convicted of terrorism may not always expose the child to violence and radical beliefs since the father/parent has become a prisoner at a correctional center/been exposed to rehabilitation programs, and learned from experience/mistakes. Hence, this study is important to understand terrorist offenders' choice of schooling for their children and the regeneration or embryonic indoctrination within their family members. Moreover, this study tries to understand correlations between variables of parents (terrorist prisoners) and their children. This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It involved terrorist offenders from several correctional centers in Indonesia as participants. The null hypothesis of this study is that being the children of a person convicted of terrorism does not always expose the children to radical beliefs or extremism. Therefore, many of the offenders' children are fortunate to have a chance to join schools not affiliated with terrorism networks. The alternative hypothesis is that fewer of these children are fortunate to get a chance to join schools not affiliated with terrorism networks. The novelty of this study lies in the mapping of terrorist offenders' choice of schooling for their children in Indonesia, as there is minimal information/study about this issue as terrorist groups/networks work undercover.³⁴

³⁴ Prastiyo and Setiabudhi, "Children Involvement in Terrorism Activities: Perpetrator or Victim? (A Study on the Circle of Violence)"; Schulze, "The Surabaya Bombings and the Evolution of the Jihadi Threat in Indonesia."

Our analysis employed a multi-variable approach to assess how specific characteristics of children (e.g., school type, school networking, trauma history, and ideological exposure chosen by parents) correlate with key attributes of their parents. The statistical results reveal significant positive correlations between offender variables and contextual factors affecting children. For instance, the length of sentences imposed on terrorist offenders is significantly correlated with the categories of schools their children attend ($p=0.004$, $C=0.479$) as well as their school networking ($p=0.001$, $C=0.439$), trauma experiences ($p<0.001$, $C=0.502$), and ideological orientations of the schools the parents chose for their children ($p<0.001$, $C=0.567$). Similar patterns are observed with offenders' risk levels and affiliations; each shows a consistent and strong association with the children's educational and ideological environments.

The findings have shown that there is a potential for the regeneration of terrorism through the selection of schools by terrorists for their children. This finding confirms previous research, which states that extremists may seek schools that align with their beliefs, but this does not necessarily indicate involvement in terrorism.³⁵ Internal rifts within terrorist organizations and external pressure can lead to the targeting of children, potentially influencing their education choices.³⁶ In Southeast Asia, the regeneration of terrorism is also carried out by terrorist groups; for example, they use children's education as a strategy for regenerating terrorism.³⁷ Local schools in different

³⁵ M. Danish Shakeel and Patrick J. Wolf, "Does Private Islamic Schooling Promote Terrorism? An Analysis of the Educational Background of Successful American Homegrown Terrorists," *SSRN Electronic Journal* (United States, 2017).

³⁶ Yelena Biberman and Farhan Zahid, "Why Terrorists Target Children: Outbidding, Desperation, and Extremism in the Peshawar and Beslan School Massacres," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31, no. 2 (2019): 169–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2015.1135425>.

³⁷ Rohan Gunaratna, "Post 9/11 Terrorism Landscape in Southeast Asia – The Threat and Response," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Dynamics and Structures of Terrorist Threats in Southeast Asia, Held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia* (Virginia: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2005), 5–26; Noor Huda Ismail, "Al Qaeda's Southeast Asia, Jamaah Islamiyah and Regional Terrorism: Kinship and Family Links," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 5, no. 1 (2007): 2318.

neighborhoods also play a critical role in recruitment and can provide opportunities for ideological indoctrination.³⁸

Conclusion

THIS STUDY tries to map Indonesian terrorist offenders' choice of schooling for their children. The findings suggest the potential for the regeneration of terrorist networks through the choice of educational institutions by terrorists for their children. This is proven by the fact that less than 50 percent (only 18%) of prisoners' children have a chance to join schools unaffiliated at all with extremist networks. Quantitatively, there is a significant positive correlation between the offenders' sentence lengths, risk levels, and ideological affiliations with the types of schools, networks, and ideological orientations chosen for their children, and the trauma experienced by these children. Qualitatively, the narratives of former offenders reveal that many children were sent to *tahfiz* or ideologically conservative schools due to perceived safety, religious alignment, or limited access to other options amid financial hardship and social stigma. These choices were often made in the context of disrupted family structures, emotional distress, and community rejection following the offenders' arrest.

The participants of this study described that their children had experienced trauma, bullying/aggression from friends and neighbors, academic decline, and psychosomatic symptoms, particularly when the arrest and identity were exposed to the public. These insights demonstrate that the consequences of terrorism-related imprisonment extend beyond the offenders and could profoundly affect the developmental and ideological environment of their children. This highlights the importance of child-focused psychosocial interventions and inclusive educational strategies in preventing the intergenerational transmission of radicalization.

Despite its originality, this study has two limitations. The first is related to the challenges of bureaucracy and technicality in conducting this study, as it involved more than one security

³⁸ Ahmet S. Yayla, "Preventing Terrorist Recruitment through Early Intervention by Involving Families," *Journal For Deradicalization* 23 (2020): 134–88.

agency (e.g., preparation, correspondence, and the security screening of the agencies took more than six months). The second is related to the use of *taqiyya* (a religious doctrine to hide the true religious identity/views/ways) by terrorist groups' members/prisoners as a deceiving technique (indoctrinated by their leaders of networks) to answer any government representatives/assessors/researchers (perceived enemies) (see Hilmy, 2013). In terms of its implication, the study offers a meaningful contribution to the investigation of terrorist prisoners' children (as vulnerable people) through the eyes of parents/prisoners. More research involving more observers of the children of terrorist prisoners is needed to understand the issue of indoctrination and trauma of these children.

Moreover, regardless of its limitations, this study 'opens a gate' to understand the terrorist prisoners' children' wellbeing and how they are raised. Further study on these children's needs is recommended through various data collection techniques, including, field observation and interviews with teachers, guardians, neighbors, and children, and peers. Practical recommendation from the study is related to scholarship programs and financial aid for offenders' children who are sent to schools unaffiliated with terrorism networks. This is to reinforce/give rewards to parents who show efforts in breaking the cycle of extremism; thus, their children's schooling can be a 'symbol' of their success story in denouncing extremism.

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