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## Gendered Radicalization of Migrant Workers: An Analysis of the Anindia Afiyantari Case and Indonesia's Deradicalization Policy

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### Kata Kunci :

Radikalisasi Berbasis Gender; Pekerja Migran; Feminisme Kritis; Keamanan Manusia; Kebijakan Deradikalisasi.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena radikalisasi berbasis gender yang menyoroti pekerja migran perempuan Indonesia dalam jaringan terorisme transnasional. Didasari oleh peran strategis perempuan dalam ekstremisme yang semakin meningkat dan kerentanan unik tenaga kerja migran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pendorong sosio-ekonomi dan gender radikalisasi, menguraikan mekanisme digital transnasionalnya, serta mengevaluasi responsivitas kebijakan deradikalisasi Indonesia. Menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis kualitatif dengan lensa feminisme kritis, studi kepustakaan ini melakukan studi kasus mendalam terhadap Anindia Afiyantari, pekerja Indonesia di Singapura yang mendanai ISIS. Temuan mengungkap bahwa radikalisasi dipicu oleh kerentanan interseksional kepadatan ekonomi, alienasi sosial, dan krisis identitas yang dieksploitasi melalui jaringan diaspora digital. Analisis menyimpulkan bahwa kerangka deradikalisasi nasional Indonesia yang dipimpin BNPT memiliki titik buta gender yang signifikan dan kurangnya pendekatan transnasional, sehingga tidak efektif bagi pekerja migran. Studi ini mengimplikasikan perlunya pergeseran paradigma dari keamanan negara (*state security*) menuju keamanan manusia (*human security*), dengan merekomendasikan integrasi modul sensitif gender, peningkatan kerja sama ASEAN, dan sinergi kebijakan antara lembaga keamanan dan perlindungan migran untuk membangun ketahanan yang holistik.

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### Keywords :

Gendered Radicalization; Migrant Workers; Critical Feminism; Human Security; Deradicalization Policy.

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### Abstract

*This study examines the phenomenon of gender-based radicalization targeting Indonesian female migrant workers within transnational terrorism networks. Framed by the increasing strategic roles of women in extremism and the unique vulnerabilities of migrant labor. This*

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*research aims to analyze the socio-economic and gendered drivers of radicalization, elucidate its transnational digital mechanisms, and evaluate the responsiveness of Indonesia's deradicalization policy. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive-analytical method with a critical feminism lens, this library research conducts an in-depth case study of Anindia Afiyantari, an Indonesian worker in Singapore who financed ISIS. The findings reveal that radicalization is fueled by intersectional vulnerabilities economic precarity, social alienation, and identity crises exploited through digital diaspora networks. The analysis concludes that Indonesia's national deradicalization framework, led by BNPT, suffers from a significant gender-blind spot and lacks a transnational approach, rendering it ineffective for migrant workers. The study implies the need for a paradigmatic shift from state security to a human security approach, recommending the integration of gender-sensitive modules, enhanced ASEAN cooperation, and policy synergy between security and migrant protection agencies to build holistic resilience.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Within academic discourse, the study of terrorism and deradicalization, both globally and nationally, remains dominated by a masculine perspective that tends to marginalize gender-based analysis. This dominance creates an epistemological bias where the understanding of extremists' motivations, roles, and vulnerabilities is viewed through the lens of male experience (Azca & Putri, 2021). In contrast, contemporary phenomena show a significant increase and transformation in the roles of women within transnational terrorist networks, evolving from positions often seen as logistical support or familial extensions to actors with strategic roles such as recruiters, fundraisers, and even operational executors (Atabik & Muhtador, 2023). This paradigm shift not only reflects a tactical change by terrorist groups exploiting gender stereotypes to evade detection by security apparatus but also signals a new, complex form of radicalization. However, existing academic responses and policy frameworks often fail to capture the complexity of this gender dimension, resulting in a crucial analytical gap and less effective policies.

This analytical gap becomes increasingly apparent and urgent to examine when focusing on the population of Indonesian migrant workers, particularly women, who occupy a unique and vulnerable position. They face a triad of vulnerabilities comprising socio-economic pressure, cultural and social alienation in host countries, and intensive access to boundless digital spaces (Johnston, Iqbal, & True, 2020). The combination of these factors creates an ideal ecosystem for the infiltration and incubation of cross-border extremist ideologies. It is within this context that the case of Anindia Afiyantari, an Indonesian migrant worker in Singapore involved in funding and providing ideological support to ISIS through social media platforms,

emerges as a highly significant empirical precedent (Nuraniyah, 2018). This case not only demonstrates a new *modus operandi* but also fundamentally questions the relevance and effectiveness of Indonesia's national deradicalization policy, which remains overly focused on male perpetrators in a domestic context and is inadequately integrated with issues of global mobility and an inclusive gender perspective.

The urgency to immediately examine this issue is based on three fundamental arguments. First, as an anticipatory effort against dynamic transnational radicalization trends, where extremist networks are becoming increasingly adept at leveraging the dense connectivity of diasporas and the psycho-social vulnerabilities of migrant workers (Supandi, Syaputra, Afthon, Pradana, & Munawar, 2025). Second, to provide constructive criticism and encourage the reformulation of national deradicalization policy to be more inclusive and gender-sensitive, thereby enabling it to reach and respond to threats that are non-physical, latent, and cross-jurisdictional. Third, this aspect pertains to the protection of Indonesia's sovereignty and reputation internationally, where societal resilience, including that of the diaspora, against violent ideology becomes an important indicator in diplomacy and global security. Thus, this research holds not only academic value but also carries strategic implications for national security and the protection of citizens abroad.

Specifically, the objectives of this research are formulated to address the complexity of this problem. The first objective is to analyze the construction of gender and the interacting socio-economic factors that shape the specific vulnerability of female migrant workers to transnational radicalization narratives and networks. The second objective is to elaborate in detail the patterns and mechanisms of gender-based radicalization that occur through digital media channels and are reinforced by solidarity within diaspora networks, using the Anindia Afiyantari case as an in-depth case study. The third objective is to evaluate the response and identify substantive and operational gaps within the current framework of Indonesia's deradicalization policy in responding to the dynamics of phenomena involving female migrant workers.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt at an integrative synthesis of three fields of study that often run parallel: non-traditional security studies (with a focus on transnational terrorism), international migration studies, and gender or feminist studies. This interdisciplinary approach enables a more holistic and contextual analysis of the relationship between three key dimensions: gender identity, global mobility, and the construction of security threats. Furthermore, this research offers an original contribution by consistently positioning female migrant workers not as passive objects of policy or mere victims, but as subjects possessing agency within the radicalization process, thereby enriching the still-limited deradicalization literature in Indonesia.

Theoretically, the analytical framework of this research employs the lens of Critical Feminism. This perspective, inspired by the thoughts of scholars such as Cynthia Enloe, is used to deconstruct how masculine-centric political, security, and knowledge structures ignore, distort, or represent the role of women in the dynamics

of violent extremism. This theory serves as an analytical tool to examine two levels simultaneously: first, how the ideological narratives of terrorist groups strategically exploit and reconstruct gender roles and identities for recruitment and mobilization purposes; and second, how the state's response through deradicalization policy often overlooks this dimension of gender power, consequently failing to see women as strategic actors within the complex and transnational contemporary threat landscape. Through this framework, the research strives to provide a deeper understanding and a critique based on gender justice.

## **METHODS**

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method, chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex socio-political phenomenon of gender-based radicalization targeting Indonesian migrant workers within transnational terrorism (Creswell, 2013). This approach enables the researcher to excavate the meanings, patterns of interaction, and social constructions underlying women's involvement in cross-border extremist networks, while simultaneously integrating empirical description with theoretical analysis based on a critical feminism perspective (Albert Lumbu et al., 2021). Consequently, the research does not stop at data exposition but strives to reveal the ideological structures and policies influencing the phenomenon. The analytical focus is directed at two main aspects: first, the dynamics of gender-based radicalization of Indonesian migrant workers within cross-border extremist networks, and second, the effectiveness of Indonesia's deradicalization policy, using an in-depth case study of Anindia Afiyantari as a representative example. The research scope is transnational, connecting the empirical context of the case in Singapore with the analysis of national policy in Indonesia, thereby examining cross-country interactions and the relationship between gender identity, global migration, and non-traditional security.

Specifically, this research is a library study that fully relies on secondary data from credible and published sources. Data collection is conducted through literature study and documentation techniques on various types of literature. Primary data sources include scientific journals, monographs, and dissertations discussing theories of radicalization, feminism, international migration, as well as security and deradicalization policies, both in global scope and within the context of Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Patel & Patel, 2019). Furthermore, this study also analyzes official policy documents from state institutions such as the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), and the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI), along with reports from international organizations like UN Women, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the ASEAN Counter Terrorism Centre (ACTC). To supplement empirical case data, the researcher refers to credible media reports and relevant international legal documents, such as the CEDAW Convention, which functions as a normative framework for analysis.

The collected data is then analyzed using the thematic analysis method to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between key concepts. The analysis process is carried out systematically through stages of data reduction, thematic classification and coding, interpretation of findings within the theoretical framework, and drawing coherent conclusions. The primary theoretical framework guiding this analysis is Critical Feminism, particularly the thought of Cynthia Enloe, which highlights the masculine bias within the international security system and global politics. This theory is used as a lens to deconstruct how masculine-centric power structures and ideological narratives shape the representation and roles of women in extremism, while simultaneously critiquing gaps in deradicalization policy responses. Through the synthesis of empirical findings and this theoretical framework, this study aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social structures, gender ideology, and state policy in the transnational radicalization process, as well as provide a conceptual contribution to the development of more gender-sensitive and inclusive deradicalization policies.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Diaspora and Structural Vulnerability: The Socio-Economic Profile of Anindia Afiyantari**

Anindia Afiyantari, an Indonesian migrant worker in Singapore, exemplifies the widespread phenomenon of female labor migration within Southeast Asia and embodies the complex vulnerabilities inherent in such diasporic existence. As part of the Indonesian diaspora, she confronted typical socio-economic challenges, including economic pressures, limited social protection, and the arduous need to adapt to a foreign work environment (Mutiara, 2024). The general socio-economic profile of Indonesian migrant workers places them within the lower-middle class, engaged in physically demanding occupations with long hours, frequently compounded by separation from their core families. This precarious situation can intensify feelings of alienation and psychological fragility, especially for women juggling dual roles as transnational breadwinners and familial anchors back home. The demanding context of a host country like Singapore necessitates significant adaptation, where migrants face not only economic strain but also cultural dislocation and constrained social networks, fostering loneliness and isolation (Laili & Holid, 2024). Within this milieu, the diaspora community functions as a crucial alternative social space, yet it often fails to provide sufficient protection or support, a gap exacerbated by limited access to host-country social and legal services, thereby heightening susceptibility to various risks, including extremist ideological infiltration.

Her engagement with the ISIS network originated in intensive online activity via social media platforms, where she actively communicated with sympathizers, disseminated radical content, and provided financial support to the cross-border terrorist structure (Pratama, Herdiani, Sulaksitaningrum, Novitasari, & Ichwanto,

2021). This financial role, executed through digital transfers to ISIS-affiliated accounts, leveraged the accessibility of digital financial technology common among migrant workers. Such online endeavors served to strengthen ideological networks and extend ISIS's influence within the Indonesian diaspora abroad, demonstrating that radicalization and material support for terrorism can flourish absent physical presence in conflict zones, operating instead through borderless digital spaces that exploit diasporic connectivity and specific vulnerabilities (Mahasneh, 2021).

Social media has emerged as a primary engine for indoctrination and ideological dissemination for extremist groups, a dynamic clearly illustrated in cases like Anindia's. Digital platforms enable the massive, structured circulation of radical messages, utilizing interactive features—groups, private messages, multimedia content—to craft compelling extremist narratives and mobilize support (Rustandi & Muchtar, 2020). These platforms allowed Anindia direct connectivity to transnational extremist networks, facilitating doctrinal reception and participation in identity-reinforcing online activities. Concurrently, the Indonesian diaspora network in Singapore played a pivotal facilitative role; while offering a social space for shared experience, such communities can also transform into conduits for radical ideology in the absence of robust social controls (Suarno, Adam, & Julyanto, 2023). For Anindia, diaspora connections bolstered a sense of belonging and solidarity while simultaneously creating avenues for extremist narratives to permeate both digital and physical interactions.

Psychological drivers such as loneliness, alienation, and the quest for a reconstituted identity frequently propel migrant workers to seek meaning and community in the virtual realm, thereby increasing their susceptibility to digital indoctrination (Sudirman, 2017). Social media, in this context, functions not merely as a communication channel but as an active arena for identity construction and normative reframing, where radical narratives are strategically packaged to be appealing and persuasive. In Anindia's trajectory, active engagement in online forums, the consumption and sharing of radical content, and sustained interactions with ISIS sympathizers in cyberspace were catalytic in accelerating her radicalization (Termeer & Duyvesteyn, 2022). This process was further compounded by inadequate social support in her immediate work environment and diaspora circles, rendering social media a primary refuge for fulfilling psychosocial needs and starkly illustrating the dangerous synergy between digital echo chambers and real-world social fragmentation.

The legal response to Anindia Afiyantari was decisively administered by Singaporean authorities, reflecting the nation's stringent policies on cross-border terrorist activities. Her arrest and prosecution were based on evidence of online activities and financial involvement with ISIS, underscoring Singapore's commitment to national security and curbing the spread of radical ideology within migrant communities (Atabik & Muhtador, 2023). Furthermore, the case necessitated and fostered operational cooperation between Singaporean and Indonesian authorities

during investigation and intelligence exchange, acknowledging Anindia's citizenship and the case's broader implications for the reputation of Indonesian migrant labor (Azca & Putri, 2021). This bilateral collaboration is vital for ensuring transparent legal proceedings and developing more effective preventive measures against transnational terrorist threats, highlighting the imperative of international cooperation in contemporary counter-terrorism.

The social and political ramifications of the case have been profound, significantly shaping perceptions of female Indonesian migrant workers. It ignited concerns regarding the vulnerability of migrant labor to radical ideologies, particularly within diaspora settings remote from familial and state oversight. This heightened risk perception threatens to worsen the pre-existing stigma and discrimination faced by female migrant workers in host countries, who already navigate complex gender stereotypes. Conversely, the incident has also acted as a catalyst, pressuring the Indonesian government to bolster protective and monitoring policies for migrant workers while enhancing digital literacy and radicalization awareness within diaspora communities. These initiatives aim to mitigate the risk of extremist entanglement and rehabilitate the international image of Indonesian migrant labor, revealing the intricate balance between security imperatives, human protection, and national reputation management.

Extremist ideologies, particularly within jihadist spheres like ISIS, actively engineer an “ideal” female role centered on moral and spiritual support for jihad. Within their narratives, women are positioned as foundational pillars for building and sustaining the community, with primary duties as wives and mothers responsible for regenerating a new generation of fighters (Nuraniyah, 2018). They are promoted as “guardians” of religious values and group identity, tasked with educating children in unwavering loyalty to the extremist ideology. This framing emphasizes the paramount importance of domestic roles, casting women as “builders of the ummah” and “guardians of the caliphate,” thereby weaponizing traditional gender expectations to frame involvement in jihad as the ultimate spiritual devotion and sacrifice (Pratiwi, 2017).

The legitimization of women's roles within extremism heavily relies on domestic symbols such as mother, wife, and sacrifice. Women are depicted as “mothers of the nation” who instill jihadist values in children and as loyal wives who sacrifice for their husbands' and the group's struggle (Subhan, 2020). These symbols not only reinforce traditional gender narratives but are also strategically employed to justify active female participation in extremist activities—from logistical support and propaganda dissemination to direct violent action when tactically required. Propaganda from groups like ISIS demonstrates a tactical shift, framing women as active agents capable of defense and militancy under pressure, indicating a flexible, opportunistic approach to gendered mobilization (Andayani & Putranti, 2018). Moreover, these narratives adeptly exploit religious interpretations and patriarchal norms to sanctify women's domestic duties while simultaneously carving out agential space for them within the

extremist project. Consequently, women are portrayed not merely as victims or objects but as active agents capable of reproducing the ideology of violence through their traditional roles, making the gender construction within extremist narratives a dynamic, strategic tool for expanding support and legitimizing ideology.

### **Socio-Economic Vulnerability and the Transnational Dimensions of Radicalization**

Indonesian migrant workers, particularly women, confront a multidimensional configuration of socio-economic vulnerabilities that significantly heightens their susceptibility to radicalization processes (Atha Zhalifunnas, Muhammad Diaz Supandi, 2025). Social alienation emerges as a critical factor stemming from geographical dislocation, which encompasses separation from immediate family, limitations in forging meaningful social networks in host countries, and cultural clashes that induce psychological disorientation. This situation is further exacerbated by systemic discriminatory practices in the labor market and public sphere, where female migrant workers are often concentrated in the informal sector and marginalized occupations such as domestic work or caregiving. These roles are characterized by low wages, long hours, and a stark lack of social security and legal protection (Aryeno, Suratman, & Nurita, 2022). Cultural norms ascribed to Indonesian women, such as resilience, patience, and a sense of resigned acceptance (*nrimo*), are frequently exploited by market mechanisms and policies to rationalize these exploitative working conditions, thereby reinforcing a cyclical pattern of vulnerability (Andayani & Putranti, 2018). Constant economic pressure, fueled by commitments to support families back home and job insecurity abroad, collectively worsens psychological stress and erodes individual social resilience, creating fertile ground for identity crises and the search for alternative ideological solutions.

Structural gender inequality within the global labor market directly contributes to this dynamic by shaping profoundly gendered migration experiences. Although the feminization of migration has increased female labor participation, this shift has not translated into substantive equality. Instead, migrant women are often trapped in occupational niches that reproduce domestic gender stereotypes, restricting their access to formal employment, vertical mobility, and comprehensive social protection (Paikah, 2019). Within this context of double marginalization—as migrants and as women—the need for a cohesive collective identity and new sources of solidarity becomes increasingly urgent. Religion, or specific interpretations thereof, can emerge as a powerful identity framework and a source of community, offering a sense of purpose and dignity that may be absent from daily work experiences (Natalis & Ispriyarso, 2018). However, these spaces of religious or diasporic solidarity are inherently ambivalent; while they can function as a psychosocial buffer, they can also become unfiltered conduits for the infiltration of extremist narratives. These narratives offer simplistic answers to the complex injustices faced, particularly in environments with limited social controls and access to moderate religious guidance.

Consequently, strategies focused on economic empowerment and recognition of the double burden borne by female migrant workers are a crucial component in building resilience against radicalization (Santosa, Prativi, Setadatri, Purna, & Grassio, 2022). Strong social support—both from families in the homeland through regular communication and from peer support networks in the host country—can serve as a protective factor. Similarly, fostering inclusive and fair work environments, alongside policies guaranteeing fundamental rights, can significantly reduce stress and feelings of isolation (Rahayu & Munir, 2013). Nevertheless, as long as the underlying gender inequalities within the global economic system and discrimination within migration policies remain unaddressed, the need for compensatory forms of alternative solidarity and identity will persist as a strategic gap. This gap can be exploited by extremist networks to recruit new members from among alienated and marginalized female migrant workers.

The radicalization of Indonesian female migrant workers must be understood within a broader transnational framework where three intersecting elements converge: the physical mobility of migrants, the expansion of digital space, and the operations of cross-border extremist networks. Mobility brings Indonesian women to economic hubs like Singapore, Hong Kong, or Taiwan, exposing them to new socio-cultural environments that simultaneously offer economic opportunity and generate experiences of alienation (Samud, 2021). In navigating this distance and isolation, digital spaces especially social media platforms and messaging applications have become critical infrastructure for social life and, paradoxically, for indoctrination processes. Extremist networks adeptly exploit the near-universal internet access among migrants to disseminate propaganda, build closed virtual communities, and coordinate activities in ways that evade traditional oversight (Fajarina, Hasan, & Oner, 2025). This effectively shifts the primary locus of radicalization from physical meetings to online interactions that are more difficult to trace.

The status of being a migrant not only creates vulnerability but also shapes a unique position for women within the architecture of transnational extremist networks. As a group often experiencing double marginalization, they may actively seek communities and narratives that offer belonging, empowerment, and a higher purpose. Networks like ISIS deliberately target these psychosocial vulnerabilities by conveying messages that glorify the central and "exalted" role of women in the global struggle, whether as moral guardians, financial supporters, or even martyrs. Their relatively improved financial capacity compared to conditions at home, coupled with their motivation and international networks, makes female migrant workers strategic assets for terrorist groups. This creates a symbiotic relationship where the individual gains a desired identity and agency, while the group secures funds, connectivity, and new operatives.

Thus, the transnational dimension of this radicalization blurs conventional boundaries between domestic and international security. Cases like that of Anindia Afiyantari demonstrate that support for terrorism can be executed entirely from

abroad, leveraging digital financial infrastructure and global communication platforms (Kamayanti, 2013). Their mobility enables the transfer of ideas and resources across jurisdictions, while the alienation experienced in the host country enhances the appeal of radical virtual communities. This phenomenon necessitates an equally transnational and coordinated policy response (Ramadhan & Ma'sumah, 2018). Such a response must extend beyond law enforcement to address the root causes of vulnerability in countries of origin, protect migrant workers' rights in destination countries, and govern digital spaces to prevent exploitation by extremist actors.

Ultimately, understanding the interconnection between gender-based socio-economic vulnerability and these operational transnational dimensions is paramount. It is essential for designing effective and humane prevention strategies that address the complex realities of migration, identity, and security in the 21st century. A holistic approach must simultaneously empower migrant women, reform discriminatory systems, disrupt digital recruitment pathways, and enhance international cooperation to mitigate the risks of radicalization within this uniquely vulnerable yet strategically targeted demographic.

### **The BNPT Deradicalization Framework: Structure and a Gender-Blind Spot**

The deradicalization programs spearheaded by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) constitute a core component of Indonesia's national counterterrorism strategy, which seeks to integrate hard security measures with softer socio-cultural interventions (Abyasa, Sari, & Konety, 2025). This dual-track model ostensibly combines a security approach—focusing on the identification, surveillance, and judicial prosecution of individuals affiliated with or influenced by radical networks, both inside and outside the penitentiary system—with a social approach aimed at long-term societal immunization. The latter is operationalized through a suite of initiatives including civic education promoting Pancasila ideology, theological counter-narratives delivered by moderate religious scholars, vocational and entrepreneurship training, and structured social reintegration processes for former detainees. BNPT formalizes this through its four-pillar framework: re-education (to reorient worldviews), rehabilitation (to develop psychosocial and economic capacity), resocialization (to rebuild social bonds), and reintegration (to ensure sustainable return to community) (Aryeno et al., 2022). To amplify its reach and legitimacy, BNPT engages in multi-stakeholder partnerships with entities like the Ministry of Religious Affairs, mainstream Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, and academic institutions, aiming to embed counter-extremism narratives within broader community discourse and educational curricula.

A rigorous, gender-sensitive evaluation, however, exposes profound deficiencies in the conceptualization and delivery of these programs, particularly regarding their applicability to female migrant workers. The prevailing deradicalization paradigm is designed through a gender-neutral—or more accurately, male-default—lens, resulting in generalized modules that fail to engage with the intersectional realities of women

who experience compounded marginalization due to their gender and migratory status (Shoman et al., 2025). Program content overwhelmingly prioritizes theological debate and nationalist indoctrination, while systematically neglecting the core socio-psychological drivers relevant to migrant women, such as the trauma of systemic workplace discrimination, the profound isolation from familial support networks, and the acute crisis of identity experienced in a foreign cultural context. This omission is not incidental but structural, reflecting a broader failure to recognize female migrant workers as a distinct at-risk population (Fuadi, 2024). Consequently, there exists no dedicated regulatory mandate, budget allocation, or specialized intervention protocol within BNPT's apparatus to proactively identify, protect, or rehabilitate women in this category, leaving a critical gap in the national counter-extremism architecture.

Transitioning towards a more effective and equitable deradicalization strategy necessitates a foundational shift to a gender-responsive and contextually nuanced methodology. This transformation requires the codification of tailored intervention modules that move beyond generic templates to address specific gendered pathways into and out of extremism, incorporating trauma-informed counseling, peer-support mechanisms, and economic empowerment programs designed for migrant women's realities (Gultom & Miftah, 2024). It further demands the formal integration of women's rights organizations and transnational diaspora networks as essential partners in program co-design, outreach, and mentorship, leveraging their cultural competence and trust. Concurrently, preventive efforts must be significantly scaled up, focusing on enhancing digital literacy to critique online propaganda and bolstering pre-departure and in-country social protection systems to mitigate the vulnerabilities that extremists exploit (Chakraborty, 2024). These strategic refinements are not merely additive but imperative for developing a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of radicalization within this uniquely vulnerable demographic.

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) and the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI) are endowed with complementary mandates that position them crucially at the intersection of gender justice, labor migration, and human security. Their theoretical role involves enacting cross-sectoral policies that bridge the traditionally separate domains of counterterrorism, women's rights, and migrant welfare. However, a granular analysis of policy frameworks reveals a persistent disconnect between legislative intent and practical implementation, particularly in mainstreaming a robust gender perspective. Foundational laws, most notably Law No. 39 of 2004 on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, while landmark in their time, employ language that is largely gender-blind. They lack explicit, enforceable provisions safeguarding female migrants against gender-specific risks, including sexual violence, reproductive health neglect, wage theft tied to gendered job segregation, and forced confinement—abuses that can fuel grievances and vulnerability to extremist co-option. Therefore, a critical legal agenda involves not only the substantive revision of this overarching law but also the proactive formulation of gender-responsive regional regulations that

guarantee protection across the entire migration continuum, from ethical recruitment and pre-departure training to post-arrival monitoring and assisted repatriation.

The operational hurdles to achieving this integrated protection are multifaceted and deeply entrenched. A primary barrier is the chronic issue of bureaucratic siloing and overlapping jurisdictions among KemenPPPA, BP2MI, the BNPT, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and local governments (Paikah, 2019). This fragmentation leads to diffused accountability, contradictory protocols, and a glaring absence of a unified, gender-sensitive case-management system for at-risk migrant workers. For instance, a migrant woman flagged for radicalized views may fall between BNPT's security focus and KemenPPPA's social welfare mandate, with no clear lead agency for her rehabilitation. This coordination crisis is exacerbated by chronic underfunding for gender-specific programs, a severe lack of systematically collected and gender-disaggregated data that masks the scale and nature of vulnerabilities, and an almost non-existent curriculum for training border officials, labor attachés, and social workers on identifying and handling gender-based radicalization risks (Aryeno et al., 2022). At the sub-national level, despite being the primary origin regions of migrant labor, many local governments lack the political will or technical capacity to enact and enforce specific protective ordinances, perpetuating a policy vacuum at the most critical point of origin.

Forging a more effective protective ecosystem thus demands a systematic overhaul aimed at bureaucratic harmonization and the deep institutionalization of gender mainstreaming (RODER, 2016). This requires KemenPPPA and BP2MI to transition from parallel operations to joint governance models, potentially through mandated inter-agency task forces with shared performance indicators and integrated data systems. They must jointly champion the enactment of subsidiary regulations that translate broad principles into actionable standards, such as mandatory gender audits for recruitment agencies and standardized protection protocols for embassies in host countries. Concurrently, investing in the capacity building of frontline personnel—from village officials in sending communities to shelter managers in destination countries—through specialized training on gender, trauma, and radicalization is essential. Finally, leveraging the grounded expertise and networks of civil society organizations as implementers and watchdogs is key to ensuring policies translate into tangible protection on the ground, creating a responsive and accountable multi-stakeholder shield for female migrant workers.

### **Theoretical Enrichment: Critical Feminism and the Rethinking of Security Paradigms**

This research on the gender-based radicalization of Indonesian migrant workers makes a substantive contribution to the development of three principal theoretical frameworks within International Relations (IR). Specifically, the critical feminism perspective serves as a vital analytical lens for deconstructing the masculine and state-centric bias inherent in traditional security paradigms, which often overlook the

gender dimension in organized conflict and violence (Enloe, 2014). This approach unequivocally positions women as legitimate *referent objects* or subjects of security. It traces how patriarchal social constructions, at both domestic and global levels, generate specific forms of vulnerability experienced by migrant women, which in turn can be exploited by extremist networks (Supandi et al., 2025). Consequently, this study does not merely confirm but also deepens the feminist critique of prevailing security knowledge regimes. It empirically demonstrates how structured gender inequality operates as a key *enabler* in transnational radicalization processes, while simultaneously expanding the horizons of non-traditional security studies to legitimately include issues of human mobility and identity as subjects of security inquiry.

Furthermore, this research actively promotes a conceptual reconfiguration of the *human security* paradigm by integrating gender and migration as its central axes. Human security, in this enriched interpretation, shifts from a narrow focus on state physical security (*freedom from fear*) towards a broader guarantee of individual dignity and well-being (*freedom from want*), with particular emphasis on multiply marginalized groups (Kurnia & Sukabdi, 2021). The context of female migrant workers clearly illustrates that threats to their security are multidimensional and interconnected, encompassing economic insecurity, vulnerability to gender-based violence, deprivation of social rights, and identity instability (Zarkasyi, 2012). Therefore, a holistic and gender-sensitive human security framework becomes crucial for understanding and addressing the root vulnerabilities exploited by extremism. It affirms that sustainable counter-terrorism efforts must proceed in tandem with a commitment to advancing social, economic, and gender justice for migrant populations.

The broader theoretical implication of this synthesis is the advancement of a more inclusive and interdisciplinary research agenda within IR. By mapping the complex intersection of gender, migration, and security, this study paves the way for more dynamic theoretical dialogue between critical security studies, international political economy, and migration studies (Kurnia & Sukabdi, 2021). It strengthens the proposition that contemporary security challenges cannot be understood through isolated disciplines. Instead, they require an integrative approach capable of capturing the complex realities of non-state actors, transnational spaces, and identity dynamics (Foucault, 1995). In other words, this research acts as a catalyst for questioning traditional disciplinary boundaries and building a more reflexive and relevant epistemology of security for an increasingly interconnected global reality.

The findings of this research directly yield a series of imperative policy recommendations for the Indonesian government, particularly in reforming the national deradicalization approach to be more inclusive, gender-responsive, and integrated with migrant protection policies (Ball, 2013). Stemming from the feminist critique of gender-neutral approaches, the foremost priority is to undertake a fundamental transformation of programs led by the National Counterterrorism

Agency (BNPT) by integrating a substantive gender perspective, not merely a cosmetic addition. This entails designing specialized intervention modules that address the unique experiences of migrant women such as trauma from labor exploitation, management of cultural dislocation, and identity crisis complemented by accessible psychosocial support mechanisms and legal aid (Ayodele Omojuwa, 2025). Policies must proactively identify female migrant workers as a vulnerable group requiring targeted prevention strategies, including pre-departure training encompassing critical digital literacy and awareness of online extremist recruitment tactics.

Acknowledging the transnational nature of the threat as analyzed within the non-traditional security framework, the success of these efforts heavily depends on the government's capacity to build and strengthen effective cross-country cooperation, particularly within the ASEAN framework (Fredayani, Adibrata, & Khairi, 2019). Transnational radicalization requires a coordinated regional response, involving the harmonization of procedures for identifying and monitoring at-risk individuals, rapid and reliable intelligence exchange, and the joint development of protocols for the rehabilitation and repatriation of exposed migrant workers. Indonesia needs to lead diplomatic initiatives to strengthen regional instruments like the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) by incorporating specific clauses on the protection of vulnerable groups, including female migrant workers (Senathalia & Rosyidah, 2021). Operational collaboration with destination countries like Singapore and Malaysia must be enhanced, involving not only security apparatuses but also ministries of labor, social services, and civil society representatives from both nations to ensure comprehensive and sustainable protection.

Moreover, to operationalize the holistic *human security* approach, the policy recommendations emphasize the critical importance of vertical and horizontal synergy within the Indonesian government itself. Close coordination between BNPT, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and local governments must be institutionalized through the establishment of a joint task force with a clear mandate and budget (Aryeno et al., 2022). This synergy aims to create an integrated referral system (*one-stop service*) for at-risk female migrant workers, ensuring that security interventions, social protection, and economic recovery operate simultaneously and support each other, thereby severing the chain of vulnerability that leads to radicalization.

Based on the theoretical and policy implications outlined above, the future policy direction must aspire to a paradigmatic transformation from a deradicalization approach still dominated by *state security* logic toward a model centered on *human security*. This transformation, crystallizing feminist critique and the expansion of security concepts, necessitates a shift in focus from merely neutralizing short-term threats to building long-term societal resilience (Fuadi, 2024). This is realized by making the fulfillment of basic rights, social justice, and economic empowerment the core of strategies to prevent violent extremism. In this context, deradicalization

programs must be reconfigured as an integral part of national development and social protection policies, specifically prioritizing improved access to quality education, healthcare, decent work opportunities, and legal protection for all citizens, especially migrant communities and their families (Harvey, 2007).

An operational pillar of this transformation is a substantial investment in critical digital literacy and citizenship education. The government, in collaboration with civil society organizations and technology platforms, needs to develop campaigns and curricula that equip prospective migrant workers—and the general public—with skills for critical thinking, identifying misinformation and extremist propaganda, and participating constructively in digital spaces (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024). Gender-inclusive economic empowerment programs are also key, providing vocational training, access to capital, and marketing assistance for former migrant workers or those at risk, thereby creating dignified and sustainable livelihood alternatives within the home country.

Finally, in line with the critical feminist principle of positioning women as active subjects, a visionary policy direction must promote the meaningful involvement and leadership of women, including former migrant workers, in every stage of counter-extremism policy (Ismail, Hassan, & Rahmat, 2023). Women must be seen as essential agents of peace and resilience. Institutionalizing their participation in policy design, delivering counter-narrative programs in communities of origin and the diaspora, and in social reintegration processes, will ensure that the resulting policies are not just *for* them, but *by* and *with* them. This female-centered *human security* approach will ultimately not only yield more effective deradicalization strategies but also contribute to the realization of a more inclusive, just, and resilient Indonesian social order capable of confronting all forms of threat, including violent extremism.

## CONCLUSION

This research set out to address three interconnected objectives concerning the gendered radicalization of Indonesian migrant workers. First, it successfully analyzed how the construction of gender and intersecting socio-economic factors shape specific vulnerabilities. The case of Anindia Afiantari demonstrates that radicalization is not merely an ideological or theological deviation but is deeply rooted in the lived experiences of structural marginalization. The convergence of economic precarity, social alienation in host countries, and the psychological strain of dual roles creates a fertile ground where extremist narratives promising purpose, dignity, and communal belonging can take root. The study confirms that patriarchal structures both in the homeland and the global labor market are not just background conditions but active enablers of the radicalization process.

Second, the research elaborated in detail the patterns and mechanisms of this gender-based radicalization, identifying the digital-diaspora nexus as its central engine. The process is inherently transnational, leveraging social media for indoctrination and digital finance for logistical support, all while being facilitated by

the social dynamics of diaspora communities that can oscillate between providing solidarity and acting as conduits for extremist ideology. This digital dimension allows radicalization and operational support to occur remotely, decoupling it from physical conflict zones and challenging traditional, geographically-bound security and deradicalization models.

Third, the evaluation of Indonesia's deradicalization policy framework reveals a critical disjunction between this complex reality and current state responses. While BNPT's integrated security-social approach provides a foundational structure, its effectiveness is severely hampered by a pervasive gender-blind spot and a domestic focus that fails to account for the transnational nature of migrant worker vulnerabilities. The analysis underscores that policies from BNPT, KemenPPPA, and BP2MI remain siloed, reactive, and lack the gender-sensitive, preventive, and cross-border coordination mechanisms required for effectiveness.

Therefore, the primary discovery of this study is that addressing gendered radicalization necessitates a fundamental paradigm shift from a state-centric security model to a human security framework. Effective deradicalization and prevention must be re-conceptualized as part of a broader project of social justice and migrant empowerment. This demands substantive, gender-responsive reforms in national deradicalization modules, the proactive strengthening of regional cooperation within ASEAN, and the holistic integration of migration, labor, and gender protection policies. Ultimately, the path to resilience lies not solely in countering extremist ideology but in diligently addressing the root causes of vulnerability—poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement and recognizing migrant women not as passive victims, but as essential agents in building peaceful and secure communities. Future research should empirically evaluate pilot programs that implement these gender-sensitive and transnational recommendations, and further investigate the comparative dynamics of radicalization across different migrant-receiving countries in the region.

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