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Security, Islam, and Indonesia

An Anthropological Analysis of Indonesia's National Counterterrorism Agency

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Abstract

This article provides an anthropological analysis of counterterrorism in Indonesia. In doing so, it draws on several complementary ideas which have shaped anthropological scholarship on security, addressing 'states of exception', 'securitization', 'governmentality', and 'human security'. The article develops its analysis through the first ethnographic study of Indonesia's national counterterrorism agency. Data comes from special access to the agency's facilities and events as well as interviews with agency personnel and ex-terrorists. The article also argues that post-9/11 security agencies frequently embrace a distinctive 'Muslim security strategy' built upon several contestable assumptions. Hence, it is assumed that Islam poses extraordinary threats to physical safety, human rights, and national identity. These threats justify suspending ordinary laws, making enormous investments in security measures, and extending such measures across the globe. It is also assumed that measures to prevent threats should focus on combating radical Islamic ideas, especially in educational institutions and on the Internet.

Keywords

security – terrorism – human rights – Islam – Indonesia – anthropology

The present article provides the first anthropological study of Indonesia's central counterterrorism agency, the Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT, National Counterterrorism Agency). Well-funded and politically powerful, the BNPT is responsible for overseeing Indonesia's general counterterrorism

strategy. Although part of this strategy involves repressing militant groups, a much larger part involves reshaping Indonesian religion, culture, education, law, Internet communication, and politics so as to eliminate the influence of 'radical' Islamic ideas and practices. The BNPT pursues this vast, security-oriented project by issuing directives to numerous government ministries and agencies, most of which have no obvious relationship to security concerns (for instance, the Kementerian Kesehatan [Ministry of Health] and the Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan [Ministry of Education and Culture]). As we will see, the BNPT holds that security, human rights, and Islamic reform are tightly related. Accordingly, the BNPT exerts significant influence over Indonesian discourses on these three important topics. I will argue that BNPT policies exemplify broader trends relevant to security, human rights, and Islamic reform in contemporary Muslim-majority countries, both inside and outside of South-east Asia.

The anthropological analysis I put forth has both ethnographic and theoretical components. The ethnographic component draws data from over 20 months of fieldwork in Southeast Asia,¹ focusing on an interlinked transnational network of government ministries, Islamic universities, human rights NGOs, and security agencies. During fieldwork, I was kindly assisted by numerous Indonesian governmental institutions² and was given special access to the BNPT (on the condition that I keep certain information confidential).³ Although the BNPT headquarters is generally off-limits to outsiders, I was introduced to its internal operations over the course of several visits. I also interviewed more than 20 BNPT employees and affiliates (many working for NGOs) and 15 ex-terrorists who had been processed by the BNPT, and I attended several BNPT events. It should be noted that, while some exceptions exist, limitations on access have severely restricted direct anthropological research on security agencies and related institutions.⁴ This is especially true with respect to counterterrorism agencies.

The theoretical component of my analysis draws on the 'anthropology of security'. This emerging field has developed in the two decades following the 9/11 attacks. It is methodologically unique in that it provides in-depth critical

1 The fieldwork involved nine separate research trips to Indonesia and Malaysia between 2014 and 2020.

2 This article would not have been possible without assistance and input from a large number of institutions, including the BNPT, the Kementerian Riset dan Teknologi, the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, and Universitas Pembangunan Nasional 'Veteran' Jakarta. I thank all these institutions (and others) for their help.

3 This article contains no information that the BNPT instructed me to keep confidential.

4 See, for instance, Gusterson 1996; Gill 2004; Foshier 2009; MacLeish 2013.

ethnographic studies of security-related issues, especially in non-Western contexts (see Goldstein 2010; Holbraad and Pedersen 2013:1–27; Low and Maguire 2019:1–30). Anthropological studies of security do not utilize a single comprehensive theoretical framework. Rather, they incorporate a number of key ideas from different thinkers, showing how these ideas complement one another and enable a deeper analysis of ethnographic material. Four of the most important ideas featured in such studies are ‘states of exception’, ‘securitization’, ‘governmentality’, and ‘human security’. It will be helpful to briefly review each of these ideas.

The idea of ‘states of exception’ derives from the work of Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben (2005). In a state of exception, political authorities temporarily suspend ordinary laws based on the claim that doing so is necessary to confront an ‘extraordinary’ threat (for instance, a terror attack, a natural disaster, or a health crisis). Anthropologists have explored how political authorities invoke states of exception in different social contexts, thereby creating justifications for eroding human rights, extending surveillance, and intervening in foreign countries. A recurring theme in such work is that purportedly ‘temporary’ and ‘limited’ suspensions of ordinary law tend to become permanent and progressively expand over time.⁵

The idea of ‘securitization’ derives from the Copenhagen School of security studies (see Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde 1998). The Copenhagen School holds that an issue becomes a security matter if it is perceived as an extraordinary threat that cannot be addressed through ordinary laws. For the Copenhagen School, simple, objective criteria for ranking threats do not exist. Consequently, political actors seek to portray particular threats as extraordinary in accordance with their norms and interests. This process is known as securitization. Anthropologists have sought to examine securitization in different social contexts.⁶

The idea of ‘governmentality’ derives from Foucault’s writings on security and governance (see Foucault 2007; Gros 2014). Somewhat inconsistent in his terminology, Foucault refers to modern governance as governmentality (or biopower/biopolitics). Foucault argues that in modern governance, states gather myriad types of statistical data on ‘populations’ (for instance, rates of crime and disease; education levels). States then use various techniques (‘apparatuses of security’) to adjust statistical phenomena in a desired direction, thereby reducing threats (for instance, decreasing crime or disease) and boosting prosperity (for instance, increasing lifespans, educational levels, or

5 Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Beckett 2013; Lutz 2014; Glück 2017; see also Masco 2014.

6 Bubandt 2005; Goldstein 2010:492; Holbraad and Pedersen 2013:1–27; see also Masco 2014:1–44.

per capita GDP). In reducing threats, states place great emphasis on preventative measures. It is assumed that threats are linked to a population's particular ideas, subjectivities, practices, and living conditions. Preventative measures seek to alter these things to statistically decrease threats. For instance, to statistically decrease the threat of sexually transmitted disease, it may be necessary to change ideas (for instance, teach that sex can result in life-threatening disease); to change practices (for instance, discourage unprotected sex); and to change living conditions (for instance, outlawing sex work or alleviating poverty, which makes sex work attractive). Notably, with further planning and technological advances, it is always possible to create new preventative measures, and hence they can potentially proliferate without limit (see Masco 2014; Glück 2017:303–4). For instance, in decreasing the threat of sexually transmitted disease, Internet communication provides new means of changing ideas (for instance, websites can teach about the dangers of sex) and medical technologies provide new means of changing practices (for instance, new forms of treatment and testing can be integrated into sexual activity). Anthropologists have sought to examine how modern governance ('governmentality') generates new technologies, techniques, forms of expertise, and institutional structures in different social contexts.⁷

The fourth idea is 'human security'. This idea has come to exert growing influence over international politics after being embraced by the United Nations in a famous 1994 human development report (see United Nations Development Programme 1994). Rejecting the conventional view that security concerns the protection of states, the 1994 report insists that security concerns the protection of individuals and their welfare. This means that anything that threatens human rights or development is a security threat. The report outlines seven major classes of threats, namely: threats to economic security (for instance, lack of sufficient income); food security (for instance, famine); health security (for instance, infectious diseases); environmental security (for instance, water pollution, tornados); personal security (for instance, domestic violence, torture); community security (for instance, destruction of identity, interethnic conflict); and political security (for instance, lack of free speech). By merging together discourses on security, human rights, and development, the notion of human security intentionally encourages greater institutional cooperation between state security agencies (for instance, military, police, intelligence) and NGOs concerned with promoting human rights and development. Thus, security agencies are encouraged to seek advice and assist-

7 See, for instance, Duffield 2007; Amar 2013; Samimian-Darash and Stalcup 2017; Low and Maguire 2019:1–30.

ance from NGOs in identifying and addressing threats to human rights and development. It is also expected that security agencies will use their distinctive capacities for surveillance, strategic planning, and repression to help further the agendas of NGOs. Anthropological studies have analysed human security as an increasingly important paradigm of governance (especially in the Global South).⁸

The present article seeks to make several contributions. Thus, as indicated above, it provides the first anthropological (or ethnographic) study of the BNPT. The article is theoretically distinctive in that it utilizes the four complementary ideas characteristic of anthropological scholarship on security, addressing states of exception, securitization, governmentality, and human security. The article also situates the BNPT within the broader context of the US-led Global War on Terror (GWOT), providing a critical perspective on this political project and highlighting parallels between the GWOT and the Cold War. Finally, the article introduces the concept of 'Muslim security strategy' as a way of describing how security agencies interact with Muslim populations in the context of the GWOT. Muslim security strategy is guided by several key assumptions. Thus, it is assumed that Islam (at least, in its 'radical' form⁹) poses extraordinary threats to physical safety, human rights, and national identity. These threats justify suspending ordinary laws, making enormous investments in security measures, and extending such measures across the globe. For instance, it is assumed that a country like the US cannot protect itself by simply implementing security measures within its borders. Rather, the US must ensure that security measures are also implemented in foreign countries, because a foreign inhabitant might plot an attack on the US homeland or US interests abroad (see Masco 2014:1–44; Glück 2017:303–4). Finally, Muslim security strategy assumes that preventative measures should focus on 'radical' Islamic ideas as a cause of terrorism and other threats. Such a perspective is not self-evident. For instance, from the colonial period until the present, 'radical' Muslim groups have tended to justify political violence in one of two ways. In some cases, violence has been justified as a response to non-Muslim military attacks and occupation of Muslim lands (for instance, in colonial Algeria, Sudan, and Indonesia or contemporary Iraq, Palestine, and Kashmir). In other cases, radical groups have used violence with the aim of establishing Islamic government by sharia law within Muslim lands.

8 Bubandt 2005; Duffield 2007; Eriksen, Bal, and Saleminck 2010; Amar 2013; see also Fassin and Pandolfi 2010:14–5; Gros 2014.

9 Notably, the notion of 'radical Islam' is quite broad and flexible, such that it is often applied to rather commonplace elements of Islamic religiosity (for instance, veiling, and a desire that state policies are somehow informed by religious values).

Consequently, from the colonial period until the present, many governments have endeavoured to prevent radical Muslim violence by scaling back military attacks/occupation (for instance, decolonization, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process) or permitting some application of sharia law (for instance, in colonial Algeria, Sudan, and Indonesia as well as many contemporary Muslim majority countries, including Indonesia and especially Aceh). By contrast, Muslim security strategy de-emphasizes preventative measures of this type in favour of combating ideas, giving special attention to educational institutions and the Internet.¹⁰ Such a stance is amenable to political actors who favour military attacks/occupation or who oppose any application of sharia law. The US government promotes Muslim security strategy across the world as part of the GWOT. I will argue that BNPT activities reflect Muslim security strategy.

1 Security and Radicalism in Indonesian History

Indonesian discourse on security and radicalism has its roots in the colonial era. Thus, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, liberal European states possessed empires which encompassed almost all of the Muslim world. Invoking a 'civilizing mission', the European empires claimed they were benefitting their Muslim subjects by bringing them 'civilizational progress'. The colonial notion of 'civilizational progress' roughly corresponds to the contemporary notion of 'development', which includes human rights as a component. What is now Indonesia was ruled by the Dutch empire. Compared to the British and French empires, the Dutch intervened less aggressively and directly in their Muslim subjects' lives, although Dutch policy moved closer to that of the British and French during the first half of the twentieth century (that is, the era of the Ethical Policy; see Kuitenbrouwer 1991; Steenbrink 2006; Locher-Scholten 2012).

For the European empires, several features of premodern/traditional Islam made it an obstacle to progress (Shinar 2006; Steenbrink 2006; Motadel 2014). These features can be described as follows. Premodern Islam prescribes a reli-

10 One might argue that the Indonesian government combines such preventative measures with efforts to combat ideas. Nevertheless, this view is not supported by the available evidence. As we will see, BNPT policy is deeply shaped by US GWOT policy. US GWOT policy is favourable to military attacks/occupation (for instance, Iraq, Afghanistan), and does not promote application of sharia law. Instead, US GWOT policy seeks to globalize programmes like Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), which focus on combating radical Islamic ideas.

gious law known as the 'sharia'. Although the sharia endorses some measure of individual liberty, it restricts this liberty by rules designed to preserve the Muslim community and various kinds of relationships (for instance, marriage, kinship, servitude to God). From the standpoint of contemporary liberalism, such restrictions infringe upon human rights. Premodern Islam also takes a particular stance on identity. An identity consists of a set of shared traits which define a distinctive community or nation. These traits might include shared blood, culture, religion, or some mixture thereof. Owing to universal psychological mechanisms, when individuals see themselves as part of a distinctive community with a shared identity, they are more likely to cooperate together and defend one another (Atran 2010:295–347; Boyer 2018:33–65). Premodern Islam teaches that all Muslims are one community/nation (*umma*) based on their shared religion (that is, their religious identity). Muslims are encouraged to cooperate in defending one another. They are also encouraged to establish one or more religious states which are based on Muslim identity, and which implement sharia law. Religious warfare, known as jihad, is prescribed as a means of defending Muslims and establishing Islamic states. Today, premodern ideas on sharia, jihad, Islamic states, and Islamic identity are frequently referred to as 'radical Islam' (known in Indonesian as *Islam radikal*). Muslims who adopt some or all of these ideas are called 'radical Muslims' (or 'Islamists'). 'Radical Islam' is a problematic, pejorative term. However, I will use it because it is central to GWOT-related political discourse in Indonesia and across the world.

The colonial era witnessed Muslim efforts to reform their religious tradition in accordance with the project of progress/development. The most liberal reformists argued that Islam did not require jihad, a religious state, or the implementation of traditional sharia law, and that Islam accepted all (or most) Western human rights norms. These views were justified through a reinterpretation of Islam's scriptural texts.

Indonesia gained independence from the Dutch around 1945. In 1998, the country made a transition to something approximating liberal democracy. The modern Indonesian state is an archipelago with an ethnically diverse population of about 270 million people, who belong to six major religious traditions. Indonesia is around 85% Muslim, but also has Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian minorities. Generally speaking, the government endorses religious tolerance and a liberal reformed interpretation of Islam. However, as a concession to radicals/Islamists, the government provides support for Islamic family courts, schools, and universities.

The government requires that all citizens accept the official state ideology of Pancasila, which champions Indonesian nationalism (*kebangsaan*). This

ideology defines national identity in terms of shared Indonesian culture and adherence to one of the country's six major religious traditions. These different religious traditions are interpreted as all endorsing belief in (something resembling) monotheism, which is enshrined as the first principle of Pancasila (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*). Common national identity, drawing on a common monotheistic religious orientation, is seen as essential to maintaining unity among Indonesia's diverse peoples, and suppressing the recurrent problem of island/regional separatist movements (for instance, in Papua, Aceh, and East Timor).

Between 1949 and 1963, the radical Muslim Darul Islam movement made unsuccessful efforts to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia by waging armed jihad warfare in West Java, South Sulawesi, and Aceh (Abuza 2007:13–36; Feillard and Madinier 2011:1–50). Since the 1970s, radicals have gained increasing influence across the Muslim world, including Indonesia. Over the past two decades, they have drawn special strength from the Internet and social media, which enable them to spread their ideas more easily (for instance, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Whatsapp) (see Eickelman and Anderson 2003; Duile 2017). The overwhelming majority of contemporary Indonesian radicals seek to advance their goals through peaceful means like preaching, education, and elections (for instance, Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia [Indonesian Party of Liberation], Front Pembela Islam [Defenders of Islam Front]). However, a very small number have taken up armed jihad warfare, engaging in terrorist attacks.¹¹ Attackers have targeted Westerners and Indonesian security personnel, accusing them of harming Muslims and/or preventing the establishment of an Islamic government that implements sharia law. Although radical movements in Indonesia (and elsewhere) invoke particular premodern ideas, such as sharia and jihad, they must be carefully distinguished from premodern Islamic social/political movements. This is partly because they use modern technologies (for instance, social media) and methods (for instance, participation in elections). However, it is also because they define themselves (largely) in relation to modernity—seeing their mission as preserving essential elements of Islam that are imperiled by the modern project of progress/development.

11 See Abuza 2007; Atran 2010; Feillard and Madinier 2011; Lamchek 2019.

2 A Critical Perspective on the GWOT

Initiated in response to the 9/11 attacks of 2001, the US-led GWOT involves heavy cooperation with dozens of allied governments across the world. The BNPT was established in 2010 to help Indonesia play its part in the GWOT. Consequently, the BNPT can only be analysed in the broader context of the GWOT.

As indicated above, studies in the anthropology of security embrace a critical approach, sceptically examining the assumptions underlying security-related discourses produced by governments and other actors. In assessing US discourse on the GWOT, such studies reject the doctrine of 'American exceptionalism' (see Gill 2004:1–22). Accordingly, they posit that the US engages in the same realpolitik tactics as other historical states, including the pursuit of power and resources, and the use of deception. More specifically, it is argued that the US is an informal military-political empire which makes false and exaggerated claims about the threat of Islamic terrorism to justify US intervention in Muslim countries (for instance, justifying intervention in Iraq and Iran by falsely claiming that they carried out the 9/11 attacks).¹² Such intervention increases US power/influence in these countries, thereby enabling the US to advance various strategic goals (for instance, controlling Muslim countries' energy resources or pressing Muslim countries to adopt the US-favoured liberal/capitalist development model).¹³

In the post-WWII era, US security strategy initially focused on the Cold War, which was then immediately followed by the GWOT. During the Cold War, US officials utilized falsehoods and deceptive propaganda to justify numerous US interventions across the world (for instance, in Chile and El Salvador in Latin America and Vietnam and Indonesia in Southeast Asia).¹⁴ A key element of US propaganda was manipulating public perception of threats by cultivating fear. Joseph Masco (2014) has argued that, during the Cold War era, US officials continually cultivated public fear of communism and Soviet nuclear attacks. He argues that, during the GWOT era, officials have done likewise with radical Islam and terrorist attacks.

12 See, for instance, Pelkmans and Machold 2011:67–9; Masco 2014:140–4. See also Zach Montague, 'Pence links Suleimani to 9/11. The public record doesn't back him', 3-1-2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/03/us/politics/pence-iran-factcheck.html> (accessed 9-1-2020).

13 Duffield 2007; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Keenan 2013; Masco 2014; Li 2020.

14 Gill 2004; Melvin 2018. See also Jess Melvin, 'Telegrams confirm scale of US complicity in 1965 genocide', 20-10-2017. <https://indonesiatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/telegrams-confirm-scale-of-us-complicity-in-1965-genocide/> (accessed 19-12-2019).

The US maintains an enormous military, which enables it to pursue an imperial foreign policy (Gill 2004:3), of which the GWOT is one element. It has been argued that a distinctive feature of US imperial foreign policy is avoidance of direct rule, and a preference for exerting influence through unequal partnerships with semi-autonomous institutions (Gill 2004:1–22). As part of the GWOT, the US has established partnerships with governments and NGOs in Muslim countries across the world (for instance, Indonesia), providing them with hundreds of billions of dollars in counterterrorism aid (see Stimson Center 2018). Such counterterrorism aid funds military/police repression of terrorist groups as well as non-violent initiatives to eliminate radical Islamic ideas from local religious, social, and political institutions (for instance, by reforming school curricula and by producing Internet content critical of radical Islam). Non-violent initiatives are carried out under a programme called ‘Countering Violent Extremism’ (CVE) (McCants and Watts 2012; Koehler 2017; Ucko 2018). In exchange for funding (partly in the form of counterterrorism aid), the US acquires increased influence over governments and NGOs. The US has also significantly shaped counterterrorism discourse at the United Nations. Due largely to US influence, in 2016, the United Nations formally recommended that countries across the world adopt CVE-type programmes (see Ucko 2018).

Although a critical approach to the GWOT has value, some key qualifications are in order. Thus, terrorism is a real phenomenon which engenders serious concerns among political actors within the US and Muslim countries (like Indonesia). These actors have a common interest in combating terrorism and cooperate to achieve this end. Moreover, in all Muslim countries (including Indonesia), there are many government officials and ordinary citizens whose concerns about radical Islam are not limited to the issue of terrorism. Rather, they are also concerned about the larger challenge posed by radical Islamic movements and their efforts to alter the social/political order. Many individuals with such concerns view the GWOT as an important tool in combating both radical Islamic terrorism and (non-violent) radical Islamic movements. These individuals are quite willing to embrace and even amplify GWOT operations—often in ways that go beyond what is demanded or desired by US officials.¹⁵ Hence, the GWOT is less a unilateral imperial imposition than an unequal cooperative partnership between the US and particular groups within Muslim countries.

Critics of the Indonesian government’s counterterrorism policies often claim that these policies are driven by the influence of the US and other West-

15 That is, by committing massive and flagrant human rights violations when targeting radical Islamic political opposition (for instance, the policies of Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi in Egypt and Muhammad bin Salman in Saudi Arabia).

ern countries. By contrast, Indonesian government officials (like those at the BNPT) consistently emphasize that their policies derive from the will of the Indonesian people, and from a global consensus on counterterrorism endorsed by the United Nations. There is some truth in both of these positions.

3 Counterterrorism and the State of Exception

In keeping with Muslim security strategy, Indonesian security agencies deem Islamic terrorism an extraordinary threat which justifies suspending ordinary laws. This development is closely tied to three Islamic terrorist attacks: the 9/11 attacks; the 2002 Bali bombings, which targeted nightclubs and killed 202 people, including 88 Australians; and the 2003 Jakarta Marriott Hotel bombing, which killed 12.

The US and other Western governments have used these attacks to justify extending their counterterrorism operations into Indonesia and cultivating a close relationship with Indonesian security agencies. While Indonesian security agencies have direct responsibility for counterterrorism operations in the country, they receive guidance and aid from Western governments.

Counterterrorism laws and agencies generally operate on the principle that terrorism is an extraordinary threat, which justifies a state of exception. Over the past two decades, the Indonesian state has sought to develop and expand these laws and agencies, thereby institutionalizing an ongoing state of exception.

Hence, in 2003, and again in 2018, the Indonesian government passed special counterterrorism legislation. This legislation treats terrorism as an extraordinary threat that cannot be handled using ordinary laws.¹⁶ Thus, unlike individuals suspected of ordinary crimes, terrorism suspects may be subjected to extensive surveillance and detained for lengthy periods without trial. In terrorism cases, wider use of the death penalty is permitted. Moreover, terrorism is defined to include any 'threat of violence' (*ancaman kekerasan*) in the form of 'speech, writing, pictures, symbols, or bodily movements' that 'can cause fear in individuals, or society at large, or which constrains the essential freedom of individuals or society' (*dapat menimbulkan rasa takut terhadap orang atau masyarakat secara luas atau mengekang kebebasan hakiki seseorang atau*

16 See Undang-Undang Nomor 5 tahun 2018; see also Brad Adams, 'Letter on Indonesia's new counterterrorism law', 20-6-2018. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/20/letter-indonesia-new-counterterrorism-law> (accessed 25-6-2019).

masyarakat).¹⁷ This broad and vague definition of terrorism provides potential grounds for prosecuting those who express ‘threatening’ ideas associated with radical Islam (for instance, ‘Those who insult Islam should be punished’¹⁸ and ‘There is no place for alcohol drinkers in Indonesia’).

Special counterterrorism legislation has been accompanied by new forms of policing. Hence, in 2003, the Indonesian government established an elite police counterterrorism squad called Detasemen Khusus 88 (Densus 88). Densus has been given over 200 million dollars in funding from Western countries, and has received special training and equipment from the US and Australia. It has an estimated staff of around 500.¹⁹ Densus strike forces wear distinctive black uniforms with black helmets and face masks. Jayson Lamchek (2019:241–74) argues that Densus frequently tortures terrorist suspects for information, engages in extrajudicial killings, tampers with evidence and interferes with defence lawyers to ensure easier convictions. These claims are based on extensive evidence collected by Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (Komnas HAM)—the Indonesian government’s own National Human Rights Commission. Komnas HAM acknowledges some excessive use of force on the part of Densus, and admits that between 2007 and 2016, at least 121 individuals arrested in counterterrorism operations died while in custody.²⁰ Lamchek (2019:241–74) suggests that because terrorism is seen as an extraordinary threat, Densus is permitted to transgress ordinary laws which forbid excessive force and tampering with the judicial process.

At the same time, the phenomena discussed by Lamchek must be placed in broader context. In counterterrorism operations of any type, there will inevitably be some behavior which intentionally or unintentionally violates human rights. Moreover, the US pushes all Muslim countries to take a hard line on terrorism—a stance that has encouraged human rights violations in these countries. Indonesian officials are (with some justification) proud of their record with regards to human rights. These officials (plausibly) assert that Indonesia’s counterterrorism policies, while imperfect, are quite restrained and compliant with human rights standards in comparison to policies prevalent in other Muslim countries (see e.g., Lamchek 2019:261–262).

17 See Undang-Undang Nomor 5 tahun 2018, Pasal 1, Ayat 1–4.

18 This sentiment was voiced in the famous 2017 Ahok case.

19 Tom Allard and Kanupriya Kapoor, ‘Fighting back: How Indonesia’s elite police turned the tide on militants’, 23-12-2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-security/fighting-back-how-indonesias-elite-police-turned-the-tide-on-militants-idUSKBN14CoX3> (accessed 25-6-2019).

20 Allard and Kapoor, ‘Fighting back: How Indonesia’s elite police turned the tide on militants’.

As a practical matter, research in Indonesia requires a certain level of self-censorship in deference to the sensitivities of security agencies. Consequently, it is not really possible to freely discuss the Densus-related stories I heard from the ex-terrorists whom I interviewed. Nevertheless, I will present one illustrative story in censored form. This is the story of a 40-year-old man named Teguh. Teguh is a pious, well-mannered individual, who works in electronics repair. He has two children and a homemaker wife who customarily wears a face veil and a loose dress. In the past, Teguh attended radical religious-study circles in his spare time. Eventually, he began engaging in military training exercises with fellow students. They were part of a network of 30 Islamic militants interested in attacking Western targets. Because Teguh was arrested by Densus before carrying out any attacks, he only ended up serving five years in prison.

When Teguh was arrested, he was staying at his mother's home with his younger brother. One morning, at 5:00 am, a Densus strike force suddenly appeared wearing their special black uniforms, and with their guns drawn. There were perhaps 20 of them, and they surrounded the house from the front and the back. They came to the door and Teguh's mother let them in. They then burst into the room where Teguh was sleeping, grabbed him, and handcuffed him. Teguh and his wife had a separate house nearby, but no one was in the house at the time. Densus also entered that house and took hold of its contents—removing a computer, books, and papers belonging to Teguh and his wife (although this material had no relationship to terrorism). Teguh's wife was banned from returning to the house for a month, as a precaution to prevent her from destroying evidence during the ongoing investigation. For one week following his arrest, Densus used various means to get Teguh to cooperate with them, while they interrogated him about his militant network.

Immediately after Teguh's arrest, his wife frantically searched for him, going to different prisons where he might have been held. However, according to her, each official she approached denied having authority over the matter and referred her to another official, who would then do likewise, referring her to yet another one. After a week, Teguh's wife was finally informed of his location, and she tried to put him in touch with a lawyer she had hired. However, by this time, Teguh had already signed a confession and agreed to have his case handled in an expedited fashion by a government-appointed lawyer. Although Teguh's wife initially protested this arrangement, she dropped the issue after Densus communicated to her that continued protesting would have negative consequences for her and her husband. As indicated above, I have omitted certain elements of Teguh's story in deference to the sensitivities of security agencies. These elements indicate that Teguh's case resembles other Densus-related cases documented by Komnas HAM.

Although most Indonesian officials consider Densus to be an important tool for fighting terrorism, many have also expressed concerns over human rights-related criticisms of Densus. Indonesian security agencies have sought to address such criticisms by according a supervisory role to Komnas HAM and also by developing alternatives to Densus. As we will see, the BNPT has taken a leading role in developing these alternatives.

Since the 2003 creation of Densus, Indonesia's counterterrorism bureaucracy has continued to grow, leading to the establishment of the BNPT in 2010. As of 2019, the BNPT has an annual budget equivalent to around 50 million US dollars.²¹ The BNPT is responsible for formulating and coordinating Indonesia's general counterterrorism strategy. As such, the BNPT provides directions to various government institutions. Some of these are security agencies like the police (including Densus), the military (Tentara Nasional Indonesia or TNI), and national intelligence (Badan Intelijen Negara or BIN). However, the BNPT also provides directions to government institutions of other types. Examples include the Kementerian Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia (Ministry of Law and Human Rights), the Kementerian Agama (Ministry of Religious Affairs), the Kementerian Pemuda dan Olahraga (Ministry of Youth and Sports), the Kementerian Pariwisata (Ministry of Tourism), the Kementerian Keuangan (Ministry of Finance), the Kementerian Luar Negeri (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Ministry of Education and Culture), and the Kementerian Kesehatan (Ministry of Health) (see Alius 2019a:13–9). Generally speaking, all government institutions are expected to play a role in counterterrorism. For instance, religious and educational institutions teach about the dangers of radical Islam; health institutions aid victims of terror attacks; financial institutions block terrorist funding by monitoring money transfers and charitable contributions; and legal institutions design special counterterrorism legislation.

I was told that the BNPT has about 800 staff across Indonesia, with 600 in the Jakarta area. Top BNPT officials are drawn from the Indonesian police and military. However, because the BNPT has a broad mission, it employs individuals of various types, including academics, lawyers, psychologists, reformist religious scholars, media experts, and so on.

While Densus is highly secretive, the BNPT is surprisingly open and transparent about its activities (albeit within certain limits). BNPT officials regularly discuss their programs with journalists, and post material about these programs

21 Rakhmat Nur Hakim, 'BNPT ajukan anggaran Rp 854 miliar untuk tahun 2019', 6-8-2018. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/06/08/07002761/bnpt-ajukan-anggaran-rp-854-miliar-untuk-tahun-2019> (accessed 18-6-2019).

on official internet websites. High-level officials have also published books on the structure and aims of the BNPT (for example, Surya Bakti 2014; Alius 2019a). Security agencies operating in most countries are far less open and transparent than the BNPT. Thus, it is difficult to imagine many agencies granting a foreign researcher the type of access that the BNPT granted to me.

4 Securitizing Islamic Terrorism

Over the past two decades, as part of the GWOT, Islamic terrorism has been subject to a process of securitization. Hence, in accordance with their norms and interests, many political actors in the US, Indonesia, and elsewhere have worked to portray Islamic terrorism as an extraordinary threat. Yet anthropologists have argued that such a perspective is not self-evident, noting that terrorism causes comparatively few deaths (see Atran 2010:277–8; Masco 2014). Here it is useful to consider existing statistical studies of terrorism. These studies typically define terrorism as violence by non-state actors which aims at advancing a political goal (Institute for Economics and Peace 2012:6; Hoffman 2006:1–41). Between 2000 and 2017, annual death totals from global terrorism (Islamic and non-Islamic) have varied widely, ranging from a low of 3,361 (in 2000) to a high of 32,685 (in 2014). Most of these deaths have been due to Islamic terrorism, and have largely occurred in the context of conflicts within Muslim countries. Notably, the biggest conflicts have been directly triggered or greatly intensified by US military invasions (see Institute for Economics and Peace 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2018). Following US invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the death toll from global terrorism increased from 3,361 deaths in 2000 to 11,133 in 2012 (Institute for Economics and Peace 2014:2). Owing to the political unrest of the Arab Spring and the outbreak of civil war in Syria, 2013 saw 17,958 deaths, with 82% of these deaths occurring in five conflict-ridden Muslim countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Syria)²² (Institute for Economics and Peace 2014:2). The death toll peaked at 32,685 in 2014, thereafter steadily declining to 18,814 in 2017 (Institute for Economics and Peace 2015:2, 2018:12). By way of comparison, there were 437,000 deaths due to homicide in 2012 (Institute for Economics and Peace 2014:4).

The death toll from terrorism is far lower in Muslim-majority countries that are not experiencing invasions or civil wars. Indonesia falls into this category.

22 Around half the population of Nigeria is Muslim, while the other four countries have large Muslim majorities.

Thus, the 2002 Bali bombings were by far the deadliest terror attack in Indonesian history and a statistical outlier. In the 12 years prior to the Bali bombings (1989–2001), terrorism caused about 50 deaths per year in Indonesia. Meanwhile, in the 16 years following the Bali bombings (2003–2018), terrorism has caused about 20 deaths per year.²³ As points of comparison, within Indonesia, during the past decade, homicide has caused roughly 1,300 deaths per year;²⁴ automobile accidents have caused roughly 30,000 deaths per year;²⁵ AIDS has caused roughly 30,000 deaths per year;²⁶ and smoking has caused roughly 200,000 deaths per year.²⁷ Given that terrorism is only a minor cause of death in Indonesia, it is not evident that it should be treated as an extraordinary threat.

Radical Muslims whom I interviewed asserted that the government inflates the terrorist threat to justify political repression of radical groups. They also complained that the government selectively classifies Muslim violence as terrorism, while not doing the same with other groups. As evidence, radicals often cite the example of the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM), a militant group which seeks Papuan independence from Indonesia. Although OPM's membership is Christian, its political goals are not primarily religious. It is estimated that OPM killed more than 40 individuals between 2011 and 2017.²⁸ Moreover, in 2018, OPM gunmen shot and killed 31 Indonesian construction workers who were building a highway in Papua. The Indonesian government insists that the 'separatist violence' of OPM must be distinguished from the 'religious violence' of radical Muslims. Only the latter qualifies as terrorism and is a valid target for BNPT operations.²⁹ The Indonesian government feels that classifying OPM as a terrorist group might exacerbate the separatist conflict and foreclose a negotiated political solution.

23 Irma Garnesia, 'Terorisme Indonesia: Dari separatisme hingga teror atas nama agama', 22-5-2018. <https://tirto.id/cKUK> (accessed 4-7-2019).

24 This estimate covers the years 2000–2016. See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 'Intentional homicide victims'. <https://dataunodc.un.org/crime/intentional-homicide-victims> (accessed 18-6-2019).

25 This estimate covers the years 2010–2018. See Jusuf, Nurprasetyo, and Prihutama 2017.

26 UNAIDS, 'Indonesia'. <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/indonesia> (accessed 18-6-2019).

27 Tobacco atlas, 'Indonesia'. <https://tobaccoatlas.org/country/indonesia/> (accessed 18-6-2019).

28 Global terrorism database, 'National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism'. <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=fatalities&search=opm> (accessed 18-6-2019).

29 Sidney Jones, 'Papuan "separatists" vs Jihadi "terrorists": Indonesian policy dilemmas', 5-12-2012. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/papuan-separatists-vs-jihadi-terrorists-indonesian-policy-dilemmas> (accessed 18-6-2019).

I asked a variety of BNPT officials to comment on the aforementioned aspects of Indonesia's counterterrorism policy. One official remarked:

In my opinion, the present law does discriminate against Muslims. OPM needs to be classified as a terrorist group. I hope that the law will change in the near future. At the same time, it is necessary to treat deaths from terrorism as special, even if they are few in number. These deaths are caused by dangerous terrorist ideas. Since Indonesia is a Muslim country, its population is very vulnerable to terrorist ideas that use Islamic justifications. These ideas can destroy entire countries by causing strife and civil war.

This BNPT official (like many others) suggests that terrorism threatens to turn Indonesia into a bloody conflict zone akin to Iraq or Syria. However, such an analysis is disputable as it does not account for the role of US military interventions, or other factors, in creating these zones.

Another BNPT official I spoke with explained that the impact of terrorist attacks cannot be measured in deaths. Unlike more ordinary deaths, such as fatal lawn-mowing accidents, terror attacks generate a larger social impact, causing mass fear and political unrest.

This argument is, in some ways, compelling. On the other hand, there are many types of deaths which can cause mass fear and political unrest (for instance, deaths caused by gang violence, drugs, or AIDS). Yet, the state has significant discretion in determining whether to securitize them, and treat them as extraordinary threats which legitimate a state of exception. Even with regards to terrorism, the Indonesian state has historically exercised significant discretion over questions of securitization. Thus, since independence, the Indonesian state has moved between securitizing and desecuritizing the threat of Islamic terrorism (for instance, in Aceh; see Kurniawan 2018:103–52). During the Cold War, the Indonesian state came to share the US view that it was necessary to securitize the threat of communism and communist terrorism. This stance was used to justify the mass killings of 500,000 (or more) Indonesian communists (and other related groups) from 1965 to 1966 (with the help of radical Muslims) in response to communist assassinations (that is, communist terrorism) (Kurniawan 2018:45–68; Melvin 2018). Such anti-communist policy was not inevitable but rather reflected a contestable political agenda. Finally, as indicated above, the state currently resists securitizing the threat of OPM-separatist terrorism, although some (for instance, in the BNPT) would like to see this changed.

Generally speaking, Indonesian government decisions on securitization reflect both domestic and foreign (for instance, US) political influences. For

example, the US pushed Indonesia to treat communism as an extraordinary threat. Despite public denials, the US government secretly encouraged and facilitated the mass killing of Indonesian communists as part of its Cold War strategy. The US and Indonesian governments also circulated deceptive propaganda about the event and the nature of the Indonesian communist threat.³⁰

Whereas the US and other Western countries incentivize and pressure Indonesia to securitize radical Islamic terrorism as part of the GWOT, such is not the case with OPM's terrorism. This helps explain why the BNPT securitizes the former but not the latter.

In considering these points, it is worth emphasizing that all governments engage in selective securitization, use deception, and manipulate public perceptions of threats. This was true in the context of the Cold War and remains true in the context of the GWOT, which, as noted by Masco, resembles the Cold War in many respects. In providing a realistic assessment of this situation, my aim is not to single out the US or Indonesian governments for condemnation. I also do not wish to deny that US and Indonesian officials are generally well-intentioned, and that much of their work is highly valued by their respective citizens. Rather, I simply wish to note that security discourse from the Cold War era to the GWOT era cannot be taken at face value, and requires critical analysis.

5 The Structure and Activities of the BNPT

The BNPT has three key organizational divisions, each concerned with a particular counterterrorism activity. The first division focuses on what is known as the 'hard approach' (*pendekatan keras*) to counterterrorism. This approach involves violently repressing terrorist groups using the police, military, and national intelligence. The second division focuses on what is known as the 'soft approach' (*pendekatan lunak*) to counterterrorism. This approach uses non-violent preventative measures (*pencegahan*) to reduce terrorist threats. Such measures prioritize combating radical Islamic ideas, but involve other things as well (for instance, guarding airports and limiting the circulation of weapons). The third division focuses on 'international cooperation' (*kerjasama internasional*), coordinating Indonesian counterterrorism efforts with counterterrorism efforts in other countries.

30 Melvin 2018; see also Jess Melvin, "Telegrams confirm scale of US complicity in 1965 genocide", 20-10-2017. <https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/telegrams-confirm-scale-of-us-complicity-in-1965-genocide/> (accessed 19-12-2019).

Most BNPT activities centre on the soft approach. To understand this approach, it is necessary to consider how the Indonesian state views radical Muslims. Radicals are seen as posing three types of threats. First, radical support for jihad threatens physical safety by encouraging terrorism. Second, radical support for sharia threatens human rights. Third, radical support for Islamic identity threatens the Indonesian state. This is because the state is built on a conception of Indonesian national identity. Although this identity has a religious element, such consists in a vague monotheism capacious enough to encompass the country's non-Muslim minorities. It is feared that if this Indonesian identity is eroded in favour of an exclusivist Islamic identity, the present state will collapse and efforts will be made to establish an Islamic state in its place. In keeping with the notion of human security, the BNPT holds that security agencies are not only responsible for countering threats to physical safety. They are also responsible for countering threats to human rights and even cultural/national identity (that is, as part of community security—see United Nations Development Programme 1994).

The BNPT holds that radical ideas are a major cause of the abovementioned threats. BNPT efforts to combat these ideas have a negative dimension and a positive dimension. The negative dimension consists in criticizing radical ideas and restricting their circulation. The positive dimension consists in promoting an ideological alternative to radical Islam. This alternative is best described as a combination of liberal, reformed Islam and Indonesian nationalism and is frequently referred to as Indonesian Islam (or Islam Nusantara). (It is not referred to as 'liberal' Islam, as this term currently has a negative connotation.³¹) Indonesian Islam holds that Islam does not require jihad (as the concept is traditionally understood), a religious state, or the implementation of traditional sharia law. It also holds that Islam affirms most Western human-rights norms and is consistent with Indonesian nationalism.

In the view of the BNPT, primary mechanisms for the circulation of radical ideas are educational institutions (like schools and universities) and new communications technologies (like the Internet and social media). Hence, the BNPT seeks to reduce the influence of radical Islamic ideas in schools, on the Internet, and on social media, while promoting Indonesian Islam in these domains.

The BNPT's stance on radical ideas is indebted to the work of Suhardi Alius, who has been head of the agency since 2016. Suhardi is an exceptionally friend-

31 This is due in part to the controversial group Jaringan Islam Liberal, which was established in 2001.

ly Muslim man in his late fifties and a graduate of the Indonesian police academy. During an interview with Suhardi, he explained that one of his main goals has been to expand the soft approach over the hard approach. This is because radical Islam poses a threat at the level of ideas. Emphasizing his opinion, he held up his Internet-connected smartphone and remarked:

All the evil in the world can come into Indonesia through this device—everything from pornography to material supporting radicalism and terrorism. In the past people received religious knowledge from proper authorities like Nasaruddin Umar and Quraish Shihab [that is, two liberal Muslim religious scholars affiliated with the Indonesian government]. However, the new generation acquires its religious knowledge through Google, and when they use that search engine it exposes them to interpretations of Islamic scripture which justify radicalism and terrorism. Radicals use the Internet to recruit our children.

Suhardi expands on this theme in his 2019 book titled *Pemahaman membawa bencana* (An understanding [of Islam] that brings disaster). In the book, Suhardi argues that Indonesian ‘radical movements’ (*gerakan radikalisme*) do not merely engage in ‘physical attacks’ (*serangan fisik*) which involve ‘terror bombing’. Contemporary radicals also engage in ‘massive non-physical attacks through the Internet and social media which target society’s views and ways of thinking’ (*serangan nonfisik yang secara masif menyasar pola pikir dan pandangan masyarakat melalui Internet dan media sosial*). These non-physical attacks promote an exclusivist Muslim identity which undermines the pluralistic Indonesian national identity (*identitas*) on which the current Indonesian state is based. If Indonesia’s national identity is undermined, the state will collapse—producing violent conflict and civil war (Alius 2019b:9–13).

The hard approach is strongly associated with Densus, while the soft approach represents an alternative to Densus. Although Suhardi views Densus as an important tool, he seeks to limit its role by prioritizing the soft approach. Here Suhardi is motivated, at least in part, by criticisms of Densus voiced inside and outside the Indonesian government. Thus, by limiting the role of Densus, he also limits the potential for human rights violations caused by Densus’s harsh tactics. Limiting Densus is also a means of de-escalating conflict between radical militants and security agencies. Suhardi explains that before he became head of the BNPT, radical leaders had started preaching and protesting against Densus’s tactics, accusing security agencies of pursuing a brutal war against them. Anger towards Densus even prompted some militants to target security agencies with retaliatory terror attacks (for instance, killing police through

shootings and bombings). By limiting Densus, Suhardi has sought to defuse the situation and open up paths to reconciliation.

Suhardi's personal motto, which he repeated during the interview, is 'memimpin dengan hati' (leading with the heart). This is also the title of a book which he has just published on his experiences as head of the BNPT (see Alius 2019a). For Suhardi, leading with the heart means using kindness, respectful manners, and personal relationships to win over terrorists and radicals who oppose the Indonesian state. Suhardi explained that this method is a response to the unique psychology of terrorists. Terrorists are not afraid to die and believe they are fighting for God. Consequently, they cannot be intimidated through violence. In fact, using violence only hardens them and emboldens them to retaliate with terror attacks on security agencies. Hence, the best way to reach terrorists is through respect and friendliness. Based on this idea, Suhardi personally visits terrorists in prison, eats simple meals with them (like chicken satay), has discussions with them, jokes with them, and listens to their concerns. He even performed a duet song with a terrorist at a crowded police event (Alius 2019a:174–5). Suhardi says he has many friends who are ex-terrorists, and some have been recruited to assist with BNPT work. During our meeting Suhardi proudly shows me mobile-phone pictures of him sitting with terrorists, with all involved apparently happy and smiling. Suhardi also keeps in communication with radical preachers, who have a habit of criticizing the BNPT for excessive use of force. Suhardi says that if a Densus raid results in the death of terrorist suspects, he will personally call radical preachers, assuring them that his policy is to arrest suspects without bloodshed. He will explain that individuals are only killed if they carry weapons and refuse to surrender because they are seeking martyrdom. According to Suhardi, if radicals understand that the government is not killing suspects without a reason, they will have less hostility towards the government.

The BNPT has a large office in central Jakarta, which occupies the fifteenth and sixteenth floors of a government tower. The office is located a short distance from Indonesia's presidential palace, and it is immediately next to the US embassy. Positioned thus, the office constantly receives input from both the Indonesian president and the US government. The office also houses the BNPT's international cooperation division.

Although the Jakarta office is important, the BNPT headquarters is located on the outskirts of Jakarta in an area known as Sentul. Recently constructed, the headquarters is a giant, sprawling complex of block-shaped white and grey buildings. The complex is built on a hill, and is protected by a massive wall that is around 20 feet high. One BNPT official estimated that perhaps 500 people work within the compound. A large majority are male. Men at the

compound typically wear slacks and batik shirts. Women frequently dress in blouses and loose skirts or trousers, either with or without veils. A special military unit guards the compound, dressing in brown uniforms and light-blue berets.

A paved black road runs through the compound. The three most important buildings in the compound are located along the road and are referred to as Buildings A, B, and C. Building A has two storeys and houses the BNPT administration. Building B has three storeys and contains facilities for representatives of Indonesian security agencies involved in the hard approach. Behind Building B there is a shooting range used for target practice by security personnel. There is also a full-sized replica of a passenger airplane, as well as a full-sized replica of two attached train cars. Security personnel use the replicas for training exercises relating to hijacking, chemical attacks, and rescue. Building C has two storeys and houses BNPT programmes dedicated to the soft approach. It also contains a small special prison for terrorists, with high, grey-coloured walls, few windows, and a mosque inside. Because Building C contains a prison, it is surrounded by a tall, silver net fence with coiled barbed wire on top. Next to Building C there is a clinic, which is used to give terrorists treatment and health checks.

The BNPT headquarters has a number of additional buildings. These include an information centre containing secret data on terrorism throughout Indonesia; a mosque for BNPT staff; a residence area for high-ranking BNPT officials; and a three-storey residence for guards, featuring dorm rooms, a mess hall, and a gym. Finally, in the rear of the BNPT complex, there is a cluster of six one-storey buildings used for training terrorists in work skills (for instance, agriculture and farming, or automotive work and welding). This is to ensure that after release, they do not fall into poverty and are able to eventually reintegrate into Indonesian society.

6 A Closer Look at the Soft Approach

The BNPT headquarters contains more facilities dedicated to the soft approach than the hard approach. The soft approach has three primary components, which are known as 'protection' (*perlindungan*), 'counter-radicalization' (*kontra radikalisasi*), and 'deradicalization' (*deradikalisasi*). It will be helpful to address each of these components individually.

'Protection' seeks to safeguard targets of major importance from terrorist threats, using appropriate preventative measures. Such targets include influential people (for instance, high-ranking government officials, especially the

president); government buildings (for instance, police and military bases), as well as facilities concerned with transportation (for instance, air travel, sea travel); telecommunications; water supply; or energy supply (for instance, oil, gas, and electricity). Additional targets may include prominent malls, hotels, and religious/cultural sites (for instance, the Jakarta Cathedral or Borobudur Temple). The BNPT is secretive about its protection operations, and I was given very limited information on the topic. However, it appears that these operations include inspecting potential terrorist targets and determining their vulnerabilities; surveilling these targets; developing security rules and procedures for staff guarding the targets (for instance, staff at airports and train stations); adjusting existing security rules and procedures in response to new terrorist tactics and technologies; and engaging in efforts to restrict the circulation of weapons and explosive materials (see Surya Bakti 2014:117–51).

‘Counter-radicalization’ consists in a military-style, psychological-operations campaign to fight radical ideas. It is a standard element in US-funded CVE initiatives across the world.

A key component of the BNPT counter-radicalization programme is the Pusat Media Damai (PMD) (Centre for Peaceful Media). PMD officials describe their activities as ‘counterpropaganda’ (*kontra propaganda*) focused on the Internet and social media. The PMD occupies areas on the first and second floors of Building C. The second-floor area contains a large, rectangular common room with marble floors, white walls, and high ceilings. It is pervaded by the constant humming of computers. Along one wall of the room are eight blue cubicles. Each cubicle has a computer, a desk space, and a black office chair. Eight Indonesian men, aged 20 to 50, sit at the cubicles engaging in counter-propaganda operations. Along the opposite wall of the room there is a sizeable filing cabinet and an oval meeting table surrounded by eight black-leather office chairs. In front of the wall is a large, white dry-erase board with markers. This is used for brainstorming and drawing up counterpropaganda ideas.

There are about two dozen people who work for the PMD. These include: three IT specialists, who ensure computers and other devices are operating properly; three religious scholars skilled in reading Arabic, promoting reformed Islam, and religiously legitimating the Indonesian state; eight people who work on a ‘creative team’ with expertise in graphics and design;³² two writers who author articles, pamphlets, and books; four specialists with expertise in distributing content through social media accounts; and two intelligence analysts.

32 Many of these figures have previous experience in television entertainment and product advertising. They are charged with designing comics, videos, memes, and the like.

The PMD utilizes high-tech computer equipment and artificial intelligence to find, monitor, and (sometimes) remove the websites and social media accounts of radical groups (like Front Pembela Islam), even if these groups are not involved in terrorism. The PMD also produces alternative content that promotes reformed Islam, affirms Indonesian nationalism, and warns of the dangers associated with radical Islam (for instance, through articles, books, memes, comics, and short videos). The PMD distributes this content through several websites, a Twitter account, a Facebook account, an Instagram account, a YouTube channel, and a special smartphone application.

Internet content produced by the PMD emphasizes that radical ideas cause violence and civil strife and threaten to transform Indonesia into a conflict zone akin to Iraq or Syria. By promoting the (contestable) claim that these conflict zones can be explained in terms of Islamic ideas (without taking account of US interventions), the PMD's Internet content amplifies fear of such ideas. This fear generates public support for the securitization of radical Islam and helps sustain an ongoing state of exception to deal with this problem.

In 2015, the PMD created a new programme, Duta Damai (Peace Ambassador), which recruits young Indonesians (aged between 19 and 35) with skills in blogging, media design, and IT. The PMD registers them in a database, gives them training, allows them to participate in BNPT events, and issues them special ID cards. Participants in the programme work outside BNPT headquarters as volunteers. The PMD then gives them various missions, which involve supporting the BNPT's ideas online, generating youth-targeted content, and spreading this content. This is done partly through a network of explicitly identified Duta Damai websites and social media accounts. Though unclear, there are indications that participants may also be posing as ordinary Indonesians and then promoting BNPT-favoured ideas anonymously or through personal social media accounts—posting, commenting, sharing, linking, liking, and engaging in online discussions. Such strategies are typical of contemporary online campaigns run by NGOs, businesses, and government institutions. The fact that programme participants are not actual BNPT employees gives the BNPT more room to claim that it is not responsible for their activities.

Counter-radicalization is not limited to the online sphere. BNPT officials also work to combat radical ideas in schools and universities by giving talks and presentations, and by distributing printed material (often based on online material created by the PMD). As we will see, much of the BNPT's most important educational work is done in partnership with NGOs.

Since 2017, the BNPT has also begun to develop programmes premised on the notion that local Indonesian culture (*kearifan lokal*) is an important tool in counter-radicalization. These programmes seek to promote and preserve

local syncretic forms of Islam, which blend Islamic teachings with various Indonesian cultural practices. It is believed that Indonesians who adopt a blend of Islam and Indonesian culture will be more inclined to accept Indonesian national identity. As such, they will be less likely to embrace the type of exclusivist Islamic identity associated with radicalism. BNPT officials currently developing these programmes have put forth a variety of recommendations. These include creating an expansive database of local cultural forms encompassing cultural festivals, dance performances, and material art as well as local customs pertaining to language, worship, marriage, inheritance, dress, and architecture. It has been recommended that such cultural forms be strengthened and revived. This will involve designing documents, pictures, and videos which promote the cultural forms in a manner that is attractive to younger Indonesians. Such material will be circulated through social media. Educational and religious institutions will also teach about these cultural forms, cultivate local cultural practices, and stage artistic performances.

Finally, there is 'deradicalization', which is also a standard element in US-funded CVE initiatives across the world. Counter-radicalization seeks to prevent radical ideas from being adopted by the general population. By contrast, deradicalization seeks to convince Muslims who have already adopted radical ideas to renounce them. Deradicalization draws on ideas and techniques from multiple disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, social work, and traditional Islamic learning. The BNPT deradicalization programme targets three groups: radicals who have been convicted of terrorism; the families (especially children) of radicals who have been convicted of terrorism; and radical individuals and families who have travelled to jihad-related conflict zones (especially Iraq and Syria) and returned to Indonesia. Given considerations of space, I will focus on the most important of these groups: radicals convicted of terrorism.

The BNPT's deradicalization programme has four phases. First, there is 'identification' (*identifikasi*). This involves an assessment of the convict to determine whether he is too radical and fixed in his opinions to participate in the programme. Assessments at the identification stage are made by a special three-person panel featuring a religious scholar, a psychologist, and a social worker. The assessment often takes place around three months after a court conviction.

The second phase is 'rehabilitation' (*rehabilitasi*), which might begin three months after the assessment. During this phase, the three-person panel sits together with the imprisoned convict in sessions where there is discussion and debate. During these sessions the panel tries to convince the convict that his radical Islamic ideas are mistaken. If the panel is satisfied the convict is making progress, they will move him on to the next phase. For many convicts, three sessions over a two-week period suffice.

The third phase is 're-education' (*reedukasi*), which may be done a couple of months after the rehabilitation phase. This involves more debate and discussion sessions, which seek to convince the convict to accept reformed Islam and Indonesian nationalism. Convicts are asked to read books on these subjects written by the BNPT, and they are trained in new methods for interpreting Islamic scripture. These methods emphasize leaving behind the literalistic interpretations favoured by radical Islam. Instead, convicts are taught to link scriptural texts to specific socio-economic conditions in the past and to argue that since conditions have changed, the texts no longer apply. For many prisoners, two sessions over the course of a month suffice.

The fourth and final phase is 'reintegration' (*reintegrasi*). This takes place towards the end of the terrorist's prison term. The goal of reintegration is to prepare him to leave prison and return to society. This step involves teaching him job skills, or, if he is especially intelligent, preparing him for the resumption of his education.

Convicted terrorists are held in 50 prisons across Indonesia. Their behaviour and conversations are constantly monitored with surveillance cameras and voice-recording equipment—much of which is hidden. A prisoner cannot move ahead through the four stages of deradicalization unless prison staff sees tangible signs that he is becoming less radical. These signs include disassociating from radical prisoners, ceasing to use the forms of dress and behaviour associated with radicalism (for instance, Arab-style dress, rigorous regimens of worship), and building friendly relations with prison staff. Convicts who successfully complete the deradicalization programme have their sentences reduced. For instance, a sentence might be reduced by 25 %. Foucault (1995) famously argued that in modern imprisonment inmates are pressured to habituate themselves to new practices which alter their character and behaviour. Such pressure is constant, because 'panoptic' prison surveillance is constant. Foucault's insights are useful in understanding deradicalization, wherein surveilled prisoners are pressed to take on habits associated with reformed (rather than radical) Islam, in the hope that this will transform them into reformed Muslims and help prevent them from engaging in future acts of terrorism.

As indicated earlier, Building C contains a prison for terrorists. It currently holds about 20 inmates. The prison is located immediately next to facilities for the deradicalization programme. This enables programme staff to utilize their methods with the inmates and also experiment with new methods. As part of the deradicalization programme, inmates are periodically taken to the area in the BNPT complex which offers training in work skills.

The deradicalization programme continues after convicts have been released from jail, with the aim of preventing them from relapsing into radical

Islam. This might happen due to continuing friendships with radicals, poverty, or being shunned by society. As part of the programme, the BNPT provides economic assistance to ex-terrorists so that they can start small businesses to support themselves and their families. Furthermore, the BNPT invites ex-terrorists to periodic events where they are offered advice on work, social integration, and a proper understanding of Islam. The BNPT also conducts covert surveillance of ex-terrorists to ensure they are not re-establishing contacts with terrorist groups.

Iskandar was one of the ex-terrorists I interviewed about the deradicalization programme. His experiences are fairly typical. Iskandar's story can be described as follows. While in high school, Iskandar began participating in Islamic activism, and at age 30 he joined a small militant group consisting of five individuals. Responding to a flare-up of communal violence between Muslims and Christians on the island of Sulawesi, this group began making rudimentary bombs to help the Muslim side. The bombs were never used, but one accidentally detonated, which drew police attention and resulted in Iskandar's arrest by Densus. By participating in the deradicalization programme, Iskandar had his original sentence of seven years reduced to five years. According to Iskandar, most terrorists in prison actually refuse to participate in the programme, for they do not want to change their views or cooperate with the government. Iskandar remarked that his own views did indeed change, but in a limited way. Hence, he still believes that it is necessary to defend Muslims and even establish an Islamic state in Indonesia. Yet this must be done through peaceful, legal means rather than by armed militancy. Iskandar recounted that during his time in prison, the BNPT brought in university professors, NGO activists, as well as religious scholars (including a few from the Arab Middle East). These individuals participated in lectures and discussion sessions, where they taught imprisoned terrorists about reformed Islam. One NGO had prisoners participate in exercises where they would simulate disputes and then practise negotiating with one another so as to resolve their conflict without resorting to violence. Victims of terrorism were also brought into prison to speak about their experiences of loss. Since his release from prison two years ago, Iskandar has attended several BNPT events. At these events, there have been presentations on work skills, reformed Islam, and Indonesia's nationalist ideology.

7 Human Security, and the Partnership between the BNPT and the NGO Sector

As noted previously, the notion of human security encourages greater institutional cooperation between state security agencies and NGOs. Such cooperation is central to BNPT operations.

There exist thousands of local Indonesian NGOs, most of which work in the field of human rights and development. However, the past decade has seen the emergence of NGOs specializing in CVE work targeting radical Islam. Because radical Islam is seen as a major obstacle to human rights, Indonesian NGOs often combine human rights work with CVE work.³³ NGOs receive most of their funding and support from Western governments and foundations (many located in the US) but often work closely with Indonesian government institutions like the BNPT. NGOs help the BNPT combat radical ideas in a number of ways. For instance, NGOs play an especially important role in combating radical ideas in schools. Among other things, NGOs help redesign school curricula to promote liberal reformed Islam. They also provide training to teachers and students about the dangers of radical Islam. In the online sphere, NGOs undertake activities similar to the BNPT's PMD. Hence, they produce and circulate massive amounts of Internet content which criticizes radical Islam while promoting liberal reformed Islam (for instance, through articles, memes, and short videos).

As a result, the BNPT and NGOs operate as partners in championing liberal reformed Islam and human rights (as a component of reformed Islam). Notably, although there exist many valuable anthropological studies on human rights and/or religious reform in Muslim societies, such studies do not address the increasingly important role played by security agencies or their emerging partnership with the NGO sector.³⁴

The BNPT head is advised by a ten-person expert committee, which provides a direct link to the NGO sector. For instance, the committee includes two scholars of Islam: Dr Azyumardi Azra (b. 1955) and Dr Nasaruddin Umar (b. 1959). Both Azyumardi and Nasaruddin are major proponents of liberal reformed Islam. Both are also major figures in the NGO sector, participating in human rights work and CVE work. Azyumardi is the former rector of Jakarta's state-run Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah, the most important of Indonesia's Islamic universities, and a global centre of liberal Islamic thought.

33 See, for instance, the Setara Institute, the Wahid Institute, and the Maarif Institute.

34 See, for instance, Bowen 2003; Mahmood 2006; Hefner 2011; Abu-Lughod 2013; Lukens-Bull 2013.

Azyumardi is also a founder of the Setara Institute, a leading Indonesian NGO specializing in both human rights (especially religious freedom) and CVE. Additionally, Azyumardi heads a special research centre at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah.³⁵ The centre runs a large project aimed at eliminating radical Islam from Indonesia's state-run school system.³⁶

Nasaruddin is a professor at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah specializing in Quranic studies. He also heads the state-run Masjid Istiqlal (Indonesia's largest mosque). Nasaruddin is a leading advocate of women's rights and of liberal Sufi-oriented interfaith dialogue, and he has helped pioneer a new security-oriented field of Islamic religious scholarship centred on deradicalization. This field is dedicated to systematically refuting doctrines and interpretations of scriptural texts used by terrorists and other radicals (especially material related to jihad). Representative of Nasaruddin's efforts is his 2008 text *Deradikalisasi pemahaman al-Quran & Hadis* (Deradicalizing understandings of the Quran and Hadith) (see Umar 2008).

Nasaruddin runs an umbrella organization, Nasaruddin Umar Office, which oversees a large, liberal, reformed Islamic school in Sulawesi as well as three NGOs: the Nusa Institute, an NGO focused on CVE work; the Balqis Foundation, an NGO specializing in human rights and development for women; and Rukun (Peaceful Coexistence), an NGO specializing in building tolerance and cooperation between Indonesia's different religious and ethnic groups. All three NGOs are currently located in a large, one-storey Jakarta home, which has been converted into offices and meeting areas. The NGOs operate together because there is substantial overlap between their missions of CVE work, human rights, development, and intercommunal tolerance.

Although the BNPT works directly and indirectly with a number of NGOs, it has especially close relations with the Nusa Institute (hereafter Nusa). Nusa was established in 2009, immediately following the publication of Nasaruddin's text 'Deradicalizing understandings'. Nusa is composed of about 20 core staff, three of which are full time, and the remainder of which work part time while holding other jobs. Almost all members of Nusa's staff teach in faculties at Indonesian Islamic universities (especially UIN Syarif Hidayatullah). The BNPT funds various initiatives at Nusa. For instance, Nusa runs short BNPT-supported training programmes for preachers, students at Islamic schools, and university lecturers. Using the 'Deradicalizing understandings' text and other materials, these programmes teach about the danger of radical ideas (especially on

35 The Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) (Center for the Study of Islam and Society).

36 That is, CONVEY Indonesia.

jihad); methods for countering radical ideas; and the necessity of building a non-violent, tolerant Indonesian society based on human rights. By fostering fear of radical ideas, NGOs like Nusa help the BNPT to build public support for the securitization of radical Islam.

Nusa helped the BNPT design its deradicalization programme for convicted terrorists. The BNPT also commissions various research projects from Nusa, including studies on the problem of hate speech, local culture as a tool in CVE work, and the effectiveness of BNPT deradicalization programmes.

8 Governmentality, Statistics, and the Indonesian Population

Foucault's notion of modern governance (or governmentality) is helpful for an overall understanding of BNPT activities. Recall that modern governance does not simply utilize repression but also makes heavy use of preventative measures. As we have seen, the BNPT employs repression (the hard approach) but gives primary emphasis to preventative measures (the soft approach). Another key feature of modern governance is its concern with statistical data on populations. States use statistics to identify security threats, quantify them, and gauge the efficacy of particular security measures in reducing them.

Sally Engle Merry (2016) has drawn attention to the increasing importance of indexes (or indicators) in modern governance. Compiled by NGOs and government agencies, indexes are reports which collect together different forms of statistical data on a particular topic (for instance, on economic growth, gender violence, or pollution). The past decade has seen the emergence of 'terrorism indexes'. These include the highly influential annual Global Terrorism Index, published since 2012 by the Australian (think tank) NGO Institute for Economics and Peace (Institute for Economics and Peace 2012; 2014; 2017; 2018).

The BNPT makes heavy use of statistics, including indexes on radicalism and terrorism. Although the BNPT consults indexes compiled by other institutions, it also produces its own. Compiling indexes requires that the BNPT formulate definitions for radicalism and terrorism, create methods for quantitatively measuring radicalism and terrorism, apply these methods to gather statistical data, and then organize this data into clear and instructive reports. Nusa often assists the BNPT in producing indexes. BNPT indexes are not made public, and access to them is restricted. Nevertheless, I was permitted to look at an early index Nusa compiled for the BNPT around 2010.

The index is significant for what it reveals about BNPT policy. The index focuses exclusively on Indonesia's Muslim population (leaving aside members of other religions). It compiles various types of statistical data on this pop-

ulation that are seen as relevant to radicalism and terrorism. This includes economic, educational, and ethnic data. After all, those who are poor, who have lower education, or who are associated with a particular ethnicity might be disproportionately attracted to radical ideas. Unlike the aforementioned Global Terrorism Index, the report does not address actual acts of terrorism. Rather, the report is concerned with “radicalism” (*radikalisme*) and the potential (*potensi*) for radicalism to generate future terrorism. To this end, the report seeks to determine how widespread radical ideas are, which parts of the population are attracted to them, and how they circulate in society. It is assumed that eliminating such ideas is a key means of preventing terrorism.

Bound with a blue hardback cover, the report is about 600 pages in length. It contains information on 32 provinces within Indonesia (the country is divided into 34 provinces). It is divided into 32 sections, with a 20-page section dedicated to each province. Since the report was compiled by a team of researchers, there is some variation between the sections. Each section contains a short introduction on the province’s history, its unique cultural customs (for instance, rituals, dances, kinship structures, and architecture), and the type of economic activity found in the province (for instance, manufacturing, extraction of oil and gas, agricultural production of sweet potatoes, sugar, and coffee). Following the introduction, various kinds of statistical data are presented in the form of tables and multi-coloured bar graphs. First, general statistical data on the province as a whole is presented, including data on its physical size; its number of cities/villages; its overall population; the educational level of the population; the ethnic/linguistic composition of the population (for instance, Java, Sunda, Minangkabau); the religious composition of the population (for instance, Muslim, Christian, Hindu); the province’s per capita GDP; the rate of economic growth in the province compared to Indonesia as a whole; and the size of the province’s different economic sectors (for instance, manufacturing, agriculture). Next comes a presentation of statistical data on radicalism within the province. This is the core of each section.

Statistical data on radicalism was gathered as follows. In each province, members of Nusa interviewed approximately 30 individuals drawn from ten different categories: three Islamic religious scholars (*ulama*); three religious preachers (*dai*); three ordinary state-run school teachers (*guru sekolah umum*); three teachers at *madrasah*-style (pre-university) Islamic religious schools; three teachers at *pesantren*-style (pre-university) Islamic religious schools; three leaders of Islamic social organizations (*tokoh ormas Islam*); three students at (pre-university) Islamic religious schools (*santri*); three professors at ordinary universities (*dosen*); three students at ordinary universities; and three mosque administrators (*pengurus masjid*). Thus, the interviews focused

primarily on individuals associated with Islamic social institutions (schools, organizations, mosques), and secondarily, on individuals associated with ordinary, state-run schools and universities. This reflects an assumption that radical ideas are associated with Islamic institutions and may be circulating within the larger Indonesian educational system.

One table provides statistical data regarding how interviewees acquire information concerning religion, radicalism, terrorism, and news. Thus, the table indicates the percentage of interviewees who acquire information from mass media, religious lectures, books, discussions with friends, and other sources. This data provides insights on how ideas concerning radicalism and terrorism circulate through society.

Other tables address five key issues: general religious understanding; views on Indonesia's government; the educational system; Islamic social organizations; and social relationships with non-Muslims. One of the lead researchers who compiled the report explained that interviewees were asked ten questions on each of the five issues. Their responses were then evaluated in terms of their radicalism. For instance, on the issue of general religious understanding, interviewees were asked whether it was appropriate to apply the sharia rule that prescribes hand amputation as a penalty for theft. They were also asked whether it was legitimate to wage jihad under contemporary circumstances. Affirmative answers to these questions were considered indicative of radicalism. The more affirmative answers that were given, the higher the indicated level of radicalism. Similar questions were posed on other issues. Thus, with respect to the issue of Indonesia's government, interviewees were asked whether they supported the establishment of an Islamic state, whether they supported the general implementation of sharia, whether they would oppose a non-Muslim president, and so on. With respect to the issue of Islamic social organizations, interviewees were asked whether they supported, or were members of, particular radical groups (for instance, FPI or Jemaah Islamiyah). With respect to the issue of social relationships, interviewees were asked whether they would have a problem with non-Muslim neighbours, and so on.

Based on their answers, interviewees were grouped into three categories: low levels of radicalism (*hati-hati*), intermediate levels (*waspada*), and high/dangerous levels (*bahaya*). Using these categories, researchers produced statistical measures of radicalism with respect to each of the five key issues (for instance, on the issue of Islamic social organizations, perhaps 20% of interviewees exhibit low levels of radicalism, 60% exhibit intermediate levels, and 20% exhibit high/dangerous levels).

The statistical data found in the report helps the BNPT direct its attention and resources effectively. Thus, if radical ideas are particularly common

in a specific province, among a specific economic class, or in specific institutions (such as mosques or *pesantren*-style schools), resources can be directed accordingly. For instance, where radicalism is associated with economic underdevelopment in a province, that province should receive further investment. Where school students or mosque administrators support the idea of an Islamic state, the school curriculum should be altered and the mosque administration changed by the government.

Over time, the statistical research done by Nusa and the BNPT is growing increasingly sophisticated, involving larger numbers of interviewees and a wider range of issues. For example, while the aforementioned Nusa report collected data from about 900 interviewees, a more recent 2017 Nusa report collected data from more than 9,000 respondents.

9 Conclusion

In this article, I have sought to provide the first anthropological (and ethnographic) study of the BNPT. Offering a distinctive theoretical perspective, the article has drawn on four complementary ideas characteristic of anthropological scholarship on security, namely, states of exception, securitization, governmentality, and human security. The article also situates the BNPT within the context of the larger GWOT, while providing a critical perspective on GWOT-related security discourse. Finally, the article has focused on the BNPT to examine how security agencies interact with Muslim populations in the context of the GWOT. It has been argued that agencies like the BNPT embrace a Muslim security strategy built upon several significant but contestable assumptions. Thus, it is assumed that (radical) Islam poses extraordinary threats to physical safety, human rights, and national identity. These threats justify suspending ordinary laws, making enormous investments in security measures, and extending these measures across the globe. It is also assumed that preventative measures should focus on combating radical Islamic ideas, with special attention given to the Internet, social media, and educational institutions.

Propagated across the world as part of the GWOT, Muslim security strategy impacts Muslim populations throughout the globe. Thus, in Muslim-majority countries (for instance, Indonesia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia), this strategy influences government efforts to deal with large, radical Muslim opposition movements (for instance, Front Pembela Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood). Meanwhile, in non-Muslim countries, this strategy influences government efforts to deal with Muslim minorities (for instance, in France, China, Myanmar, and India).

Security agencies play a central role in implementing Muslim security strategy. Hence, an accurate understanding of their methods, ideological commitments, and organizational structures is essential to understanding how the GWOT is transforming contemporary Muslim life. The BNPT is a useful object of study, as it is comparatively open and transparent, generously permitting forms of research that would not be allowed by other security agencies. The ethnographic data examined in this article reveals that the BNPT is a security agency that is integrated within the broader GWOT through funding streams and institutional partnerships; that utilizes both 'hard' and 'soft' approaches; that seeks to reshape the general social and religious life of Muslims; that propagates a version of Islam tailored to fit official state ideology; that implements its policies with assistance from the full range of domestic government institutions as well as the NGO sector; and that utilizes standard CVE-type programmes developed largely by the US (for instance, counter-radicalization and deradicalization). A proper understanding of the BNPT is a first step towards understanding other security agencies involved in the GWOT.

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