



International Journal
Social and Political Sciences

International Journal Social and Political Sciences

(I J S P S)

e-ISSN: 3089-5936 p-ISSN: 3089-5987

Vol 2, No 3 December (2025): Page no: 225-234

Available online at

<https://journal.austrodemika.org/index.php/ijspss>



Theological Exclusivism of the Khawarij: A Threat to Islamic Moderation in the Modern Era

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<https://doi.org/10.69812/ijspss.v2i3.149>

Article Info



Article History

Received:

July 31, 2025

Revised:

December 04, 2025

Accepted:

December 30, 2025

Abstract:

This study addresses the persistence of religious radicalism in contemporary Muslim societies, particularly in Indonesia, where pluralism and social cohesion are challenged by exclusive, takfiri, and anti-state interpretations of Islam. In this context, the theological legacy of the Khawarij is important because its doctrines of excommunication, absolutism, and legitimized violence continue to influence modern extremist narratives. The study aims to analyze the genealogy of Khawarij theology, compare its ideological characteristics with Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia and Jemaah Islamiyah, and assess its implications for Islamic moderation in the modern era. This research employs a qualitative library research approach using secondary data from classical Islamic texts, contemporary books, scholarly journal articles, research reports, religious documents, and credible digital sources. Data were collected through systematic literature review and analyzed using content analysis, supported by source and perspective triangulation to ensure validity. The findings show that Khawarij theology is characterized by takfir, rigid literalism, hostility toward dissent, rejection of illegitimate rulers, and justification of violence. These elements reappear in contemporary radical groups, although expressed through different strategies, with HTI emphasizing ideological-political mobilization and Jemaah Islamiyah employing violent methods. The study concludes that Khawarij-style theological exclusivism remains a serious threat to Islamic moderation and should be addressed through historically grounded deradicalization and stronger promotion of wasathiyah Islam. Therefore, strengthening inclusive theology, tolerance, and contextual religious interpretation is essential for preserving peace within Indonesia's plural society today.

Keyword: Exclusivism, Islamic Moderation, Modern Era



INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of religious radicalism in contemporary Muslim society is one of the greatest challenges in realizing social stability, national integration, and the strengthening of Islamic values as rahmatan lil 'alamin, or a mercy to all creation (Umar, 2023). In Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world and a society that is plural in terms of ethnicity, religion, and culture, religious radicalism has

the potential to threaten the values of diversity and interreligious harmony. Amid efforts by the state and civil society to promote moderate Islam (*wasathiyah*), certain groups continue to spread extremist ideas through transnational ideologies, *takfiri* doctrines, and rejection of the nation-state system (Umar, 2024; Saifuddin, 2025).

One ideological root of contemporary radical movements that is often overlooked is the legacy of Khawarij thought, an early sect in Islamic history that emerged after the arbitration (*tahkim*) between 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. The Khawarij were known for their literal and rigid understanding of religious teachings, ideological exclusivism, and violent actions against those who held different views. In Islamic history, the Khawarij were pioneers of the doctrine of *takfir*, namely declaring fellow Muslims unbelievers solely because of political and theological differences. Their mindset and actions became a precursor to extremist groups that justify violence in the name of religion (Seed, 2014).

In the Islamic world, radicalism has existed since early times, particularly during the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. This group became known as the Khawarij. The movement first emerged from disappointment following the *tahkim* between 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. The Khawarij rejected the arbitration and eventually launched a rebellion. They were hostile toward both 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, and they believed that all Muslims other than themselves were unbelievers whose blood was lawful to shed (Saleh, 2018).

Therefore, studying the doctrine of the Khawarij is not merely a historical inquiry, but is also relevant to understanding the dynamics of contemporary radicalism carried out in the name of Islam. Radicalism is a term with many meanings, one of which is commonly understood in the context of violence. Although the term was introduced by Western states, over time it came to be recognized as a deviation in human behavior in both social and religious life. This phenomenon emerged as a response to human diversity (Nurhasanah, 2019).

Several studies have examined the phenomenon of radicalism and religious extremism in Indonesia from various perspectives. One study explains that there is continuity between the Khawarij mindset and contemporary radical movements. It identifies classical Khawarij concepts such as *takfir* and rebellion against rulers deemed unjust as latent inspirations for extremist groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and their factions in Indonesia. However, this study remains general in nature and does not explore in depth the local dynamics in Indonesia or provide a direct comparison between Khawarij thought and radical groups such as HTI or Jemaah Islamiyah (Fahmi et al., 2023).

In the socio-cultural dimension, another study shows that the development of technology and social media has become a new medium for spreading radical ideas, especially among young people. Using Arnold Toynbee's theory of challenge and response, it argues that the challenges of modernization, when not approached critically, can give rise to extreme and reactive responses in the form of intolerance and radicalism. Although significant in the socio-technological context, this study does not specifically trace the historical and theological roots of radicalism as reflected in the Khawarij tradition (Iqra et al., 2023).

A theological approach and normative solution to radicalism can be found in a study discussing Nurcholish Madjid's thought on religious moderation. It explains that Cak Nur's ideas on pluralism, tolerance, and openness in interpreting religious texts provide an important foundation for curbing the flow of religious radicalism. He rejected exclusive understandings and emphasized that Islam is an inclusive and contextual religion. Although this study offers profound philosophical and practical solutions, it does

not address the ideological domain of radical groups that directly refer to Islamic history such as the Khawarij, and therefore does not fully answer the ideological challenge of contemporary radicalism rooted in an extreme textual legacy of Islam (Nurhamidah et al., 2024).

By contrast, another study emphasizes the distinction between fundamentalism oriented toward purifying religious teachings and fundamentalism that leads to ideological violence. It explains that fundamentalism may arise as a form of normative piety, but when it transforms into a doctrine of violence and exclusivism, it has harmful consequences for the social order and religious life. This study is important in distinguishing between piety and radicalism, but it does not connect the aspect of fundamentalism with the sectarian doctrine of the Khawarij that inspires groups such as HTI or JI (Harjana et al., 2025).

Based on the literature review, it can be seen that studies on Islamic radicalism have been conducted from various perspectives, namely ideological-historical, sociological-technological, theological-philosophical, and fundamentalist perspectives. However, there has not yet been a study that explicitly and systematically compares classical Khawarij doctrine with the thought and ideological strategies of contemporary radical groups in Indonesia. In fact, the influence of Khawarij teachings in the form of takfir, anti-state attitudes, and the legitimization of violence still serves as an epistemic basis covertly employed in the narratives of groups such as HTI and JI.

Accordingly, this study aims to fill that gap by critically examining the ideological relationship between the Khawarij and contemporary radical groups in Indonesia. The main focus of the study includes: (1) the genealogy of the Khawarij and their extremist doctrines, (2) a comparison between the Khawarij and groups such as HTI and Jemaah Islamiyah in theological, political, and da'wah strategy aspects, and (3) the impact of Khawarij ideology on the spirit of moderate Islam in Indonesia. This study is expected to contribute to academic discourse on radicalism and deradicalization, as well as to strengthen efforts to formulate strategies for preventing extremism based on the historical-theological roots of Islam.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research method to examine the relationship between Khawarij ideology in classical Islamic history and the development of contemporary radicalism in Indonesia. This approach was chosen because it is relevant for analyzing religious thought as a normative, historical, and theological construct, while also linking it to current socio-political phenomena.

The data used in this study are secondary data obtained from various written sources, including classical and contemporary books on the Khawarij and radical Islamic movements, scholarly journal articles published within the last five years, research reports, religious documents, and other relevant and credible digital sources. The literature review focuses on works discussing Khawarij doctrine, the historical development of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), as well as literature on Islamic moderation in Indonesia.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic review of scholarly literature, both primary and secondary. Primary sources consisted of early Islamic historical texts and classical exegetical works, while secondary sources included journal articles, dissertations, organizational reports, and academic analyses on radicalism and religious extremism. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis, focusing on the identification of patterns of thought and ideological argumentation within the texts. To

ensure the validity and credibility of the analysis, this study also applied source and perspective triangulation. Accordingly, this method is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how Khawarij ideology has been inherited, modified, and operationalized within modern radical movements in Indonesia, as well as how it has become a real challenge to the idea of moderate Islam in a plural society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Genealogy and Theological Ideology of the Khawarij

The name *Khawarij* is derived from the word *kharaja*, which means “to go out” or “to leave.” As the name suggests, the Khawarij were originally followers of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib who became disappointed and disagreed with his decision to accept arbitration as a means of resolving the dispute between ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu‘awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. However, there is also an opinion that the naming of this group is based on Surah Al-Nisa verse 100, which mentions leaving one’s home in flight to Allah and His Messenger. Thus, the Khawarij viewed themselves as people who had left their homeland in devotion to Allah and His Messenger (Nasution, 2018).

The origin of the Khawarij can be traced to the leadership of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, specifically during the arbitration (*tahkim*) in the Battle of Siffin between the camps of ‘Ali and Mu‘awiyah. This group was initially composed of supporters of ‘Ali who later turned against him because they rejected the arbitration, which they regarded as “human judgment.” They raised the slogan, “No judgment except God’s judgment” (*La hukma illa lillah*), and considered ‘Ali to have committed a grave error, even though in fact they themselves had initially pressured him to accept the arbitration (Al-Baghdadi, n.d.).

They later referred to themselves as *Syurah*, derived from the word *yasyri* (to sell), as mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 207: “And among the people is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah.” In this sense, they saw themselves as people willing to sacrifice themselves for Allah. They were also known as *Haruriyyah*, a name taken from the village of Harura near Kufah in Iraq. In this village, twelve thousand people gathered after separating from ‘Ali. They then chose Abdullah Ibn Abi Wahb Al-Rasibi as their imam, replacing ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. Although they suffered a major defeat in battle against ‘Ali’s forces, a Khariji named ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muljam ultimately succeeded in assassinating ‘Ali (Nasution, 2018).

Despite suffering defeat, the Khawarij did not surrender. They reorganized themselves and continued their resistance against established Islamic authority, both during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. In their view, the rulers of the time had deviated from Islamic teachings and therefore had to be opposed and overthrown. In the political sphere, they held views different from the dominant understanding of the period. They tended to be more democratic in the sense that they believed the caliph or imam should be freely chosen by all Muslims. The position was not restricted to members of the Quraysh tribe or to Arabs, but was open to anyone who fulfilled the qualifications, as long as he was Muslim, even if he were an African slave. The elected caliph would retain office as long as he remained just and implemented Islamic law. However, if he deviated from Islamic teachings, he had to be deposed, or even killed (Nasution, 2018).

In this regard, they generally accepted the caliphates of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. They acknowledged that both caliphs had been rightly appointed and had not deviated from the Islamic teachings they recognized. However, they considered ‘Uthman Ibn ‘Affan to have deviated beginning in the seventh year of his caliphate, and they likewise regarded ‘Ali as having deviated after the arbitration mentioned above. From that point onward, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali were considered unbelievers in their view, as were

Mu'awiyah, 'Amr Ibn al-'As, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, and all others whom they believed had violated Islamic teachings (Nasution, 2018; Sholih, 2009).

At this point, the Khawarij entered into the question of *kufr*: who could be called an unbeliever and thus outside Islam, and who could be called a believer and therefore remain within Islam? These questions were no longer merely political, but theological. Opinions about who truly remained Muslim and who had left Islam and become an unbeliever, along with related issues, were not always the same, and this led to the emergence of various factions within the Khawarij themselves (Nasution, 2018). The ideology of the Khawarij may be summarized as follows:

- a. They tended to regard anyone who differed from them as an unbeliever, even if that person was a Muslim.
- b. They believed that only their own understanding and practice of Islam were correct, while the understanding of other groups was considered mistaken.
- c. Muslims regarded by them as deviant and unbelieving had to be brought back to Islam according to their own interpretation.
- d. Governments and religious scholars who were not aligned with them were considered misguided, so they appointed an imam from among themselves as both religious and political leader.
- e. They held fanatical views and did not hesitate to use violence, including **قتل** and assassination, to achieve their goals (Nasution, 1998).

2. Theological Fragmentation and Radicalism of the Khawarij Sects

a. al-Muhakkimah

The original Khawarij group was also known as *al-Muhakkimah*. They believed that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, 'Amr ibn al-'As, Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, and all those who approved arbitration had committed sin and become unbelievers (Nasution, 2018). The *al-Muhakkimah* emerged as the first faction of the Khawarij during the arbitration between 'Ali and Mu'awiyah. They chose Harura in the region of Kufah as their base of movement, with approximately 12,000 followers who were known for their devotion. Under the leadership of Abdullah ibn al-Kawa, this group was supported by influential figures such as 'Attab ibn al-A'war, Abdullah ibn Wahb al-Rasibi, 'Urwah ibn Jarir, and Yazid ibn Abi 'Ashim al-Muharibi, who was known by the **لقب** Dhu al-Thudayyah (Al-Baghdadi, n.d.).

In doctrinal terms, *al-Muhakkimah* strongly rejected human arbitration and accepted only the law of God. They opposed the idea that leadership must come from the Quraysh and argued that any just person could become a leader. They even believed that the world could function without a leader. The movement was eventually defeated by 'Ali's forces at Nahrawan, causing the surviving followers to scatter to various regions such as Oman, Kerman, Sijistan, al-Jazirah, and Tel Mauzan in Yemen, with only very small numbers remaining in each place (Al-Shahrastani, n.d.).

b. al-Azariqah

The founder of this sub-sect was Nafi' ibn al-Azraq, and it had around 20,000 followers. Its leader was later given the title *Amir al-Mu'minin* and died in battle in Iraq in 686 CE. This sub-sect was more radical than *al-Muhakkimah* because they no longer used the term *kafir* but instead *mushrik*, and in Islam *shirk* is considered a graver sin than disbelief (Nasution, 2018). *Al-Azariqah*, the followers of Nafi' ibn al-Azraq, emerged as a Khawarij group that revolted from Basrah toward Ahwaz and successfully took control of that region along with surrounding territories, including Persia and Kerman, during the

time of Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr. Under the leadership of figures such as Abdullah ibn al-Mahuz and his brother 'Umar ibn Umair al-Hanafi, Qatari ibn al-Fuja'ah al-Mazini, Ubaidah ibn Hilal al-Yashkuri, and Shalih ibn Mikhrif al-'Abdi, the group possessed around 30,000 cavalry troops (Al-Baghdadi, n.d.).

In its development, *al-Azariqah* adopted extremely radical doctrines, including declaring as unbelievers those who did not agree with them, regarding major sinners as unbelievers destined to remain eternally in hell, and permitting the killing of the children and women of their opponents. After engaging in various battles against commanders such as Muslim ibn Ubais, 'Uthman ibn Ubaidillah, and Haritsah ibn Badr, the group was eventually defeated by al-Muhallab in a war that lasted nineteen years during the time of al-Hajjaj. After the defeat of Nafi', leadership passed to Qatari ibn al-Fuja'ah, who was appointed as the new leader of *al-Azariqah* (Al-Shahrastani, n.d.).

c. al-Najdat

Al-Najdat was one branch of the Khawarij led by Najdah ibn 'Amir al-Hanafi. Initially, Najdah and his followers planned to join *al-Azariqah*. However, they refused because they disagreed with the extreme views of *al-Azariqah*, which held that Muslims who did not migrate to their territories were considered polytheists, and that killing the children and wives of Muslims with different views was permissible. This disagreement caused a split, and Najdah was then appointed leader by the faction that separated from them.

Najdah's views differed in several respects from those of other Khawarij groups. In his view, Muslims who disagreed with them were only considered unbelievers if they committed major sins, whereas his own followers who committed major sins would still be punished but would not remain eternally in hell. Meanwhile, minor sins could become major sins if repeated continuously. Najdah also introduced the concept of *taqiyyah*, namely concealing one's religious belief for self-protection, whether through speech or action.

In political terms, Najdah held that the existence of an imam was necessary only when circumstances urgently required it, and that humanity could in principle live without an imam. However, internal divisions eventually arose in this group for various reasons, including the distribution of war booty and Najdah's attitude, which was considered too lenient toward the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, whom some followers viewed as an enemy. This internal conflict ultimately led to Najdah being deposed and killed by his own followers, such as Abu Fudaik and Rashid al-Tawil (Nasution, 2018).

d. al-Ajaridah

The *al-Ajaridah*, followers of 'Abd al-Karim ibn Ajrad, were more moderate than other Khawarij groups. They did not regard migration as an obligation, but merely as a virtue, and they allowed residence outside their territory without considering such people unbelievers. They also permitted only the property of those killed in war to be taken as spoils, unlike *al-Azariqah*. This group rejected Surah Yusuf in the Qur'an because they believed that holy scripture should not contain love stories. The group later split into several currents, such as *al-Maimuniyyah*, which adopted *Qadariyah* doctrine, and *al-Syu'aibiyyah* and *al-Hazimiyyah*, which believed that God determines human actions (Nasution, 2018).

e. al-Shufriyyah

This sect was attributed to its leader, Ziyad ibn al-Ashfar, and held views more moderate than those of *al-Azariqah*. They did not declare as unbelievers those who did not participate in battle, as long as they agreed in matters of religion and belief. Their teachings included the view that those who did not migrate were not considered unbelievers, that the children of polytheists should not be killed, and that major sins did not always lead to unbelief unless the sin was not accompanied by a worldly punishment. They also argued that territories not aligned with them were not *dar al-harb*, but merely government camps or bases that could be fought against. In their concept of *kufr*, they distinguished between disbelief caused by denying God's grace and disbelief caused by denying God Himself. In addition, they held that *taqiyyah* was permissible only in speech, not in action, and that Muslim women could marry unbelieving men in non-Muslim territories for the sake of self-protection (Nasution, 2018).

f. al-Ibadiyah

This group, named after Abdullah ibn Ibad, was the most moderate and lenient Khawarij group toward Muslims who differed from them. They viewed Muslims who disagreed with them as unbelievers, yet marriage and inheritance relations with them were still permitted, and killing them was considered forbidden. Territories not aligned with them, except for government headquarters, were regarded as *dar al-tawhid* and could not be fought against. They also maintained that a person who committed a major sin was still considered one who affirmed the oneness of God, even if not a true believer, and that a major sin did not expel a person from Islam.

In warfare, only horses and weapons could be taken as spoils, while gold and silver had to be returned. This view led Abdullah ibn Ibad to refuse joining *al-Azariqah* and to build a good relationship with the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, followed by his successor Jabir ibn Zaid al-Azdi (Nasution, 2018). Their moderate attitude was also reflected in theological views that did not claim the eternal damnation of polytheists in hell, allowed marriage and inheritance with those who differed from them, and did not consider such people impure.

3. Khawarij Ideology: A Real Threat in the Modern Era

Khawarij ideology, although originating in the first century of Hijri, remains a real threat in the modern era. The extreme ideas they embraced have undergone transformation into a new form known as neo-Khawarij. This group holds that any thought deviating from a literal interpretation of Islamic teachings must be rejected and opposed. They reject contextual and flexible approaches to understanding religious texts and display rigidity in practicing religion (Umar, 2023).

In contemporary reality, neo-Khawarij often employ radical methods to achieve their ideological goals. Extreme acts such as murder, rebellion, and terrorism, including suicide bombings, are considered legitimate instruments in the name of religion. To strengthen this argument, two examples of extreme and radical groups that have inherited the ideological spirit of the Khawarij in the modern context are presented below: Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (Nugraha & Ariska, 2024; Saifuddin, 2025).

a. HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia)

Hizbut Tahrir was introduced to Indonesia in 1982 by Abdul Rahman al-Baghdadi, the leader of HT Australia. He was relocated to Bogor at the request of KH Abdullah bin

Nuh, the head of Al-Ghazali Islamic Boarding School in Bogor. Through his role, Hizbut Tahrir began to develop in several regions of Indonesia. The movement eventually became increasingly popular on university campuses, and its membership began to include intellectual circles, including academics and students. Nevertheless, during the New Order era, it operated only clandestinely because of the repression of the authoritarian regime. It was only after the Reform era that Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia benefited from the opening of democratic space, although this did not last long (Mujibuddin, 2022; Rahman, 2021).

The Khawarij and HTI share several ideological similarities, although their contexts and applications differ. First, both emphasize the implementation of Islamic law in everyday life. The Khawarij were known for their strict attitude toward violations of Islamic law, while HTI advocates the comprehensive application of sharia in all aspects of life. Second, both display anti-authoritarian tendencies. The Khawarij rejected authorities considered inconsistent with Islamic principles, and HTI likewise rejects governmental systems deemed secular or not fully implementing sharia.

Third, both groups show puritan inclinations, seeking to return to what they regard as the pure and original practice of Islam. Fourth, both regard the Muslim community as an important entity that must be united under sharia principles. Fifth, both tend to view differing opinions as threats to their ideology, although HTI may express its rejection in a less violent manner. Despite these similarities, it is important to note that there are significant differences in historical context, objectives, and methods between the more extreme Khawarij and HTI, which seeks to achieve its goals through political and intellectual means.

b. JI (Jemaah Islamiyah)

Jemaah Islamiyah originated from earlier Islamic movements, especially Darul Islam (DI) or Negara Islam Indonesia (NII), founded by S.M. Kartosuwiryo. DI did not last long and was suppressed by the military during the Old Order era. However, in the 1970s, DI re-emerged, prompting repressive actions by the military, including mass arrests of DI leaders. Subsequently, DI recruited two important figures, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. Between 1985 and 1991, hundreds of DI cadres participated in military training in Afghanistan. During their time there, they not only gained military knowledge but also absorbed a new religious doctrine popularly known as Salafi-jihadism. This doctrine later motivated its adherents to establish an Islamic state in Southeast Asia and also marked the beginning of internal divisions within Darul Islam (Zakariah, 2022).

Internal disputes later emerged within DI when its imam was criticized for being influenced by *tareqat* practices. Nevertheless, he remained in place and changed the name of DI to Jamaah Darul Islam in 1987. Meanwhile, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir founded a new group called *Jamiatul Minal Muslimin* in 1996, which later became Jemaah Islamiyah. Jemaah Islamiyah was motivated by the goal of establishing an Islamic state in Southeast Asia, inspired by Afghan veterans (Zakariah, 2022).

Under the leadership of Abdullah Sungkar and later Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, JI expanded its influence in Southeast Asia by forming *Rabitatul Mujahidin*. Meetings in Malaysia produced plans to establish *Daulah Islamiyah Raya*, covering Indonesia, Malaysia, and other countries. The first Bali bombing, which occurred on 12 October 2002, targeted the Sari Club and Paddy's Café in Kuta, Bali. The first explosion occurred at Paddy's Café, followed by a second blast in front of the Sari Club. The total number of casualties reached 509, including 185 deaths. After the attack, analyses linked the bombing to the disbandment of Laskar Jihad, the arrest of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, and the

involvement of international terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda. Investigations showed that the perpetrators, including Imam Samudra, regarded the attack as an obligatory jihad inspired by the conflict in Iraq. The Bali bombing formed part of JI's strategy to establish *Daulah Islamiyah Raya* in Southeast Asia (Syamsuddin, 2021).

The Khawarij and Jemaah Islamiyah share several ideological similarities, although they emerged in different historical contexts. First, both adopt extreme interpretations of Islamic teachings and believe that armed struggle is a legitimate means of achieving their objectives. Second, both reject governments they perceive as inconsistent with Islamic principles. Third, both emphasize jihad as an obligation, either as resistance against rulers regarded as unbelievers or as an effort to establish an Islamic state. Fourth, both demonstrate puritan tendencies by claiming exclusive correctness in understanding Islam and often judging others, including fellow Muslims, as deviant. Fifth, both display intolerance toward differences in opinion and schools of thought and frequently justify violence in defense of their beliefs. Sixth, both are associated with the use of violence, although the Khawarij were known primarily for direct military action in their own era, whereas JI specifically employed terrorism to pursue political and ideological goals.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the ideology of the Khawarij, as one of the earliest sects in Islamic history, should not be understood merely as a historical episode confined to the past. Rather, it constitutes a theological legacy whose doctrinal patterns continue to resonate in the emergence of contemporary radical movements. The Khawarij's emphasis on *takfir*, their rigid claim to exclusive religious truth, and their readiness to delegitimize fellow Muslims created a framework of religious exclusivism that has remained influential across time. In this sense, the significance of the Khawarij lies not only in their historical rebellion, but also in the enduring epistemological and theological assumptions they introduced into Islamic political and religious discourse. Their ideas have provided an important reference point, either directly or indirectly, for later movements that adopt rigid, absolutist, and confrontational understandings of Islam.

Through a comparative analysis of the Khawarij, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), this study finds substantial similarities in several core dimensions. These include the tendency to divide society into categories of truth and error, the rejection of political authority considered incompatible with divine law, and the promotion of a puritan and exclusive religious worldview. Although these groups emerged in different historical and political contexts, they share a common ideological orientation that prioritizes doctrinal purity over social coexistence and compromise. At the same time, the study also shows that their methods differ significantly. HTI has generally pursued its objectives through political discourse, intellectual mobilization, and ideological propagation, whereas JI has been more closely associated with violent extremism and terrorist methods. Nevertheless, despite these differences in strategy, their ideological roots can still be traced to the extremist spirit historically associated with the Khawarij.

The persistence of such theological exclusivism poses a serious threat to the existence of moderate Islam, particularly in plural societies such as Indonesia. Islamic moderation is fundamentally built upon the principles of tolerance, balance, inclusivity, and peaceful coexistence. By contrast, Khawarij-like ideology promotes hostility toward difference, delegitimization of alternative interpretations, and the normalization of violence in the name of religious authenticity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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