

COMMUNITY BASED PREVENTIVE STRATEGY: STRENGTHENING ANTI TERRORISM SOCIAL NETWORKS THROUGH RELIGIOUS MODERATION DA'WAH

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Abstract: Terrorism in Indonesia often stems from narrow and exclusive religious understandings, allowing radical ideologies to easily infiltrate society. Beyond its role as a place of worship, the mosque holds a strategic function as a social center that can serve as the foundation for preventive strategies. This article examines how mosque communities can strengthen anti-terrorism social networks through da'wah promoting religious moderation. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using literature review and conceptual analysis. The findings indicate that mosques have the potential to become spaces for reinforcing moderate religious literacy, fostering positive social interaction, and serving as ideological fortresses against the spread of radicalism. Da'wah of religious moderation has proven effective in expanding social networks that cultivate tolerance, peace, and harmony among communities. The article recommends synergistic communication, coordination, and collaboration between mosque administrators, religious leaders, and government institutions to strengthen preventive strategies aimed at building a resilient and non-violent society.

Keywords: Mosque, Preventive Strategy, Religious Moderation, Social Networks, Terrorism

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of terrorism represents a global threat that continues to evolve with diverse patterns and strategies. In Indonesia, terrorist networks often exploit religion as a justification for violent ideology. However, the majority of Indonesians are moderate Muslims who uphold the values of tolerance and humanity.

As a religious institution, the mosque holds a central position in the life of the Muslim community. Beyond serving as a place of worship, it also functions as a center for social, educational, economic, and even political activities. This strategic role makes the mosque both a potential ideological fortress of the nation and a possible target for radical group infiltration.

Counterterrorism efforts in Indonesia have largely focused on repressive approaches, arrest and law enforcement. However, such strategies are curative and fail to address the root causes of radicalization. Therefore, preventive and pre-emptive approaches are urgently needed to close the space for the early spread of radicalism. One effective approach is through empowering mosque-based communities.

Religious moderation *da'wah* serves as an essential instrument in strengthening social resilience against violent ideologies. Through preaching that emphasizes balance, tolerance, and anti-extremism, mosques can function as centers for enhancing moderate religious literacy. Consequently, they can build anti-terrorism social networks that involve congregants, religious leaders, youth, and the wider community.

Research Questions:

1. How can mosques serve as community-based institutions for preventive efforts against terrorism?
2. How can religious moderation *da'wah* strategies strengthen anti-terrorism social networks?

Research Objectives:

1. To describe the role of mosque communities as a preventive strategy against terrorism.
2. To analyze effective models of religious moderation *da'wah* in building anti-terrorism social networks.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Preventive and Pre-Emptive Concepts in Counterterrorism

- 1) In criminological theory, there are three primary approaches to crime prevention: **repressive**, **preventive**, and **pre-emptive** strategies.
- 2) **Repressive** actions are taken after a crime occurs (e.g., arrest and legal prosecution).
- 3) **Preventive** actions aim to stop crime before it happens, such as through supervision, education, and literacy.
- 4) **Pre-emptive** actions anticipate the emergence of intent, motivation, or opportunity for crime, for example through awareness, guidance, and value inculcation.

In Indonesia, the repressive approach alone has proven insufficient. The National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) recorded more than 400 terrorism-related cases between 2020 and 2023, including both attempted and executed attacks. Notable examples include the suicide bombing in Makassar (2021) and the attack on the Astana Anyar Police Station in Bandung (2022). Both incidents involved perpetrators previously exposed to radical ideologies through social networks and exclusive religious study groups. These facts highlight the urgent need to strengthen community-based preventive and pre-emptive strategies.

2.2 The Mosque as a Social Space

Historically, the mosque in Islam has served not only as a place of ritual worship but also as a center of education, justice, economy, and community consolidation. In Indonesia, there are more than 800,000 mosques and prayer halls (*mushalla*) (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2023), making mosques highly strategic social spaces that shape public opinion and religious behavior.

However, several studies have shown that a small number of mosques have been used as venues for radical preaching. A report by the Setara Institute (2018) found indications that around 41 mosques in state institutions and ministries delivered sermons containing intolerant messages. Although this percentage is relatively small, it reveals the vulnerability of mosques when they are not managed through a moderate approach.

2.3 Religious Moderation

Religious moderation is a perspective, attitude, and practice of religion that emphasizes balance between personal conviction and respect for diversity. Since 2019, Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs has adopted religious moderation as a national program to counter radicalism.

The key indicators of religious moderation include:

- 1) Commitment to national identity.

- 2) Tolerance toward differences.
- 3) Rejection of violence.
- 4) Adaptability to local culture.

Empirical data underscores the urgency of this issue. A survey by BNPT and Alvara Research (2020) revealed that around 12% of Indonesia's youth agreed with the use of violence to defend religion. Without literacy and education in moderation, this figure could become fertile ground for terrorist recruitment.

2.4 Mosque-Based Anti-Terrorism Social Networks

From a sociological perspective, social networks function to shape patterns of communication, interaction, and solidarity among individuals. When utilized positively, these networks can form communities resilient to extremist ideologies. Several community-based initiatives in Indonesia have proven effective:

1. The **Forum for Coordination of Terrorism Prevention (FKPT)**, established by BNPT, involves religious leaders, academics, and youth to raise awareness against radicalism.
2. The **Youth Mosque Movement** in Central Java (2022) initiated moderate Islamic study programs and community activities to prevent radical infiltration.
3. Women's *pengajian* groups in South Sulawesi have actively countered radical narratives by promoting peaceful family literacy and anti-violence values.
4. These examples demonstrate that mosques, through their congregational networks, have strong potential to become bastions of anti-terrorism when guided by the principles of religious moderation *da'wah*.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a **descriptive qualitative approach** using literature review methods, complemented by factual data from official reports, surveys, and academic studies related to mosques, religious moderation, and terrorism prevention.

- 1) **Data Sources:** Official government documents (BNPT, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Setara Institute, LIPI, Wahid Foundation).
- 2) Academic articles and research reports on the role of mosques and religious moderation.
- 3) Empirical phenomena, including radicalism and terrorism cases in Indonesia (2015–2023).
- 4) **Analytical Technique:** Thematic analysis, grouping data by theme (mosque roles, moderation *da'wah*, anti-terrorism social networks) and interpreting them within the framework of terrorism prevention.
- 5) This method was chosen because the study focuses on exploring concepts, practices, and strategies that can strengthen the role of mosque communities in building social resilience against terrorism.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Mosque as a Base for Counterterrorism

The mosque represents the closest social space to the Muslim community. It serves not only as a center for worship but also for interaction, consolidation, and education. Given its open and inclusive nature, the mosque can be an effective medium for spreading moderate religious ideology.

Nevertheless, certain vulnerabilities exist. The Setara Institute (2018) reported that several mosques within government and campus environments had delivered sermons promoting intolerance. This demonstrates that mosques can become recruitment grounds for radical ideologies if not properly managed.

Conversely, there are numerous examples of mosques that serve as strongholds of moderation. For instance, **Jogokariyan Mosque in Yogyakarta** actively conducts inclusive Islamic studies, economic empowerment programs, and interfaith social activities. This model illustrates how mosques can strengthen social cohesion, leaving no room for violent ideology to grow.

4.2 Religious Moderation *Da'wah* in Mosques

Mosque-based *da'wah* wields significant influence in shaping congregational mindsets. When oriented toward moderation, *da'wah* nurtures a tolerant, inclusive, and non-violent society. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019) outlined four key indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and acceptance of local culture, each serving as a guide for mosque-based *da'wah*.

Empirical evidence includes:

- 1) The **Moderation Da'wah Program** at the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh (2021–2022), where preachers were trained with materials on religious moderation, resulting in reduced intolerance among youth congregants.
- 2) The **Peace Sermon Initiative** at Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta, emphasizing nationalism, tolerance, and interfaith brotherhood.
- 3) These examples demonstrate that structured religious moderation *da'wah* can effectively serve as a shield against radicalization.

4.3 Mosque-Based Anti-Terrorism Social Networks

The concept of social networking highlights that interpersonal connections strengthen solidarity and collective consciousness. When the mosque becomes the center of such a network, congregants can form communities that resist radicalism. Real examples from Indonesia include:

- 1) The **Mosque Youth Communication Forum** in Central Java (2022) initiated the *Youth for Peace* movement through regular studies, digital literacy training, and social activities, effectively preventing radical infiltration among mosque youth.
- 2) The **BNPT's FKPT Program** in West Java engaged mosque administrators, teachers, and youth in creating creative media content to counter radical narratives online.
- 3) The **Muslimat NU Community** in East Java educated families through women's study groups to prevent children from exposure to violent ideologies.
- 4) These networks illustrate that countering terrorism is not solely the responsibility of security agencies but a collective effort that can be built through mosque communities.

4.4 Effective Preventive Strategies

Based on analysis, several mosque-based preventive strategies are effective in countering terrorism:

- 1) **Strengthening Moderate Religious Literacy:** Mosque administrators should organize training on religious literacy emphasizing moderation. Congregants must be equipped with critical understanding to avoid exclusive interpretations.

- 2) **Optimizing Pulpit Da'wah:** Preachers and imams must have moderate perspectives. Sermons should reinforce national unity, tolerance, and peace.
- 3) **Community-Based Social Activities:** Mosques should serve as centers of social solidarity through community service and economic empowerment, leaving no vacuum for radical groups to exploit.
- 4) **Utilizing Mosque Social Media:** Many mosques now have social media accounts that can be used to spread moderate content and counter online radical propaganda. For example, **Salman Mosque at ITB** regularly produces digital *da'wah* content focused on peace literacy and science.
- 5) Through these strategies, mosques can perform a dual role, as centers of worship and as pillars of social resilience in countering terrorism.

5.1 Conclusion

Mosques play a strategic role in terrorism prevention due to their closeness to the community and their dual functions as religious and social institutions. Through community-based preventive strategies, mosques can:

- 1) Strengthen moderate religious literacy to prevent radical influence.
- 2) Serve as centers for religious moderation *da'wah* emphasizing nationalism, tolerance, anti-violence, and cultural inclusivity.
- 3) Build core anti-terrorism social networks involving congregants, youth, women, and religious leaders.
- 4) Utilize social media as an effective tool to counter radical propaganda in the digital sphere.
- 5) Thus, mosque-based community preventive strategies through religious moderation *da'wah* constitute an effective approach to reinforcing social resilience and preventing the growth of violent ideologies in Indonesia.

5.2 Recommendations

- 1) Mosque administrators should strengthen religious moderation programs by involving preachers, clerics, and youth groups.
- 2) The government and BNPT should intensify collaboration with mosque communities through literacy and moderation training.
- 3) Religious leaders should promote peaceful narratives in sermons, lectures, and community activities.
- 4) Youth and women's communities should be actively involved in building mosque-based anti-terrorism networks.
- 5) Modern mosques should optimize digital platforms to disseminate positive content that can rival radical propaganda online.

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