

# Radical Religious Expressions among Followers of Jamaah Anshorud Daulah (JAD) and Jamaah Ansharus Syariah (JAS) in Bima City: A Social Political Networks Perspective

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## Article Info

### Article History

Accepted: 04-02-2026

Approved: 10-02-2026

Published: 11-02-2026

### Keywords:

Religious Expression

Religious Radicalism

Jamaah Anshorud Daulah

Jamaah Ansharus Syariah

Symbolic Interactionism

## Abstract

**Abstract:** *This study examines radical religious expressions among Jamaah Anshorud Daulah (JAD) and Jamaah Ansar Syariah (JAS) in Bima City using a qualitative phenomenological approach grounded in George H. Mead's symbolic interactionism. Based on interviews with six members and twelve months of participant observation, the study finds contrasting patterns across key dimensions. JAD demonstrates rigid religious consciousness, subordinated identities, hierarchical interaction, organization-oriented action, and fixed symbolic meanings. In contrast, JAS shows more flexible religious understanding, greater individual agency, participatory social relations, transformative action, and adaptable symbols. These findings indicate that radical religious action is not spontaneous but develops through a gradual social process involving meaning interpretation, identity construction, group interaction, and symbolic deployment.*

**Abstrak:** Studi ini meneliti ekspresi keagamaan radikal di antara Jamaah Anshorud Daulah (JAD) dan Jamaah Ansar Syariah (JAS) di Kota Bima menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi kualitatif yang berlandaskan interaksionisme simbolik George H. Mead. Berdasarkan wawancara dengan enam anggota dan observasi partisipan selama dua belas bulan, studi ini menemukan pola yang kontras di berbagai dimensi utama. JAD menunjukkan kesadaran keagamaan yang kaku, identitas yang subordinat, interaksi hierarkis, tindakan yang berorientasi pada organisasi, dan makna simbolik yang tetap. Sebaliknya, JAS menunjukkan pemahaman keagamaan yang lebih fleksibel, agensi individu yang lebih besar, hubungan sosial partisipatif, tindakan transformatif, dan simbol yang mudah beradaptasi. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa tindakan keagamaan radikal bukanlah spontan tetapi berkembang melalui proses sosial bertahap yang melibatkan interpretasi makna, konstruksi identitas, interaksi kelompok, dan penerapan simbolik.

## Introduction

The concept of religion in social sciences encompasses a broad spectrum of definitions depending on the theoretical perspective used. Émile Durkheim (1912) defined it as "a system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things that unites adherents into a moral community," while Clifford Geertz (1973) saw it as "a system of symbols that shapes the moods, motivations, and thought patterns of a society." Religiosity refers to individuals' subjective expressions of faith, while religion emphasizes collective institutional forms (Hadziq & Rodiah, 2023). Radical religious expression occurs when religious doctrine is transformed into a political ideology that encourages literal and exclusive interpretations, often justifying the use of violence (Wibisono et al., 2019).

Religious radicalism differs from extremism in that it seeks fundamental socio-political change through extra-constitutional methods, distinguishing cognitive radicalism (extreme thinking) from behavioral radicalism (violent action) (Hafid, 2020; Iting et al., 2025). This phenomenon integrates sacred cosmology, moral absolutism, and a cosmic war narrative that positions its adherents as divine warriors against evil forces (Zifamina, 2022). Salafi-jihadi ideology dominates the global landscape through groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and the Taliban, which propagate a global narrative of jihad (Ashghor, 2021).

In Indonesia, religious radicalism is rooted in a long genealogy that began with Darul Islam/Indonesian Islamic Army (DI/TII) from 1949-1962, followed by the Jihad Commando in the 1970s, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) with the 2002 and 2005 Bali Bombings, Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), and Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Jamaah Ansharusy Syariah (JAS) after the emergence of ISIS in 2014 (Abdullah, 2018; Ashghor, 2021). Wirawan Sukarwo (2021) and Siagian (2020) highlight the post-New Order anti-modernity reaction as the main catalyst, where radical groups reject state secularism and Pancasila pluralism.

The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) and the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) of UIN Jakarta define radicalism as an intolerant attitude that seeks a total transformation of the socio-political system, often accompanied by justification for violence (Agustin & Situmeang, 2023). Quintan Wiktorowicz (2005) characterizes it as an extreme ideology based on a confrontational interpretation of "pure Islam," while Alex Schmid (2013) emphasizes the rejection of democratic plurality and the legitimacy of extra-parliamentary violence. Core characteristics include theological exclusivism (the believer-infidel dichotomy), doctrinal purification (the rejection of local heresy and polytheism), and the concept of offensive jihad as a collective obligation (Yusup, 2018).

Radical groups consistently brand the government as thaghut (divine oppressor), forming a rigid identity through salafi-jihadi symbols such as the tauhid flag, cingkrang pants, and niqab that separate them from the mainstream NU-Muhammadiyah (Majid et al., 2023). The driving factors are multidimensional: ideological such as tauhid hakimiyyah and al-wala' wal-bara'; socio-economic such as marginalization in Poso and Bima (Widayat et al., 2021); global through the Afghanistan-Iraq-Syria conflict (Makatita & Yumitro, 2023); and digital via social media echo chambers (Weimann, 2016). Wiktorowicz's (2005) concept is

highly relevant to post-reform Bima, where economic and identity crises open the door to recruitment.

JAD emerged in 2015 under the influence of Aman Abdurrahman, an ISIS affiliate with the 2016 Thamrin and 2018 Surabaya Bombings. JAS, as a splinter group of JAT, emphasizes moderate da'wah in Bima, linked to the JI-JAT-MIT network (Pedrason, 2022; Tabrani & Ashghor, 2023). Recruitment patterns rely on interpersonal relationships such as family and Islamic boarding school teachers (Chernov Hwang, 2018), while radical expressions form interpretive communities through symbols such as the tauhid flag and the term ikhwan-akhawat (Fernando, 2021; Wiktorowicz, 2005).

Bima City, West Nusa Tenggara, 98% Muslim (BPS, 2023), has become a center of post-ISIS radicalism with two main clusters: JAD Penatoi, which exclusively implements strict al-wala' wal-bara', and JAS Melayu, which is participatory in social da'wah (Abdullah, 2018; Husni et al., 2023). Salafi-jihadi symbols such as the cingkrang robe and niqab emphasize the separation from traditional Islam in NTB, creating a countercultural identity (Ahmad et al., 2021). Existing research tends to focus on macro-analysis such as terrorist networks (IPAC/ICG reports) and ideology (Saloom, 2019), with minimal exploration of the micro-phenomenology of the lived experiences of JAD-JAS followers through the perspective of George H. Mead.

George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism explains radical expression as a dynamic meaning construction process through five core elements: mind (internal dialogue between stimulus-response), self (I-Me dialectic where I is impulsive and Me is social), society (role-taking and generalized other), action (impulse-perception-manipulation-consummation cycle), and symbol (significant gesture that carries shared meaning) (Siregar, 2016). JAD-JAS followers build takfiri identity through the bay'ah ritual, exclusive language (ikhwan-akhawat, thaghut), and anti-national gestures such as the rejection of the Red and White flag.

The integration of Husserl-Schutz phenomenology with Mead's produces a phenomenological symbolic interactionism model that captures the essence of radical lived experiences: how individuals experience, interpret, and reproduce ideology through everyday interactions. This approach fills a gap in the predominantly structural-functional literature, offering an analysis of individual agents in the local context of Bima. Macro studies such as Shofwan (2016) excel at mapping networks but fail to explore the microdynamics of the subjective meaning construction of JAD-JAS followers. This research fills this gap with a hybrid phenomenology-Mead model for local radical expression.

This study was conducted to answer the research questions: How do JAD-JAS followers form a radical religious mind-self in Bima; How are societal interactions negotiated in their daily lives; What stages of action emerge in their expressions of radicalism; How do symbols represent the identity of the JAD-JAS group?

This research has theoretical significance for developing phenomenological symbolic interactionism as a new model for analyzing local radicalization, extending Mead's application to contemporary Indonesian political Islam. Practical: Providing recommendations for symbol-identity-based deradicalization for BNPT/BNPB Bima targeting the JAD hierarchy via leadership arrests, JAS ideological contest via the narrative of democracy-sharia. This research contributes to the understanding of radicalism as a gradual symbolic construction, not a spontaneous phenomenon, paving the way for effective experiential-near deradicalization.

## Research Method

This research method uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-interpretive phenomenological design to reconstruct the subjective experiences and religious expressions of JAD and JAS followers in Bima City. This research was conducted in two sub-districts, Penatoi and Melayu in Bima City, West Nusa Tenggara, which were purposively selected because they are significant bases of religious and social activities of the JAD and JAS networks, while also representing different but equally exclusive socio-religious contexts. The main subjects of the study were JAD and JAS followers aged 30–70 years (all male) with varying educational backgrounds and 5–30 years of involvement in religious studies, da'wah, and organizational networks, while additional informants (community leaders, local officials, security forces, and researchers) were selected purposively to enrich the perspective. The units of analysis include individuals (lifeworld, the process of interpreting tauhid, jihad, and religious identity) and organizations (structures, norms, religious authority, and internal group dynamics), thus enabling a simultaneous understanding of the personal and structural dimensions of religious radicalism.

Data were collected through longterm participant observation in mosques, religious study houses, business spaces, and informal meeting points; in-depth interviews with subjects and key informants in various natural settings; and documentary studies (recitation notes, lecture recordings, da'wah leaflets, digital traces, and media archives). Data analysis followed a modified version of Creswell's (2018) phenomenological process : identifying key statements from transcripts, horizontalization, interpreting and grouping them into essential themes, and developing textural and structural descriptions of the informants' religious experiences. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, diligent observation, and an audit trail, while results were presented in a themed phenomenological narrative supported by direct participant quotations and, where relevant, thematic tables/charts linking key statements, meanings, themes, and theoretical elaborations of symbolic interactionism.

## Results and Discussion

### ***Radical Mind Interpretation***

In Mead's perspective, *the mind* is not simply an individual's capacity for thought, but an internal social process in which individuals communicate with themselves through symbols whose meanings are formed through interaction. In the context of JAD, the formation of the amir's *mind* shows a relatively uniform pattern: religious awareness is built through a

rigorous diagnosis of the condition of the community and the socio-political system, then reinforced by a layered and structured religious socialization pathway. Isk (the amir of JAD Pusat 2017) interprets the condition of Muslims as a people who are "Islamic only rhetorically" and trapped in the system of *thogut*. Mhm expands this diagnosis by placing democracy as the center of polytheism, because it is considered to "make the voice of the people the voice of God." This way of viewing the world shows that *the mind* in JAD operates based on very rigid categorical distinctions: between pure monotheism and polytheism, between true Islam and Islam mixed with the system of *thogut*, between sharia and democracy. This pattern produces a dichotomous religious awareness, the world is understood in black and white oppositions with no gray area.

Mhm (JAD NTB's 2015 amir) took a different path but arrived at a similar *mindset*. He relied heavily on readings and lectures from selectively selected figures. When these sources consistently viewed democracy as a form of *thogut*, his perspective on Indonesia was shaped accordingly: a democratic state was seen as a space "full of *thogut*." Here, it's clear how the choice of knowledge sources shapes a conceptual lens that then colors the overall perception of reality. This *mindset formation* doesn't emerge suddenly, but rather through a long socialization process. Isk, for example, followed a family path that was initially linked to the JI network, then studied at various Islamic boarding schools, attended UIN, and finally attended the religious studies of Aman Abdurrahman. He himself admitted that his radical thinking was an "old memory" that came to life when he met a mentor who aligned with his family background. This suggests that the radical *mindset* in JAD is a recrystallization of past experiences that were then reinforced by the charismatic authority of the central amir.

Thus, the concept of *mind* in JAD is characterized by: (1) a very rigid theological-political diagnosis of the reality of the people and the state; (2) a layered and relatively closed path of religious socialization; (3) selective selection of knowledge sources and strengthening only one framework; (4) the strong role of authority figures (amir/ustaz) as reinforcements of the framework of thought. The result is *a mind* that is dogmatic and difficult to accept alternative interpretations. In contrast to JAD, the formation of *mind* in JAS, especially in Abh, shows a more evolutionary, reflective pattern, and open to revision. Abh does not only rely on one organization, but has gone through a long journey from DI/TII, JI, JAT until finally leading JAS. Each phase of the movement becomes a source of experience and knowledge that is then re-evaluated.

In its early stages, Abh (the leader of JAS Nusra) also interpreted democracy as a false system and Indonesia as *darul kufr*, thus deserving the title *darul jihad*. However, over time, he stated that this understanding was "reconstructed." JAS, under his leadership, "accepted democracy with reservations" and prioritized scientific study in taking a stance. Abh stated that "truth is not absolute from us," and if there is something wrong, it is "thrown away," if it is lacking, it is "corrected." This statement demonstrates an explicit recognition that religious understanding is subject to criticism and revision. In Mead's perspective, *the mind* here functions not as a container for frozen doctrinal memorization, but as a continuous dialogical process between experience, text, and context. Abh learned from tafsir books, from field

experience, and from his long journey across organizations. His religious awareness was shaped not by a single authority figure, but by a series of interactions with various movements and socio-political realities.

Thus, the formation of *mind* in JAS is characterized by: (1) a long and evaluative ideological journey; (2) integration between textual knowledge and empirical experience; (3) recognition of the possibility of error and the need to revise understanding; (4) a tendency to use rational arguments and “scientific studies” in taking positions. The result is a *mind* that is relatively more flexible and pragmatic than JAD, although it remains within the framework of a strong Islamic commitment. From the explanation above, it is clear that JAD and JAS represent two different models of religious *mind formation*. JAD forms religious awareness through a socialization path that leads to a dichotomous, dogmatic mindset and is strongly tied to certain authorities. JAS, on the other hand, forms religious awareness through a more protracted path of experience and study, which allows for the revision and reconstruction of understanding.

Theoretically, this suggests that within the framework of symbolic interactionism, the “radical *mind*” is not a single type. There are rigid radical *minds*, such as those in JAD, which interpret religious symbols in a very fixed and uniform manner, and there are more reflective radical *minds*, such as those in JAS, which, while remaining theologically exclusive, open up space for interpretative change.

### ***Formation of Self-Identity***

Self-identity, in Mead's perspective, is the result of a dialectic between *the I* (the spontaneous self) and *the Me* (the self that sees itself through the perspective of others or the generalized other). In JAD, *self-formation* tends to take place within a strong hierarchical framework and positions the amir as the dominant *generalized other*. Isk distinguishes himself from other Muslims by emphasizing his scholarly background: “I am a Muslim, not a follower.” He positions himself as a subject who understands the *dalil* (law) in depth, different from ordinary Muslims who merely follow tradition without a strong argumentative basis. Here, *the self* is constructed as a more “authentic” and “higher” identity religiously. Mhm does something similar by emphasizing the role of his *da'wah*, sermons, and religious studies. His religious identity is constructed as “a preacher who feels he understands more” than ordinary Muslims.

At the amir level, *the self* is supported by clear structural roles. Isk defines himself as an amir tasked with disseminating doctrine, recruiting members, and raising funds. Mhm describes himself as a regional amir responsible for all JAD activities in NTB. Their *self* is firmly anchored in their formal positions within the congregational structure. Their legitimacy derives from their closeness to the central amir and assignments from above, not from a participatory selection process. At the member level, such as Sfl (a follower of JAD Bima), *the self* is constructed in a highly relational manner: “I am just a loyal follower of my amir.” Self-identity is reduced to the status of obedient “follower.” There is no claim to independent personal identity; the self is defined through obedience to the leader. This

demonstrates the dominance of *the Me* (the self as an object viewed from the perspective of the amir and congregation) over *the I* (the spontaneous, creative self). Members are not encouraged to construct unique self-definitions, but rather to conform to the definitions established by the structure.

This condition results in *a self* that is subordinate and dependent on external authority. When the authority structure is shaken (for example, due to the arrest of an emir), members' self-identities can potentially become confused or emptier, as their *self-identities* have been constructed entirely within a framework of obedience to that authority. In JAS, *self-formation* exhibits a more hierarchical pattern and allows slightly more room for individual autonomy, although still within a hierarchical framework. Abh constructs *his self*-identity as a "senior figure in the Islamic Movement" with extensive experience across organizations. His identity is not merely that of a "cleric" or "emir," but also a "movement activist" with expertise in managing congregations and experience navigating various internal and external dynamics. *His self*-identity is enriched by experience, not just by formal positions. He also emphasizes honesty as a means of preaching, demonstrating that his identity is linked to personal moral qualities, not merely structural functions.

At the member level, Irw holds the position of *qoid i'lam* (media section) of JAS Nusra. *His self* is not only defined as a "follower," but also as an information manager. He does state that he always follows the decisions of the emir, but at the same time plays a technical role that requires ability and initiative. This indicates a more specific role identity and provides space for *a sense of competence*. Fhm (JAS Nusra's follower), on the other hand, still displays a relatively immature *self*. *He only describes himself as a follower who tries to obey and does not talk much about his role or qualities. This shows that within JAS there is a spectrum of self-formation: from the more reflective and role-based to the still very relational and subordinate. In general, self-formation in JAS shows: (1) at the emir level, an identity that is not only based on formal structures, but also on experience and moral qualities; (2) in some members, a more specific role identity (for example in the media field); (3) in some other members, a pattern similar to JAD, namely the self as an obedient follower. Thus, the self in JAS tends to be more hierarchical and slightly more open to individual initiative than in JAD, although the amir's authority remains strong.*

### **Radical Interpretation of Social Interaction (Society)**

From Mead's symbolic interactionist perspective, *society* is not simply a collection of individuals, but rather a social system organized through recurring patterns of interaction that shape shared meanings. This section examines how the two groups organize their internal interactions and interactions with the outside world, and the implications for organizational cohesion and resilience. Within JAD, members' internal interactions are characterized by a strict hierarchical structure and a centralized command system. Isk himself explicitly describes this pattern: "We build a very solid brotherhood. If one person is sick, everyone helps. Every activity awaits instructions from the central leader. So it's a command system." This statement reveals an interesting duality: a solid and mutually supportive brotherhood, yet built within a strict command-control framework.

Mhm reinforces this picture by saying: "Our solidarity is very strong within the congregation. If a member of the congregation faces difficulties, we help alleviate them. Before we act, we must first coordinate with the emir." The phrase "before we act, we must first coordinate" indicates that even acts of mutual assistance within JAD must first receive the emir's approval. In other words, there is no room for spontaneous action that does not go through hierarchical channels. All coordination must go "upward" before it can be executed. The result is very high internal cohesion under "normal" conditions, but it is also vulnerable to fragmentation when the authority structure is shaken. Because solidarity within JAD relies heavily on the presence and authority of the central emir, when the central emir is arrested, sentenced, or lost contact, the entire coordination system can fall apart. In contrast to JAD, internal interactions within JAS exhibit a more deliberative and participatory pattern, although it remains hierarchical. Abh said: "Like in most congregations, the brotherhood is very strong."

However, it still gives each member the freedom to choose what is best for him or herself. The key phrase here is "still gives freedom." This indicates that within JAS, there is room for individual decision-making within the context of collective solidarity. Members do not simply "wait for instructions from the emir" before acting; instead, they are given "the freedom to choose what is best for themselves." This is a fundamental difference from JAD. Even more extreme, Fhm (a member of JAS Bima) describes interactions within JAS as "Just flexible. Everyone can interact with anyone in the congregation." This statement stands in stark contrast to what JAD members might say, who tend to say that their interactions are "limited according to the emir's determination" and are closely monitored. The result is a more resilient and adaptable cohesion. When the structure is shaken, members are not completely disoriented because they are accustomed to a space of local autonomy and deliberation.

### ***Radical Social Action (Action).***

In Mead's symbolic interactionism theory, *action* is not merely *output behavior*, but rather a complex process involving four interrelated stages: (1) *impulse*; the initial urge to act; (2) *perception*; sensing and interpreting the situation; (3) *manipulation*; mentally planning various possible actions; and (4) *consummation*; executing the action and satisfying the initial urge.

#### *Impulse to Act*

*Impulse*, in Mead's perspective, is the initial drive that drives an individual to initiate an action. In JAD, the source of *the impulse* to act predominantly comes from external sources, namely from the orders of the central leader, from the pressure of group solidarity, and from the framing constructed about the state of the people and the state. Isk said: "Because I know, I act. And also from the orders of the central leader. Because of group solidarity too." This statement indicates three sources of impulse: (1) knowledge (because I know), (2) external authority (orders of the central leader), and (3) peer pressure (group solidarity). Although Isk mentions knowledge as the first source, in practice, the orders of the central leader and

group pressure seem to be more dominant. The knowledge that Isk possesses is knowledge that has been framed *by* the congregation; he is not *independent knowledge* that is developed autonomously.

Mhm more explicit in mentioning *external authority*: "Because it was commanded by Allah and the Messenger of Allah through the Qur'an and the Sunnah. And also by the scholars and of course our emir." By placing "ordered by Allah and the Messenger of Allah" at the beginning, Mhm gives religious legitimacy to the impulse to act. However, the phrase "and our emir" at the end indicates that the interpretation of the command of Allah and the Messenger of Allah is mediated through the emir. In other words, the impulse to act is ultimately a combination of: (a) *religious authority* (Allah and the Messenger), (b) *textual authority* (the Qur'an and the Sunnah), (c) *institutional authority* (the scholars), and (d) *immediate authority* (the emir). At the member level, *the impulse* to act becomes simpler but also more externally driven. Sfl says: "The command of the mentor and the emir." There is no further explanation as to why he needs to obey. The fact that the impulse to act is a command from an authority figure. This is a form of *impulse* that is completely externalized, the member has no independent motivation to act other than the command received.

In contrast, *the impulse* to act in JAS tends to be more internally integrated, although it is still shaped by organizational values. Abh said: "My knowledge drives me to behave and act. Because I believe there is a responsibility that will be accounted for in the afterlife." In this statement, the sources of impulse are: (1) personal knowledge and (2) responsibility that will be accounted for in the afterlife. This is a drive that comes from internal beliefs and moral orientation, not from external commands. More importantly, Abh does not mention "orders from the amir" or "instructions from the leadership" as the source of *impulse*. Instead, the knowledge and sense of accountability that Abh possesses are the result of personal understanding and experience, although of course also influenced by the organizational environment. However, in Abh's framing, the ultimate source is internal, namely his conscience and personal understanding.

Irw also shows a similar pattern: "Understanding of religion is what drives all actions in the congregation." The phrase "understanding of religion" indicates that *the impulse* is the result of personal *understanding*, not from external commands. This is different from Sfl (JAD member) who said "commands from mentors and amirs" which are purely external. From a psychological perspective, this condition is autonomous motivation. Autonomous motivation tends to be more sustainable because it originates from internal values and understanding. Even when the external context changes, or when the leader changes, the impulse to act in accordance with internalized values can continue. This fundamental difference between *heteronomous impulse* (JAD) and *autonomous impulse* (JAS) will have major implications for *the sustainability* of members' commitment to the congregation and its ideology.

### *Perception in Action*

If *impulse* is the initial impulse to act, then *perception* is how an individual understands and interprets a situation before deciding how to act. In JAD, perception of a situation is formed through a fixed and standardized conceptual framework. Isk said: "Seeing the context of the event directly, collecting data, considering the many impacts of the decision to be made." Although Isk mentioned a comprehensive process seeing directly, collecting data, and considering the impact this process still occurs within the parameters established by the organization.

The perception of the situation exhibits more open and deliberative characteristics. Abh stated: "Learning. Truth is not absolute from us. So we continue to learn. If something is wrong, discard it. If it is right, accept it. If something is not corrected, then fix it. Don't be ashamed." This statement is incredibly significant because it explicitly acknowledges four fundamental aspects: (1) *fallibility* (the possibility of being wrong); (2) continuous learning (a learning process that never stops); (3) a willingness to leave mistakes behind; and (4) a culture of correction without shame. The implication of this pattern of perception is that JAD has low perceptual flexibility. When reality does not fit the existing conceptual framework, JAD members experience cognitive tension but lack the understanding to reevaluate their conceptual framework. They can only: (a) ignore the incongruent reality; (b) reinterpret reality to fit the framework; (c) experience a crisis when they can no longer ignore or reinterpret.

These perceptual patterns have significant implications for the JAS organization. This organization demonstrates greater perceptual flexibility. When empirical reality does not align with existing conceptual frameworks, JAS members can engage in *collaborative deliberation* to reevaluate those frameworks. They have the capacity to collectively *revise their frameworks of understanding* without experiencing organizational crisis or internal fragmentation.

### *Manipulation in Action*

*Manipulation*, in George Herbert Mead's terminology, is the stage where individuals mentally plan and consider various possible actions before actual execution. In the context of JAD, manipulation is secretive and highly centralized. Isk describes it revealingly: "Closed and disconnected. Only certain members are consulted. The others don't know. They only know about the execution." This suggests that planning occurs: (a) behind closed doors, without transparency; (b) in select circles, with only the elite involved; (c) with information asymmetry, with most members only knowing the execution instructions without context or reason.

The main implication is that most JAD members act as implementers, not decision-makers. They lack the information and authority to discuss the wisdom of planned actions, and thus simply receive and carry out instructions. Overall, the pattern remains centralized, with final authority resting with the central emir. In contrast to the previous JAS, JAD exhibits

structural rigidity that is potentially vulnerable to external disruption, although efficient for swift action. In JAS, *manipulation* is more transparent and collaborative than in JAD. Abh stated: "Seeing, hearing, and reading directly the existing phenomena. Then basing it on the Quran and Sunnah as a guide for action." This describes planning as: (a) based on direct observation, with leaders actively seeing, hearing, and reading actual phenomena; (b) with a clear frame of reference, namely the Quran and Sunnah, rather than arbitrary decisions; (c) implicitly inclusive, with consultation, rather than based on direct orders. This process emphasizes adaptability rooted in empirical reality and religious guidance, creating more contextual planning.

Irw exhibits an explicit collaborative pattern: "Together with the amir and other members of the congregation, we plan what actions need to be taken in certain situations." The phrase "together with the amir and other members of the congregation" indicates a collective process involving both the amir and rank-and-file members. The phrase "planning what actions need to be taken" emphasizes responsiveness to specific situations, flexibility rather than rigidity or predetermination. This pattern contrasts sharply with the closed nature of JAD, which allows members to participate in the planning stage. Fhm represents a more centralized pattern: "It's all planned by the amir and seniors. I'm just ready to carry out orders." For members like Fhm, *manipulation* resembles JAD, with planning by the amir and seniors, execution by subordinates. This indicates that although JAS is more decentralized organizationally, leadership practices remain *top-down*. Overall, JAS exhibits a wider distribution of decision-making authority than JAD. More members are involved in planning, although the amir retains ultimate authority.

### *Consummation in Action*

*Consummation* is the final stage where the action is actually carried out and the satisfaction of the initial impulse is achieved. This study focuses on: (a) the actual actions taken by JAD and JAS members, and (b) *the outcomes* or satisfaction obtained. In JAD, *consummation* is oriented towards maintaining the organization. Isk describes his role as amir: "Finding funds, accommodating congregants who are wanted by security forces. Reconciling congregants with their families if there is internal conflict within their households." These actions all serve to maintain the organization and ensure its continuity.

Specifically: fundraising, securing operational resources; accommodating wanted persons; protecting members from the authorities; strengthening internal loyalty; reconciling conflicts; maintaining the organization's social cohesion. Mhm stated vaguely: "We have done many things within the congregation. Because we feel responsible for the running of the organization, which has been entrusted to us by the central leader." The phrase "responsible for the running of the organization" emphasizes the priority of organizational continuity, rather than achieving specific strategic goals in society. From an *organizational analysis perspective*, this is an internally oriented action focused on maintaining structure and membership, rather than transforming the external environment or realizing broad ideological goals. The implication of this pattern is that *the outcome of*

JAD's actions is primarily about maintaining the organizational status quo, rather than broader ideological or socio-political transformation. Members engage in activities that keep the organization running, but do not necessarily advance concrete ideological goals such as enforcing sharia law or rejecting democracy.

In JAS, *consummation* focuses on ideological transformation and organizational adaptation. Abh describes a significant action: "We left the network that declared everyone as infidels like JAD. And formed a new group called JAS." This was a fundamental act of separation from the parent organization due to ideological differences. The phrase "leaving the network that declared everyone as infidels like JAD" indicates an explicit critique of JAD's practice of takfir (declaring all outsiders as infidels). This action was not simply an organizational separation, but rather an ideological differentiation; JAS actively differentiated its approach to the application of the principle of takfir. This process reflects a concrete execution that changed both the organizational structure and ideological positions.

At the member level, Irw stated: "Conveying my understanding to other members." This is an ideological transmission activity, spreading understanding/ideology. The phrase "my understanding" indicates that Irw has personal *agency* in the way ideology is communicated, rather than the mechanical transmission of a centrally created ideology. This pattern emphasizes flexibility in execution, where members not only carry out orders but also articulate their own understanding. From an organizational analysis perspective, this is an outward-oriented action focused on spreading ideology and has the potential to transform external understanding while also being inwardly oriented on ideological adaptation and organizational evolution. The implication of this pattern is that the outcome of JAS actions has the potential for double transformation: both the organization and understanding. JAS members not only keep the organization running but also engage in ideological refinement and organizational adaptation.

### ***Use of Religious Symbols***

In Mead's symbolic interactionism theory, symbols are the fundamental medium through which meaning is shared and communicated within a social community. Symbols are not simply "labels" for objects or concepts; rather, they are gestures or objects that have shared meaning for members of a particular social community. Thus, the study of *symbols* is the study of how communities construct, maintain, and reproduce collective meaning that enables coordination of action and internal solidarity.

In JAD, Sfl provides a very concrete description of the visual markers in JAD: "Like the congregation in general, yes, cingrak pants, hats and robes in the Middle Eastern style and black as the dominant color." These visual symbols include: Cingkrang pants (short pants, not reaching the ankles); Hats (usually peci or turbans in the Middle Eastern style); Jubah (long robes in the Middle Eastern style); Black as the dominant color. An interesting phrase in Sfl's answer is "like the congregation in general." This phrase shows that for Sfl, these visual symbols are considered "normal" or "natural", not something unique or strange. This

is a sign of successful socialization, where these typical markers have become "normal" or "natural" in Sfl's daily experience. In addition to visual symbols, JAD uses conceptual symbols, abstract concepts that organize ideology and frame perceptions of the world. Isk stated: "We often voice the purity of monotheism, fighting against thogut, polytheistic democracy, jihad, sharia, caliphate and others as important messages in the congregation." Conceptual symbols according to Isk include: pure monotheism; fighting against thogut; polytheistic democracy; jihad; sharia; caliphate.

Mhm added: "We fight for the establishment of a caliphate on this earth of Allah. Therefore, we continue to voice religious symbols such as jihad, takfir, and also Al Wala' Wa Al bara' as the values of the struggle." Additional symbols: takfir (announcement of someone as an infidel or apostate); Al Wala' Wa Al bara' (loyalty to true believers and rejection of non-believers and idol worshippers). Interestingly, JAS uses most of the same symbols as JAD, but their interpretations are different. Abh stated: "Democracy is shirk, Indonesia is Darul Qufur, therefore it is darul jihad." Abh's symbols include: democracy is shirk (same as JAD); Darul Qufur (land of infidelity); Darul jihad (land where jihad is obligatory). Irw added: "We often say that democracy is shirk, that Pancasila is thogut and others." Irw's symbols: democracy is shirk (same as JAD); Pancasila is thogut (Pancasila as idol worship). Fhm stated: "Everything related to jihad and the caliphate."

On the surface, JAD and JAS use very similar, if not identical, symbols, both proclaiming "jihad," "caliphate," "shirk democracy," "thogut," and so on. The fundamental difference lies in the interpretation and application of these symbols. While the symbolic vocabulary is similar, their operational meaning and practical implications differ between the two groups. The differences in interpretation of the symbols can be seen in the way emirs and members explain how they arrived at their interpretations. Isk explained: "I learned it from an early age. I went to Islamic boarding schools, studied with ustadz as my mentor. So the interpretation wasn't quick. It was a long process." The phrase "already berproses lama" (through a long process) indicates that Isk's interpretation of religious symbols was not the result of a recent decision or recent discussion. Rather, this interpretation has been deeply internalized through long-term socialization.

Mhm expressed a similar pattern: "I always read all the basic concepts of this struggle. From my reading, that is what I understand about the symbols of this struggle." Mhm explicitly stated that the choice of reading sources shapes interpretation. Because Mhm read material that consistently considers democracy as shirk, her understanding became "democracy is the same as shirk." There were no alternative readings that offered a different view; Mhm's choices were selective and confirmed existing beliefs. Interpretation by JAS. Abh explained: "From my long journey in this movement, of course I already know a lot about it, both from books of interpretation and also from my own studies." The phrase "from a long journey" indicates that Abh's interpretation is not only from reading or guidance from one figure, but also from involvement with various organizations and contexts. The phrase "from books of interpretation and also from my own studies" illustrates the integration between textual study and personal research.

More importantly, Abh explicitly acknowledged the shift in interpretation. When asked about the evolution of his views on democracy, Abh stated: "Back in the old congregations, both JI and JT, Indonesia was darul qufur, a democracy that was good. Over time, we reconstructed that understanding. We accepted democracy with caveats." This is a remarkable admission; Abh openly admits that his initial interpretation ("democracy that is bad") has been reconstructed into "accepting democracy with caveats." Interpretations are not fixed, but evolving. Irw demonstrates a more open pattern: "Based on my understanding from studying the books and sermons of ustadz who are experienced in the field of jihad." Although he names the ustadz as a source, the phrase "based on my understanding" indicates a personal interpretation, not a pure transmission of what the ustadz said. From an epistemological perspective, this represents an exploratory engagement with a source that is open to multiple interpretations and a willingness to revise understanding as evidence or context changes.

## Conclusion

This study reveals the essence of religious radicalization of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Jamaah Ansharusy Syariah (JAS) followers in Bima City as a process of intersubjective meaning construction through George Herbert Mead's five dimensions of symbolic interactionism: mind, self, society, action, and symbol. The main findings show profound structural differences between the two groups. JAD forms a rigid-dichotomous consciousness (mind) through centralized knowledge from the central emir, where Isk diagnoses the crisis of the ummah with the absolute category of pure tauhid versus thaghut, while Mhm and Sfl internalize the utopia of the Islamic State. In contrast, JAS develops a flexible-pragmatic mind through local deliberation, as expressed by Abh with an emphasis on "study of sharia politics based on knowledge, not lip service." JAD's self-construction is totally subordinate, where Sfl states "I am a congregation loyal to my emir. I follow every command," reflecting the dominance of the social Me over Mead's impulsive I, with a relational identity without independent agency. JAS demonstrates a balanced and agency-based dialectic of self, where Abh, Irw, and Fhm articulate specific roles through adaptive organizational experiences. JAD's societal interactions are mechanical through the exclusivity of al-wala' wal-bara' Penatoi, creating a rigid boundary between believers and non-believers, while JAS builds participatory organic solidarity through inclusive Malay social da'wah.

Mead's stages of action (*impulse-perception-manipulation-consummation*) differ in principle: JAD follows an external-centralization cycle leading to violence ("Follow the amir's direction" Sfl), while JAS goes through an internal-deliberative process oriented towards da'wah transformation. JAD's rigid-standard symbol system (ISIS flag, cingkrang robe, niqab) represents a totalizing takfiri identity, while JAS's flexible-contextual system (local turban, ikhwan-akhawat) functions performatively for social negotiation. Three fundamental organizing principles that emerge from the phenomenological analysis are: (1) rigidity versus flexibility in the formation of consciousness; (2) centralization versus distribution of authority in social interactions; and (3) subordination versus agency in self-

construction. These principles produce two models of contemporary radicalism: "Authoritarian-Dogmatic Radicalism" (JAD) which is ideologically cohesive but structurally fragile after the arrest of the leadership, and "Collaborative-Pragmatic Radicalism" (JAS) which is adaptive but prone to internal conflict.

The theoretical contribution of this research is the development of a phenomenological symbolic interactionism model as a framework for analyzing local radicalization, extending the application of Mead's concept to the context of Indonesian political Islam, which was previously dominated by macro-structural approaches (IPAC, Solahudin). This hybrid model captures the subjective lived experiences of radical followers, filling a gap in the literature that lacks the microdynamics of everyday meaning construction. Practical implications are aimed at the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) and the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) in the Bima region: JAD deradicalization is effective through targeting the leadership hierarchy (arresting central-regional emirs), while JAS requires an ideological contestation strategy that challenges the narrative of democracy versus sharia hakimiyyah through counter-narrative da'wah. This experience-near approach is superior to general models because it adapts to specific organizational characteristics. Limitations of the study include a sample of six informants limited to the Bima-specific context, the potential retrospective bias of interviews with former members, and a single focus on phenomenological methods without quantitative triangulation. Further research is recommended: (1) a comparative longitudinal study with JI/HTI; (2) analysis of JAD-JAS's digital social media discourse; (3) multi-method integration with critical discourse analysis; and (4) evaluation of the effectiveness of the BNPT deradicalization program after implementing this model.

This research demonstrates that religious radicalism is not a spontaneous or monolithic phenomenon, but rather a gradual symbolic construction that can be mapped and intervened upon through Mead's understanding of microdynamics. The findings offer concrete hope for identity- and experience-based deradicalization policies, contributing to Indonesia's socio-religious stability post-ISIS.

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