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# Bottom up political movement to prevent radicalization: the role of campus organization

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This study examines the understanding of members of campus organizations regarding the impact of radicalization that leads to terrorism and the actions that students should take to prevent or not take part in radical actions. This study aims to explore the involvement of young people in these organizations in combating radical actions. Young people are not only involved in organizational activities but also actively organize activities to fight against radicalization. Young people's concerns about radicalization are increasingly apparent from the spread of information about its impact through social media. The findings of this study indicate that the involvement of young people in organizations on campus has a positive influence on them, including increased self-confidence, leadership skills, and decision-making skills related to dealing with security issues. The study's novelty derives from its contribution to the study of youth in Indonesian student organizations and their efforts to combat radicalization toward terrorist causes. This focus provides insight into the impact these organizations have on young people's lives. Therefore, the study's relevance as an examination of how to prevent radicalization is significant. This study will be of interest to educational institution administrators and policymakers.

### KEYWORDS

campus organizations, combat radicalization, involvement theory, positive influence, young people

## 1 Introduction

Terrorist acts have become a threat to international security and the security of every country in the world (Ahmed et al., 2018; Subagyo, 2021). Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that the young generation is a key agent in peace and development, so they need to be allowed to participate in social life (Ile and Boadu, 2018; Egede, 2025). Based on this background, this study seeks to explore the role of the younger generation through campus organizations that actively invite their fellow organizations to prevent them from falling into terrorist crimes.

Several scholars have linked the role of campuses in countering radicalism. One of them is the role of academics in universities in supporting the Indonesian government's counter-terrorism strategy through anti-radicalism movements among students and research

that examine the emergence of radicalism, intolerance, and terrorism (Subagyo, 2021; Yani et al., 2024). Other scholars stated that some students had a wrong interpretation of the term Islam, which comes from Arabic, so reform experienced many obstacles in the campus environment (Bostom, 2005; Gerges, 2009; Hanafi et al., 2022; Moniruzzaman, 2008a; Phares, 2005).

Radicalism and terrorism are two different concepts. Radicalism tends to be open-minded, while terrorism tends to be closed-minded and carries out all its activities using violence, which harms many civilians. Although some scholars argue that radical movements are directly related to militancy (Beck, 2008; Schmid, 2013). Finding ways to fight or prevent acts of terrorism from occurring again is very important because terrorist acts have an impact on international and domestic security throughout the world, as mentioned in the background above (Hoffman, 2017; Majekodunmi et al., 2022).

Moreover, terrorists are not crazy because they can make measured and reasonable tactics and often consider their actions to be the truth so that they can give confidence to their followers in various parts of the world (Richardson, 2007; Pasat, 2024). One way to prevent people from being involved in criminal acts of terrorism and radicalism is through economic empowerment and education (Taşpinar, 2009; Majekodunmi et al., 2022). The role of young people in the education sector, especially on campus, is one strategy to prevent their involvement in radical movements. Based on research conducted by Muthuswamy, it was found that the younger generation, especially young men, are very easily influenced by the jihad movement, which leads to radical actions (Muthuswamy, 2022).

Several scholars have focused on the role of campuses in increasing security, including the safety of the young generation studying on campus and crimes that cause fear and thus affect the way students learn (Barberet and Fisher, 2009; Tomsich et al., 2011; Owusu et al., 2016; Mkhize et al., 2022). Therefore, increasing the role of the young generation, especially university students, in countering radicalism is necessary because those born between 1982 and 2003 are members of the Net Generation (Roodt and Peier, 2013; Ho et al., 2022). They are experts in using digital technology and the Internet, so they play the role of agents of change. They are often known as digital natives or millennial groups (Ho et al., 2022; Wesner and Miller, 2008).

According to social psychology, radicalization can occur for various reasons, including feelings of exclusion, threats to identity, negative emotions, and loss of meaning and significance in life. To achieve deradicalization, it is necessary to expand social contacts and develop relationships and empathy with others (Oleś, 2020; Shafeioun and Haq, 2023). Therefore, one of the relevant ways to counteract radicalization practices, especially for youth and students, is through campus organizations, which are not only a means of self-development but also a means of expanding social contacts and introducing anti-radical values.

Campus organizations also serve as forums for social movements to develop organically among young people. Although young people, in terms of resources and understanding of social norms, are not yet at a mature level of independence, their tendency to organize through peer networks are the main forces in realizing social movements with effective collective action (Yuen and Tang, 2023). Student involvement in campus organizations provides

momentum that can strengthen their collective action in voicing efforts to address contemporary issues, including the threat of terrorism and radicalism.

This study uses a collaborative approach to explore students' role in countering radicalism through their activity in campus organizations. Collaboration involving various scientific disciplines is critical to achieving goals, whether in research, collaboration, or education (Hadorn et al., 2008; Guimarães et al., 2019; Schmalz et al., 2019; Parti and Szigeti, 2021). This approach is also novel in exploring student activities in campus organizations to prevent acts of radicalism. The gap in this research is the lack of research that focuses on the role of students in supporting the government's strategy to combat radicalism in the campus environment.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Radicalism

The radical approach involves active engagement in transformative politics using methods rooted in practical experience and activism (Tatum, 2021). Initially, radicalism was not a crucial issue as long as it remained a perspective or ideology for its followers. However, when this ideology developed into a radical movement accompanied by violence, the resulting practices became problematic in terms of social dynamics (Usman et al., 2023; Yani et al., 2024). This practice of radicalism needs to be anticipated significantly to suppress the potential for radical actions to develop in society.

The spread of radicalism cannot be separated from the spread of ideological ideas. For example, Fenneman's description of fascism and radical populism relates to the basic human differences that create social inequality. In this process, cultural and ethnic incompatibility leads to the spread of social demands. For populist elites, the narrative of discontent is addressed by blaming certain groups as the root cause (Miscoiu et al., 2008). Such narratives represent the fact that ideological reasons that are propagated collectively can be the basis for the development of radicalism.

The phenomenon of increasing extremist practices in the form of beliefs, feelings, and pro-conflict and inter-group violence behavior represents the political radicalization dimension. In the political context, all forms of political goals are directly related to the fanatical support of certain groups, which can increase the risk of violence. This means that radicalism can occur in group identification and reactions to threats from other groups (McCaughey and Moskalenko, 2008; Shafeioun and Haq, 2023).

Radicalism generally develops due to multiple factors; therefore, the process is sustained and driven by various factors, such as radical ideology and specific motivating factors for individuals. In this case, radicalism is viewed as the dynamic adoption of a perspective by individuals that legitimizes the use of terrorism in the context of revolutionary action (Usman et al., 2023; Schuurman and Carthy, 2024). Unsurprisingly, radicalism and terrorism are often linked to each other and pose a threat to both society and the state.

Radicalization refers to the process of developing extreme ideologies and beliefs. In practice, ideology and action can be linked, but not always so. Therefore, understanding radicalization that develops into violent extremism includes more than just religious understanding and doctrine. There are also those who carry the banner of militant jihad but have little understanding of the radical ideology they represent (Borum, 2011; Weimann et al., 2025). Thus, extremist ideologies and beliefs must be analyzed according to the path of action that shows the radicalization process.

The practice of radicalism arises as a result of friction between groups that heats up both parties, so that it develops into conflict and competition. Radicalism can be seen through the relational perspective exhibited by social movements by explaining the link between political opportunities and organizational resources. The availability of political opportunities can influence actors' reactions to a demand, which directly affects the strategic choices made by social movements. In some cases, organizational resources and contextual opportunities framed differently lead to radicalization practices (Porta, 2018).

To understand the process of radicalism in depth, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms of radicalism. One such mechanism is individual radicalization in joining a radical group—the slippery slope, which is a mechanism of radicalism based on self-justification by adopting new beliefs and values to justify a behavior. Self-justifying tendencies have even been described in social psychology studies as a form of inconsistency between positive images and bad behavior, known as the dissonance theory. This interpretation is also in line with the complex view that emotional and psychological dimensions are the main motivating factors in violent extremism (McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008; Jensen et al., 2018).

In social psychology, radicalism is identified with individual vulnerability. For this reason, the micro view must be interpreted in conjunction with the macro view, which explains that the preconditions of radicalism are the complex interactions between cultural habits, modernization, and traditions that justify violence (Porta, 2018). This means that radicalism is a complex process that involves the smallest level of individuals, including identity and behavior, to the level of groups and international actors in the process of fulfilling their interests.

The influence of radicalism can attack all levels of society without exception. However, young people are one of the most vulnerable groups to radical influence as a result of their identity search process. Therefore, efforts are needed to overcome these challenges, one of which is increasing the role of the community. In its development, there are two main ideas including “community engagement” and “community resilience” that play a role in counteracting radicalism for young people. Community engagement serves to complement the role that the state apparatus cannot play in ensuring deterrence against signs of radicalism and to connect legitimacy between the state apparatus and community groups. Community resilience represents a greater community role in preventing community members from being exposed to radicalism (Stephens et al., 2021). Based on the explanation above this research focuses on two theories, social control theory and involvement theory, to suppress the influence of radicalism on the younger generation through campus organizations that act as a filter for radicalism.

## 2.2 Social movement

Social movements are a form of social action that is carried out as a collective effort to address crucial issues in society. However, with the development of social interaction, social movements have grown into increasingly diverse actions involving various patterns of interaction, ranging from centralized and decentralized to cooperative. In addition, social movements analytically tend to move from the logic of collective action to the logic of connective action through the presence of new media, such as the Internet, which facilitates the flow of information exchange (Clubb, 2016; Bertuzzi, 2020).

As a new form of media, social media platforms have succeeded in strengthening social movements through connective actions that link people with loose social bonds. Although effective in publicly disseminating the ideology behind the action, social movements based on connective actions tend to be less effective in coordinating protests to push for reform on social issues (Burston, 2024). Therefore, for complex issues such as terrorism and radicalism, collective action is more relevant as a form of protest carried out through social movements. This dynamic allows those who are part of social movements to evaluate each other to achieve common collective goals (Mathieu, 2021; Pizarro et al., 2022). Directly, social movements not only become a momentum for action to realize anti-radicalism but also become a social restriction for group members to avoid radical ideologies.

An exciting discussion related to social movements is that the predictions, expectations, and moral status generated in social movement practices have varying formulations according to the progress, collective action, and mechanisms of change achieved. Therefore, in formulating mechanisms to address radicalism through social movements, an approach is needed that can serve as a driving force for deradicalization. This approach proposes the structural and attitudinal changes needed to reduce involvement in violence and radicalism (Clubb, 2016; Fard, 2024). By framing the issues of violence and radicalism, social movements can shape a collective understanding of how the dynamics of social groups in society need to be carried out to anticipate the development of radical and extremist ideologies in the future.

Social movements also need to be understood as a form of social transformation that refers to cooperation between groups of people or organizations to achieve specific goals. There are at least two main foundations that encourage organizations to implement social movement practices in a structured manner. First, it is related to the formal identity of the organization and its impact on society driven by empathy. Second, the organization is run by considering opportunities to address social phenomena (Famiola et al., 2024). In short, the struggle for collective issues involving inequality and injustice will form a social movement whose ultimate goal is to encourage social change for the better by focusing on lobbying the social sphere (Nardini et al., 2021).

Social movements do not exist in vacuums. They are the foundation for change, formed through a unity of purpose among individuals and groups within appropriate social bonds. Therefore, social movements must be coalitions (Tatum, 2021; Zajak and Haunss, 2022). This means that social movements become a common platform for community groups to push for changes they have jointly agreed upon. In this context, social

movements are not merely a practice of change but a key driver that can facilitate shared aspirations in countering threats through inclusive coalitions.

Therefore, the dynamics of radicalism have encouraged various organizations to strengthen their social movements in anticipation of the development of radicalism in society. One of the most relevant organizations in this regard is faith-based organizations (FBOs). FBOs serve as a moral compass for society to counter various radical and extremist ideologies so that their influence can be minimized (Ishaku et al., 2021). In Indonesia, the implementation of radicalism anticipation through social movements among organizations is not limited to FBOs but can also involve campus organizations. The goal is to strengthen the foundation of young people in realizing collective action to combat and prevent the spread of radicalism in the future.

### 3 Conceptualization: social control theory

Social control theory was introduced in 1969 by Travis Hirschi in his publication *Cause of Delinquency*. A key assumption of social control theory is that views of morality are so diverse that no strong motivation is needed to explain crime. Basically, a person will prioritize self-interest over other interests, but there is a social order that limits moral issues. According to Hirschi, social bonds are a source of conformity related to crime elimination. Social bonds include attachment, commitment, belief, and involvement (Costello and Laub, 2020; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2023).

According to social control theorists, there are two forms of social control: internal and external. Internal refers to inner control based on social values and norms that are internalized by society. This internal control is successful if there is balance and a feeling of satisfaction because one has behaved consistently following the norms of society. Therefore, deviation can occur due to a lack or failure of moral socialization. The external form refers to external control based on the absence or presence of social punishment and rewards in response to disobedience (Tshabalala, 2001). Violations occur because of an individual's failure or inability to maintain the morals that are applicable in society. Social control theory has four factors that mutually support a social bond: commitment, the existence of an attachment, confidence, and engagement (Mkhize et al., 2022). Social control theory can be used to explore the role of the younger generation, especially students, through their involvement in a student organization that can protect themselves and their members from being trapped in radical actions.

In the realm of radicalism, social control is a principle that can suppress the development of radicalism so that it does not lead to acts of terrorism. Therefore, social control can be a principle that brings about revolutionary change without reaching the level of extremism that leads to terrorism. The control referred to can be realized through the use of legal means aimed at promoting a more inclusive perspective (Schuurman and Carthy, 2024). This control then acts as a barrier to prevent radicalism from developing into extremism, ensuring that such practices remain under control and do not become opportunities for spreading terrorism.

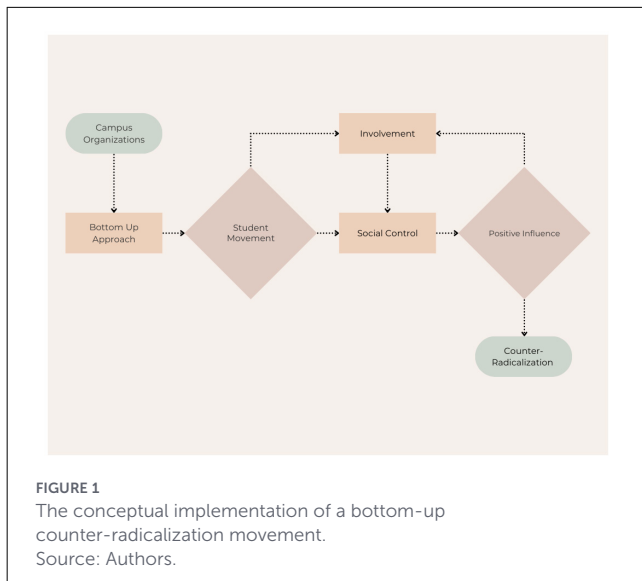
This study focuses on the theory of involvement, which is an important component of social control theory. Astin suggests that the concept of involvement denotes the psychological and physical energy concentrated within students to gain experience not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom and in other curricular activities (Alexander, 1996). In the framework of Astin's theory, knowledge is obtained not only within the classroom but also from various contexts outside campus. Astin explains that students' involvement in organizations gives them interpersonal, leadership, and public speaking skills (Alexander, 1996). Pascarella and Terenzini found that activities outside the classroom affect personal development, such as increased self-confidence and leadership skills (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). Foreman and Retallick identified that the involvement of a threshold motivated students to become involved in the learning process (Foreman and Retallick, 2013). They further found that students who participated in extracurricular activities had higher scores than those who did not (Foreman et al., 2012). Students who are active in organizations will have interpersonal skills, such as making the right decisions when facing problems and leadership abilities (Rubin et al., 2002; Dugan, 2006).

The involvement theory is applied by examining the activities that have been carried out on campus by members of campus organizations to prevent radicalization. In this case, campus organizations become a means for students to gain extracurricular experiences that can motivate them positively. In addition to supporting student self-development, campus organizations can play a positive role in counteracting the spread of radicalism and terrorism by reinforcing moderate values. To realize this role, campus organizations are active in becoming a forum for empowerment, education, and strengthening brotherhood. In practice, campus organizations' role in strengthening brotherhood to counteract radicalism is in line with Islamic values known as "*ukhuwah*," which means brotherhood. However, it should be emphasized that the nature of the concept of *ukhuwah* is broad and universal, so there are no restrictions on its implementation by race, country, class, ethnicity, religion, and so on (Hadari and Abubakar, 2023).

Figure 1 represents the implementation of social control theory and involvement theory in realizing counter-radicalism on campus through campus organizations. In this case, campus organizations serve as a bottom-up approach by students to achieve various positive goals. The presence of campus organizations directly strengthens student social movements in various areas, including counter-radicalism. Through campus organizations, students will be within the scope of "social control" that protects them from radicalism. In addition, campus organizations also aim to encourage student involvement in a more positive way. Ultimately, campus organizations can be conceptualized as a space for students to reinforce their interests and talents, while also providing a safe place to avoid radicalism.

### 4 Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. The data collection method used in this research was the interview method.



The interview method was used in this research to obtain a real picture of the issues that occur in society. To obtain appropriate data, the interview process should be designed using more open-ended questions to elicit more detailed responses compared to closed-ended questions (Knott et al., 2022). In addition, to maximize the interview process in obtaining primary data, this research used semi-structured interview practices. Semi-structured interviews allow the development of predetermined topics in the interview to be followed up according to the participant's responses to generate interesting discussions (Rugg and Petre, 2007). This study applied semi-structured interviews, which allowed researchers to ask new questions so that the information provided became more valid and reliable (Ukam et al., 2024).

Interviews were conducted face-to-face with 55 students who had been active in campus organizations at Hasanuddin University for at least 1 year. The students who were interviewed participated voluntarily and were selected using a purposive sampling approach or were selected randomly, making it easier for researchers to trace their roles in the organization. The purposive sampling used in this study are based on several key criteria, including student involvement in campus organizations and the duration of their participation in these organizations. Participants were also selected based on organizational diversity, ranging from structured and hierarchical organizations to those based on students' interests and talents, in order to obtain a variety of perspectives. The characteristics of the informants in more detail can be seen in Table 1. The table shows that although the student regime has the largest percentage, there are still several other organizations, such as the English Debate, Swimming, and LDK MPM, that represent interest and talent groups. No minors were involved in this study. Informed consent was obtained through verbal consent. Verbal consent was used to simplify the approval process and avoid burdening participants with the administrative requirements of written consent. This method was also effective in maintaining the trust of research participants. In order to protect the informants, this study was conducted by ensuring the participants' anonymity. This was done in consideration of the sensitivity of the issue and

the security of the informants' data. Additionally, to alleviate fears of stigma or social consequences, the interviews were conducted in a safe, inclusive, and non-judgmental setting.

Interviews were conducted between June 2022 and March 2024. Most of the interviews were conducted on campus. The interviews lasted for 30–40 mins. The same questions were asked of the 55 students, with some necessary adjustments due to differences in the organizations in which they were active. The questions the researchers asked included the following:

1. What defines radicalism?
2. What encourages you to participate in organizational activities?
3. How does your organization contribute to building a better understanding of radical threats among students?

To maximize the interview process, the main questions were asked as key questions, which were then developed according to the responses of each participant. This semi-structured method allows for interview results that are more relevant to respondents' perspectives. Students who were interviewed allowed us to use their cell phones to document and record the interview sessions. Students also allowed us to write down the results of the interviews in notebooks regarding important quotes or sayings they said. Before we left the interview location, we showed our notes to the students we interviewed so that they could reread the important points in their notebooks. All students involved in the interview agreed to participate in this study.

## 5 Result and discussion

Researchers use thematic analysis techniques to identify, analyze, and report in detail the interview data so that a pattern is found that can support the determined research theme. This research involves organizations on campuses because students, as young people, can be a pillar of the future of Islamic movements that advocate (da'wah) tolerance of students of different religions, races, and languages. Campus organizations are an option for students to channel their hobbies and talents. The campus organization at Hasanuddin University (Unhas) is known as the Student Activity Unit (UKM). Apart from participating in lecture activities, students can also participate in UKM starting from the first semester. Based on Unhas data for 2023, Unhas has 35 UKM that are forums for developing student talents. Some of these UKM are engaged in the arts, spiritual or religious, scientific, and sports sectors. According to the Student Regiment Organization:

I joined the Student Regiment Organization, abbreviated as *Menwa*, because I wanted to train mentally and physically. I was fortunate to join this organization because it has many activities at the national level, allowing me to meet students from various universities in Indonesia.

Then, a student who is active in the English debate organization or HEDS, said the following:

I am interested in joining HEDS because I want to hone my mind to think critically and quickly. This organization indirectly forces me to continue updating my reading. Therefore, scientific insight must be broad, not only in English.

A student who is active in a swimming organization said:

TABLE 1 Characterization of informant.

Characterization	Specific characteristics	Number of students	Percentage
Gender	Female	20	36
	Male	35	64
			<b>100</b>
Age	18–25	55	100
	25–30	0	0
			<b>100</b>
Student organization	English debate organization	5	9
	Regiment organization	30	55
	Swimming organization	3	5
	Campus Da’wah Institute for Mushalla Lovers Organization (LDK MPM)	17	31
			<b>100</b>
Position in the organization	Leader/secretary	8	15
	Member	47	85
			<b>100</b>
Long time in organization	1–2 years	55	100
	More 2 years	0	0
			<b>100</b>

Bold value indicates total percentage.

I joined UKM swimming because it is a hobby, and we can also train our competitive spirit and sportsmanship in achieving achievements.

Based on the interview data above, students choose to join one of the organizations based on their talents. There are also considerations based on the desire to explore abilities, fame, and achieve success (Nesse et al., 2020). The interview results also revealed that campus organizations primarily function as forums for social movements. In this case, common collective goals achieved through social movements (Mathieu, 2021; Pizarro et al., 2022) can be fulfilled by the presence of organizations that match students’ interests and talents.

Organizations play an important role in providing a good understanding of radical threats from inside or outside the campus. Students can be agents of change in realizing campus security. Therefore, an organization can provide good insights and understanding of religious knowledge. Students can create harmony through their organizations by increasing religious tolerance among students from different organizations. Ultimately, campus organizations can serve as a platform for fostering social control among students by minimizing the influence of negative radicalism through involvement in positive groups and discussions. This represents threshold involvement that motivates students to become involved (Foreman and Retallick, 2013).

A student who joined the Campus Da’wah Institute for Mushalla Lovers Organization (LDK MPM) said:

The activities we carry out in the organization are in the form of religious studies, which are routinely conducted every month. One of the aims of this study is to foster student brotherhood through an activity called Pesantren IT (IT learning camp). This activity aims to train students to use social media to carry out da’wah and raise our voices to increase tolerance among fellow students of different beliefs.

A student who is active in the Student Regiment organization said:

In this organization, there are not only Muslims but also many students from different religions. We always maintain a sense of tolerance so that there are no minor disputes between us.

The interview above provides an overview of the principle of the LDK MPM in Islam. The LDK guides its student members by shaping their character so that they can develop their talents and potential, especially those related to the development of Islam. The LDK MPM also conducted several religious studies. This shows that LDK-MPM is a da’wah organization that has a role in spreading da’wah on campus that is not focused on one religion or an Islamic campus. Considering that religious-based organizations serve as moral guides for society in combating various radical and extremist ideologies (Taufani, 2014; Ishaku et al., 2021), students can also utilize this platform as a means to realize the anti-radicalism movement and become a momentum that can control students so that they are not influenced by radicalism.

We asked students about their definition of radicalization. The responses below by students who are part of the organizational activities of English debating, LDK-MPM, and Resimen Siswa are about the following definitions of radicalization:

Radicalism is a movement that seeks renewal in the political, economic, or social fields in revolutionary or drastic ways and takes the form of violence against civilians. However, not all radical actions lead to terrorist acts.

The interview above indicates that radicalization is often interpreted as an act of jihad by a terrorist and is often associated with Islamist extremism. Some radical groups want to implement Islamic teachings by acting irrationally and using violence in a revolutionary manner. These groups carry out religious fundamentalist movements with violence and rebellion, which may

result in bloodshed. These extreme groups see radicalism and terrorism as conveyor belts, and the tolerance of this intolerance is no longer acceptable (Erdem, 2002; Baran, 2004).

The extent of radicalization can be studied through beliefs and behaviors. In the radicalization process, there are three types of beliefs: exposure to radical ideology, shared beliefs, and commitment to radical beliefs. Radicalization behavior is also segmented into three main types: lifestyle changes, support for extremist movements, and active involvement in radical operational plans (Biggs and Seech, 2024). Therefore, it is important for students to avoid beliefs and behaviors that lead to radicalization.

Radicalization occurs as a form of group identification and an in-group reaction to emerging threats. To understand the practice of radicalization, it is necessary to understand that there is a context of conflict and competition between groups that can cause them to become radicalized (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008). Sociodemographic factors, such as poverty and low socioeconomic status, have relatively little influence on radicalism. In contrast, psychological and criminogenic factors are relatively crucial in radicalism (Wolfowicz et al., 2021). Understanding the younger generation's definition of radicalization illustrates that members of that generation understand that radical actions can cause harm and even bring death to others.

We asked what makes a person want to participate in radical activities that lead to terrorism. Some student participants made the following comments:

Some people participate in forms of radicalization activities that lead to terrorist actions because they are not satisfied with the international system, such as Israel's control of Palestine.

Regarding the causes of radicalism that lead to acts of terrorism, several students gave the following responses:

Groups of people who support forms of radicalization because of the large inequality between the poor and the rich in Indonesia. Inequality that is increasingly widespread will give a sense of disappointment to certain groups of people. The most common imbalance occurs in cities.

Another respondent said:

People who participate in radical activities because of their misunderstanding of jihad. These people are easily affected by false promises from terrorists. In general, young people are easily influenced to participate in radical activities.

The results indicate that students hold a variety of views regarding the concept of radicalism. Students generally perceive the concept of radicalism as an extreme form of behavior, potentially involving violence, and an intolerant mindset. These views suggest that students adopt a more contextual and normative approach in understanding radicalism. This perception is significant as a common ground emerges between the academic definition of radicalism which emphasizes structural aspects, and students' understanding. Beyond this necessity, students' perceptions are further analyzed and interpreted in accordance with conceptual literature indicators to establish consistent correlations and to develop anti-radicalism standards among students.

The discussion above provides an explanation for why it is so easy for people to be enticed to participate in radical activities that lead to terrorism due to environmental influences, such as a sense of disappointment in the injustices that occur in their community. Schmid identified several causes of radicalization in various countries, including:

- a. Exclusion and social inequalities (Benin)
- b. The violation of basic rights, poverty, and political violence (Costa Rica)
- c. Severe poverty, injustice, drugs, despair, and exclusion (Dominican Republic)
- d. Human rights violations through oppression (Malaysia)
- e. Injustice, the exclusion of youth in the economic field, unstable politics, despair (New Zealand)
- f. Interference from the West in settling territorial disputes (Palestine)
- g. Hunger, despair, extreme poverty, fear, lack of responsibility among human beings (Namibia)
- h. Injustice, poverty, exclusion, despair (Senegal).

The sources of radicalization mentioned above can also be found in other countries. The government's failure to create a sense of justice for the community has triggered the emergence of radicalization (Schmid, 2014; Idris, 2017).

The next question we asked was about what the youth participants knew about counter-radicalization. Some of their comments were as follows:

Counter-radicalization is the actions taken so that people do not fall into forms of radicalization. For this reason, it is necessary to approach people or young generations who have deviant doctrines so that we can change their understanding.

Counter-radicalization is an open dialogue involving all elements of religion to create religious tolerance. This program is crucial for protecting the country from terrorist threats.

Counter-radicalization is the use of media and information to spread positive content. Through online social media, diversity can be spread in a way that continues to exist in the community.

One way to combat radicalization is to provide young people with knowledge about the dangers of joining radical activities. Young people whose daily lives are closely related to the digital world should be aware of the impact of cyber-attacks.

The comments above express the need for young people to understand the dangers of radicalization. This need is important as a policy input for the government. We asked the student participants about their strategies to prevent radicalization. Their comments were as follows:

The religious curriculum must be maintained at the university level because religious education can be a tool for reinforcing attitudes and habits that prevent students from falling into radical action. One activity that has been carried out to keep young people from supporting radical activities is conducting studies at mosques. Studies conducted in mosques by students are intended not only for students or members of Islamic organizations but also for the general society.

Religious education is important for the younger generation because it can educate them to be young people who have a sense of responsibility to their family, society, and country. The religious curriculum must be maintained to foster a religious mentality in students that opposes participation in radical activities.

Hasan remarked that the freezing of the religious curriculum would increase the possibility of radical activities (Hasan, 2012). The role of religion on campus is necessary, including the existence of religious organizations on campus. Universities will also have a role in developing students as spiritually rich individuals who will have the ability to compete in the era of globalization, namely,

by encouraging students to participate actively in organizations (Caesari et al., 2013). The students' additional comments are as follows:

The mosque is not only a place of prayer or reading the Qur'an but also a place for social activities. These social activities with religious nuances are carried out routinely, once a month.

Islamic organizations on campus generally conduct discussions and competitions. Their discussion includes the efforts of younger generations to avoid radical activities. They are also diligent in carrying out several studies, such as routine joint studies, supplementary Islamic studies, inspirational Islamic studies, studies of Islamic engineering techniques, studies after Asr prayer, monthly taklim, and weekly taklim.

These Islamic organizations discuss not only religious studies but also national issues. They are aware of the importance of maintaining tolerance values so that no radical actions occur (Jamilah, 2021; Yani et al., 2024). Therefore, the role of youth in Islamic organizations on campus is to foster Islamic faith and knowledge that transcends superficial differences. The next set of youth comments is as follows:

Many social media platforms appearing today that are equipped with features that can be used to promote movements. In the era of big data, students should be able to use social media wisely. We would invite instructors from these organizations to provide training on how to use Twitter and blogs. Training should also provide students with knowledge about the dangers of hoaxes and invitations that lead to radicalization.

Training in the wise use of online media is important because the recruitment carried out by terrorist organizations is no longer closed but opened globally through the Internet. Some training, such as this, has been used to recruit new members to Islamic organizations on campus.

Hasanuddin University has also implemented many strategies to prevent radicalism from influencing these organizations, such as regulations and policies from the leadership of the college, the selection of approved student activities to be held on campus, and cultural strategies. Students are also given the freedom to participate in extracurricular, intercurricular, and intracurricular religious activities in the school. Institutions should organize activities that take place inside and outside the classroom to provide opportunities for students to develop their potential. Scholars have found that students who diligently participated in or were active in co-curricular activities without neglecting other academic activities were more effective at developing cognitive abilities such as interpersonal skills, self-confidence, critical thinking, and communication skills than students who were not part of organizational activities (Huang and Chang, 2004; Kuh and Umbach, 2004).

Hasanuddin University has also carried out routine activities such as the University Hasanuddin Study of the Qur'an. This activity is conducted monthly and involves lecturers and students. The premise for involving students in this activity is that they are young people who have energy and fresh ideas and embrace the participation of their peers. Islamic organizations on campus also conduct many activities in the mosque, which is a tool for facilitating systematic, sustainable, and organized student activities.

The interview above is in line with INFID data, which provides data that explains the inequalities found in several sectors, such as employment opportunities, possessions, income, opportunities to obtain education, environmental quality, health, law, politics, housing, and employment opportunities in Indonesia. Takwin, an INFID researcher, said that social, economic, and educational inequality in society can be the seeds of radicalism (Budiman, 2017; Valenta, 2018). A survey conducted by the INFID shows that, in 2018, Indonesian society experienced an increase in social inequality. The inequality index has continued to increase, from 4.4 in 2016 to 5.6 in 2017 and 6.0 in 2018 (Valenta, 2018). Indonesia's GINI index, according to the World Bank, is 36.1 in 2023 (World Bank, 2023). However, the Central Statistics Agency provided data in January 2019 indicating that the poverty rate dropped from 9.86 percent to 9.66 percent. The population living in poverty was also reported to have decreased from 25.95 million to 25.67 million (Hendartyo and Setiawan, 2019). In fact, the poverty rate continues to decline until it reaches 9.03 percent in 2024 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). Poverty can stem directly from societal inequality. Therefore, the government must try to reduce economic inequality, as it influences radical activities (Hardy, 2018; Hill, 2021). Individuals who participate in radical activities typically have several reasons for doing so, such as economic, psychological, ideological, social, political, and technological reasons. Another reason is directly related to an individual's relative deprivation. Relative deprivation increases the likelihood that a person will see themselves as deprived. In the sense that they find themselves in a state of discontent and discrimination. Such conditions can increase the extent to which a person's identity becomes fused with a particular group identity (Christmann, 2012; Wolfowicz et al., 2021).

Salim posits that *jihad* is a struggle to uphold God's will to receive the pleasure of Allah. *Jihad* also refers to someone who can control his or her desires, is not tempted by Shaitan, and strives to carry out amar ma'ruf and combat tyranny and evil (Salim, 2013). *Jihad* does not always imply militarism or violence; it can also mean cooperation to achieve peace. Islam is not strictly compatible with any form of terrorism because terrorism poses a threat to both international and national peace and security. Terrorism causes environmental insecurity, which leads to social instability. Because Islam opposes all activities that create social unrest (Moniruzzaman, 2008b), activities that are radical because their hostility causes chaos in society are prohibited, including suicide.

The role of youth organizations in counter-radicalization can be realized with the help of society, stakeholders, researchers, and university leaders. Youth organizations, such as Islamic organizations, can be established on campuses. Youth are defined as individuals between 16 and 30 years of age, based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 40 of 2009 (Indonesian Minister of Law Human Rights, 2009). Youth who are part of campus organizations automatically become part of the group that carries out social movements in anticipation of radicalism issues on campus. In this process, social movements are carried out by connecting the values and identities of the group to achieve the stated goals and missions (Nardini et al., 2021). The values and group identity referred to young people as part

of campus organizations, while the goals and mission aligned the mission of campus organizations with the goal of anticipating radicalism. In addition, at the micro level, social movements are carried out as a form of individual skill in realizing protest practices (Mathieu, 2021; Pizarro et al., 2022) related to efforts to address the development of radicalism issues that are dangerous to the nation.

This article discusses the understanding of the young generation about radicalization, the reasons for someone participating in forms of radical activities that lead to terrorism, the actions that should be taken in support of counter-radicalization, and the practical role of youth as part of security studies within an organization. The most relevant step in preventing radicalism is active involvement in student organizations. Student organizations serve as forums for students to channel their talents and form coalitions to understand anti-radicalism perspectives that can encourage them to actively engage in counter-terrorism narratives. Thus, campus organizations become forums for social movements for students to avoid extreme radicalism. In addition, campus organizations act as a means of social control through their active and positive involvement in the organization so that students are not led astray by extreme radicalism.

From a regulatory perspective, most campus organizations are categorized as top-down in their approach due to being directly monitored by campus administration. However, the interesting aspect of this research is the focus on viewing campus organization practices through a bottom-up lens, represented by the realm of student interactions at the grassroots level. These interactions not only build networks through organizations but also create spaces for discussion, including on the prevention of radicalism which are then developed as the objectives of campus-based social movements. This study considers campus organizations as an initial platform for students to engage in bottom-up initiatives in voicing their opinions and concerns regarding radicalism. Campus organizations also serve as a platform for students to participate in positive actions and maintain social control to avoid falling into negative influences, thereby ensuring that their efforts can foster the implementation of counter-radicalism from an early stage.

## 6 Limitations

The research findings have provided a fresh perspective on the dynamics of addressing radicalism in society through student organizations. The study explains that Social Control Theory and Involvement Theory serve as a strong theoretical foundation for mapping the process of preventing radicalism among young people through campus organizations, which also function as platforms for promoting social movements aimed at strengthening anti-radicalism sentiments. Broadly speaking, this study focuses on the social, cultural, and political dynamics occurring in the Makassar region regarding aspects of radicalism prevention; therefore, its findings cannot be directly generalized to other regions with different forms of student interaction and socio-political dynamics. Consequently, the research results should be understood as a contextual dynamic related to early indications of radicalism prevention through the role of campus organizations in the city of Makassar. Further research is expected to represent dynamics

in other regions by testing the consistency of findings within a broader context.

## 7 Conclusion

This study proposed educational approaches to youth organizations on campus, such as campus organizations, to combat radicalization. Through the semi-structured interviews, we were able to conclude that young people involved in youth organizations have an accurate understanding of the meaning of radicalization. Young people develop many experiences while participating in organizational activities such as dialogue, studies, and competitions. Political situations and acts of terrorism did not affect the activities of youth organizations in conducting religious studies. These organizations also examine issues of patriotism and promote tolerance to enhance it. In practical terms, youth organizations carry out various activities aimed at encouraging other young people not to participate in radicalism. Involvement theory in this study does not merely represent student participation in campus organizations, but also serves as a mechanism for reinforcing anti-radicalism values formed through social control over various positive student activities. Furthermore, campus organizations, as platforms for student social movements, foster productive collaboration and promote inclusivity and diversity, thereby encouraging the development of a moderate and anti-radical mindset. The findings of this study should then be understood as a correlational practice that emphasizes the role of campus organizations as one of the factors driving counter-radicalism through inclusive and positive social interaction spaces.

## Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by Hasanuddin University on August 1st, 2021 (2045/UN4.21/PL00.00/2019), accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki's rules. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The ethics committee/institutional review board waived the requirement of written informed consent for participation from the participants or the participants' legal guardians/next of kin because Informed consent was obtained through verbal consent. Verbal consent was used to simplify the approval process and avoid burdening participants with the administrative requirements of written consent. This method was also effective in maintaining the trust of research participants. The participant has consented to the submission of the case report to the journal.

## Author contributions

SS: Conceptualization, Supervision, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft. TT: Validation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Investigation, Writing – original draft. RE: Methodology, Visualization, Resources, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft. MR: Writing – original draft, Software, Data curation, Methodology. MA: Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing, Project administration. CA: Writing – review & editing, Methodology.

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