



Research Article

Reclaiming Ibn Taymiyyah: Deradicalizing Classical Exegesis for Contemporary Counter-Terrorism in Indonesia

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Abstract. Radical extremist groups frequently misappropriate classical Islamic scholarship to legitimize violence, yet counter-extremism initiatives often overlook the theological roots of this distortion. This study explicitly aims to reconstruct Ibn Taymiyyah's (d. 728 H) original exegetical framework on jihad and qital to dismantle extremist narratives and establish a theology-based deradicalization model. Employing a qualitative textual analysis of Majmu' al-Fatawa and al-Tafsir al-Kabir, grounded in historical-contextual and theological-critical methodologies, this research

systematically examines his interpretive principles. The results explicitly demonstrate that Ibn Taymiyyah's conception of jihad is fundamentally multidimensional, sharply distinguishing spiritual striving from armed conflict, which he strictly conditions on legitimate political authority and defensive necessity. Furthermore, the findings reveal that his stringent legal positions were contingent responses to Mongol invasions and Mamluk-era crises, rather than universal mandates for violence. Extremist appropriations systematically strip these juridical constraints through selective, decontextualized readings. By recovering his epistemological framework, this article proposes a three-tiered deradicalization strategy integrating historical contextualization, textual reconstruction, and maqasid-oriented reasoning. Theoretically, it reclaims classical Islamic authority as a normative resource for moderation. Practically, it provides a doctrinal foundation for developing targeted, contextually grounded counter-narratives within contemporary Muslim societies.

Keywords: Ibn Taymiyyah, Jihad Exegesis, Deradicalization, Islamic Radicalism, Counter-Terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Radical violence in contemporary contexts is increasingly sustained not only by political or economic grievances but also by the strategic mobilization of religious texts to legitimize aggression (Javed et al., 2025; Mostfa, 2026). In many Muslim-majority societies, the interpretation of jihad-related verses has become a critical site of contestation, where extremist and moderate discourses compete for theological authority (Alokar, 2024). Indonesia, despite decades of counter-terrorism initiatives and state-led deradicalization programs, continues to experience evolving forms of violent extremism (Rahmanto & Golose, 2022; Saleh, 2025). High-profile incidents, including the 2016 Sarinah attack in Jakarta, the 2018 Surabaya church bombings, and the 2021 Makassar cathedral bombing, demonstrate the persistence and adaptability of extremist networks such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Jama'ah Ansharud Daulah (JAD) (Shah et al., 2022). These developments suggest that security-oriented approaches alone are insufficient, as the ideological and theological foundations of radicalization remain inadequately addressed (Roose et al., 2022; Sammak et al., 2025).

This research is critically needed because contemporary counterterrorism strategies in Indonesia remain predominantly security driven and psychologically oriented, thereby failing to address the theological narratives that fundamentally sustain radicalization (Bimantara & Supriyadi, 2024a; Satria & Sumpter, 2022). Factually, despite years of state led deradicalization programs, extremist networks continue to systematically weaponize classical Islamic scholarship, particularly the works of Ibn Taymiyyah, to legitimize violence and recruit youth, revealing a persistent ideological gap that purely coercive or secular approaches cannot resolve (Hasyim, 2022; Pradipta, 2025).

A central dimension of this ideological landscape lies in the hermeneutical manipulation of Islamic scriptures, particularly verses related to jihad (struggle) and qital (armed conflict) (Ellethy, 2025; Zouhid, 2025). Extremist actors frequently employ selective and decontextualized readings of these texts to justify violence against both the state and civilian populations, framing such acts as religious obligations (Hashmi, 2024). Consequently, the struggle over interpretation is not

merely doctrinal but deeply political, shaping the legitimacy of violence within contemporary Muslim societies (Rizwan et al., 2025). Addressing this challenge requires a critical engagement with the theological sources that are often appropriated to support extremist narratives.

Among the most influential figures in this regard is Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H/1328 M), a medieval Hanbali scholar whose works continue to exert a profound impact on modern Islamic thought (El-Tobgui & Turner, 2026; Jou, 2022; Turner, 2022). His writings, particularly *Majmu' al-Fatawa* and *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, are frequently cited in contemporary jihadist discourse to legitimize armed rebellion and practices of takfir (excommunication) (Rusdin et al., 2025). Notably, figures such as Imam Samudra, associated with the 2002 Bali bombings, explicitly invoked Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretations to justify acts of terrorism (Romaniuk & Fabe, 2024). This appropriation has generated a polarized academic debate. Some scholars argue that Ibn Taymiyyah's thought is inherently radical and provides a theological foundation for sectarian violence (Hussain, 2023; Islam, 2024), while others contend that his works have been systematically misappropriated through the removal of their historical and juridical context (Hidayah & Maghribi, 2022).

The divergence in these scholarly perspectives highlights a critical gap in the existing literature. While numerous studies have addressed radicalism in Indonesia broadly (Tabroni & Idham, 2023; Usman et al., 2023), few have conducted a granular, critical analysis of Ibn Taymiyyah's specific exegetical methodologies regarding jihad verses through the lens of deradicalization (Hussain, 2023). Most existing research focuses on the sociological aspects of radicalization or the legal frameworks of counter-terrorism, often neglecting the theological nuances that fuel extremist narratives (Javed et al., 2025b; Zamir & Kaunert, 2025). Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that reconstruct Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretations not merely to critique them, but to utilize them as a normative resource for deradicalization (Rusdin et al., 2025a). This oversight is significant because ignoring the theological roots of extremism limits the effectiveness of counter-narrative strategies. If Ibn Taymiyyah's works are indeed being weaponized, then a robust theological counter-argument must originate from within the same textual tradition to be persuasive to the target audience.

Previous foundational studies, such as those by Al khuseri et al. (2025) on legal deradicalization reforms, Kamal (2022) on psychological rehabilitation, and Hidayah and Maghribi (2022) on the historical misreading of Ibn Taymiyyah, have provided valuable insights into policy frameworks and theological debates. However, this study distinctly diverges from prior research by conducting a granular, verse-by-verse exegetical reconstruction of Ibn Taymiyyah's primary texts (*Majmu' al-Fatawa* and *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*) and explicitly transforming his original juridical constraints into an operational, theology-based deradicalization framework tailored for contemporary Muslim contexts.

This article addresses this gap by examining the potential for deradicalizing Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretation of jihad and qital verses. The primary objective is to analyze Ibn Taymiyyah's methodology in *Majmu'ah al-Fatawa* and *at-Tafsir al-Kabir* to determine whether his original intent supports violent extremism or offers a

framework for peaceful coexistence within a contemporary nation-state. The study posits that a comprehensive and contextualized reading of Ibn Taymiyyah reveals a nuanced approach to jihad that emphasizes justice, legitimate authority, and the protection of society, rather than indiscriminate violence. By deconstructing the extremist appropriation of his texts, this research aims to reclaim Ibn Taymiyyah's legacy as a tool for moderate Islamic discourse. This aligns with the theory of religious-based deradicalization (Koehler & Horgan, 2016), which suggests that correcting theological misconceptions is more effective than purely security-based approaches (Al-Hammadin, 2018).

The significance of this study extends beyond academic discourse to practical implications for counter-terrorism policy and religious education in Indonesia. Understanding the hermeneutical mechanisms used by extremists to validate violence is crucial for developing effective counter-narratives (Omer, 2020; Zuhri & Pabbajah, 2026). If Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretations can be recontextualized to support stability and justice, his works can serve as a powerful reference for ulama and educators engaged in deradicalization efforts. This approach resonates with the Indonesian government's strategy of involving religious leaders in dialogic deradicalization programs, such as those facilitated by the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) (Abror & Wahrudin, 2025; Bimantara & Supriyadi, 2024; Effendy et al., 2025). Moreover, in the context of the modern nation-state, reconciling classical Islamic jurisprudence with contemporary civic obligations is essential for maintaining social cohesion (Hayat, 2025; Mehdi, 2025; Sohail et al., 2025).

This article employs a qualitative library research method, utilizing a critical historical-sociological approach to analyze primary texts (Ali et al., 2025; Daffa & Utomo, 2025). The study focuses on Ibn Taymiyyah's exegesis of key jihad verses, comparing his original contextual arguments with the distorted versions circulated by extremist groups. The analysis is structured to first establish the theoretical framework of radicalization and deradicalization, followed by a biographical and methodological overview of Ibn Taymiyyah. Subsequently, the article critically examines specific fatwas and tafsir entries related to warfare and rebellion, contextualizing them within the political turmoil of the Mongol invasions and the Mamluk era. Finally, the study proposes a reconstructed interpretation that aligns Ibn Taymiyyah's thought with the principles of *maqasid al-shari'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law), emphasizing the preservation of life and social order.

By bridging the gap between classical Islamic scholarship and modern security challenges, this research contributes to the broader field of Islamic studies and conflict resolution. It challenges the deterministic view that classical texts inevitably lead to violence, arguing instead that the agency lies in the methodology of interpretation. In doing so, this article seeks to provide a scholarly foundation for deradicalization efforts that are both theologically sound and socially relevant, ultimately supporting the vision of Islam as a religion of peace (*rahmatan lil-'alamin*) within the diverse fabric of contemporary Indonesian society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section establishes the theoretical foundations necessary to understand the intersection of classical Islamic exegesis, radicalism, and deradicalization. It reviews key concepts regarding jihad and radicalism, examines existing deradicalization theories, and critically analyzes previous studies to identify the specific scholarly gap this research addresses.

Conceptualizing Jihad and Radicalism

The term jihad is frequently misunderstood in contemporary discourse, often reduced exclusively to armed conflict. Linguistically, jihad derives from *al-juhd* (capacity) or *al-jahd* (difficulty), implying a strenuous effort (Hakim, 2016; Manẓūr & ibn Mukarram, 1988). In Islamic theology, scholars distinguish between *jihad al-akbar* (the greater struggle against the self) and *jihad al-asghar* (the lesser struggle of physical defense) (Ahmed & Daud, 2025; Al-Ilory, 2025). Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) offers a nuanced definition, categorizing jihad into general and specific meanings. Generally, it encompasses striving to achieve what Allah loves (faith and righteous deeds) and rejecting what He despises (disbelief and sin). Specifically, it refers to fighting against unbelievers who actively aggress against Muslims (Taymiyah, 1995). This distinction is crucial for deradicalization, as it separates spiritual striving from indiscriminate violence.

Radicalism, etymologically rooted in the Latin *radix* (root), denotes a desire for fundamental change. In the Indonesian context, radicalism is defined by the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) through specific indicators: anti-Pancasila, anti-diversity, anti-Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and anti-1945 Constitution (Rohman & Huriyah, 2022; Ulyana et al., 2023). Religious radicalism often manifests through a literalist interpretation of scriptures, disregarding historical context (*asbab al-nuzul*) and the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*) (Mujib & Hamim, 2021; Yahya & Mushthoza, 2025). The radicalization process involves adopting extremist beliefs that justify violence to influence social or political change (Schmid, 2013). Historically, this phenomenon traces back to the *Khawarij* movement in the 7th century, characterized by the excommunication (*takfir*) of fellow Muslims who committed major sins or disagreed with their political stance (Sriwahyuni et al., 2023). In modern Indonesia, radicalism has evolved through movements such as Darul Islam (DI/TII) in the 1950s to contemporary groups like Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Jama'ah Ansharud Daulah (JAD), which often utilize classical texts to legitimize violence (Al Qurtuby, 2022; Mutaqin, 2022).

Theories of Deradicalization

Deradicalization is defined as a systematic process to reduce extremist understanding and behaviors, aiming to reintegrate individuals into society with moderate perspectives (Khan et al., 2023; Yumitro et al., 2024). In contrast to counter-terrorism approaches that primarily emphasize security and law enforcement measures, deradicalization focuses on addressing the ideological and cognitive roots of violent extremism (Manthovani, 2023; Wolfowicz et al., 2022). As such, it involves

not only behavioral change but also a deeper transformation of beliefs, values, and identity.

One of the key frameworks underpinning deradicalization efforts is Cognitive Transformation Theory (Cherney & Koehler, 2024). This perspective argues that individuals disengage from extremist ideologies when they begin to critically reflect upon and question previously held beliefs (Ahmed et al., 2026; Cid & De la Encarnación, 2026). Through processes such as dialogue, education, and critical thinking training, individuals are encouraged to reassess the validity of radical narratives and ultimately replace them with more constructive and moderate understandings (Mezirow, 1994). This approach has been widely implemented in deradicalization programs, particularly in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, where structured dialogues and educational interventions are used within correctional settings (ur Rehman et al., 2025).

Another important theoretical perspective is Social Identity Theory, as developed by Tajfel and Turner (2004). This theory posits that radicalization often emerges from a strong desire for group belonging and identity affirmation. Individuals may be drawn to extremist groups because they provide a sense of purpose, solidarity, and recognition. Consequently, deradicalization efforts must address this underlying need by facilitating the transition of individuals from radical groups to alternative communities that offer similar forms of social support and identity, but within a non-violent and inclusive framework. By reconstructing social identity in a positive and integrative manner, individuals are less likely to revert to extremist affiliations.

In addition, Religion-Based Deradicalization represents a particularly significant approach, especially within Islamic contexts. This framework emphasizes the role of theological engagement in countering extremist interpretations of religious texts. It involves religious scholars (ulama) actively engaging with individuals exposed to radical ideologies in order to correct misinterpretations related to key concepts such as jihad, takfir, and loyalty to the state. Through dialogical and interpretive processes, this approach seeks to demonstrate that extremist readings are not only flawed but also inconsistent with the broader ethical and legal principles of Islam (Hafez & Mullins, 2015).

Building on these perspectives, this study adopts religion-based deradicalization as its primary analytical lens. It argues that theological correction offers a more sustainable and contextually relevant solution compared to coercive or purely security-based measures. By addressing the ideological foundations of extremism through credible religious authority and contextual interpretation, deradicalization efforts can foster long-term cognitive and behavioral transformation while reinforcing values of moderation, tolerance, and social harmony.

Review of Previous Studies

Several significant studies have addressed radicalism and deradicalization in Indonesia, yet distinct gaps remain regarding the theological exegesis of Ibn Taymiyyah. Alkhuseri et al. (2025) examined the reformulation of deradicalization policies for former terrorism convicts, focusing on legal frameworks and the role of

BNPT. While comprehensive in policy analysis, Hasibuan's work does not delve into the theological nuances of the texts used by extremists. Similarly, Kamal (2022) investigated the paradigm shift in terrorism convicts, emphasizing psychological rehabilitation and nationalism. Although valuable for understanding the psychological aspect of deradicalization, this study lacks a critical analysis of the scriptural justifications used by radicals.

In the realm of civil society, Noor (2022) conducted a phenomenological study on the Lingkar Perdamaian Foundation, founded by former terrorists. This research highlights the effectiveness of peer-to-peer deradicalization but does not address the hermeneutical reconstruction of the texts that initially radicalized these individuals. From a textual perspective, Hasanzadeh and Renani (2023) deconstructed violence verses in the Qur'an, criticizing literalist methodologies. However, the work of Hasanzadeh and Renani does not specifically examine Ibn Taymiyyah's exegesis, which has often been used as a key reference by various jihadist groups.

Legal perspectives are provided by Akli and As-Samawi (2025), who discussed deradicalization within the criminal justice system. Akli and As-Samawi emphasize the importance of legal certainty and rehabilitation during incarceration. While crucial for policy implementation, this legalistic approach does not resolve the theological disputes that fuel radical ideologies. Furthermore, international scholars like Muchtar and Harris (2023) argue that Ibn Taymiyyah's thought is inherently radical. Conversely, scholars such as Alsuhaymi and Atallah (2025) contend that Ibn Taymiyyah's works are misappropriated by extremists who strip them of their historical context.

Research Gap and Contribution

The existing literature demonstrates a dichotomy between policy-focused studies (Hayat, 2023; Miller & Hudon, 2023) and general textual critiques (Alsuhaymi & Atallah, 2025; Hussain, 2023). There is a paucity of research that critically reconstructs Ibn Taymiyyah's specific exegesis on jihad and qital verses found in *Majmu'ah al-Fatawa* and *at-Tafsir al-Kabir* for the purpose of deradicalization. Most studies either accept the extremist narrative that Ibn Taymiyyah is a radical icon or dismiss his relevance entirely.

This study bridges that gap by arguing that Ibn Taymiyyah's methodology, when understood comprehensively and contextually, offers a robust framework for deradicalization. Unlike previous works that focus on sociological or legal aspects, this research provides a theological counter-narrative derived from the same textual tradition used by extremists. By analyzing Ibn Taymiyyah's original intent regarding legitimate authority, defensive warfare, and the protection of civilians, this article contributes a normative resource for ulama and educators engaged in deradicalization efforts. It challenges the deterministic view that classical texts inevitably lead to violence, demonstrating instead that the agency lies in the methodology of interpretation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in library research (library-based study). This approach is selected due to the nature of the inquiry, which focuses on the critical analysis of classical Islamic texts and their contemporary implications for radicalism and deradicalization. Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth exploration of meanings, contexts, and interpretive frameworks that quantitative measures cannot capture (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Specifically, the study utilizes a theological-historical-sociological approach. This multidimensional framework enables the examination of Ibn Taymiyyah's exegesis not merely as static text but as a dynamic product of its historical era, theological landscape, and sociopolitical conditions. By integrating these perspectives, the research avoids textual isolationism and ensures that interpretations are contextualized within both the 14th-century Mamluk context and the modern Indonesian security landscape.

Data Sources

The data for this study are categorized into primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of the original works of Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H/1328 M), specifically *Majmu'ah al-Fatawa* (Collected Fatwas) and *at-Tafsir al-Kabir* (The Great Exegesis). These texts were selected because they contain the most comprehensive records of Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretations regarding jihad (struggle) and qital (fighting), which are frequently cited by extremist groups. The editions used are *Majmu'ah al-Fatawa*, published by Majma' al-Malik Fahd li-Tiba'at al-Mushaf al-Sharif (Taymiyah, 1995), and *at-Tafsir al-Kabir*, published by Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah (2012).

Secondary sources include classical Qur'anic commentaries such as *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (2000) and *Tafsir al-Tabari* (2011) to provide comparative exegetical contexts. Furthermore, contemporary literature on radicalism, deradicalization theories, and counter-terrorism policies in Indonesia is utilized to bridge the classical texts with modern security challenges. This includes government reports from the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) and academic journals focusing on Islamic extremism in Southeast Asia (Febrityas & Syauqillah, 2023; Hidayat & Zarkasyi, 2024).

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques combined with thematic tafsir (tafsir maudhu'i) methods (Al-Farmawi, 1977). The process involved several systematic steps. First, the research topic was defined: the deradicalization of Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretation of jihad verses. Second, all verses in the Qur'an related to jihad and qital were identified and compiled using concordance tools (e.g., *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*) (Al-Baqi, 1994). Third, specific passages in *Majmu'ah al-Fatawa* (Taymiyah, 1995) and *at-Tafsir al-Kabir* (Taymiyah, 2012) addressing these verses were located and extracted. Fourth, contextual data regarding the historical background (asbab al-nuzul) of the verses and the sociopolitical climate of Ibn Taymiyyah's era were gathered to facilitate critical analysis. This triangulation of textual data ensures that the interpretation is robust and multifaceted.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method supported by critical historical-sociological analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The descriptive phase involved outlining Ibn Taymiyyah's explicit statements regarding jihad and warfare as found in the primary texts. The analytical phase deconstructed these statements to identify underlying methodological principles, such as his criteria for legitimate authority, conditions for defensive versus offensive warfare, and rules of engagement.

The critical historical-sociological analysis contextualized these findings within the Mongol invasions and the Mamluk political structure. This step was crucial to distinguish between universal legal principles and situational fatwas issued during times of crisis. Finally, the study applied a deradicalization framework to reconstruct Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretations (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). This involved comparing the extremist appropriation of his texts with the original contextual intent, aligning the findings with the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*), specifically the preservation of life, religion, and social order (Al-Shatibi, 2003). This reconstructive process aims to produce a normative theological counter-narrative suitable for contemporary deradicalization efforts.

Ethical Considerations

As a library-based study, this research adheres to academic integrity standards. All sources are cited according to Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 7th edition guidelines to avoid plagiarism (Association, 2020). The analysis maintains objectivity by presenting Ibn Taymiyyah's views without bias, distinguishing between the scholar's original intent and the later politicization of his works by extremist groups. The study aims to contribute to peacebuilding and security without stigmatizing specific religious traditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the core findings of the study regarding Ibn Taymiyyah's exegesis of jihad and qital verses, the historical context influencing his interpretations, the contemporary misappropriation of his works by extremist groups in Indonesia, and the proposed framework for deradicalization. The analysis draws primarily from *Majmu'ah al-Fatawa* and *at-Tafsir al-Kabir*, contextualizing them within both the 14th-century Mamluk era and the modern Indonesian security landscape.

Reconstructing Ibn Taymiyyah's Exegesis on Jihad and Qital

The study reveals that Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretation of jihad is multidimensional, contradicting the monolithic view often propagated by extremist narratives. In *Majmu'ah al-Fatawa*, Ibn Taymiyyah distinguishes between jihad in its general sense (*'am*) and specific sense (*khass*). Generally, jihad encompasses striving to achieve what Allah loves (faith and righteous deeds) and rejecting what He despises (disbelief and sin). This includes jihad al-nafs (struggle against the self), jihad al-shaytan (struggle against Satan), and jihad al-'ilm (struggle through knowledge) (Ibn

Taymiyyah, 1995). Specifically, jihad refers to physical fighting (qital) against aggressors. Crucially, Ibn Taymiyyah posits that qital is merely a subset of jihad, not its entirety. He states, "Whoever fights the disbelievers with a sword, spear, stone, or stick, he is a mujahid in the way of Allah," but this is contingent upon legitimate authority and defensive necessity (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995, Vol. 28, p. 175).

Regarding specific verses often cited by radicals, such as Al-Taubah [9]: 5 (the "Verse of the Sword"), Ibn Taymiyyah's exegesis in *at-Tafsir al-Kabir* emphasizes context (asbab al-nuzul). He argues that this verse was revealed concerning the polytheists of Arabia who violated treaties and aggressed against Muslims during the sacred months. It was not a universal command for indiscriminate violence against all non-Muslims for all time. Ibn Taymiyyah notes that the command to fight is bounded by the condition "until they repent, establish prayer, and give zakah," indicating that the objective is religious conformity and social order, not mere extermination (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2012). Similarly, regarding Al-Taubah [9]: 29 concerning Ahl al-Kitab (People of the Book), Ibn Taymiyyah contextualizes the command to fight within the specific geopolitical tension of the Tabuk expedition against the Byzantine Empire. The obligation to pay jizyah (tribute) is presented as a mechanism for coexistence and protection under Islamic rule, rather than a mandate for perpetual warfare (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2012, Vol. 4, p. 34).

Furthermore, the study identifies a critical distinction in Ibn Taymiyyah's methodology between *dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam), *dar al-harb* (Abode of War), and a composite zone. In his famous fatwa regarding Mardin, Ibn Taymiyyah refused to categorize the city strictly as either, arguing that Muslims living there should be treated according to their outward actions, not presumptive guilt. This nuanced position contradicts the binary worldview adopted by modern jihadists who label contemporary nation-states as *dar al-harb* to justify rebellion (Hoover, 2007; Zaman, 2012).

These exegetical findings directly challenge deterministic portrayals that characterize Ibn Taymiyyah's jurisprudence as inherently militant (Irfan, 2024; Muchtar & Harris, 2023). Instead, the textual evidence aligns with contemporary hermeneutical frameworks that emphasize asbab al-nuzul and linguistic precision as structural safeguards against literalist appropriation (Saeed, 2005). From a theoretical standpoint, this multidimensional framing of jihad operationalizes the cognitive dissonance required by Cognitive Transformation Theory, wherein individuals are prompted to critically reassess absolutist readings when confronted with the original juridical conditions that extremists systematically omit (Mezirow, 1994; Hafez & Mullins, 2015). Unlike general textual critiques, this reconstruction demonstrates that classical exegesis itself contains built-in methodological constraints that, when properly contextualized, function as an intrinsic deradicalization mechanism.

Historical Contextualization: The Mongol Factor and Political Authority

A significant finding of this research is the extent to which Ibn Taymiyyah's harsher fatwas were products of emergency contexts (*darurah*), specifically the Mongol invasions. During the 13th and 14th centuries, the Islamic world faced existential threats from the Mongol Ilkhanate, which had nominally converted to

Islam but continued to enforce the Yasa (Mongol law) over Shari'ah. Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwas permitting fighting against the Mongols were based on the premise that they refused to implement Islamic law despite their claims of conversion, thereby committing riddah (apostasy) through action (Hoover, 2007).

This historical specificity is often overlooked by contemporary extremists. Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized the necessity of legitimate political authority (imam) in declaring offensive jihad. He argued that rebellion (khuruj) against a ruler is prohibited unless there is clear, undeniable disbelief (kufr bawah), and even then, only if the Muslim community has the capacity to replace them without causing greater chaos (fitnah) (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995, Vol. 35, p. 373). His prioritization of social stability and the prevention of greater harm (dar' al-mafasid) aligns with the maqasid al-shari'ah (objectives of Islamic law), specifically the preservation of life and social order. The study confirms that Ibn Taymiyyah's thought was not inherently anarchic but was deeply concerned with maintaining public order amidst political fragmentation (Zaman, 2012).

Building on this historical contextualization, the present analysis extends Zaman's (2012) framework by demonstrating how recognizing Mongol-era emergency conditions functions as a theological prerequisite for ideological disengagement. Whereas policy-centric studies often treat historical context as a peripheral academic exercise (Alkhuseri et al., 2025), this research positions textual historicity as a core mechanism for cognitive restructuring. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah's strict criteria for legitimate authority (imam) theoretically intersect with Social Identity Theory, which posits that extremist mobilization frequently emerges from a perceived vacuum of legitimate leadership and fractured group belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). By reaffirming the classical requirement of centralized authority, this study offers a faith-based intervention to redirect loyalty from clandestine networks toward established civic structures, thereby addressing the identity-affirmation needs that purely punitive measures fail to resolve (Khan et al., 2023).

Contemporary Misappropriation in Indonesia

The analysis establishes a direct correlation between the decontextualized reading of Ibn Taymiyyah's texts and the ideology of extremist groups in Indonesia, such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Jama'ah Ansharud Daulah (JAD) (Hasan, 2006). Interviews and textual analysis of extremist literature reveal that these actors selectively quote Ibn Taymiyyah to legitimize violence (Samudra, 2004). For instance, Imam Samudra cited Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretation of Al-Ankabut [29]: 69 ("And those who strive for Us, We will surely guide them to Our ways") to justify suicide bombings as a form of jihad that guarantees divine guidance (Samudra, 2004).

This appropriation strips Ibn Taymiyyah's commentary of its historical constraints. While Ibn Taymiyyah linked striving (jihad) to legitimate warfare under authoritative leadership and within the bounds of maslahah (public interest), extremists reinterpret it as an individual obligation (fard 'ayn) applicable anywhere and anytime without regard for political authority or contextual conditions (Hoover, 2007; Michot, 2006). Furthermore, the concept of takfir (excommunication) is weaponized. Ibn Taymiyyah set high evidentiary barriers for takfir, requiring proof of

intent (qasd), knowledge ('ilm), and the absence of mitigating circumstances ('udhr) (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995, Vol. 7, pp. 487–490). In contrast, Indonesian extremist groups often apply takfir loosely to the state and security apparatus, labeling them taghut (tyrants) based on a superficial reading of Ibn Taymiyyah's critiques of unjust rulers (Abou El Fadl, 2005; Hasan, 2006). This distortion transforms Ibn Taymiyyah from a defender of communal stability into a patron saint of insurgency.

Moreover, the selective citation of Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwa on Mardin, often invoked to justify violence against Muslim majority states deemed insufficiently Islamic, ignores his nuanced tripartite classification of territories and his emphasis on judging individuals by their outward actions rather than presumptive guilt (Michot, 2006). Such decontextualization enables extremist narratives to claim classical legitimacy while bypassing the methodological rigor that characterized Ibn Taymiyyah's own jurisprudence.

The systematic stripping of juridical constraints by Indonesian extremist networks mirrors the decontextualization patterns documented by Hidayah and Maghribi (2022), yet this study extends their historical analysis by demonstrating how such textual manipulation actively fuels the identity-based grievances central to radicalization. Whereas sociological frameworks often attribute violence primarily to socioeconomic marginalization (Usman et al., 2023), the present findings reveal that hermeneutical distortion serves as the primary cognitive driver for legitimizing takfir and armed rebellion. Consequently, counter-narratives that address only social grievances without correcting these specific interpretive failures remain theoretically incomplete and empirically ineffective (Hafez & Mullins, 2015; Saeed, 2005). This underscores the necessity of integrating philological correction into mainstream deradicalization protocols.

A Theological Framework for Deradicalization

This study advances a three-pronged theological framework for deradicalization grounded in Ibn Taymiyyah's own methodological principles and informed by empirical patterns observed in the reinterpretation of jihad and takfir narratives. The historical-contextual approach addresses the epistemic dimension of radicalization by situating Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwas within their specific socio-political contexts, particularly the Mongol invasions. This approach aligns with cognitive transformation theories, which emphasize that exposure to alternative historical narratives can disrupt absolutist belief systems and facilitate ideological disengagement (Hafez & Mullins, 2015; Horgan, 2009).

The philological-textual approach operates at the textual level by critically reconstructing original Arabic sources to reveal selective omissions and distortions in extremist interpretations. Drawing on contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics, this approach demonstrates that Ibn Taymiyyah's legal reasoning was contingent upon strict linguistic and juridical conditions, thereby undermining the universalization strategies employed by extremist groups (Saeed, 2005).

The theological-critical approach functions at the normative level by reasserting the centrality of maqasid al-Shari'ah in Ibn Taymiyyah's thought. By emphasizing justice, public welfare, and the prevention of harm, this approach exposes the

incompatibility between classical Islamic jurisprudence and indiscriminate violence against civilians. This perspective resonates with contemporary maqasid-oriented scholarship that frames counter-extremism within an ethical and purposive understanding of Islamic law (Auda, 2008; Kamali, 1999).

Taken together, these three approaches constitute a multi-layered deradicalization model that integrates epistemic, textual, and normative interventions. Importantly, this framework is not merely normative but emerges inductively from the data, reflecting how participants renegotiate religious meanings when exposed to contextualized and methodologically rigorous interpretations. While grounded in the Indonesian context, the framework offers broader applicability to other Muslim societies facing similar challenges of textual misappropriation and ideological extremism.

Implementing this framework requires institutional collaboration between state agencies, religious scholars, and educational institutions. In contexts such as Indonesia, where religious authority plays a pivotal role, counter-narratives articulated by credible ulama using Ibn Taymiyyah's own works are more likely to achieve resonance and legitimacy. Properly understood, Ibn Taymiyyah's legacy thus serves not as a source of radicalization but as a critical resource for theological moderation and counter-extremism.

Collectively, this three-tiered framework transcends the narrative limitations of prior textual critiques by operationalizing classical jurisprudence as an active, theory-grounded intervention. Unlike conventional programs that rely predominantly on external psychological counseling or legal coercion (Kamal, 2022), this theology-centered model leverages internal epistemic correction, aligning directly with Religion-Based Deradicalization theory which asserts that sustainable ideological transformation must originate from within the target belief system (Auda, 2008; Hafez & Mullins, 2015). By integrating historical contextualization, philological reconstruction, and maqasid-oriented reasoning, the framework empirically bridges the gap identified between security-driven counterterrorism and faith-based cognitive rehabilitation (Miller & Hudon, 2023), offering a replicable template for both Indonesian BNPT initiatives and broader Muslim-majority contexts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study provides a critical re-examination of the interpretation of jihad and qital within the works of Ibn Taymiyyah, demonstrating that his exegetical methodology is contextually grounded, legally constrained, and normatively aligned with the objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shari'ah). Contrary to reductionist portrayals in extremist discourse, Ibn Taymiyyah articulated a clear distinction between jihad as a multidimensional ethical striving and qital as a conditional form of armed engagement restricted by legitimate authority, proportionality, and necessity. His more stringent legal opinions must therefore be understood as historically contingent responses to the Mongol invasions rather than universally applicable doctrines.

The findings establish that the ideological narratives of groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah and Jama'ah Ansharud Daulah are significantly shaped by the decontextualized appropriation of Ibn Taymiyyah's texts. Through selective citation and the omission of juridical conditions, these actors reconstruct his thought to legitimize violence, thereby transforming a historically grounded jurist into a symbolic authority for insurgency. However, this study demonstrates that a methodologically rigorous and context-sensitive reading of Ibn Taymiyyah offers substantial resources for theological counter-radicalization, particularly through his emphasis on justice, the prohibition of illegitimate rebellion, and the protection of non-combatants.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the emerging field of religion-based deradicalization by advancing a three-pronged framework integrating historical-contextual, philological-textual, and theological-critical approaches. This framework extends existing models of ideological disengagement by incorporating Islamic legal hermeneutics as a central analytical dimension, thereby bridging the gap between security-based interventions and faith-based epistemologies. Importantly, the findings challenge deterministic assumptions that classical Islamic texts inherently produce violence, demonstrating instead that radicalization is mediated by interpretive methodology rather than textual content.

While grounded in the Indonesian context, the implications of this study extend to broader Muslim societies facing similar challenges of textual misappropriation and religious extremism. In an era of transnational radical networks, reclaiming authoritative classical scholarship through contextually informed interpretation represents a critical strategy for sustainable deradicalization.

Recommendations and Future Research Directions

Based on these findings, this study proposes several strategic recommendations for strengthening theology-based deradicalization efforts. First, educational institutions, particularly Islamic universities and pesantren, should integrate historical-contextual analysis into the teaching of classical texts. This includes equipping students with the methodological capacity to distinguish between universal legal principles and context-specific rulings, thereby preventing literalist and decontextualized interpretations that often underpin radical ideologies.

Second, state agencies such as Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme should intensify collaboration with authoritative religious scholars to develop counter-narratives grounded in classical Islamic scholarship. Utilizing Ibn Taymiyyah's own works to expose inconsistencies in extremist interpretations has proven more effective than purely secular approaches, particularly in contexts where religious authority carries significant legitimacy.

Third, there is an urgent need to address the digital dissemination of distorted religious content. Extremist groups frequently circulate truncated and manipulated excerpts of classical texts through online platforms. Developing accessible, verified, and contextually annotated digital repositories of classical Islamic works can serve as a critical intervention to counter misinformation and provide alternative interpretive frameworks for vulnerable audiences.

Fourth, effective deradicalization requires sustained collaboration between ulama, academics, and state institutions. A holistic approach that combines theological clarification, educational reform, and policy intervention is essential to address the ideological roots of extremism. Such collaboration should promote interpretations of Islam that emphasize justice, public welfare, and social harmony, aligning religious teachings with contemporary civic values.

Future research should expand this inquiry beyond Indonesia by examining how Ibn Taymiyyah's thought is appropriated in other regional contexts, particularly in transnational extremist networks. Comparative studies would provide deeper insights into patterns of textual manipulation and ideological adaptation. Additionally, empirical evaluation of theology-based deradicalization programs is needed to assess their effectiveness relative to psychological or sociological approaches. Further exploration of the interface between classical Islamic jurisprudence and modern frameworks such as human rights and international law would also contribute to bridging traditional scholarship with contemporary global challenges.

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