



# The Transformation of Jamaah Islamiyah and Actor Rationality: Implications of Rational Choice Theory for Deradicalization Strategies in Indonesia

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## Abstract

*This study examines the rationality behind the dissolution of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) in Indonesia, employing the Rational Choice Theory framework. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on ideological or security aspects, this research argues that JI's organizational transformation and eventual dissolution resulted from rational calculations by its members to evaluate risks, benefits, and social opportunities. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation involving former JI members in the Greater Solo area. The findings reveal that the dissolution was not merely a consequence of government pressure but a product of internal rational considerations aimed at avoiding legal risks, safeguarding educational assets, and expanding socio-economic participation. The study identifies three forms of rationality operating within JI: ideological, pragmatic, and adaptive rationality. These findings suggest that ideological transformation within radical Islamic movements can be understood as a process of rational recalibration, rather than mere submission to external coercion. This study contributes to the understanding of deradicalization and social reintegration strategies in the Indonesian context.*

**Keywords:** *Jamaah Islamiyah, rational choice theory, ideological transformation, rationality, deradicalization.*

## INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) by 12 senior figures on June 30, 2024, will be an important milestone in the history of the Islamic movement in Indonesia. The declaration of dissolution, read by the former Amir Abu Rusdan and approved by two other ex-Amirs, Zarkasih (2004–2007) and Para Wijayanto (2007–2019), marked the end of one of the most influential radical Islamic networks in Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> In his statement, the figures confirm the commitment to the Unitary State Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), to stopping all forms of hostility, to reformulating the curriculum of institution-affiliated education with JI, and to actively participating in the nation's development in accordance with applicable law.<sup>2</sup>

A study of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) has been done in the last two decades, especially in the context of radicalism and transnational Islamic movements. In general, academic literature regarding JI can be grouped into three main categories. First, the study highlights the emergence and structure of the JI organization. Zulkarnain Haron and Nordin Hussin explain that JI is a continuation of the ideological movement of the growing Darul Islam (DI) since the 1950s, with a rigid and oriented interpretation of the jihad ideology going to the establishment of an Islamic State.<sup>3</sup> Studies confirm that the phase beginning with the formation of JI was driven by sentiment exclusive towards the state and modernity. Second, research that discusses JI's strategies, networks, and recruitment. Akh Muzakki describes the ideologization strategy and mechanisms of JI cadre formation, emphasizing loyalty, obedience, and sacrifice for ideals upholding sharia.<sup>4</sup> Quinton Temby explores JI's relationship with global Islamic groups, especially the ideological and logistical connections with Al-Qaeda.<sup>5</sup> Third, research that highlights the transformation of post-deradicalization Islamic movements. Study Abuza shows that JI experienced internal fragmentation after the arrest of several leaders. Some members go through track moderation and integration socials, while others choose to maintain the old ideology in smaller, closed groups.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kompas Cyber Media, "Jamaah Islamiyah Bubar, Nyatakan Kembali ke Pangkuan NKRI Halaman all," KOMPAS.com, 7 Juli 2024, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2024/07/07/13465371/jamaah-islamiyah-bubar-nyatakan-kembali-ke-pangkuan-nkri>.

<sup>2</sup> *Eksklusif Podcast Strategist JI Bubar: Argumen Para Wijayanto Mantan Amir JI 2008-2019*, diarahkan oleh SKSG UI, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gu3GWyj1owU>.

<sup>3</sup> Zulkarnain Haron dan Nordin Hussin, "A Study of the Salafi Jihadist Doctrine and the Interpretation of Jihad by Al Jama'ah Al Islamiyah," *Kemanusiaan: The Asian Journal of Humanities* 20, no. 2 (2013), [http://web.usm.my/kajh/vol20\\_2\\_2013/art%20%20\(15-37\).pdf](http://web.usm.my/kajh/vol20_2_2013/art%20%20(15-37).pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Akh Muzakki, "The roots, strategies, and popular perception of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 8, no. 1 (2014): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2014.8.1.1-22>.

<sup>5</sup> Quinton Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jamaah Islamiyah," *Indonesia*, no. 89 (2010): 1–36, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20798213>.

<sup>6</sup> Zachary Abuza, "Funding terrorism in Southeast Asia: the financial network of Al Qaeda and Jamaah Islamiyah," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 25, no. 2 (2003): 169–99, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/387728>.

The above studies tend stop at the analysis of emergence, ideology, and networks of the JI movement. Not much yet: a study that examines the process of an organization's dissolution, as well as its members' internal response to a change in doctrine and direction. In fact, the JI elites' dissolution marked a significant shift in ideology from an armed stance to an attitude of accommodation toward the state and national law. To understand change, this research uses the Theory of Rational Choice (*Rational Choice Theory*), as developed by James Coleman<sup>7</sup> and Gary Becker.<sup>8</sup> Theory This assumes that individuals act based on the consideration of profit-loss (cost-benefit), where each social decision results in a rational calculation of potential benefits (*rewards*) and risks (*costs*). In the JI context, the approach helps explain why some members choose supports the dissolution of the organization, while others maintain their old identity and jihad ideology.

With this framework, the dissolution of Jamaah Islamiyah can be seen not solely as a result of state pressure, but also of internal rationalization among its members. They weigh repeat values ideological, security, personal, interests, economy, as well as social position in public post-deradicalization. This process yields various category responses, ranging from rational-pragmatic to rational-adaptive to rational-ideological, depending on how each count benefits or risks from changing their attitude toward the organization. Changes involving around 6,000 members of Jamaah Islamiyah raise an important question: What is the rationale for the elite and JI members deciding to dissolve the organization? How calculation of profit and loss, individual influence, and attitude toward dissolution? How does pattern adaptation social and economic ex-JI members after changing the organizational orientation?

## RESEARCH METHODS

Type study: This case study examines a natural case study, focusing on one social phenomenon: the dissolution of the official Jamaah Islamiyah in 2024 and its members' dynamic responses. A case study was chosen to examine deep rationality in action, both individual and collective, as well as the social context that surrounds it. Research was implemented in the Solo Raya area, which includes Surakarta City, Surakarta Regency, Sukoharjo, Karanganyar, Sragen, Boyolali, and Klaten. Subject study includes Former members of Jamaah Islamiyah, both those involved in the declaration of dissolution and those who chose not to join. Figure community and local authorities, who understand the dynamics of social groups. Researchers and activists in deradicalization who have secondary data and field experience related to JI.

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<sup>7</sup> James S. Coleman, *Foundations of social theory* (Harvard university press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Gary S. Becker, *The economic approach to human behavior*, vol. 803 (University of Chicago press, 1976).

Data collected with several techniques: In-depth interviews with ex-JI members to dig into their motivation and the rationality behind their decisions. Observation participatory in the activity, social, religious, and economic, among ex-members in society. Analysis document on the official statement of dissolution, the curriculum institution JI education, as well as media reports. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner so that informants could freely explain their views and experiences—observation conducted in Islamic boarding schools, homes of tahfidz, and community social initiatives by ex-JI members. Data analysis was carried out interactively and inductively following the Miles and Huberman model,<sup>9</sup> which includes three stages: Data reduction, namely selecting relevant data, related choices and considerations, and rational actors. Data presentation is compiled from patterns of response among JI members (rational-pragmatic, adaptive, ideological). Withdrawal conclusion and verification linking empirical findings with the core concept of Theory Choice Rational, such as *utility maximization* and *cost minimization*. The analysis is conducted simultaneously with data collection, allowing an interpretation reflective of field dynamics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Transformation of Jamaah Islamiyah in Solo Raya

Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) has a strong historical presence in the Solo Raya region. The organization. This began with a network of preaching built by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, two figures central to the movement to purify Islam in Surakarta.<sup>10</sup> Root Ideology resistance Jamaah Islamiyah is based on the spirit of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia, a long struggle led by Kartosuwiryo, who opposed President Soekarno on August 7, 1949, and established the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) in Tasikmalaya, West Java.<sup>11</sup> Ideology struggles they develop from the purification of faith, leading to the spirit of armed jihad, which later manifests in a three-stage struggle: *Takwinul Congregation* (formation and organization), *Takwinul Qimah* (preparation and strength), and *Istikhdamul Qimah* (use of strength).<sup>12</sup>

The scholars take note that the founding of JI took place in January 1993, as a result of a peak division between Abdullah Sungkar, who adheres to the Salafi Jihad ideology, which upholds the purification of values in religion, and Ajeng Masduki Amir JI, who adheres to Sufism and is very

<sup>9</sup> Matthew B. Miles, *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*, Second (Sage Publications, 1994), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Wildan, "Mapping radical Islamism in Solo: A study of the proliferation of radical Islamism in Central Java, Indonesia," *Al Jamiah* 46, no. 1 (2009), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/762/>.

<sup>11</sup> Ghofar Asnanto, "Gerakan Darul Islam: Catatan Kecil dari Pengalaman Sejarah," *SLASAT* 4, no. 3 (2019): 59–66.

<sup>12</sup> *Eksklusif Mantan Amir Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah Mbah Zarkasih*, diarahkan oleh SKSG UI, 2024, 01:00:30, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jexh9d0TNTc>.

accommodating with Indonesian culture.<sup>13</sup> JI was initially a jihadist group whose territory included Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia. However, since Abdullah Sungkar's death, inter-regional coordination has become less harmonious, so JI has developed only within Indonesia's territory.<sup>14</sup>

The Jamaah Islamiyah movement was shaken post- 2002 Bali Bombing, where the authorities carried out a series of violent actions and massive arrests of JI members.<sup>15</sup> In several incidents, Densus executed several JI members after a guilty verdict from the judge.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the apparatus placed the JI Amirs as the main targets. So that happened the sequence of arrests of the Amirs, starting with Abu Rusydan in 2003, Adung in 2004, Zarkasih in 2007, and Para Wijayanto in 2019.<sup>17</sup> Zarkasih describes JI's journey without Amir like a body without a head, an existence they like No There is.<sup>18</sup>

Actually, it changed direction. JI's struggle during the leadership of Para Wijayanto (2007–2019) began to go through a social and educational track, as well as leave the path of terror.<sup>19</sup> Although a policy change has occurred, the apparatus still treats JI members and Amir as targets for arrest, so they finally decide to dissolve on June 30, 2024. Six senior figures, including two former amirs, in effect officially declare the disbanding of JI and their loyalty to the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>20</sup> The declaration states, first, the dissolution of Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah and its return to the lap of the Unitary State Republic of Indonesia. Second, guarantee free curriculum and teaching materials from the attitude of the *Tatarruf* and refer to understand the *Sunni and the Sunni Congregation*. Third, forming a team assessment curriculum and teaching materials. Fourth, Ready For involves active involvement in independence, so that the Indonesian nation becomes advanced and dignified. Fifth, ready to follow the applicable laws in the Unitary State Republic of Indonesia and committed and consistent in operating things that are a consequence logically. Sixth, matters related to the above agreement will be discussed with the state through the Densus 88 Anti-Terror Headquarters of the Indonesian National Police Transformation. This raises an important question: what drives actors,

<sup>13</sup> As' ad Said Ali, *Al-Qaeda: Tinjauan Sosial-Politik, Ideologi dan Sepak Terjangnya* (LP3ES, 2014), 161.

<sup>14</sup> *Eksklusif Mantan Amir Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah Mbah Zarkasih*, diarahkan oleh SKSG UI, 2024, 01:00:30, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jexh9d0TNTc>.

<sup>15</sup> Marthsian Yeksi Anakotta dkk., "Analisis Penangkapan Terduga Teroris oleh Detasemen Khusus 88 Anti-Terror dari Perspektif Penegakan Hukum-Joseph Goldstein," *Journal of Judicial Review* 23, no. 1 (2021): 01–16, <http://dx.doi.org/10.37253/jjr.v23i1.4346>.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Ali Zaidan, "Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme (Pendekatan Kebijakan Kriminal)," *Law Research Review Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (2017): 149–80, <https://doi.org/10.15294/snh.v3i1.20932>.

<sup>17</sup> *Eksklusif Podcast Strategist JI Bubar: Argumen Para Wijayanto Mantan Amir JI 2008-2019*, diarahkan oleh SKSG UI, 2024, 55:39, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gu3GWyj1owU>.

<sup>18</sup> *Eksklusif Mantan Amir Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah Mbah Zarkasih*, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Syaifudin Zuhri, "The Changing Paradigm of Indonesian Jihadist Movements: From Al-aduww Al-Qarib to Al-aduww Al-Baid," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 4, no. 2 (2010): 240–67, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2010.4.2.240-267>.

<sup>20</sup> Media, "Jamaah Islamiyah Bubar, Nyatakan Kembali ke Pangkuan NKRI Halaman all."

like JI members, to leave behind old struggles and take a different path toward peace?

### **Classification Ex JI Post Members Dissolution**

The findings field shows the existence of three responses from former members of Jamaah Islamiyah against the dissolution of the organization:

#### *Rational Pragmatic*

Group First from ex-JI members is Rational Pragmatic, accepting dissolution, involved in society and business, and productive. Group First. These are the people who see potential profit as a consideration in their decisions and in the risks to the economy, as well as to their own safety if they still survive. Group This, in a way, is a person who enjoys comfort in business, work, and banking employment in the structure government, such as civil servants or workers under contract. In the world of education, they empower educators at affiliated institutions and have received government funding. Former member in classification. This own identity, a social low group, is not seen as active in the activity group, even after a long time. They also consider that the pattern-thinking group is already out of step with Indonesia's development.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Rational Adaptive*

Group two is Rational Adaptive, which is aware of risk, legal, and social factors, but still maintains the old ideology. They accept change as an adaptive strategy to endure existence while maintaining old values. Some ex-members stated, "This is a coping strategy reality, which is important, as it can still convey preaching."<sup>22</sup> Besides that, they also enjoy various training, even free electronics, and receive training money. Some members say that dissolution is a reality, preaching that must be faced, because of the threat of existing groups and sources of power in the economy, with closing schools as well as cottage-affiliated Islamic boarding schools with this group.<sup>23</sup>

Even though JI has disbanded, the ex-member group still operates the same way in educational institutions or in business; it continues to operate after dissolution. They use chance dissolution to legalize their educational institutions, both below the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education. One of the leadership cottages in Sragen state, where a declaration was conducted at the pondok and attended by various government institutions, including the Ministry of Religion, he submitted so that licensing the Official Madrasah Aliyah Pondok is made easier.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Wawancara dengan R.A 2 Februari 2026

<sup>22</sup> Wawancara dengan SFL 26 Desember 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Wawancara dengan E.W 16 Januari 2026.

<sup>24</sup> Wawancara dengan ustaz Z 20 Mei 2025.

For guard Spirit religion and struggle ex-members, they form groups to recite teachings from the former leadership and the religious teacher group they were in before. The wives and children of the ex-member also hold group study. Material study. This still contains about Islam, with occasional discussion of government, they mark No, in line with the spirit of Islam.<sup>25</sup> They still put themselves as the government of the oppressed society. This strengthens the suspicion that the disbandment of JI is only a natural strategic and adaptive move rather than a sign of sincerity in recognizing this country.

#### Analysis Thinking Second Group

Although they have different levels of internalization of ideology, the second group shows a direction of relative attitude similar to that towards the Indonesian state and society. Recognition that Indonesia is not an infidel country. Change doctrine. This is a leap ideologically important. QS verse. Al-Maidah [5]: 44 serves as a basis for rejecting the current state system, interpreted in its context. They assess Indonesia as *Dar al-Islam*, namely the Muslim region that must guard its stability. Thus, the state apparatus, TNI, and Polri are no longer considered enemies but rather part of the Muslim community (*brotherhood*) *wathaniyah*.

Reception Symbols of the Transforming State attitude are shown symbolically through installations, including the President and Vice President, the Garuda Pancasila symbol, and the Red and White flag, in institutions of previous education affiliated with the JI network. They also follow the August 17th ceremony flag and sing the song *Indonesia Raya* as an expression of loyalty to their nation. This action is not just a formality but a genuine internalization of national identity among former JI members.

#### *Rational Ideological,*

Group three is members who refuse the disbandment of JI and maintain armed jihad ideology as a form of spiritual commitment. For them, the risks of arrest, loss of source economics, and social stigma are considered sacrifices in worldly life, which will be repaid with reward and honor in the hereafter. Although the minority, considering that more of the 6,000 JI members have returned to the Republic of Indonesia, the group still exists latently, with a built network of lower-level land and communication forums closed. Some old JI members also admitted the whereabouts of these people, who are difficult to track. They do not accept the decision of the 16 leaders to dissolve, only to exist.<sup>26</sup>

The rationality group is third. This is a non-natural, economic, yet spiritual ideology in which religious values are considered more important than material benefits. Group This own belief that profit maintains old

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<sup>25</sup> Wawancara dengan L.A. 25 Januari 2026.

<sup>26</sup> Wawancara dengan M.M 27 Desember 2025.



ideology in the form of eternal happiness that is not comparable with risk, arrest, or loss of temporary worldly life. This group has its own identity, is strong, and has been involved in various risky actions. Among them is a senior member and a former Amir JI, both of whom defended the ideology. This is Adg.<sup>27</sup>

Attitudes and Views Group Rational-Ideological they are: 1) Maintain Old Views on the Indonesian State. 2) Group This still assesses Indonesia as the *thagbut state* that does not comply with Islamic law, as a literal interpretation of the QS. Al- Maidah [5]: 44. Changing the view is considered a form of deviation from faith. Therefore, they reject ideological adjustment and the affirmative importance of replacing the state system with a form of servitude to God. 3) Keeping Distance from Members Who Return to the Republic of Indonesia. 4) Indonesian society: they still greet old colleagues, but there is a separation principle in ideological conversations. Members who accept the Republic of Indonesia are considered to have experience in the principle of inqilab (shift), so that interaction is restricted for the guard purity belief group.

Maintain the Old Method in Armed Jihad Islamic Struggle, still considered as the only method upholding Islam kaffah, emulating Prophet Muhammad and his generation, Salaf. Belief: This gives them a strong moral identity, even though risky in a way, legal and social. In logical choice, rational action. This shows rationality-based value -rational action where spiritual orientation overcomes material calculation.

| Category             | Main Features                                                                                        | Rational Motives                                                                           |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rational-Pragmatic   | Accept dissolution, involvement active in society and business productive.                           | Evaluate that profit socio-economic and security bigger compared to maintain old ideology. |
| Rational-Adaptive    | Adapt self in a way gradually without reject completely old ideology.                                | Avoid risk social, but still maintain internal identity as a " congregation" preaching .”  |
| Rational-Ideological | Reject dissolution and permanent maintain old doctrine though without structure formal organization. | Evaluate commitment to the struggle of Islam more worth than benefit worldly.              |

This pattern shows that decision makers are strongly influenced by perceptions of risks and opportunities, not solely by order leaders. Members with economic and social capital tend to adopt a rational-pragmatic attitude, whereas those with strong ideological attachments remain in the rational-ideological category.

<sup>27</sup> Wawancara dengan Alm 12 Januari 2026.



## Driving Factors Dissolution Jamaah Islamiyah

The transformation of the ideological Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) from an armed jihad movement into organizations openly supporting state dissolution in 2024 can be explained by the Theory Choice Rational approach. In this framework, every individual and group seeks to maximize utility and minimize losses (costs) amid social, political, and economic changes. The dissolution of JI is not solely a consequence of state pressure, but rather results from the calculation process rationale of the elites and members in response to various external and internal factors that influence the organization's sustainability.

### *External Factor*

First, *Firmness, Government, and the Formation of Densus 88*, The Indonesian government took a firm step to counter radical movements after a series of terrorist actions, especially the 2002 Bali Bombings.<sup>28</sup> President Megawati issued two regulations (PERPU) to fill the gaps left by the law, namely Government Regulation No. 1 of 2002 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts Terrorism and Government Regulation No. 2 of 2002 concerning the Investigation, Prosecution, and Prosecution Case of the Bali Bombings. In 2003, Government Regulation, instead of Law No. 1 of 2002, became Law No. 15 of 2003 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts Terrorism.<sup>29</sup> Constitution. This then pushes the Indonesian National Police from Detachment, specifically 88 Anti- Terror (Densus 88), through the Chief of Police Decree No. 30/VI/2003. Furthermore, Law No. 5 of 2018 further underscores the government's commitment to taking action against perpetrators of terrorism. Law, this also gives the apparatus greater authority to arrest the alleged party involved in the terrorist network.<sup>30</sup>

From the perspective of rationalchoice, the steps the government takes to take action against terrorists create a very high cost for society and cause harm to JI members. Risk arrest, loss of freedom, and social stigmatization cause the leaders consider repeating the effectiveness of armed struggle. Since then, Para Wijayanto, who was appointed as Amir JI, replaced Asih, changing the pattern of JI's struggle to become a movement of education and social preaching. In this context, the dissolution of an organization is a rational strategy to minimize losses and maintain personal and social assets.

Second, *Arrest Mass and Legal Labeling*. Verdict South Jakarta District Court No. 2191/PID.B/2007/ PN.JKT.Self, which determined JI as a corporation, is in a position subject to the law. Until 2021, Densus 88 had arrested 876 JI members out of a total of more than 2,900 suspected terrorists

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<sup>28</sup> Zaidan, "Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme (Pendekatan Kebijakan Kriminal)."

<sup>29</sup> Fajar Purwawidada, *Jaringan Baru Teroris Solo* (Gramedia, 2014), 22.

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Zulfikar dan Aminah Aminah, "Peran Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme dalam Pemberantasan Terorisme di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pembangunan Hukum Indonesia* 2, no. 1 (2020): 129–44, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jphi.v2i1.129-144>.

in Indonesia.<sup>31</sup> To stop the group movement, the police target the arrest of leaders and key figures of Jamaah Islamiyah. Attempts to arrest the emirs walk with the capture of Abu Rusydan in 2003, then sentenced to a 3.5-year sentence because of the perpetrator of the bombing of the church in 2000.<sup>32</sup> When the JI leadership changed from Abu Rusydan to Adung or Sunarto, the number of arrests widened until Amir was caught in 2004. The arrest of the JI leader continues to happen, changing leadership in groups. Zarkasih, as a replacement for Adung, has applied a more secure method, and the secret was also caught in 2007 in Yogyakarta.<sup>33</sup>

Since the arrest of Zarkasih, news of the arrest of JI leaders had been delayed. It was heard a long time ago that in 2019, Densus returned to catch JI leader Para Wijayanto.<sup>34</sup> Para Wijayanto, who was sworn in as JI's amir, replacing Zarkasih in 2007, was set as a fugitive in 2008. 11 years after being declared a fugitive, police arrested Para and his wife at the Adaya Hotel in Bekasi, West Java.<sup>35</sup> JI's ability to protect Amir and them from arrest shows development ability and adaptation to the situations in which they find themselves, avoiding violent activity while still building a network. Although they can delay Amir's arrest longer, Densus remains under arrest for its members. In a situation like this, the members face a dilemma: either continue the activity with high risk or take a safe step through organizational transformation. In general, rational choice for self-dissolution becomes an adaptive strategy to maintain a sustainable social network, Islamic boarding schools, and the members' lives.

Third, *Restrictions on Movement and Security Strategies*. Arrests repetitive against the JI emirs, starting with Abu Rusydan (2003), Adung (2004), Zarkasih (2007), to Para Wijayanto (2019), show the seriousness of the government in stopping the movement of the organization. push the emergence of the 'Total Amniyah System (TAS) and the Total of Solution (TOS) systems. Both systems. This is an innovative internal security system designed to avoid detection and maintain organizational stability.<sup>36</sup> However, when room movement is narrower, and the system is considered ineffective, dissolution is considered a rational final solution. solution to avoid the destruction of the organization and loss across the entire education network.

<sup>31</sup> Nurhadi Sucahyo, "Densus 88 Klaim Jamaah Islamiyah Mulai Melemah," VOA Indonesia, 13 Oktober 2021, <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/densus-88-klaim-jamaah-islamiyah-mulai-melemah/6268531.html>.

<sup>32</sup> "Densus 88 Ungkap Sejumlah Peran Sentral Abu Rusydan di Jamaah Islamiyah | tempo.co," Tempo, 17 September 2021, <https://www.tempo.co/hukum/densus-88-ungkap-sejumlah-peran-sentral-abu-rusydan-di-jamaah-islamiyah-473328>.

<sup>33</sup> *Densus 88 Tangkap Pimpinan Tertinggi JI Indonesia*, t.t., diakses 3 Desember 2025, <https://www.suarasurabaya.net/kelanakota/2007/Densus-88-Tangkap-Pimpinan-Tertinggi-JI-Indonesia/>.

<sup>34</sup> *Eksklusif Podcast Strategist JI Bubar*, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> "Jamaah Islamiyah: Para Wijayanto ditangkap, inilah akhir kelompok yang berafiliasi dengan Al-Qaeda di Indonesia?," BBC News Indonesia, t.t., diakses 4 Desember 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-48849610>.

<sup>36</sup> *Eksklusif Podcast Strategist JI Bubar*, 2024.

### ***Internal Factors***

First, *Policy Leadership and Evaluation of Ideological Strategy*, The Leadership of Wijayanto marked a change in JI's orientation from confrontation to social consolidation. Experience witnesses conflict in the Middle East, in particular post Arab Spring and the emergence of the Islamic State (IS), giving the lesson that violence precisely creates instability and internal divisions among Muslims. In comparison with Syria and Indonesia, JI leaders assess that Indonesia has more room for preaching and implementing more Islamic values. So, in a way, a rational, focused struggle, diverted from confrontation, political, going to development, social, and education-based Islamic values.<sup>37</sup>

Second, *Change Understanding Theological*. The reinterpretation doctrine of religion has become an important factor in changing JI ideology. Previously, Indonesia was seen as a mandatory *target state* to be fought. However, through internal discussions and interactions with various religious figures, it appears that Indonesia is an *expert country in the qiblah* that must be guarded. Changes: This shift in orientation from rational ideological exclusivity to moral and social rationality, where peace and stability are considered more beneficial than violence. Acceptance of Pancasila as the basis of the state also reveals a calculative value: accepting the existing system allows Islamic preaching and education to remain free from legal obstacles.

Third, *Rescue Educational Assets and Sustainability*, JI operates 42 Islamic boarding schools, with more than 11,000 students enrolled in the Communication Forum Cottage Islamic Boarding School (FKPP). Threats to foreclosure assets and dissolution institution education due to the banned status of organizations have become serious. In framework theory, choice rationality and decision dissolution organization are calculative strategies for saving assets and promoting sustainability. With the let go identity formal JI, network education can still operate legally and obtain social legitimacy.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Rationality Behind the Decision to Disband**

Analysis based on Theory Choice and Rational Choice Theory shows that the dissolution of JI results not only from state pressure but also from collective decisions based on rational calculations by members and the organization's elite.

*Rationality, Security, and Sustainability Life*, After two decades of experience with criminalization and arrest of JI members, many figures realize that continuing the armed struggle brings high risks, good for security, self, family, and sustainable institution education. In the framework choice

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<sup>37</sup> *Eksklusif Podcast Strategist JI Bubar*, 2024.

<sup>38</sup> "42 Pesantren Yang Sebelumnya Terafiliasi Dengan Jamaah Islam," Tribuna News, 07:32:14.972274, <https://tributanews.polri.go.id/blog/nasional-3/42-pesantren-yang-sebelumnya-terafiliasi-dengan-jamaah-islamiah-ji-gelar-upacara-hut-ke-80-ri-libatkan-11-ribu-peserta-91436>.

rationale, disbanding JI is a strategy to minimize risk (cost), especially arrest, social stigma, and the strict apparatus security.<sup>39</sup>

*Rationality, Economic, and Social*, In Indonesia, JI members' movements are limited; many ex-member groups are involved in social activities, education, and the productive economy.<sup>40</sup> In this condition, affiliated with a stamp organization, it precisely hinders access to help the government, partnership businesses, and support society. Declaration dissolution allows them to gain benefits from social and economic (utility-maximizing) factors through public legitimacy and trust. One of the affiliated cottages with JI directly submits to the licensing official after a declaration is made at the pondok.<sup>41</sup>

*Rationality Ideological*, Some members interpret repeated jihad not as a physical, but as an effort fight for Islamic values in general peace. Rationality. This appears from the evaluation, theological and pragmatic, that maintains that violence is neither relevant nor contradictory to people's welfare. Change. This shows that rationality is not always material, but can also take the form of rationality normative, namely, a search for a balance between religious values and social values.

### **Implications: Theoretical and Social**

Study shows that rationality in group religious No single. There is spiritual (transcendental), social, and pragmatic rationality at work simultaneously. In the context of Theory Choice Rational, the disbandment of JI can be read as a reformulation process of rational calculation: from orientation hereafter to orientation worldly social, without deleting identity religious. Implications for social policy: the approach to deradicalization must adapt to a rational classification. This: Group *Rational-Ideological* needs new approaches to theological dialogue and moral legitimacy approaches. Group *Rational-Pragmatic* needs support for economic and social reintegration to be stable. Group *Rational-Adaptive* should be strengthened through the development of institutional capacity, institutional preaching, and legal education.

### **CONCLUSION**

The disbandment of Jemaah Islamiyah was not solely driven by state pressure but also by its members' internal rational calculations. The rationality underlying their decisions falls into three main categories: ideological, pragmatic, and adaptive. These findings broaden the scope of Rational Choice Theory in explaining religious phenomena and demonstrate that ideological

<sup>39</sup> *Perjalanan Dari Abdullah Sungkar hingga Jamaah Islamiyah Bubar [Liputan Khusus]*, diarahkan oleh Tribun Jogja Official, 2024, 41:28, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw3uUsD2I0k>.

<sup>40</sup> Julie Chernov Hwang, "The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists: Understanding the Pathways," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 2 (2017): 277–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2015.1034855>.

<sup>41</sup> Interview dengan Eks JI pengelola Pondok MH 4 Desember 2024

transformation within radical groups can be understood as a rational social process rather than simply the result of external coercion.

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