

## Feminine Da'wah in Counter-Radicalism: Messaging Strategies of Female Clerics in West Java

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### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran strategis ulama perempuan di wilayah Garut dan Tasikmalaya dalam menangkal radikalisme keagamaan melalui praktik dakwah komunitas yang feminin, empatik, dan kontekstual. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah menganalisis bagaimana dakwah feminin berfungsi sebagai strategi kultural yang tidak hanya menyampaikan ajaran agama, tetapi juga membentuk wacana Islam moderat yang inklusif, dialogis, dan adil gender. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif berparadigma konstruktivis, penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kasus dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif di majelis taklim perempuan, serta dokumentasi materi dakwah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para dai'ah menggunakan metode komunikasi berbasis narasi, dialog terbuka, dan terapi sosial; serta menyampaikan materi dakwah yang mereinterpretasi konsep-konsep kunci seperti jihad, hijrah, dan fiqh relasi gender melalui pendekatan keadilan dan resiliensi komunitas. Implikasi penelitian ini terletak pada kontribusinya dalam membangun model kontra-radikalisme berbasis akar rumput dengan menonjolkan kepemimpinan perempuan dalam ruang keagamaan. Temuan ini juga menunjukkan bahwa majelis taklim dapat menjadi ruang aman untuk pemulihan ideologis, pemberdayaan sosial, dan inovasi teologis. Keaslian penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi antara pedagogi penyembuh (healing pedagogy), wacana Islam transformatif berbasis gender, dan strategi dakwah lokal, yang memberikan kontribusi epistemologis baru dalam kajian Islam, keadilan gender, dan ketahanan komunitas terhadap radikalisme.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Dakwah Feminin; Gender dan Kontra-Radikalisme; Pedagogi Penyembuh; Ketahanan Komunitas; Islam Moderat.*

### **Abstract**

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This study explores the strategic role of female clerics in the Garut and Tasikmalaya regions in countering religious radicalism through feminine, empathetic, and contextually grounded community da'wah practices. The primary objective is to analyse how feminine da'wah functions as a cultural strategy that not only conveys religious teachings but also constructs a discourse of moderate Islam that is inclusive, dialogical, and gender-just. Employing a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm, this research adopts a case study method with data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation in female majelis taklim, and documentation of da'wah materials. The findings reveal that the da'iyah (female preachers) employ communication methods based on narrative, open dialogue, and social therapy; and that their da'wah content reinterprets key concepts such as jihad, hijrah, and gendered fiqh through the lenses of justice and community resilience. The study contributes to the development of a grassroots-based counter-radicalism model by highlighting female religious leadership in sacred spaces. It further demonstrates that majelis taklim can serve as safe spaces for ideological recovery, social empowerment, and theological innovation. The originality of this research lies in its integration of healing pedagogy, gender-based transformative Islamic discourse, and local da'wah strategies, offering a novel epistemological contribution to Islamic studies, gender justice, and community resilience against radicalism.

**Keyword :** *Feminine Da'wah; Gender and Counter-Radicalism; Healing Pedagogy; Community Resilience; Moderate Islam.*

## **Introduction**

The threat of religious radicalism in Indonesia continues to show an alarming trend and has become a serious challenge to social stability, pluralism, and national unity. West Java Province, with the largest Muslim population and complex religious dynamics, recorded the highest number of violations of freedom of religion and belief (FoRB) nationally, with 35 cases in 2019.<sup>1</sup> This figure far surpasses other provinces such as Jakarta (20 cases), East Java (18), and Aceh (17), as illustrated in Figure 1. These data reinforce

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<sup>1</sup> Wahid Foundation, *Kemajuan Tanpa Penyelesaian Akar Masalah: Laporan Tahunan Kemerdekaan Beragama/Berkeyakinan Tahun 2019 Di Indonesia*, 2020.

West Java's position as an epicentre of social and ideological tensions, making it a fertile ground for the spread of intolerance and radicalism.

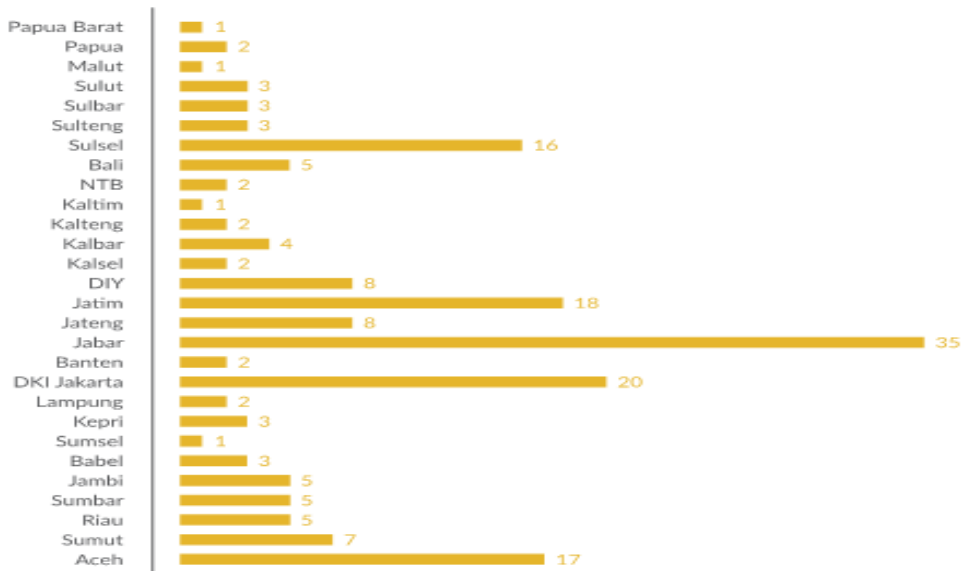


Figure 1: Number of FoRB Violations by Province<sup>2</sup>

The study by Affandi et al.<sup>3</sup> in the *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* asserts that radicalism in West Java is not merely a contemporary phenomenon but rather an accumulation of political Islamic heritage, weak penetration of moderation policies in educational institutions, and the dominance of centralised state approaches that exclude local religious actors. Other studies have found that youth and students' exposure to extremist ideology is reinforced by digital media consumption and the weakness of community-based social control systems.<sup>4</sup> This

<sup>2</sup> Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> R Widya Setiabudi Sumadinata, R M T Nur Affandi, and Dina Yulianti, "Sectarian Narratives of the 2019 Presidential Election and the Radical Transnational Network," *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 13, no. 4 (2019): 381 – 396, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85090899083&partnerID=40&md5=25a2035b08060e5d4d53fe77f9f0293f>.

<sup>4</sup> Suraya and Ahmad Mulyana, "Radicalism on Teens as the Effect of Digital Media Usage," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 36, no. 1 (2020): 76 – 89, <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2020-3601-05>.

condition is exacerbated by resistance from some university lecturers to religious moderation policies,<sup>5</sup> indicating that radicalism in West Java operates systemically across social, cultural, and educational domains.

Religious radicalism does not always manifest through explicit physical violence; it also grows through ideological indoctrination in community-based religious spaces such as majelis taklim. Women, once positioned solely as victims in the chain of extremist violence, are now actively involved as perpetrators and disseminators of radical ideologies-either directly through acts of terror or indirectly by delivering ideologically charged da'wah within women's communities. Research by Pisiu<sup>6</sup> and Nuraniyah<sup>7</sup> indicates that women's involvement in extremism stems from complex motives, including identity search, domestic pressures, and engineered religious idealism.

In this context, community-based deradicalisation efforts-particularly those led by female clerics using feminine, empathetic, and contextual da'wah methods-warrant closer examination. Gayatri & True<sup>8</sup> emphasise the importance of women's involvement in counter-violent extremism (CVE) strategies in Indonesia, as they possess deeper social and emotional access within families and communities. Hence, the da'wah strategies employed by female clerics hold not only theological significance but also strategic value as ideological bulwarks against gender-based radicalism.

Previous studies have addressed women's involvement in radicalism and deradicalisation through three main complementary approaches. However, they have yet to fully address the strategic dimensions of female clerics' da'wah in local contexts. First, research on gender-based radicalisation has

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Syaifuddin et al., "Lecturers' Resistance to Religious Moderation Policy in Handling Radicalism: Evidence from State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia," *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences* 22, no. 2 (2024): 3314 – 3329, <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.00244>.

<sup>6</sup> Daniela Pisiu, *Women of Jihad, Women, Global Protest Movements, and Political Agency: Rethinking the Legacy of 1968*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351203715-11>.

<sup>7</sup> Nava Nuraniyah, "Not Just Brainwashed: Understanding the Radicalization of Indonesian Female Supporters of the Islamic State," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 6 (2018): 890 – 910, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1481269>.

<sup>8</sup> Irine Hiraswari Gayatri and Jacqui True, "The Unlikely Marriage of Counterterrorism and Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Indonesia," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 18, no. 1 (2025): 324 – 349, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2446024>.

shown that women are not merely victims but also active agents in extremist networks. Amelia et al.<sup>9</sup> and Asiyah et al.<sup>10</sup> note that women often become involved in terrorism through domestic relationships, digital propaganda, and entrenched structural influences. Pisoiu<sup>11</sup> and Nuraniyah<sup>12</sup> further highlight the complexity of women's motivations-from identity search and ideological solidarity to symbolic jihadism-most of which are not adequately accommodated in conventional counter-radicalism frameworks.

Second, gender-based deradicalisation approaches stress the importance of gender sensitivity in designing reintegration and counter-extremism programmes. Schmidt,<sup>13</sup> Eggert,<sup>14</sup> and Veronika<sup>15</sup> in *Critical Studies on Terrorism* critique the persistent stereotypes depicting female extremists as passive, brainwashed, or immature, which undermine their potential as peace agents. Gayatri & True<sup>16</sup> propose integrating the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) approach into Indonesia's counter-terrorism strategy, advocating for the active involvement of female clerics and community-based organisations.

Third, studies on women's roles in community-based radicalism prevention reveal that women hold strategic positions in strengthening social resilience at the grassroots level. Musyafak et al.<sup>17</sup> and Widyaningsih &

<sup>9</sup> F Amelia, P Widodo, and A Budiarto, "Motivasi Wanita Sebagai Pelaku Aksi Terorisme Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Peperangan Asimetris* 6, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>10</sup> U Asiyah, R A Prasetyo, and S Sudjak, "Jihad Perempuan Dan Terorisme," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 14, no. 1 (2020): 199, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2020.141-08>.

<sup>11</sup> Pisoiu, *Women of Jihad*.

<sup>12</sup> Nuraniyah, "Not Just Brainwashed: Understanding the Radicalization of Indonesian Female Supporters of the Islamic State."

<sup>13</sup> R Schmidt, "Duped: Examining Gender Stereotypes in Disengagement and Deradicalization Practices," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism University of Denver*, 2020, 953–76, <https://doi.org/10.57610x.2020.1711586>.

<sup>14</sup> J P Eggert, "Gender, Deradicalisation and Disengagement," in *Routledge Handbook of Deradicalisation and Disengagement*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315387420>.

<sup>15</sup> Nuri Widiastuti Veronika, "Poor, Brainwashed and Immature: Prevalent Gender Stereotypes in Indonesian Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and Counterterrorism (CT) Efforts," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 18, no. 1 (2025): 91 – 114, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2397155>.

<sup>16</sup> Gayatri and True, "The Unlikely Marriage of Counterterrorism and Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Indonesia."

<sup>17</sup> N Musyafak et al., "Peran Perempuan Dalam Pencegahan Radikalisme," *Jurnal Dakwah* 21,

Kuntarto<sup>18</sup> show that women play a key role in disseminating values of moderation through informal education and community da'wah. Research by Fadillah<sup>19</sup> in Jambi and Latief & Madjid<sup>20</sup> also affirms the role of women's majelis taklim as spaces for cultural and spiritual transformation in response to the spread of exclusivist ideologies.

Nevertheless, a significant gap remains unexplored: how the communication strategies and da'wah messages developed by female clerics—especially da'iyah from Nahdlatul Ulama—in women's religious spaces such as majelis taklim serve as effective counter-radicalisation mechanisms. Existing studies mostly focus on psychosocial aspects, state policies, or institutional approaches, with few examining the practice of da'wah based on moderate Islamic values and gender equality, particularly in local contexts such as Garut and Tasikmalaya.

This study aims to address that gap by analysing the messaging strategies used by female clerics; particularly da'iyah from Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama—in countering radical ideologies at the community level. It focuses on examining majelis taklim as a women-based da'wah platform that not only facilitates religious learning but also cultivates values of moderate and tolerant Islam. The study explores the communication methods employed (narrative, dialogical, and participatory) and the da'wah content that contextually addresses radicalism. Through this approach, the study seeks to formulate a feminine da'wah model that effectively strengthens the ideological resilience of women's communities against the spread of religious extremism.

The study is premised on the argument that female clerics possess strategic potential in countering radicalism through a feminine, contextual, and community-based approach to da'wah. Within religious spaces such as majelis taklim, da'iyah not only transmit Islamic teachings but also

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no. 1 (2020): 85–110, <https://doi.org/10.14421/JD.2112020.6>.

<sup>18</sup> R Widyaningsih and Kuntarto, “Determinan Keterlibatan Perempuan Dalam Gerakan Radikalisme,” *Malan: Journal of Islam and Muslim Society* 2, no. 1 (2020): 40–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100701258585>.

<sup>19</sup> Nisaul Fadillah, “Women's Majelis Taklim and The Gradual Move Toward Gender Equality A Study in Jambi Province,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 17, no. 1 (2023): 100 – 123, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2023.17.1.100-123>.

<sup>20</sup> Hilman Latief and Abd. Madjid, “Majlis Taklim and The Path Of Women's Islamization In Indonesia,” *Muslim World* 112, no. 4 (2022): 457 – 472, <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12449>.

reconstruct inclusive and gender-just religious narratives in response to exclusive interpretations that often serve as gateways to radical ideology. By prioritising participatory and affective communication and employing da'wah materials such as fiqh mubadalah, tolerance, and civic nationalism, female clerics act as peace agents capable of fortifying communities' ideological resilience from within. This argument assumes that da'wah messaging strategies supported by women's spiritual experience and social positioning offer an effective alternative to state-dominated structural counter-radicalism approaches.

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm to understand the da'wah messaging strategies of female clerics in resisting radicalism in West Java, specifically in the regions of Garut and Tasikmalaya. This approach is chosen based on the premise that social reality is a constructed meaning shaped by experience, relationships, and symbolic interpretations in the context of community-based da'wah.<sup>21</sup> A case study design is employed to enable in-depth exploration of local dynamics. Data collection techniques include participatory observation, in-depth interviews with da'iyah, religious leaders, female community figures, and radicalism observers, as well as documentation of da'wah activities and materials in majelis taklim. Informants are selected purposively based on their active engagement with da'wah and counter-radicalism issues. All data are analysed using descriptive-qualitative methods through stages of reduction, thematic categorisation, and interpretative analysis,<sup>22</sup> focusing on three key aspects: the function of majelis taklim as community da'wah spaces, da'wah communication methods, and da'wah content addressing radicalism. Data validity is strengthened using triangulation of sources and methods.<sup>23</sup>

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Majelis Taklim as a Space for Feminine Community Da'wah

Field observations and in-depth interviews conducted in Garut Regency, Tasikmalaya Regency, and Tasikmalaya City reveal that *majelis taklim* is one of the primary community-based da'wah platforms led by female clerics to

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<sup>21</sup> M C B Umanailo, "Paradigma Konstruktivis," 2019, <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/9ja2t>.

<sup>22</sup> R Kriyantono, *Teknik Praktis Riset Komunikasi* (PT. Kencana Perdana, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan R\&B* (Alfabeta, 2012).



prevent the spread of radical ideologies. Its function goes beyond normative religious education and encompasses ideological and sociocultural dimensions. These *majelis taklim* serve as venues for reconstructing an understanding of Islam that is peaceful, contextual, and responsive to local dynamics. This approach aligns with Joakim and White's<sup>24</sup> findings, which demonstrate that community resilience against ideological threats is shaped not solely through formal state structures, but also through local mechanisms grounded in spirituality and social solidarity.

During routine religious gatherings attended by women of diverse ages and social backgrounds, *da'iyah* deliver messages addressing strategic issues such as religious extremism, intolerance, gender equality, and nationalism using dialogical and participatory approaches. This practice marks a shift in the role of female clerics from normative educators to social and ideological change agents, as discussed by Giscard d'Estaing in her study on women's engagement in community-based counter-extremism.

Transformations in religious attitudes among attendees have become increasingly evident with regular participation in these gatherings. Ustadzah Hj. Ernawati Siti Saja'ah of Garut noted that participants began distinguishing between unifying and divisive da'wah after consistently attending *majelis taklim*. Ustadzah Neng Aam Siti Marhamah of Tasikmalaya emphasised that radicalism often infiltrates through domestic spaces, such as via spouses or relatives. In this context, *majelis taklim* act as effective platforms for neutralising such influences and reinforcing a moderate understanding of Islam. As noted by Tomaro,<sup>25</sup> women's engagement in community spaces significantly contributes to preventing the spread of radical ideologies targeting women through personal relationships and closed ideological narratives.

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<sup>24</sup> Erin P Joakim and Robert S White, "Exploring the Impact of Religious Beliefs, Leadership, and Networks on Response and Recovery of Disaster-Affected Populations: A Case Study from Indonesia," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 30, no. 2 (2015): 193 – 212, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2015.1025538>.

<sup>25</sup> Queenie Pearl Tomaro, "Beyond Motherhood: Women's Agency as Mediators and Monitors in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives in the Philippines," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2025.2474509>.



Field data are further reinforced by the perspectives of religious figures and counter-radicalism activists. Heri M. Tohari from MUI Garut stated that the most effective empowerment of the ummah begins with small spaces like *majelis taklim*. Neng Hannah of FKPT West Java stressed the importance of equipping female clerics with narratives of tolerance. Fauz Noor affirmed that the approach of Fatayat NU's *da'iyah*; which prioritises empathy, lived experience, and social negotiation-is the most culturally effective strategy to counter gender-based radicalism. This underscores the argument that the success of community-based da'wah is largely determined by local sensitivity and affective approaches, aspects not typically found in formal structural strategies.

The five strategic functions of *majelis taklim* in preventing radicalism can be summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Roles of Majelis Taklim in Countering Radicalism

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Field Findings</b>
Educational Space	Regular study sessions, contextual tafsir discussions, strengthening women's religious literacy.
Ideological Space	Clarifying concepts such as <i>jihad</i> , <i>hijrah</i> , and <i>qital</i> ; promoting civic nationalism and Islam Nusantara.
Protective Space	Providing a safe space for women vulnerable to extremist influences.
Emotional Space	Da'wah with wisdom and compassion (Qur'an 16:125); reinforcing identity as peace agents.
Social Space	Dissemination of moderate values through domestic and women's community roles.

Field findings demonstrate that *majelis taklim* serve dual functions as educational forums and as sites of resistance against radicalism. The da'wah delivered by *da'iyah* is not doctrinal, but rather adapted to the lived experiences and social contexts of the participants. Consequently, *majelis taklim* transcend their role as mere religious study groups and become platforms for women's empowerment and critical engagement with exclusive religious narratives.

Women who were once positioned passively now emerge as active agents capable of filtering sermons and rejecting radical narratives. Da'wah

grounded in empathy and real-life experience fosters emotional connections between *da'iyah* and their congregants, which proves essential in nurturing inclusive religious identities.

These findings align with the works of Giscard d'Estaing, Eddyono & Davies,<sup>26</sup> and Tomaro,<sup>27</sup> all of whom assert that women's involvement in religious education and social transformation contributes significantly to community-based ideological resilience. By leveraging women's social and spiritual capital, community da'wah proves more adaptive and impactful than top-down structural approaches.

From the data analysis, four dominant patterns emerged. First, there is a transformation of participants from passive recipients to reflective agents. Their engagement in *pengajian* fosters greater selectivity in processing religious information. Second, da'wah is delivered through empathetic and contextual methods that address women's domestic and social realities. Third, *majelis taklim* provide safe spaces where women feel comfortable asking questions, engaging in discussion, and expressing views. Fourth, there is an increase in the capacity of female clerics as social mediators and conveyors of tolerant Islamic narratives.

These patterns indicate that community-based da'wah strategies led by women create social structures that are flexible, inclusive, and adaptive in resisting radical ideology. In this context, *majelis taklim* led by female clerics function not only as religious forums but also as cultural instruments for building community resilience against ideological infiltration. This resilience does not emerge from structural pressure, but rather from affective proximity, moral credibility, and social relations built consistently through participatory and contextual da'wah.

This strategy signifies a shift from formal state-led deradicalisation to relational approaches rooted in lived experience, participation, and community solidarity. In this regard, women's da'wah becomes an effective

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<sup>26</sup> Christine M. Rubie-Davies and Rosenthal Robert, "Examine the Effectiveness of a Teacher Expectation Intervention across Different Schools," 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Tomaro, "Beyond Motherhood: Women's Agency as Mediators and Monitors in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives in the Philippines."

counter-narrative to extremism because it is born of the community's own realities and aspirations.

As emphasised by Joakim & White,<sup>28</sup> community resilience to radicalism depends greatly on local capacity to foster safe and resilient social spaces. Therefore, *majelis taklim* can be positioned as a vital component of counter-radicalism architecture-one that goes beyond legalistic approaches by reinforcing inclusive and peaceful religious social capital.

## 2. Feminine Da'wah Methods: Narrative, Dialogue, and Social Therapy

Grounded in the principle of Qur'an 16:125-"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner"-the da'wah practices of female *da'iyah* in Garut, Tasikmalaya Regency, and Tasikmalaya City reflect a concrete implementation of moderate da'wah that is reflective and contextual. Their strategies are not based on hierarchical monologues, but rather on life narratives, open dialogue, and empathetic social therapy. This model aligns with the *female religious leadership in counter-extremism* approach, which underscores the importance of women's involvement in social mediation grounded in peaceful values and affective spirituality.<sup>29</sup>

Ustadzah Ernawati Siti Saja'ah recounted that her da'wah does not consist solely of normative preaching but involves storytelling that resonates emotionally. Narratives from the Prophet, his companions, and the personal experiences of congregants are shared to contextualise Islamic values. This method builds emotional and spiritual bonds, fostering a communicative and participatory space for da'wah. As noted by Tomaro,<sup>30</sup> experience-based approaches in religious spaces are essential in preventing gendered radicalisation.

Meanwhile, Ustadzah Neng Aam Siti Marhamah practices dialogical da'wah that involves Q&A sessions and clarification of sensitive topics such as *jihad*, *hijrah*, and gender relations. This model nurtures critical awareness

<sup>28</sup> Joakim and White, "Exploring the Impact of Religious Beliefs, Leadership, and Networks on Response and Recovery of Disaster-Affected Populations: A Case Study from Indonesia."

<sup>29</sup> Tomaro, "Beyond Motherhood: Women's Agency as Mediators and Monitors in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives in the Philippines."

<sup>30</sup> Tomaro.

among congregants about the manipulation of religious texts. Such open discussions are consistent with the importance of women's involvement in constructing peace narratives, as shown in Eddyono and Davies' study, which positions women as key actors in community-based counter-extremism.

Furthermore, Ustadzah Ade Siti Rohmah and Ustadzah Silvia Rahmah highlight the significance of gentleness and wisdom-based approaches as methods that touch on the psychosocial dimensions of congregants. Through compassionate communication, emotional support, and spiritual care, they facilitate emotional and religious recovery amidst prevailing social pressures. This practice affirms Fransen's findings, which show that affective and relational da'wah is highly effective in countering exclusivist ideologies targeting vulnerable groups.

These methods are applied flexibly, tailored to the psychosocial conditions of the participants. There is no rigid script-only the guiding principles of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and sensitivity to the voices and burdens of women. This feminine approach to da'wah reveals that it is not merely a mode of religious communication but a living space of affection, healing, and empowerment.

Table 2. Classification of Feminine Da'wah Methods by Female Clerics

Approach Type	Field Practice Description	Primary Function
Narrative	Preaching framed through stories of the Prophet, companions, or the congregants themselves.	Evokes emotion; builds emotional connection
Dialogical	Open discussion, respectful Q&A, and collective interpretation in religious gatherings.	Promotes critical and collective understanding
Wisdom-Based	Use of gentle language, personal examples, and emphasis on compassion and empathy.	Facilitates psychological healing and moral awareness
Social Therapy	Da'wah as a space for counselling, emotional support, and spiritual advocacy.	Offers social service and strengthens solidarity

This table illustrates that feminine da'wah methods are not limited to religious knowledge transfer; they function as pedagogical, psychosocial, and

cultural tools essential for sustaining moderate Islamic values within communities.

Based on field observations and interviews, it can be concluded that female clerics' da'wah approaches possess distinct characteristics that differ from conventional models. Their approach is flexible, empathetic, and oriented toward spiritual and social healing. The content is not delivered in a top-down fashion but emerges through life stories, open discussions, and emotional accompaniment grounded in compassion and wisdom.

Narrative-based da'wah enables congregants to feel affectively and cognitively connected with the Islamic values being conveyed. Stories become a reflective medium for internalising moderation in daily life. Meanwhile, participatory discussions allow space for clarifying sensitive issues and encourage critical religious understanding. In this context, wisdom-based and social therapy approaches act as significant tools of social recovery-particularly for women facing ideological pressures from domestic or digital spaces.

Field findings indicate four interrelated dominant patterns. First, narrative da'wah fosters emotional closeness and strengthens the resonance of Islamic values with women's lived experiences. Second, dialogical discussion promotes active participation and challenges the narrowing of textual interpretations. Third, the wisdom approach foregrounds peaceful and compassionate communication in delivering da'wah content. Fourth, social therapy practices turn *majelis taklim* into safe spaces for spiritual and psychosocial healing.

These patterns suggest that feminine da'wah is not only responsive to ideological threats but also preventive against emotion-based radicalisation. Such practices represent a direct implementation of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* in complex socio-religious contexts.

This interpretation reinforces theoretical insights on *female religious leadership in counter-extremism*, which emphasise affective, experiential, and participatory approaches to building community resilience.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, as noted by Fransen, counter-extremism strategies that incorporate narratives

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<sup>31</sup> Tomaro.

and safe spaces for women tend to be more sustainable, as they address the social and emotional roots of ideological vulnerability.

Thus, the feminine da'wah methods employed by *da'iyah* in the study areas not only reflect pedagogical innovation but also contribute to the construction of community-based moderate Islam, affective relationships, and inclusive social resilience.

### **3. Da'wah Content and the Reinterpretation of Islamic Values**

*Majelis taklim* led by female clerics in Garut, Tasikmalaya Regency, and Tasikmalaya City serve as critical arenas for the reinterpretation of Islamic values, particularly in response to exclusive and radical religious narratives. The content of the da'wah delivered no longer revolves solely around ritual aspects but engages with ideological and social dimensions in a contextual manner. The *da'iyah* actively deconstruct literal interpretations of concepts such as *jihad*, *hijrah*, and gender relations using grounded, reflective, and participatory approaches.

Ustadzah Hj. Ernawati Siti Saja'ah emphasises that *jihad* should not be understood merely as physical warfare, but as inner and social struggle in daily life-raising children, maintaining family, fighting poverty, and spreading compassion. This approach shifts the meaning of *jihad* into a context of peaceful civic responsibility, aligning with the reinterpretation proposed by Atabik & Muhtador,<sup>32</sup> who argue that *jihad* is often misused in gender-based extremist recruitment.

Meanwhile, *hijrah* is not framed as a call to abandon the social order or the state, but rather as a moral and introspective transformation. According to Ustadzah Neng Aam Siti Marhamah, *hijrah* is a personal effort to improve oneself, broaden religious understanding, and cultivate social sensitivity. This understanding resonates with the study by Syahbudi et al.<sup>33</sup> which explores *hijrah* as a peaceful identity-building practice among urban Muslims, while

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<sup>32</sup> Ahmad Atabik and Moh Muhtador, "Jihad And Interpretation Of Religious Texts On Female Terrorists In Indonesia," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 1 (2023): 1 – 30, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v11i1.16342>.

<sup>33</sup> Syahbudi et al., "Hijrah And Rectification Of Muslim Identity: The Case of Campus Da'wah Activists in Pontianak City," *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 2 (2024): 262 – 281, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i2.1174>.

also criticising the ideologisation of *hijrah* in social media that promotes conservatism and social isolation.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the dissemination of *fiqh* based on *mubadalah* (reciprocity) is a key feature in many study sessions. This concept is used to explain mutuality between men and women in household roles, leadership, and decision-making. Ustadzah Ade Siti Rohmah and Ustadzah Silvia Rahmah connect *fiqh mubadalah* with egalitarian marital relationships and new understandings of family leadership. This strategy enhances women's authority in religious community spaces and effectively challenges patriarchal interpretations of scripture. Research by Kodir et al.<sup>35</sup> and Nurjanah et al.<sup>36</sup> affirms that *maqāṣid cum-mubāḍalah* has been adopted in progressive fatwas and Islamic education to advocate for gender justice and respond to interpretive crises.

Moreover, *da'iyah* also emphasise moral values such as patience, compassion, and tolerance within the national and social context. They stress the importance of respecting diversity, rejecting hate speech, and cultivating love for the nation as an integral part of faith. These narratives serve not only as a form of consciousness-raising but also as protection against the hegemonic narratives of gender-based radicalism. As noted by Fransen, *da'wah* rooted in empathy and affective values constitutes a powerful defence against the infiltration of extremist ideologies at the community level.

To clarify the variety and significance of *da'wah* content delivered by female clerics in West Java, the following table presents thematic classifications based on findings from regular *majelis taklim* sessions:

Table 3. *Da'wah* Content Themes by Female Clerics in Preventing Radicalism

<sup>34</sup> Imam Mustofa, Muhammad Iqbal Juliansyahzen, and Wildani Hefni, "Hijrah and Changing Religious Preferences in Contemporary Islamic Legal Practice," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 23, no. 1 (2023): 115 – 138, <https://doi.org/10.18326/IJTIHAD.V23I1.115-138>.

<sup>35</sup> Faqiuddin Abdul Kodir et al., "Maqāṣid Cum-Mubāḍalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women's Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 2 (2024): 519 – 545, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i2.16617>.

<sup>36</sup> Siti Nurjanah et al., "Al-Mubāḍalah Fī Mafhūmi Fiqhi Al-Mar'ah Al-Mu'āshirah Bī Indūnīsiyā," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial* 17, no. 1 (2022): 189 – 215, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v17i1.6140>.



<b>Da'wah Theme</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Strategic Function</b>
Reinterpretation of Jihad	Jihad as moral, social, and spiritual struggle, not violence.	Eliminates justification for violence; strengthens civic engagement
Reinterpretation of Hijrah	Hijrah as self-transformation and renewal of intention, not ideological isolation.	Rejects exclusivism; promotes inclusivity in religious practice
Fiqh Mubadalah	Mutuality in marital roles, family leadership, and social role distribution.	Deconstructs patriarchal dominance; empowers female agency
Islamic Morality & Moderation	Preaching compassion, tolerance, nationalism, and <i>rahmatan lil 'alamin</i> .	Builds a peaceful Islamic identity rooted in love for the homeland
Islamic Gender Relations	Teachings on justice in private and public life, <i>mubadalah</i> narrative, and women's rights.	Protects congregants from gender-biased interpretations exploited by radical groups

This classification shows that the da'wah content delivered by female clerics extends beyond normative religious rituals, functioning as an ideological tool for reconstructing Islamic values that are peaceful, gender-just, and contextually grounded. The reinterpretation of key concepts such as *jihad*, *hijrah*, gender *fiqh*, and social ethics serves as an entry point to counter exclusive religious discourses that are prone to extremist appropriation.

Field observations and interviews reveal that the da'wah content developed by *da'iyah* is not top-down or dogmatic. Instead, it is conveyed through storytelling, contextual interpretation, and affective narratives rooted in women's lived experiences. This strategy enables stronger value transmission, as it directly resonates with the social realities of the community.

The findings indicate four dominant patterns. First, the reinterpretation of *jihad* and *hijrah* shifts their meanings from violence and isolation to social struggle and self-renewal, undermining their exploitation in extremist propaganda.<sup>37</sup> Second, the grounding of *fiqh mubadalah* in family and

<sup>37</sup> Syahbudi et al., "Hijrah And Rectification of Muslim Identity: The Case of Campus Da'wah

community relations creates mutual narratives that liberate women from patriarchal biases.<sup>38</sup> Third, the instillation of moral values such as *rahmah* (compassion) and *tasamuh* (tolerance) is carried out practically, using life illustrations rather than mere textual quotations. Fourth, the integration of nationalistic messages into da'wah content demonstrates that nationalism is not positioned as the antithesis of religion but as an expression of responsible faith.

These patterns suggest that women's da'wah content not only fosters peaceful religious identity but also strengthens ideological resilience at the community level. Da'wah becomes not merely a space for education, but a site of healing and social resistance to both textual and gender-based radicalism.

The interpretation of these findings supports the idea that female clerical leadership in da'wah is a tangible contribution to building a participatory and justice-oriented architecture of moderate Islam. In line with the theory of *female religious leadership in counter-extremism*<sup>39</sup> and the *healing pedagogy* approach, da'wah based on narrative, empathy, and social relationships has a higher effectiveness in reaching vulnerable groups-especially women targeted by extremist propaganda.

Accordingly, the da'wah content delivered by female clerics is not merely educational; it is a counter-hegemonic strategy intertwined with culture, affection, and the social experiences of the community. This practice represents a vital epistemological contribution to developing a form of da'wah that is resilient to extremism and inclusive of diversity.

#### **4. Discussion: Feminine Da'wah as a Cultural Strategy for Counter-Radicalism**

This study reveals that female clerics in Garut and Tasikmalaya play a central role in fostering community resilience against radicalism, particularly

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Activists in Pontianak City”; Atabik and Muhtador, “Jihad And Interpretation Of Religious Texts On Female Terrorists In Indonesia.”

<sup>38</sup> Nurjanah et al., “Al-Mubādalāh Fī Maḥūmī Fiqhī Al-Mar’ah Al-Mu’āshirah Bī Indūnīsiyā”; Kodir et al., “Maqāṣid Cum-Mubādalāh Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women’s Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh.”

<sup>39</sup> Tomaro, “Beyond Motherhood: Women’s Agency as Mediators and Monitors in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives in the Philippines.”

through feminine, empathetic, and contextually grounded community-based da'wah practices. They do not merely transmit normative religious teachings but actively develop da'wah spaces as arenas for producing moderate Islamic discourse that is responsive to local social and ideological dynamics. This approach positions women not merely as conveyors of doctrine, but as ideological and cultural actors who reconstruct Islamic values through the language of experience and empathy.

Three key dimensions were identified: first, communication methods based on narrative, dialogue, and social therapy; second, da'wah content that reinterprets the concepts of *jihad*, *hijrah*, and gender relations in progressive terms; and third, the transformation of congregants from passive recipients to reflective agents. These three dimensions synergistically generate ideological resilience within communities by strengthening collective affect, social solidarity, and contextualised spiritual meaning. The da'wah strategies adopted are adaptive, as they address the emotional and social domains of congregants-areas often overlooked by formal structural approaches.

The effectiveness of this approach stems from the sociocultural proximity of female clerics to their communities. As women who share similar challenges in domestic and social spheres, they offer a form of da'wah that is authentic and encounters minimal resistance. Giscard d'Estaing and Tomaro<sup>40</sup> underscore that women's involvement in religious education and social mediation provides a vital foundation for building gender-based community resilience to radicalism. The emphasis on the reinterpretation of *jihad* and *hijrah* also emerges as a strategic key. Studies by Atabik & Muhtador<sup>41</sup> and Syahbudi et al.<sup>42</sup> demonstrate that deconstructing violent and exclusivist scriptural narratives is essential for curbing ideological radicalisation.

Another epistemic contribution is evident in the use of *fiqh mubadalah* and the *maqāṣid cum-mubāḍalah* approach, which reinforce principles of mutuality and justice in social relations. This hermeneutical framework not

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<sup>40</sup> Tomaro.

<sup>41</sup> Atabik and Muhtador, "Jihad And Interpretation Of Religious Texts On Female Terrorists In Indonesia."

<sup>42</sup> Syahbudi et al., "Hijrah And Rectification of Muslim Identity: The Case of Campus Da'wah Activists in Pontianak City."

only challenges patriarchal interpretative dominance but also affirms women's lived experiences as a legitimate source of religious authority.<sup>43</sup> In this context, religious narrative becomes a space for ideological negotiation that reaches the grassroots in participatory and justice-oriented ways.

These findings also align with the concept of *healing pedagogy*,<sup>44</sup> wherein da'wah is not limited to doctrinal transmission but functions as a process of spiritual healing and social affective restoration. Female clerics act as spiritual companions who create safe spaces for congregants, particularly women, in facing ideological and social pressures often untouched by state-centred approaches. This model also reinforces the notion of da'wah as a space of liberation rather than mere instruction.

Compared to previous studies-such as Gayatri & True<sup>45</sup> and Musyafak et al.<sup>46</sup>-this research offers a new contribution by highlighting the communication strategies, narrative forms, and organically developed da'wah content produced by female clerics in community-based religious settings. While earlier studies focused more on macro-level policy or structural participation of women in CVE, this study presents feminine da'wah praxis as a counter-hegemonic force against exclusive and patriarchal radical narratives.

Thus, the results of this study not only reinforce theoretical frameworks concerning women's involvement in community-based counter-radicalism, but also provide a replicable and scalable practical model. The feminine da'wah approach-rooted in affect, dialogue, and lived experience-proves effective in offering an alternative to the top-down deradicalisation models that have dominated state policy. This strategy not only builds ideological resilience but also facilitates spiritual and social recovery within Muslim

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<sup>43</sup> Kodir et al., "Maqāsid Cum-Mubādalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women's Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh"; Nurjanah et al., "Al-Mubādalah Fī Mafhūmi Fiqhi Al-Mar'ah Al-Mu'āshirah Bī Indūnīsiyā."

<sup>44</sup> Glenn Hardaker and Aishah Ahmad Sabki, "Islamic Pedagogy and Embodiment: An Anthropological Study of a British Madrasah," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 28, no. 8 (2015): 873 – 886, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2014.917738>.

<sup>45</sup> Gayatri and True, "The Unlikely Marriage of Counterterrorism and Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Indonesia."

<sup>46</sup> Musyafak et al., "Peran Perempuan Dalam Pencegahan Radikalisme."

women's communities-groups that have long been targets of ideological co-optation and marginalisation.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that the feminine da'wah strategies employed by female clerics in Garut and Tasikmalaya have successfully repositioned majelis taklim from being merely spaces for religious study to becoming arenas for the production of contextual, inclusive, and gender-just moderate Islamic discourse. The main findings encompass three interrelated dimensions: first, da'wah methods based on narrative, dialogue, and social therapy; second, da'wah content that reinterprets key Islamic concepts such as jihad, hijrah, and gender relations; and third, the transformation of female congregants from passive recipients into reflective agents capable of resisting radical narratives. Together, these dimensions form the foundation of ideological resilience against gender-based radicalism within the community.

The scholarly contribution of this research lies in the integration of the healing pedagogy approach within community da'wah strategies, and in its emphasis on Islamic narratives that are responsive to local social dynamics. Beyond expanding the discourse on female religious leadership in counter-extremism, the study also proposes a conceptual framework of feminine da'wah as a cultural strategy rooted in affective spirituality, gender reciprocity, and social solidarity. This approach transcends formal top-down deradicalisation models by offering a participatory, transformative, and more sustainable model of da'wah.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. The geographical scope was confined to Garut and Tasikmalaya and centred around a specific women's organisation (Fatayat NU), which may not fully represent the diversity of feminine da'wah models across Indonesia. Moreover, the influence of resistance toward female clerics from conservative groups was not examined in-depth within its sociopolitical dimensions. Future research could expand to other regions with different Islamic characteristics and explore further the dynamics of resistance and negotiation of female da'wah authority amid religious patriarchal hegemony.

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