

## **Micro Intervention Model of Social Work Values in Handling Radicalized Children**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the contribution of micro-level social work practices to the rehabilitation of children exposed to radicalism in Indonesia. The study aims to explain how seven core individual-focused social work values individualization, purposeful expression of feelings, controlled emotional involvement, acceptance, a non-judgmental attitude, self-determination, and confidentiality, are operationalized in casework-based counter-radicalization interventions. Rather than positioning child rehabilitation solely as a security agenda, this study conceptualizes it as a process of restoring life capabilities oriented toward the best interests of the child. The research adopts a qualitative case study design, with data collected between 2019 and 2023 through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The study purposively selected informants from cross-sectoral professionals directly involved in the rehabilitation of children exposed to radicalism. The researchers conducted data analysis through systematic processes of coding, categorization, and thematic interpretation to ensure contextual depth and the credibility of findings. The findings demonstrate that the seven social work values consistently operate in forming a recurrent intervention pattern, moving from values to stages of intervention and ultimately shaping the meaning of rehabilitation outcomes. These values guide holistic assessment, inform the selection of intervention techniques, and frame rehabilitation success not in terms of ideological compliance or zero risk, but as the restoration of emotional regulation, the recovery of child agency, and the reopening of future life orientations. Rehabilitation practices unfold through interprofessional collaboration among social workers, psychologists, educators, religious leaders, and security officers, with social workers playing a pivotal role as ethical gatekeepers in navigating tensions between child welfare logic and state security logic. The most critical challenge emerges during social reintegration, when institutional rehabilitation outcomes often fail to align with community acceptance, underscoring the need to expand interventions beyond the micro level toward community-based approaches. This study contributes theoretically by extending social work value theory into the context of child deradicalization, a field largely dominated by security-oriented approaches. It also offers a practical contribution by proposing a value-based micro-intervention framework for the rehabilitation of children exposed to radicalism in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Social Work Values, Child Deradicalization, Child Rehabilitation, Interprofessional Collaboration, Micro Social Work.

### **Abstrak**

Studi ini meneliti kontribusi praktik kerja sosial tingkat mikro terhadap rehabilitasi anak-anak yang terpapar radikalisme di Indonesia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana tujuh nilai inti kerja sosial yang berfokus pada individu: individualisasi, ekspresi perasaan yang bertujuan, keterlibatan emosional yang terkontrol, penerimaan, sikap tidak menghakimi, penentuan diri, dan kerahasiaan, dioperasionalkan dalam intervensi kontra-radikalisasi berbasis kasus. Alih-alih memposisikan rehabilitasi anak semata-mata sebagai agenda keamanan, studi ini mengkonseptualisasikannya sebagai proses pemulihan kemampuan hidup yang berorientasi pada kepentingan terbaik anak. Penelitian ini mengadopsi desain studi kasus kualitatif, dengan data yang dikumpulkan antara tahun 2019 dan 2023

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melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen. Studi ini secara sengaja memilih informan dari para profesional lintas sektor yang secara langsung terlibat dalam rehabilitasi anak-anak yang terpapar radikalisme. Para peneliti melakukan analisis data melalui proses sistematis pengkodean, kategorisasi, dan interpretasi tematik untuk memastikan kedalaman kontekstual dan kredibilitas temuan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tujuh nilai pekerjaan sosial secara konsisten beroperasi dalam membentuk pola intervensi yang berulang, bergerak dari nilai-nilai ke tahapan intervensi dan pada akhirnya membentuk makna hasil rehabilitasi. Nilai-nilai ini memandu penilaian holistik, menginformasikan pemilihan teknik intervensi, dan membingkai keberhasilan rehabilitasi bukan dalam hal kepatuhan ideologis atau risiko nol, tetapi sebagai pemulihan regulasi emosional, pemulihan agensi anak, dan pembukaan kembali orientasi kehidupan masa depan. Praktik rehabilitasi berlangsung melalui kolaborasi interprofesional di antara pekerja sosial, psikolog, pendidik, pemimpin agama, dan petugas keamanan, dengan pekerja sosial memainkan peran penting sebagai penjaga gerbang etika dalam menavigasi ketegangan antara logika kesejahteraan anak dan logika keamanan negara. Tantangan paling kritis muncul selama reintegrasi sosial, ketika hasil rehabilitasi institusional seringkali gagal selaras dengan penerimaan masyarakat, yang menggarisbawahi perlunya memperluas intervensi di luar tingkat mikro menuju pendekatan berbasis komunitas. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi teoritis dengan memperluas teori nilai pekerjaan sosial ke dalam konteks deradikalisasi anak, bidang yang sebagian besar didominasi oleh pendekatan berorientasi keamanan. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menawarkan kontribusi praktis dengan mengusulkan kerangka kerja intervensi mikro berbasis nilai untuk rehabilitasi anak-anak yang terpapar radikalisme di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Nilai-nilai Pekerjaan Sosial, Deradikalisasi Anak, Rehabilitasi Anak, Kolaborasi Antarprofesional, Pekerjaan Sosial Mikro.

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## INTRODUCTION

The involvement of children in networks of violence and radicalism has become an increasingly alarming global phenomenon, both in academic discourse and international media reports (Héliot et al., 2020; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Morris, 2016). Global data indicate that more than 300,000 children are involved in over 30 armed conflicts worldwide (Mapp, 2008). Moreover, approximately two million children are reported to have direct or indirect connections to ISIS, whether as family members, sympathizers, or active participants within extremist networks (Pasagic, 2019). These figures demonstrate that radicalization can no longer be understood solely as an adult phenomenon; it has deeply penetrated childhood, carrying long-term consequences for social security and the sustainability of peace.

Children's involvement in armed violence occurs across regions and ideological contexts. Numerous studies document children associated with ISIS in the United Kingdom (Akbar, 2017), the recruitment of children by criminal gangs in Central America (Cardeli et al., 2019), and the use of children as combatants by groups such as God's Army in Myanmar (Brooten, 2008), the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, FARC in Colombia, and jihadist groups in Pakistan (Asal et al., 2008). These patterns reveal that children are often recruited, mobilized, and manipulated through a combination of ideological indoctrination, structural pressures, and emotional dependence on adult authority figures.

In Indonesia, this phenomenon presents equally serious characteristics. Records indicate children's involvement in acts of terrorism between 2009 and 2019, including the Surabaya and Sidoarjo bombings, which involved children under the age of 12 as part of violent actions (Lasmawati & Susilo, 2020; Zada et al., 2021). These cases expose the complexity of child radicalization in Indonesia, which extends beyond violent ideology to include family dynamics, social environments, and failures in child protection mechanisms. This context demonstrates that security-based approaches alone remain insufficient for addressing children who have been exposed to radicalism.

Within academic literature, research on children and radicalism can be grouped into several major trends. First, studies on pathways to child radicalization emphasize the role of active indoctrination and passive neglect within families and social environments (Cardeli et al., 2019; Sikkens et al., 2017; Sylviani Biafri, 2019; van Bergen et al., 2016). These studies show that children often lack the reflective capacity to resist violent ideologies instilled by parents, relatives, or ideological mentors. In addition, exposure to extremist content through the internet and online games accelerates the normalization of violence within children's imagination (Ahmed, 2018).

Second, research on gangsterism and youth violence reveals structural similarities between criminal groups and terrorist organizations. Both feature strong collective bonds, ideological symbols, exclusive loyalty, and the construction of violent identities as sources of meaning and social status (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Thornton, 2023; Whittaker, 2018). This perspective broadens the understanding of radicalization as a social process driven by the search for identity, affiliation, and recognition, particularly among children and adolescents who experience psychosocial vulnerability.

Third, literature on social work interventions and rehabilitation emphasizes the effectiveness of relationship-based, trust-oriented, and accompaniment approaches over legal-repressive strategies (Ma, 2020; Oliver et al., 2012). However, these studies also identify persistent ethical dilemmas, including professional bias, client stigmatization, and risks of confidentiality breaches in cross-sectoral work involving social workers, security agencies, and state institutions (Finch, 2021; Haugstvedt, 2020).

Despite these important contributions, significant gaps remain in the literature. In particular, few studies systematically examine how core social work values are internalized and practiced in micro-level interventions with radicalized children. The Indonesian context, marked by the intersection of terrorism, family dynamics, and youth violence, remains underexplored from a value-based social work perspective. Yet this approach is crucial for mediating tensions between state security logic and principles of child protection and welfare.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyze the application of seven core social work values: individualization, purposeful expression of feelings, controlled emotional involvement, acceptance, a non-judgmental attitude, self-determination, and confidentiality (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015), in micro-level interventions for children exposed to radicalism in Indonesia. The study seeks to demonstrate how these values function not only as ethical principles but also as practical frameworks supporting child rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Furthermore, this study advances the argument that individual-centered social work values constitute a foundational basis for ethical and effective intervention in the context of child radicalization. These values enable social workers to navigate dilemmas of stigma, bias, and interprofessional collaboration while ensuring that interventions remain oriented toward the best interests of the child. By situating social work practice within a core value framework, this study not only reaffirms the relevance of classical social work theory but also extends its application into the field of child counter-radicalization. In doing so, the study contributes to the advancement of social work theory and practice while offering curative and preventive references for child protection policies and deradicalization strategies in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The unit of analysis in this study comprises the rehabilitation institution and the professional actors responsible for handling children under the age of 12 who have been exposed to radicalism. Specifically, the study focuses on a single rehabilitation institution designated by the Indonesian government as a

specialized protection service center for children in this category. As of 2023, this institution remained the only facility officially mandated to manage cases of radicalized children within this age group. The study does not treat children as direct research subjects; instead, it centers on the practices, experiences, and perspectives of the professionals involved. This design aims to avoid the risk of secondary trauma and to uphold core principles of child protection.

The study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design (Creswell, 2016; de Boer & Zeiler, 2024). This approach enables an in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena within real-life contexts. Child radicalization constitutes a sensitive and multidimensional issue that cannot be reduced to a single variable; it requires a holistic understanding of institutional practices, professional roles, and contextual challenges. A case study design proves particularly appropriate because the research examines one institution with extensive experience, approximately eight years (2016–2024), in managing the rehabilitation of children exposed to radicalism. In this study, the researcher acts as an external observer and analyst, maintaining professional distance to minimize bias and preserve analytical objectivity.

Primary data derive from informants with diverse professional backgrounds. The study involves 16 informants, consisting of six social workers, one institutional leader, two special education teachers (SLB-E), one religious leader, two child psychologists, two members of *Densus 88*, one representative from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and one representative from the National Counterterrorism Agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme*). The researcher selected informants purposively based on their direct involvement in the rehabilitation process and interprofessional collaboration. In addition, the study draws on secondary data obtained from institutional documents, internal reports, and policy guidelines related to child protection and counter-radicalization strategies.

Data collection occurred between 2019 and 2023 using three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The researcher conducted observations within the rehabilitation institution to understand daily practices and interaction patterns among professional actors. Semi-structured in-depth interviews allowed flexibility for informants while ensuring coverage of key research themes. Document analysis included the examination of institutional records, program reports, and internal policies as a means of data triangulation. The study deliberately excluded children as informants to uphold research ethics and prevent the risk of further trauma.

The researcher analyzed data through systematic stages adapted from Creswell (2016): (1) organizing and preparing data, (2) reading all data to gain a general understanding, (3) coding data using a color-coding scheme to identify recurring patterns, (4) grouping codes into major themes, and (5) interpreting findings in relation to the research objectives. Thematic analysis served to identify meanings and patterns across interview, observation, and document data. To ensure the validity of findings, the study applied source triangulation and method triangulation, thereby enhancing reliability and strengthening confidence in the study's conclusions.

The study followed rigorous ethical approval procedures and administrative authorization. An academic panel consisting of six doctoral scholars and two professors with specialized expertise in child social work first evaluated the research proposal and declared it scientifically and ethically sound. Following this approval, the university issued a research permit to the relevant institution (Letter No. 518/UN6.G/LT/2020), which the institution formally acknowledged through an official consent letter (Letter No. 3388/4.2.1/HM.03/5/2020), thereby authorizing the research. Throughout the research process, the researcher complied with all institutional regulations, including identification procedures for site access and restrictions on visual documentation without written permission. The study upheld ethical research principles through the implementation of informed consent, provided both in written and oral

forms, including explanations of the research objectives, methods, and potential implications. Participation remained entirely voluntary, with assurances that participation or refusal would result in no consequences. The researcher strictly protected informant confidentiality by omitting personal identifiers from publications. Informants received five days to review consent forms, ask questions, and make informed decisions. The researcher used all data exclusively for academic purposes and conducted the study with professional competence, integrity, respect for participants, and full adherence to established research ethics standards.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Internalization of Social Work Values in the Early Stage of Interventions with Radicalized Children**

The initial reception stage emerges as the most decisive yet most fragile phase in the rehabilitation of children exposed to radicalism. Social workers emphasize that, at this stage, professional relationships have not yet formed, while the child's ideological identity often appears at its most rigid through mechanisms of rejection and suspicion. One informant explained, "At the beginning of the meeting, the children refused to interact with us, they considered us enemies, especially to our friends who did not wear the hijab" (SW-3, Interview, June 13, 2021). This statement shows that religious symbols function as boundary markers that delineate who counts as a "friend" and who becomes positioned as an "enemy." In other words, child radicalization does not always appear as an explicit ideological narrative; it frequently manifests as exclusive identity judgments that treat religious attributes as prerequisites for initial social acceptance.

In such contexts, the value of individualization does not operate merely as an ethical slogan but as a working tool that shapes early outreach strategies. Social workers avoid uniform approaches and ideological profiling that tend to reduce children to the label of "terrorist children." Instead, they initiate relationships by recognizing each child as a unique subject with distinct emotional rhythms, experiences, and psychological ages. This approach appears in strategies that build rapport through activities that seem simple yet prove decisive, such as games and casual conversations. One social worker stated, "We start with games and light conversations; we never talk about trauma right away, because they immediately shut down" (SW-1, Interview, August 14, 2020). This strategy shows that individualization at the early stage works through emotional de-escalation: professionals do not force relationships into threatening territory but open them through safe, familiar channels aligned with children's everyday worlds.

These practices also affirm the value of purposeful expression of feelings, understood as emotional expression that professionals do not leave uncontrolled but guide gradually and intentionally. Rather than compelling children to "tell their trauma" from the outset, social workers create space for emotional expression through media that children tolerate more easily, including play, storytelling, and casual dialogue. One informant noted, "We use games to reduce suspicion" (SW-2, August 15, 2020). Within the logic of micro-level social work, play and light conversation do not function as incidental activities; they operate as instruments to lower ideological resistance and expand possibilities for communication. At this point, professionals do not suppress children's emotions, fear, anger, suspicion, but redirect them into safer situations where children can gradually recognize and process these feelings.

However, early relationship-building does not occur in a vacuum; it always unfolds through negotiation with the ideological realities attached to the child. Consequently, some initial reception strategies require culturally and religiously sensitive adjustments. When children reject social workers

perceived as “different,” institutions assign Muslim staff members and, in certain cases, require the use of the hijab to minimize resistance. One informant stated, “Children reject non-Muslim workers” (SW-3, Interview, June 13, 2021). This finding indicates that religious sensitivity does not represent a compromise with violent ideology; rather, it functions as an ethical–practical strategy to open relational access. By minimizing triggers of suspicion, social workers establish a basic precondition for intervention: trust. Without trust, subsequent stages, needs exploration, risk mapping, and change planning, stall at the outset.

If the initial reception stage demonstrates how social work values operate as a “relational bridge,” the assessment stage shows how these values transform into a holistic “framework of understanding.” Informants emphasize that assessment cannot remain limited to conventional psychological examinations; it must also encompass ideological, social, and environmental dimensions. One psychologist illustrated this point with an indicator that appears minor but carries significant meaning: “Some children refuse to salute the flag or recite *Pancasila*. This is an indicator of ideological exposure” (Psy-2, Interview, July 14, 2022). In these findings, refusal of national symbols does not merely signal “defiant behavior”; it marks the internalization of values that position national identity as something to reject. This pattern reveals that child radicalization operates through symbolic layers, where values and loyalties form at the level of repeated gestures, speech, and attitudes.

Holistic assessment also situates the child within a broader social network, particularly when interventions aim toward reintegration. One social worker emphasized, “We involve families and neighbors to map risks before reintegration” (SW-4, Interview, June 14, 2021). This statement confirms that rehabilitation outcomes depend not only on the child’s condition but also on the social ecology that will either accept or reject the child. Accordingly, early-stage assessment does not function merely as a process of “diagnosing the child”; it becomes a comprehensive mapping of risks and supports, ranging from trauma and aggression to community stigma and environmental readiness.

Analytically, these early-stage findings reveal three interrelated patterns. First, trust-building requires time and professional empathy, which renders confrontational interventions ineffective at the outset of relationships. Second, ideological resistance shapes how children evaluate professionals even before substantive interventions begin, requiring social workers to remain sensitive to symbols, identities, and specific psychological triggers. Third, interventions must adjust to children’s ages and levels of radical exposure, meaning that strategies effective for one child may not work for another. These patterns align with Cimino’s (2014) emphasis that early engagement demands individualization and approaches that respect client uniqueness, particularly under conditions of distrust and alienation.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that social work values function as mechanisms for deconstructing radical identities from the earliest stages, not through ideological confrontation but through the formation of safe, gradual, trust-based relationships. Initial reception and holistic assessment thus provide both ethical and technical foundations to ensure that institutions treat children not as security objects but as subjects of protection who require sustained psychosocial recovery and social reintegration.

### **Social Work Values in the Process of Intervention and Child Rehabilitation**

Intervention represents the stage at which social work values no longer function merely as “ethical guidelines” but operate as concrete practices that directly shape professional decisions, service modalities, and institutional strategies for navigating the tension between child protection and counter-radicalization agendas. Informants emphasized that intervention strategies must respond to findings from holistic assessments so that rehabilitation does not remain partial or short-lived but becomes targeted and

sustainable. Because child radicalization simultaneously involves psychological, ideological, and social dimensions, effective intervention must integrate trauma recovery, the reorientation of value frameworks, and reintegration preparation within a single, mutually reinforcing continuum of services. Within the framework of the seven core social work values (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015), the intervention stage becomes the most visible arena for applying acceptance, a non-judgmental stance, and self-determination as the foundations of child-centered micro practice.

First, acceptance without legitimizing violent ideology appears as a subtle yet firm practice of separation: professionals accept the child as a subject in need of recovery, while they continue to reject violent ideology as a moral and social orientation. In practice, this acceptance takes shape through psychological services that treat children's emotions as realities to be understood and processed rather than condemned or treated as evidence of criminality. One psychologist stated, "We use counseling sessions to help children express their feelings and reduce aggression" (Psy-2, Interview, July 14, 2022). This statement shows that acceptance works through recognition of children's emotional realities, trauma, aggression, and instability as entry points for recovery. At the same time, psychological interventions do not aim to "forgive" violence but to restore emotional balance so that children regain relational and reflective capacities. In the context of child social work in Indonesia, which continues to face shortages of specialized professionals and a systemic tendency to prioritize legal approaches, this form of acceptance provides a critical corrective to models that move children too quickly into punitive regimes (Siagian et al., 2019). In other words, acceptance at the intervention stage functions as a gateway to rehabilitation by affirming that children are not merely objects of security discipline but rights-bearing subjects in need of recovery.

Second, a non-judgmental stance operates as a strategy to reduce resistance and open space for internal change. Here, non-judgment does not imply moral relativism; rather, it rejects communicative closures produced by security labels, stigmatization, and moralistic language that position children as fixed "ideological problems." This stance leads social workers and professional teams to avoid confrontational forms of intervention. Instead of aggressively debating beliefs, they foster change through relationships, dialogue, and the strengthening of support networks. One social worker emphasized, "Family counseling and community dialogue are essential to reduce stigma and foster acceptance" (SW-2, Interview, August 15, 2020). This quotation indicates that non-judgment operates not only at the level of child-professional relationships but also across child-family-community relations. When stigma becomes the primary barrier to reintegration, strategies that restore social relationships prove far more decisive than efforts that merely aim to "correct ideology." This orientation aligns with Indonesia's child protection reform agenda, which promotes a shift from institutional care toward community-based approaches, with social work as a key profession in this structural transformation (O'Leary et al., 2019). In this sense, non-judgment functions as a relational technology that creates social conditions allowing children to avoid being trapped in permanently stigmatized identities.

Third, respect for self-determination emerges as the most sensitive yet most crucial element, because radicalization fundamentally operates by disabling agency: children learn to obey, imitate, and internalize ideological control. Ethical intervention, therefore, must do more than "neutralize extremism"; it must restore children's capacity to choose, to develop preferences, and to imagine independent futures. At this stage, informants stressed the importance of involving children in small but realistic decisions, choosing activities, expressing preferences, and participating in discussions about reintegration pathways, even when available options remain limited. Such involvement generates a new experience of selfhood, in which the child becomes not merely a program recipient but an actor who helps shape their own recovery.

In the Indonesian rehabilitation context, which often faces constraints in resources, infrastructure, and trained professional support, agency restoration serves as a key indicator of service quality rather than a cosmetic addition (Wanglar, 2021). Here, self-determination functions as the antithesis of indoctrination by affirming that successful rehabilitation restores children's subjectivity rather than simply normalizing behavior.

The ideological dimension at the intervention stage does not operate separately from psychosocial work; professionals address it through alternative narratives that reject violence, broaden moral horizons, and restore a sense of belonging to wider communities. One religious leader stated, "We provide alternative religious narratives to counter extreme interpretations and guide children back to mainstream values" (RL-1, Interview, June 12, 2021). This statement shows that ideological reorientation does not function as counter-propaganda but as meaning-centered accompaniment that offers a more inclusive moral compass. At this point, interprofessional collaboration becomes essential. Social workers cannot carry out interventions alone because children face layered problems: psychological, religious, social, and security-related. Scholarship on rehabilitation in Indonesia also underscores the importance of cross-sectoral and interprofessional collaboration to ensure that recovery extends beyond the individual to encompass service access and social readiness (Fallo et al., 2025; Stratford et al., 2014). In other words, successful intervention results not from a single profession but from an orchestration of roles: psychologists restore emotional balance, social workers strengthen relational ecologies, religious leaders provide moral frameworks, and security institutions manage risk so that services can proceed.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that social work values at the intervention stage function as ethical technologies that restore children's agency from ideological control. Acceptance ensures that professionals treat children as subjects of recovery rather than objects of punishment; a non-judgmental stance preserves communication channels so that change can occur without destructive resistance; and self-determination rebuilds children's capacity to choose and to construct prosocial identities. Accordingly, this study shows that the seven core social work values remain relevant not only as professional norms but also as practical frameworks that operationalize the rehabilitation of children exposed to radicalism through a sustained combination of psychosocial recovery, value reorientation, and strengthened relational support (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015).

### **Confidentiality and Ethics as Pillars of Trust in Interprofessional Collaboration**

The rehabilitation of children exposed to radicalism in this institution operates under two regimes that do not always align: a child protection regime grounded in welfare logic and a counter-radicalization regime grounded in security logic. At this intersection, confidentiality and ethical reasoning cannot function merely as "administrative rules"; instead, they constitute prerequisites for professional practice across actors. The findings show that the continuity of assessment and intervention depends heavily on the ability of social workers and other professionals to manage informational boundaries, open enough to enable collaboration, yet sufficiently closed to protect children's identities and to prevent rehabilitative relationships from collapsing under stigma or control-oriented logics. In this sense, social work values operate as an infrastructure of trust that makes interprofessional collaboration possible without sacrificing children's rights and dignity.

The findings further demonstrate that confidentiality in cases involving children exposed to radicalism represents not only a professional ethical commitment but also a sensitive arena of negotiation among social workers, psychologists, educators, religious leaders, and counterterrorism officers. During the assessment stage, the need to map risks and histories of ideological exposure requires cross-actor

information exchange. At the same time, such exchange carries risks: when children's identities and case details circulate too widely, rehabilitation can turn into a labeling process, repositioning children as monitored "security objects" rather than subjects of recovery. In this context, confidentiality functions as a working condition that ensures shared information remains proportional, relevant, and non-harmful to children's vulnerabilities.

Field data also show how the institution enforces strict confidentiality through internal regulations, such as identification procedures for site entry and prohibitions on visual documentation without explicit permission. These practices function as dual protection mechanisms. On the one hand, they protect children from public exposure that could prolong stigma and complicate reintegration. On the other hand, they protect the institution from information leaks that could disrupt interagency collaboration. In social work terms, confidentiality does not "conceal the truth"; rather, it ensures that information does not become a social weapon that harms children. This perspective aligns with social work ethics scholarship that identifies confidentiality as one of the most conflict-prone areas of professional judgment, particularly when social work operates within organizations that also carry control mandates (Reamer, 2016).

A distinctive feature of these findings is that confidentiality does not rest solely on normative declarations but on ethical procedures that deliberately slow decision-making. Informants receive time to review consent forms, obtain verbal explanations, and ensure that they fully understand the implications of participation. This mechanism not only protects informants but also cultivates a culture of caution that is highly relevant to child-related interventions. When institutions safeguard confidentiality procedurally, trust no longer depends on personal sincerity; it becomes an outcome of accountable systems. In interprofessional settings that risk being absorbed by security logics, such confidentiality systems function as anchors that keep rehabilitation aligned with child protection principles.

The findings further indicate that interprofessional collaboration generates ethical dilemmas that resist simple solutions because participating actors carry different mandates and success metrics. On one side, social workers and psychologists tend to measure success through restored relational capacity, emotional stability, and children's social readiness. On the other side, security actors emphasize risk mitigation and the prevention of ideological recidivism. This tension does not always surface as open conflict; it often appears as divergent orientations regarding whether children should be treated primarily as rights-bearing subjects or as potential threats. At this juncture, social work values operate as differentiating tools that prevent rehabilitation from sliding into mere control practices.

Within this landscape, social workers emerge as ethical gatekeepers, not by obstructing collaboration, but by ensuring that collaboration remains within ethical boundaries that protect children as clients. The concept of gatekeeping in social work ethics frequently appears in contexts where professionals must balance client autonomy, the principle of nonmaleficence, and systemic demands (LaSala & Hyatt, 2019; Reamer, 2022). In this case, the gatekeeping role of social workers manifests in two primary practices: first, ensuring that cross-actor information exchange does not exceed rehabilitative needs; and second, ensuring that language, procedures, and intervention decisions do not intensify stigma or lock children into risk-based identities. Accordingly, social workers function not merely as service providers but as boundary guardians who determine whether rehabilitation remains restorative or becomes increasingly controlling.

The findings also affirm that ethical dilemmas do not resolve at the individual level; instead, professionals address them through ethical support structures such as consultation, transparent communication, and ongoing negotiation. Research shows that practitioners frequently rely on formal and informal consultation networks to maintain accountability in ethically complex cases (Mcauliffe &

Sudbery, 2005), and ethically mature organizations typically develop comprehensive strategies to manage ethical challenges (Reamer, 2022). In this study, adherence to institutional rules, the application of informed consent, and strict confidentiality practices constitute an ethical architecture that allows interprofessional collaboration to function without compromising child protection principles.

Overall, these findings indicate that social work values, particularly confidentiality and ethical gatekeeping, operate as counterweights to state power in counter-radicalization contexts. They do not negate security mandates; rather, they limit the expansion of security logics so that such logics do not colonize rehabilitative spaces. In doing so, assessment and intervention can proceed as child rights-based recovery practices while remaining compatible with the demands of interagency coordination.

### **Challenges of Social Reintegration: Tensions between Institutional Support and Community Acceptance**

The termination and review stage reveals that successful rehabilitation within institutions does not automatically translate into social acceptance beyond institutional settings. The findings indicate a structural gap between the “capacity for recovery” built through professional interventions and the “social reality” shaped by stigma, fear, and community resistance. At this point, institutional rehabilitation reaches its limits: it can improve psychological stability, reopen future orientations, and even foster prosocial aspirations, yet it remains fragile when confronted with social rejection that disrupts everyday support networks. In other words, termination is not merely the closure of services but a moment of testing, whether changes produced by institutions possess sufficient “social space” to endure.

One of the most salient patterns is community stigma that attaches not only to children but also to their families. Informants describe how communities often interpret a child’s return not as a process of recovery but as the “return of a threat.” As a result, pathways for reintegration into original environments often close from the outset. As one social worker stated, “Children often have no choice but to enter predetermined institutions, since communities reject them” (SW-1, Interview, July 12, 2023). This statement shows that reintegration does not unfold as a negotiated social process but as a consequence of rejection: children are “transferred” to institutions willing to accept them rather than “returned” to restorative living environments. Termination thus becomes paradoxical: institutions complete their rehabilitative mandate, while communities fail to complete the mandate of acceptance.

This gap also generates a more serious risk, namely failed reintegration as a source of vulnerability to re-radicalization. The findings show that community rejection can reactivate the “us–them” logic that once sustained violent ideology: when children feel they lack a legitimate place in society, rehabilitation institutions lose the social base necessary to sustain change. Within rehabilitation frameworks, this problem aligns with critiques that institution-centered services often produce “administrative recovery,” children are declared finished, without addressing social barriers such as relational poverty, limited access, and stigma that shape individuals’ capacity to live autonomously in communities (Craig, 2019). What is at stake, therefore, is not merely the status of “program completion” but the durability of children’s newly formed identities in real social spaces.

These findings underscore that reintegration cannot rest solely on institutions, because the sustainability of change depends on social ecologies outside institutional walls: neighbor acceptance, access to education, peer relationships, and long-term social support. In practice, social workers recognize these needs but face constraints of time and choice. As one informant noted, “We try to prepare alternative environments, but options are limited and time is short” (SW-4, Interview, July 12, 2023). This situation shows that reintegration often operates according to what is “available” rather than what is “ideal.” The

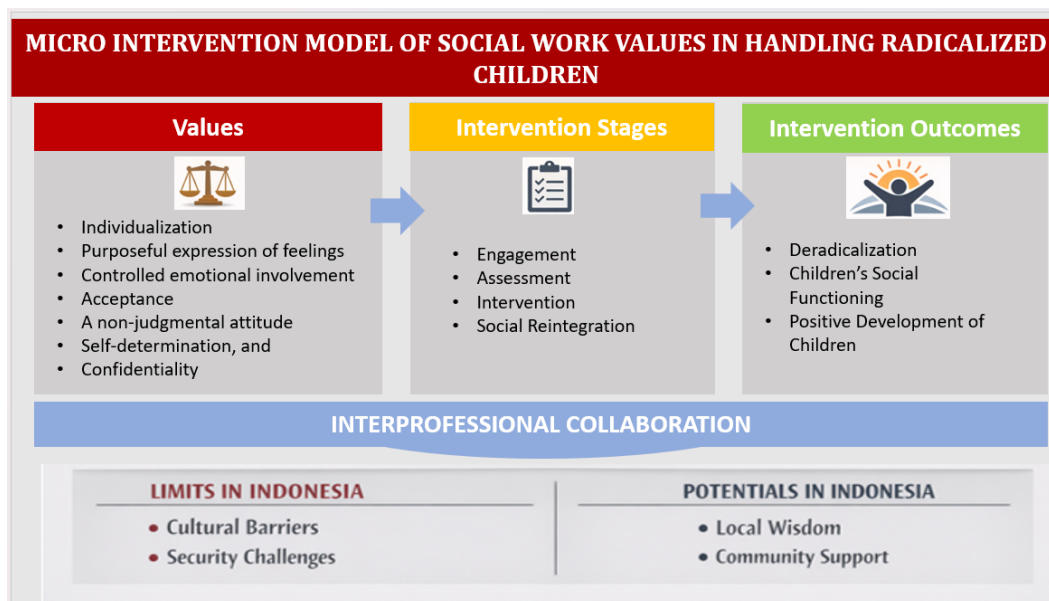
core problem lies not only in the scarcity of receiving institutions but also in the absence of adequate community-level social work to transform conditions of acceptance.

This context strengthens the argument that reintegration requires a community-based approach, not as an optional add-on but as a condition of sustainability. Rehabilitation literature emphasizes that transitions from institutional dependence to community autonomy require layered social support, including public education, the strengthening of informal networks, and accompaniment that reaches everyday life (Gasset et al., 2004). More broadly, community-based rehabilitation approaches have demonstrated contributions to social participation and well-being because they operate simultaneously at two levels: strengthening individuals and reshaping social environments to become more enabling (Chatterjee et al., 2009; Trani et al., 2021). In this sense, reintegration cannot be understood merely as placement but as a social process that reproduces safety, belonging, and the legitimacy of normal life.

At this point, the findings offer a specific emphasis: social work values must expand from the micro level to the community. If, during the intervention stage, social work values strengthen children's recovery within professional relationships, then during termination and review these values require translation at the meso level, building social support, managing stigma, and creating realistic spaces of acceptance. Without such expansion, institutional rehabilitation risks becoming "recovered inside, fragile outside": change exists, but it lacks a social habitat to endure. Sustainable termination, therefore, does not mark the end of a program but the beginning of community work, public education, long-term social support, and acceptance strategies, so that reintegration does not devolve into an administrative mechanism but becomes a genuine process of inclusion.

### **A Value-Based Micro Social Work Intervention Model for Addressing Radicalized Children**

This article also demonstrates that rehabilitation practices for children exposed to radicalism, often read primarily through a "security" lens, actually operate through a structured and recurring value-driven pathway. The pattern is consistent: social work values shape how assessment is conducted, then guide the selection of intervention techniques, and ultimately determine how rehabilitation "outcomes" are defined (not merely compliance or zero risk, but more stable transformations in life capacities). In other words, values do not appear as normative slogans at the outset of the process; they function as a compass that regulates the rhythm of micro-level decisions: how children are positioned (subjects rather than objects), how families are engaged (partners rather than social suspects), and how risk is interpreted (recoverable vulnerability rather than threats to be suppressed). This pattern of "values to intervention stages and to outcomes" becomes increasingly relevant as child radicalization flows through cross-provincial digital spaces, where responses easily slip into a purely regulatory logic.



**Figure 1. Value-Based Micro Social Work Intervention Model for Radicalized Children in Indonesia**

At the assessment stage, the values of the “best interests of the child” and “human dignity” function as differentiating tools that separate security categories (involvement, networks, intentions) from welfare categories (psychological condition, family relations, experiences of violence or fear, and support needs). In this framework, assessment does not operate as a filtering mechanism to determine who is dangerous; it serves as a mapping exercise to identify what is fragile and what can still be strengthened. Accordingly, early indicators of change do not focus solely on reduced ideological expression but also on signs of restored basic functioning: emotional regulation, a sense of safety, and children’s capacity to renegotiate their life aspirations. This interpretive approach aligns with the character of value-based social work in Indonesia, which tends to integrate psychosocial and family dimensions and, in many practices, spiritual-cultural resources as supports for identity and social skills, not as doctrinal instruments, but as sources of meaning that help prevent regression (Lessy et al., 2025).

At the intervention stage, the values of “empowerment” and “supportive relationships” transform intervention from mere counter-narrative delivery into a broader recovery process: rebuilding self-control, strengthening family support, and creating micro-environments that allow children to maintain routines without constant surveillance. At this point, interprofessional collaboration appears not as a technical division of labor but as a site of value negotiation. Security actors tend to emphasize certainty and risk prevention, while social workers ensure that the process does not produce permanent labels that ultimately obstruct recovery. Effective collaboration, therefore, allows “two languages” to operate together, the language of security to map risk and the language of welfare to restore capacity without permitting either to dominate the other. Such cross-professional work also fills a persistent gap in the Indonesian context, where the professionalization of social workers and their institutional recognition often lag behind the complexity of the cases they handle, requiring social workers to actively safeguard ethical space amid bureaucratic procedures and policy pressures (Fahrudin & Witono, 2024; Nufus, B. H. et al., 2026)

These integrative findings delineate both the limits and the potential of the model in Indonesia. Its limits emerge when child intervention is reduced to an institutional project driven by rapid indicators (safe–unsafe), while more fragile changes, such as psychological recovery and family relational resilience, require time and layered support. Yet its potential is equally evident: precisely because child deradicalization remains dominated by security-oriented approaches, a value-based model offers a concrete methodological correction rather than rhetorical appeal. It positions rehabilitation as micro-level capability building: expanding children’s life choices, reducing dependence on violent networks as sources of identity, and preparing more stable preconditions for social reintegration. In a landscape of continuously evolving online recruitment, where dozens to hundreds of children have been identified or suspected across multiple provinces, approaches that rely solely on enforcement risk leaving a “recovery vacuum” that may become a turning point for renewed exposure.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study demonstrates that interventions for children exposed to radicalism cannot be understood solely as matters of security or ideological deviance. Rather, they constitute a process of restoring life capacities that is fundamentally shaped by how social work values are operationalized at each stage of micro-level intervention. The core findings reveal a consistent pattern: social work values shape the conduct of assessment, guide the selection of intervention strategies, and ultimately determine how rehabilitation success is defined. At the stages of initial reception and assessment, the values of individualization, acceptance, and purposeful expression of feelings function as mechanisms for deconstructing radical identity through the formation of safe, trust-based relationships. At the intervention stage, the values of a non-judgmental attitude and self-determination enable the restoration of children’s agency, which had previously been diminished by ideological indoctrination. At the termination and reintegration stages, confidentiality and ethical reasoning emerge as safeguards of trust in interprofessional work, while simultaneously exposing the structural limits of rehabilitation when individual change does not coincide with community acceptance. Taken together, these findings affirm that rehabilitation for children exposed to radicalism operates through a structured value-driven pathway rather than through a logic of regulation alone.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be explained through the social work value framework that places relationships, human dignity, and the restoration of agency at the core of micro-level intervention (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015). In this study, child radicalization does not primarily appear as a rational ideological choice but as the outcome of relational processes that close off reflective space and replace it with obedience, exclusive loyalty, and rigid moral dichotomies. Consequently, confrontational or legalistic interventions at early stages risk reinforcing ideological resistance. The values of individualization and acceptance operate as mechanisms of emotional de-escalation that reopen children’s capacities for relating and communicating. Within micro social work theory, recovery does not begin with ideological correction but with the restoration of basic functions: emotional regulation, a sense of safety, and the ability to build trust. Self-determination at the intervention stage then functions as an antithesis to the logic of indoctrination by restoring experiences of choice, preference, and future imagination as foundations for sustainable change. Accordingly, the relationship between values, intervention stages, and rehabilitation outcomes is not linear or administrative but reflexive and relational.

When compared with prior literature, this study demonstrates both continuity and important shifts. Research on pathways of child radicalization has emphasized active indoctrination and passive neglect within families and social environments, including the acceleration of radicalization through digital

spaces (Ahmed, 2018; Cardeli et al., 2019; Sikkens et al., 2017; Sylviani Biafri, 2019; van Bergen et al., 2016). The present findings confirm these arguments while adding a frequently overlooked micro dimension: how the residues of indoctrination manifest as relational withdrawal, symbolic suspicion, and emotional resistance during the early stages of rehabilitation. Meanwhile, literature on gangsterism and youth violence highlights structural similarities between criminal groups and terrorist organizations as sites of identity formation and social status (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Thornton, 2023; Whittaker, 2018). This study extends that perspective by showing that severing violent affiliations cannot rely solely on dismantling networks but requires rebuilding relationships and life meanings through value-based interventions. Studies on social work interventions have emphasized the effectiveness of trust-based approaches over repressive ones while also identifying ethical dilemmas in cross-sector collaboration (Finch & McKendrick, 2019; Haugstvedt, 2020; Ma, 2020b; Parker, 2012). The novel contribution of this study lies in its empirical mapping of how these values function as ethical technologies that regulate information boundaries, professional relationships, and decision orientations within the context of child deradicalization in Indonesia.

Historically, these findings reflect a paradigm shift in Indonesia's approach to child radicalization, moving from a purely security-based framework toward a protection- and welfare-oriented rehabilitation approach (Ramakrishna, 2015; Sebastian et al., 2020; Setia & Syarif, 2022). At the same time, the study shows that the historical legacy of security approaches remains strong, particularly at the reintegration stage, where community stigma and collective fear constrain spaces for social acceptance. Socially, the findings reveal tensions between the recovery capacities developed within institutions and the social realities shaped by stigma, rejection, and weak community-level interventions (Ilyas & Athwal, 2021; Muhammad & Hiariej, 2021). Reintegration fails not because children do not change, but because social environments fail to provide space for those changes to endure. Ideologically, the study challenges the assumption that deradicalization primarily involves "replacing ideology." The findings show that the restoration of agency and social relationships matters more; violent ideologies weaken when children gain alternative meanings, relational support, and socially legitimate life prospects (Hadingrat & Wibowo, 2022; Harahap et al., 2019).

Reflection on these findings reveals both functions and dysfunctions. The primary function of a value-based intervention model lies in its capacity to restore children as subjects rather than objects of security by reducing resistance, opening reflective space, and fostering prosocial aspirations. However, dysfunctions emerge when this approach remains confined to institutional settings. Rehabilitation that succeeds within institutions becomes fragile when it lacks strategies for social transformation at the community level (Agastya et al., 2024; Purwati et al., 2021). Moreover, interprofessional collaboration that lacks a robust ethical architecture risks shifting rehabilitation into covert mechanisms of control, particularly through the expansion of security logic into welfare spaces.

Based on these dysfunctions, this study proposes several policy-oriented action plans. First, strengthening community-based rehabilitation must become an integral component of interventions for children exposed to radicalism rather than an optional stage following institutional rehabilitation. This includes public education, family accompaniment, and stigma-reduction strategies at the local level. Second, the position of social workers as ethical gatekeepers in cross-sector collaboration requires reinforcement through clear mandates to manage confidentiality, intervention language, and the boundaries of information exchange. Third, indicators of success in child deradicalization must be redefined, shifting from measures of compliance and risk absence toward indicators of capability building, including emotional stability, relational recovery, and long-term social readiness. In this way, a value-

based approach functions not merely as a normative correction to security-oriented frameworks but as a concrete and sustainable methodological solution for addressing child radicalization in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This study affirms a central lesson: interventions for children exposed to radicalism cannot be reduced to matters of security or ideological correction alone. Instead, they constitute a process of restoring life capabilities that depends fundamentally on how social work values operate at the micro level. The findings demonstrate that core social work values, such as individualization, acceptance, a non-judgmental attitude, self-determination, and confidentiality, systematically shape the stages of assessment, guide the selection of interventions, and define the meaning of rehabilitation success. Effective rehabilitation does not manifest through administrative compliance or the absence of risk, but through the restoration of emotional regulation, the return of children's agency, the reopening of future orientations, and the development of relational readiness to re-enter social life. Accordingly, child deradicalization in the Indonesian context is more accurately understood as a value-based rehabilitative process rather than as an extension of security control practices.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study offers significant conceptual and empirical advances to the fields of child radicalization and social work. First, it documents in detail how social work values function as ethical technologies within rehabilitation practices for children exposed to radicalism, an area long dominated by security-oriented approaches. Second, it proposes a value-based micro-intervention model that elucidates the linkages among values, intervention stages, and rehabilitation outcomes as an analytical framework that can be replicated and further developed. Third, by positioning social workers as ethical gatekeepers in interprofessional collaboration, the study enriches discussions on interprofessional practice, ethics, and child protection within counter-radicalization policy contexts. More broadly, the findings extend social work value theory by demonstrating its relevance in an extreme context, namely, child deradicalization under the pressure of state security logic.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. Its focus on a single rehabilitation institution constrains the generalizability of the findings to other institutional contexts with different social, political, and cultural characteristics. In addition, for ethical reasons, the study did not include children as direct informants, which means that children's subjective experiences could only be accessed through professional perspectives. These limitations open avenues for future research to develop comparative studies across institutions, expand analyses to community and policy levels, and, through more participatory ethical designs, incorporate children's voices in rehabilitation and reintegration processes. Further research is also needed to examine how this value-based intervention model operates in the prevention of digital radicalization and in strengthening community resilience. In this sense, the present study does not seek to close the discourse, but rather to serve as a starting point for developing more ethical, sustainable, and human-centered approaches to child deradicalization.

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