

Political Movement of Islamic Religious Groups and Its Potential Conflict: A Study on Salafi in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Eka Hendry Ar.^{1*}

¹Department of Islamic Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pontianak, Pontianak – Indonesia

Abstract

The political movement of Salafi in the form of the *da'wah* movement has the potential for horizontal conflict. The potential for conflict in this movement was caused by the tend of “attacking” of this movement toward traditional religious groups. This research is located in Pontianak City, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, and uses qualitative methods and field research. The data was analyzed using the Islamist theory. The findings of this research are: First, the Salafi Islamic movement is a *da'wah* movement. The Manhaj Salafi (the Salafi Way) carries out *tarbiyah* and economic activities. Second, the Manhaj Salafi developed in Pontianak City is an apolitical *manhaj* and is not a Jihadist Salafi. Third, the responses of outsider groups are diverse, but prejudice is still strong against Salafi Islam, primarily related to the doctrine and its *da'wah* approach. Fourth, escalation towards violence and conflicts has not been observed, but there is an escalation. Based on the rising conflict potential, it is needed the anticipation to prevent the violence of the conflict between the Salafi movement and the traditional religious groups.

Gerakan politik Salafi dengan bentuk gerakan dakwah memiliki potensi konflik horizontal. Potensi konflik tersebut disebabkan oleh sifat “menyerang” gerakan kelompok ini terhadap kelompok keagamaan tradisional. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Kota Pontianak Kalimantan Barat, Indonesia, dan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan. Adapun teori yang digunakan untuk memahami data adalah teori tentang Islamisme. Adapun hasil risetnya sebagai berikut: Pertama, gerakan Islam Salafi merupakan gerakan dakwah. Manhaj Salafi melakukan kegiatan dakwah tarbiyah dan kegiatan ekonomi. Kedua, manhaj Salafi yang berkembang di Kota Pontianak adalah manhaj yang apolitik, dan bukan termasuk Salaf jihadi. Kedua, respon outsider group cukup beragam, namun prasangka masih terus tumbuh terhadap keberadaan Islam salafi, terkait dengan doktrin dan pendekatan dakwahnya. Ketiga, untuk potensi konflik belum ada tanda-tanda eskalasi berkembang ke arah kekerasan. Sejauh ini sudah masuk level ketiga. Berdasarkan potensi konflik yang mengemuka perlu dilakukan upaya antisipasi untuk tidak terjadinya kekerasan akibat konflik yang terjadi antara kelompok Salafi dengan kelompok keagamaan tradisional.

Keywords: conflict potential; Islamic religious group; political movement; Salafi; traditional religious group

*Corresponding Author: Eka Hendry. Ar (ekahendry77@iainptk.ac.id), Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pontianak, Jl. Letjend Suprpto No. 19, Benua Melayu Darat, Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat 78121, Indonesia.

Introduction

The political movement of Islamic religious groups blossoming after the 1997 political reform has provided an "open space" for various suppressed religious ideologies to resurface, including those banned during the Old Order and New Order eras as they were considered anti-Pancasila. One religious group is the Salafi (Malik 2024), which focuses on purification and political purposes. At the onset of the reformation, at least 200 new mass organizations and political parties were formed, from the conservative-puritan to the secular-liberal (Hendry Ar. 2013). The Salafi movement has recently changed. On the one hand, they preserve conservatism. On the other hand, they attempt to construct tolerance to diversity, as in Jama'ah Hijrah in Kediri and the religious moderation among Salafis in Ambon (Huda, Sulaeman, and Marpuah 2023; Sugi, Rahman, and Kamarzaman 2023).

Several studies examine the Salafi movement and the conflicts surrounding it. Research by Alhusni et al. (2023) regarding the conflict between the Salafi groups and the Aceh Ulama Consultative Council (MPU) ultimately triggered the prohibition of several Salafi views. As a result of the MPU's decision, the Salafi groups did not accept it. Ultimately, it sparked a conflict between the two. Furthermore, Padang and Kamal's research (2024) was about the conflict between Salafis and local religious leaders in Silima Village, Kuta Pakpak Barat, North Sumatra. The conflict resulted in a struggle for influence and a feeling of threat from local religious leaders with Salafi teachings. Conflict occurs between Salafi followers and those outside Salafi understanding and between Salafi movements (A'la and Bakar 2024). Because *jami* salafis, *haraki* (*sururi*) salafis and *jihadi* salafis are in conflict with each other. It also

includes the dynamics that occur within the Salafi membership itself. Dr. Fauzi is an interesting phenomenon regarding the internal dynamics of Salafi followers themselves (Azca 2024). The various references above show that conflict occurs not only in one direction between Salafi followers and non-Salafis but also between the harakahs of Salafis, both organizationally and individually.

Facing this conflict, apart from reactive attitudes, the phenomenon of "defense mechanisms" also emerged from non-Salafi circles, such as being more motivated to carry out religious activities more actively. Noerhaidi Hasan (2002, 2007) found that, as a response to the "threat" of Salafi ideology in Javanese society, it sparked efforts to revive the tradition in society.

On the Salafi side, dealing with conflict is also a transformation. Experience in South Kalimantan, the Salafi group chose a softer attitude and integration by using various methods such as building communication with other groups facilitated by the government. Then, be accommodating to local community culture, avoid polemics regarding the substance or material of teachings, and develop more of the philanthropic side, as well as an invitation to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah (Abidin and Hafizah 2019). Likewise, in dealing with Salafi ideology, there is not only one direction, meaning non-Salafis towards Salafis alone but also the response of Salafi followers towards non-Salafis. So, there is a kind of two-way response between the various parties. According to Amine Tais (2024), all religious sects inevitably have to rethink their position as time passes. Persisting stubbornly in apologetics and polemics is no longer appropriate; they have to rethink their exclusive stance, including the Salafi group.

This study is different from the above studies done by many researchers because as a religious movement having the spirit of revivalism, puritanism, and radicalism (Malik 2024), the Salafi movement, especially as represented in Pontianak City West Kalimantan, is associated with political Islam with the characteristic of Islamic totalism. Islamic totalism means that Islam is not only a religion in a limited sense—a belief system and individual spirituality—but is also a system of life and a code of conduct in political, social, and economic spheres. Islamism is a manifestation of a “formalized religion” in the public space in industrial and post-industrial societies. Such formalization of religion extends to social and political life, resulting in the formalization of Islamic politics (Wiktorowicz as cited by Gade and Bøås 2020; Qodir and Singh 2023). On the other hand, the Salafi movement in Pontianak is also characterized by its apolitical nature. This means that the Salafi movement in Pontianak is not oriented toward political movements.

Due to its opposing nature, the Salafi movement in Pontianak City created polemics in society. Their underlying principles often entail “attacks” on religious traditions (Chaplin 2018). An example of such polemics is Salafi in Pontianak City, as is the case in other areas;

many youths are drawn towards Salafi *da’wah* [sermon] because they view it as more authoritative and prestigious (Iqbal 2014; Sugi et al. 2023; Syarif, Herlambang, and Suratman 2023; Wahid 2015). Such a shift has spurred antipathy between the people and the mainstream Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulema (NU), Muhammadiyah, and some mosque committees. A similar phenomenon also occurred in Pontianak City, causing friction between followers of Salafi movement members and outsiders.

This research uses qualitative methods, field research, and a case study approach. Data sources are informants and documents. The method for extracting data is through interviews, observations, and document studies. Seven informants were involved in this research, as mentioned in Table 1.

Based on the description above, this study aims to describe the discourse regarding Salafi groups in general, what the political expressions of Salafi groups are in Pontianak, what the relationship between Salafi groups is with other groups, and what the potential for conflict is due to differences between Salafi groups and other groups.

Table 1
List of Informants

No.	Initial Name	Position
1	P1	Salafi member 1
2	P2	Salafi member 2
3	P3	Salafi member 3
4	P4	Salafi teacher
5	P5	Committee of Local Mosque
6	P6	Local Islamic Organization Leader
7	P7	Academician

Source: Primary Data

The questions in this study are based on the assumption that as a global ideological movement, Salafi has experienced many different dynamics, so the movement's form also varies according to the socio-cultural context in which the movement is located. In Pontianak, the specific social, cultural, and religious context gave birth to a specific Salafi movement phenomenon. The specific Salafi movement, even though it has accommodated local cultural values because it is a new movement, is nevertheless different from religious movements and local community groups, which in turn gives rise to the potential for conflict.

Salafi as Apolitical Movement: *Da'wah*, Educational, and Economic Movements

Various terms were used to identify the Salafis, such as the Salafi movement, the Salafi congregation (*jamā'ah*), or the Salafi group. The movements are also identical to the thoughts of the Salaf or *al-mutaqaddimūna fi al-sair*, roughly translating into the predecessors and the passed-down actions (Jannah 2014). Some interpret Salafi as a movement that adheres strictly to the literal understanding of the holy book and follows strictly the ways of life of the first three generations of Islam. The majority of them are non-violent and apolitical. They carry out *jihād*, but it is nothing more than practicing a religious obligation to uphold the transnational Islamic state (Alsoos 2021; Julian 2015).

Nonetheless, Aboul el-Fadl in Faizin (2018) stated the Salafis are often considered similar to Wahhabis [the Sunni Islamist movement]. However, some may disagree and believe that they are distinctively different. The debate is probably rooted in the fact that the Salafis were founded and propagated by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) to revive the pure

Islamic teachings of the Salaf generation. His ideology was influenced by the teachings of Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (1292-1350), who were affiliated with the Neo-Hanbali school known to be puritanical and literalist (Krismono 2017). Since the term Wahhabi has pejorative content, Salafi followers prefer to identify their movements with *Muwaḥḥidīn* [unitarian] or *Salafīyyūn* [Salafi followers] (Krismono 2017).

Although the Salafi movement distinguishes itself from the Wahhabis, their basic teachings are intertwined. Therefore, the Salafi movement was then identified with the Wahhabi movement as a puritan, revivalist, or fundamentalist movement. Faizin (2018) believes that Salafis can be categorized or identified as Islamic fundamentalists. This category developed in Europe because there was no equivalent translation of the Salafi. Meanwhile, Basyir (2014) compares Salafi to neo-fundamentalism, a non-revolutionary (far from violent) Islamic movement seeking to re-Islamize society through social actions, especially at the grassroots level.

In this context, the term fundamentalism is closer to the revival of Islam or Islamic revivalism than its negative connotation, i.e., violent and revolutionary (Faizin 2018). Fundamentalism takes the spirit of purification of Islamic teachings, referring back to what was practiced by Prophet Muhammad and the companions of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*. More specifically, Essack (2003) identifies at least seven characteristics of Islamic fundamentalist thoughts, namely: 1) committed to strict religious practices; 2) committed to obeying the text; 3) having an ahistorical view that Islam can permanently solve all the problems of humankind; 4) believing in the application of Islamic Sharia practiced at the time of Prophet Muhammad; 5) committed to upholding an Islamic State with sovereignty in

the hands of God; 6) enmity towards all parties who reject fundamentalists, deeming them heretics; and 7) rejection of any good that comes from non-Islamic sources.

Basyir (2014) referred to the statement of Peter Huff, who identified fundamentalists' sociological, psychological, intellectual, and theological characteristics. Sociologically, fundamentalists are often associated with outdated or irrelevant values. Culturally, they are inclined to do something vulgar, not intellectual. Psychologically, they lean toward authoritarianism and conspiracy theories. Intellectually, their historical awareness and ability to engage in critical thinking are low. Theologically, they are identical to literalism, primitivism, legalism, and tribalism. Politically, they are associated with reactionary populism.

In Indonesia's context, the pattern of the Salafi *da'wah* movement is generally divided into two phases, namely the pre-reform phase (New Order) and the post-reform. The pre-reform phase was between the mid-1980s and 1998), characterized by more closed preaching and apolitical tendencies. Islamic societies had to be gradually converted to Islam through *tarbiyah* (teachings) and *tasfiyah* (purification) before Sharia could be applied comprehensively, and *da'wah* was carried out using the *halaqah* (closed circles) method. Then, in the reform phase, the *da'wah* movement was more open, slowly entering the political sphere. For example, on April 6, 2000, a large meeting was held at the Senayan, Jakarta, to promote *jihād*, which later inspired the birth of the Communication Forum of Ahl al-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah (*Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunna Wal-Jama'ah - FKAWJ*) led by Ja'far Umar Thalib.

The Salafis are also active in carrying out *da'wah* activities through educational

institutions. They build Islamic boarding schools with integrated facilities to accommodate students from kindergarten to higher education (Wahid 2015). Various Salafi ideologies and views are introduced through these educational institutions, tailored to the age and education level. Foreign donors sponsor these educational institutions in addition to the congregation's contributions. Donors include the Kuwaiti Charitable Foundation, Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, and Qatari Sheikh Eid Charity Foundation (Wahid 2015). Propaganda through education is massive, including educating preachers across Indonesia.

The Salafi group's *da'wah* movement is dynamic and aligned with the development of the current socio-political situation. However, in general, the main propaganda is to purify Islamic teachings while reviving religious practices from the time of the Prophet and his companions.

Salafi is not monolithic but consists of several types. Wahid (2015) divides Salafi into three classifications, namely Purist, Haraki, and Jihadist. Each has its *da'wah* movement style, attention level to the world of education, relations with other Islamic organizations, relations with the government, and political views. Howell (2010) is of the view that Salafis are not one face, especially in terms of their perspective on Sufism. Not all Salafis reject Sufism as heresy. Some even develop Sufistic views. Krismono (2017) agrees that Salafi is fragmented, especially when responding to regional and international political situations.

The three variants of Salafi are also called the reformist, rejectionist, and jihadist. The reformist Salafi is a blend of traditional Salafi and the social and political theology of the Muslim brotherhood. They tend to be pragmatic and dynamic. *Al-Sahwah al-Islāmiyyah* (Islamic awakening) is an

example of flourishing reformists in Saudi Arabia. Then, the rejectionist (or puritan Salafi) is a passive Salafi emphasizing the purification of Islam through *da'wah* (education). This group rejects all forms of political activities, calls for complete obedience to the legitimate government, and firmly rejects the Muslim brotherhood and *jihād*. This movement is also developing in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the jihadist Salafi emphasizes the solidarity of the world's Muslims so that Muslims are solid and safe. One example is the Hamas Intifada movement in Gaza, Palestine (Julian 2015). The choice of *jihād* is one way of Salafi, not the ultimate way. These variants of Salafi exist not only on a global level but also in a country like Indonesia.

Methodologically, Salafi's thoughts are more or less close to the characteristics stated by Essack (2003) and Huff (2000), such as interpretation of the truth, tending to be ahistorical (with an orientation to the past), being inclusive, embracing different beliefs or views, and being against something originating outside Islam (non-Islamic). From time to time, when the *tasfiyyah* (purification) process is enforced, the Salafi group clashes with local religious traditions (Chaplin 2018) outside of the Salafis.

Political Views of the Salafi Movement in Pontianak City

Political view (*manhaj*) Salafi is generally apolitical, meaning it is not a politically oriented *da'wah* institution. This points expressed by P1, P2, and P3 in a similar expression:

"... The political view of Salafi in Pontianak is generally apolitical. The negative aspects of politics cause this apolitical attitude. Politics is seen as a way to seize and maintain power by deception, so it is considered to cause more harm than good. However, some scholars of the Sunnah still provide room for politics, especially in inevitable (*darūrāt*) contexts."

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal's group has explicitly stated that Salafi is completely detached from political activity. Umar Sewed explained in one of the videos on YouTube that politics is filled with the spirit of division, not the unity of the *ummah* (Islamic society). The harm is greater than the benefits obtained from political practice. Meanwhile, Wahdah Islamiyah still tolerates politics, especially in *darūrāt* (emergency) contexts. The rejection of politics is not because it is inherently evil but because contemporary political practice tends to justify any means to achieve an end (Machiavellism)—a practice far from Islamic teachings' principles. In this context P2, an informant from Salafi, said:

"... not rejecting, because, in fact, there is politics in Islam. However, they cannot participate because the current implementation of politics is far from Islamic guidelines. Politics that exists today is full of slander, mutual hatred, etc., which, we can see, tends to cause divisions that Allah does not like. However, according to Islamic guidelines, if there is already a leader, it is obligatory to obey in *ma'rūf* [good] matters. As such, demonstrations, let alone insulting the leader, are hated in Islam. *Wallāh a'lam* [only God knows]"

As for the permissibility to participate in politics, it is more because it is considered "dangerous" if Muslims do not participate. One case that can be referred to is the political role of the Salafi view (*manhaj*) based on the opinion of Ustad Firanda Andirja. He published a *fatwā* (advice) on the website related to the April 9 2014 Election. Ustad Firanda (2014) delivered a fatwa from Dr. Saad Asy-Syitsri in the 2014 Election.

"... Based on the fatwas of the great scholars who have profound views, high fiqh [understanding], and piety to Allah, such as Shaykh bin Baz, Shaykh al-'Uthaimin, and Shaykh al-

Bani *rāḥimahullāh*, as well as the *fatwā* of the Great Ulama of Medina, Shaykh Abdul Muhsin al-'Abbad *ḥafīzahullāh*, as well as several other scholars whom we had asked for advice from, we followed the advice of these scholars to encourage Muslims to participate in voting in elections, as a practice of fiqh rules *irtikāb akhāfu ḍararain* [take the lightest harm], especially considering the country's condition, which is worrying. After that, we discussed and decided to encourage Muslims to do the following: 1) If you know the best candidate who favors the Sunnah and defends Islam's interests, vote for that candidate. 2) Be aware of the Christian, Shi'a, and liberal candidates, even if they are from an Islamic Party."

So according to the above *fatwa*, P1, the informant from the Salafi said:

"If a voter does not know the candidates, voting for the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera - PKS) is advisable. Although we continue to declare that democracy is forbidden, after all, PKS—with all its shortcomings—remains a party that is expected to contribute to Islam and Muslims. However, Muslim voters need to be aware of Shi'a and non-Muslim candidates."

Political activities are divided into two types. The first type is practical politics to secure a seat in the parliament. This action is unjustified for the seeker of knowledge because carrying out teachings to fellow humans and returning to Allah is more significant than being busy with politics. Also, politics plunges the participants into a pit of actions and morals that do not follow the identity of a knowledge seeker, who is supposed to be an educator and protector of all. In other words, the politics in a democratic system has many aspects that contradict the Sharia and the ulema's opinions, both in its foundation and structure.

The second type of politics is voting, which could be considered "the lesser of two evils."

Unlike the first type, which aims solely for a worldly advantage to secure a seat in the parliament, participating in elections could be considered less harmful. There is nothing wrong with action as long as it provides a benefit to help people return to Allah (Ali 2019; Suryana 2024; Syakir 2014).

The views of these Sunnah scholars and clerics became the rationale for followers of Manhaj Salafi to participate in practical politics, such as voting in general elections, both for the legislative and presidential elections. The *fatwā* explicitly states three propositions. First, practical politics or the desire for power contains more *muḍarat* [harmful elements] than benefits. Politics can damage a person's morals because it may force a person to violate religious law. Second, participation in elections is needed if, in the opinion of the Salafi scholars, the political condition jeopardizes the *ummah*'s well-being. In other words, if the conditions are safe, then there is no obligation for Muslims (especially the Salafi congregation) to participate in practical politics. Third, knowledge seekers are not allowed to enter political affairs. It is more critical for Islamic students to take care of the affairs of *da'wah* and religious knowledge.

According to Wiktorowicz and Meijer in Martin van Bruinessen (2014), this apolitical Salafi is categorized as pure Salafi. In the context of Middle Eastern Salafi, there are three types of Salafi, namely pure Salafi, *ḥarakah* [political activist] Salafi, and *jihādi* Salafi. Political Salafis are those who intersect with the ideas of the Muslim brotherhood and are always critical of political authority. Meanwhile, the *jihādi* Salafi is represented by the Al-Qaeda movement.

Genealogically, the apolitical group in Indonesia is affiliated with the Abu Nida group.

Martin van Bruinessen (2014), strengthened by Arifin (2015), reported that many students returned home in the early 1990s from studies in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Ja'far Ummah Talib and Abu Nida led two competing groups. Abu Nida received financial support from a wealthy foundation in Kuwait, while Ja'far sought allies locally. Ja'far created the Communication Forum of Ahlussunah wal Jama'ah (FKAWJ), which in 2000 turned into Laskar Jihad and took part in defending Muslims in the conflict in Maluku. After 2002, Laskar Jihad returned to the *da'wah* and apolitical format. Meanwhile, from the beginning, Abu Nida was not interested in politics.

Political attitudes are also seen in the relationship between the Salafi members and *Ulil Amri* [the government]. Salafi's view emphasizes obedience to Allah, the Prophet, and *Ulil Amri* (QS. al-Nisā': 59). According to informant P4 (the caretaker of Al-Mukaramah Islamic Boarding School), *Manhaj* Salafi prioritizes utility and benefits. In addition to not getting into practical politics, the Salafi view also avoids clashes with fellow Muslims and the government. Furthermore, the informant stated:

"Salafi *da'wah* always avoids opinions that offend and target individuals. We are only *muqallid* [followers of knowledge] who prefer to follow the scholars who refer to the opinions and interpretation of the Companions. It is not in our capacity to give *fatwas* or determine laws discussed by previous *imams* (*mujtahid*, *muttabi*', and *muqallid*). The development of Salafi in Pontianak City is progressing, as seen by the number of them coming to study meetings in the mosques. Salafi is not an organization with a structure. Still, among people who understand Salafi or Salafi figures, many have established foundations in independent forms focusing on society and religion, not politics."

P1, P2, and P5 in similar sentences expressed that Salafi's view rejects disobedience, let alone acting against the government, as long as the government does not destroy or attack the Sharia. Even if the leader is a non-Muslim, as long as there is no significant threat to Muslims, we are still obliged to obey. Even demonstrations are prohibited under Islamic law because such methods cause more harm than benefits.

Therefore, the relationship between the Salafi members and the government in Pontianak City is relatively good. The government has never intervened in the dissemination of Salafi teachings, and many City Government employees have also become members of the Salafi movement. The *Manhaj* Salafi events are held in various mosques in Pontianak City. P1 stated: "... there has never been questioning by the authorities, let alone being disbanded. The *daurah* [learning/training event] is conducted openly, not exclusively, so anyone can attend."

Another indicator of the relationship between the Salafi congregation and the government is seen in the licensing process for establishing madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and foundations. To date, the licensing process has been straightforward. As discussed in the previous section, Salafi groups independently build Islamic boarding schools, foundations, and cooperatives. Had there been objections to the doctrine or teachings of the Salafi, there would probably be restrictions on the licensing of these institutions.

Their obedience to the government fosters good relations between the Salafi movement in Pontianak. According to the Salafi doctrine, obedience to the leader is obligatory, even if the leader is from non-Muslim circles. A leader must be obeyed as long as they do not restrict or

attack the Sharia. Therefore, all forms of disobedience, such as demonstrations against the government, are also prohibited in Salafi doctrine. One of the references to the Salafi scholars is from Shaykh Salih al-Fauzan and Al-Hafidz Ibn Hajar *rahimahullāh* (n.d.).

Outsider Groups' Reaction to the Salafi Da'wah Model

The outsider groups in this study are everyone else who does not follow the Salafi movement but either directly or indirectly interacts with the Salafi members, especially the mosque clerics and the *daurah* congregations. Their reactions to the Salafi vary according to their knowledge, with some very peripheral and others profound.

What is sometimes conspicuous and attracts the attention of outsiders is how Salafi groups dress and perform daily worship. In Pontianak City, there are around 346 mosques and 439 mushalla [smaller places of worship] (BPS Kota Pontianak 2021), most of which practice Sunni Islam. Among the traditions of Sunni Islam are the recitation of *tarhīm* before the call to prayer; the *imām* reciting the *dhikr* and prayer aloud after the five daily congregational prayers; and a mosque that continues with *ṣalawāt* while shaking hands to form a *halaqah*. Then, the Subuh prayer is followed by the recitation of the *qunut* prayer. In many mosques, Friday nights are for recitation activities, such as reciting the *ṣalawāt* together and the surah Yasin and *tahlīl*. As for the Salafi members, they do not practice these traditions because, according to them, there is no guidance in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

It concerns the outsiders, as they assume that if this doctrine develops or becomes mainstream in mosques or mushallas, the places of worship will be empty because everything is done

separately. According to P7, based on his experience as a lecturer, the informant has never had a direct or indirect conflict with a Salafi group. However, he admits that some mosque administrators have warned of having no *imām* or *mu'azzin* [callers of prayers]. The concern is that should the Salafi group take over and become imams, then some customs in the mosque will no longer be continued.

It is an interesting phenomenon—although there is no open rejection of the Salafi congregation, there are concerns, albeit not expressed explicitly. People worry that if members of Salafi join a mosque, they will make some changes, causing hegemony over the mosque with Salafi views. Salafis are not only suspected of wanting to purify worship practices that are considered heretical (*taṣfiyah*) but may also limit the opportunities for clerics with different interpretations.

P5, a Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board member of West Kalimantan, stated that he is no longer welcome at the Muhammadiyah Mosque (Al-Furqan Mosque). He suspects this is due to strong opposition from individuals affiliated with the Salafi movement, who view him as too liberal. P5 emphasized that the disagreement is not rooted in the core teachings, as there are many shared religious principles between Muhammadiyah and the Salafi. The divergence lies in interpretative approaches. However, he expressed concern that exclusive restrictions may lead to hegemonic control.

This hegemonic shift could occur for several reasons, one of which, according to Ustadz Samsul Hidayat, is because the mosque *ta'mir* [clerics] probably did not take care of the mosque. It opens up opportunities for other parties to enter. It has happened in Muham-

madiyah mosques, where Salafis take over the Muhammadiyah administration. However, it has not significantly affected Muhammadiyah's thoughts or *manhaj*.

There are also complaints from several other mosques in Pontianak City. Even some of the Salafi congregants are aware of it. According to informant UFA, there are complaints from the clerics regarding the dominance of the Salafi at the mosque. Then, there are concerns about hegemony or the influence of teachings, which are considered exclusive (the tendency to consider the most correct and by the guidance of the Prophet). There are also complaints about the cleanliness of the mosque, and there has been a deliberate attempt to replace the mosque's *imām*.

The informant, P5, confirmed that several mosques complained about the hegemonic tendencies of the view of the Salafi congregation, as happened to the Wan Sagaf Mosque and the Batara 4 Kota Baru Mosque. However, the most worrying complaint is about the allegation of *bid'ah* to the practice of Muslims, which sometimes angers outsider groups.

According to P3, an informant from Salafi, the concerns raised by outsiders about friction in certain mosques, including the Raudhah Mosque, Nurul Hidayah, Wan Sagaf Mosque, and others, were acknowledged by Salafi members. However, he explained that these frictions stem from misunderstandings rather than significant issues related to religious interpretation. The differences are mainly technical. Salafi members are mindful of their presence; for instance, when they hold a *daurah* in a mosque, they refrain from taking up the *imām* position and the first three rows behind him to allow the mosque's regular *imām* to lead prayers. P3 further highlighted that despite these misunderstandings, Salafi members are still permitted to

hold *daurah* in mosques previously considered contentious, such as in the Raudhah and Nurul Hidayah mosques, demonstrating that no significant conflicts have arisen.

Potential for Horizontal Conflict Between the Salafi and the Mosque Congregations

The potential for horizontal conflict over religious views may arise when a new religious ideology encounters conventional beliefs and practices. In this context, conflict refers to the incompatibility caused by differing perspectives, beliefs, and approaches to religion. These differences can escalate from disagreements and polarization to violent confrontations (Fisher 2000). Field data on the development of the Salafi's view suggests that there is a possibility for conflict between communities as these divergent views emerge.

This incident occurred at the Ar Raudhah Mosque on BLKI Street, Pontianak City. Chronologically, a Salafi *daurah* is typically held after the Maghrib prayer in the congregation. The congregation will gather at the front, surrounding the Ustadz. The mosque congregants who do not attend the *daurah* usually go straight home after praying, including the elderly. The usual *daurah* lasts until the Isha prayer. At the time of the Isha prayer, the congregation usually still gathers at the front. After the *daurah* is completed, the congregation immediately takes a position, filling the rows in front. It is what the elderly congregants complain about, who usually fill the rows in front behind the *imām*.

Finally, they submitted a complaint to the mosque's management, accompanied by various other reasons, such as cleanliness issues. Based on the complaint, the mosque's

management responded to the matter, but it did not result in disbandment. There is an issue stating that the congregation disbands the Salafi *daurah*. P1 said:

“This is untrue. Until now, they have been allowed to conduct *daurah* at the Raudhah Mosque. In my view, the complaints are more about technical issues, not the content of the *da'wah* carried out by Salafi members.”

Regarding the content, it seems that both parties have mutual respect for the differences because the Salafis are also well aware that when they use the mosque's space for *daurah*, there is an unwritten provision not to take the position of the *imām* and three rows behind the *imām*.

A similar incident also happened at the Nurul Hidayah Wan Sagaf Mosque. There were complaints from the congregation regarding the *daurah* held at the mosque. According to informant (P6):

“The congregation raised concerns primarily about the ideology promoted by the Salafis, who often prohibit and label as heresy the religious practices of non-Salafi groups. Additionally, complaints involved the Salafis taking over the management of the mosque, such as being administrators of the mosque, preachers, and imams.”

According to P6, the Nurul Hidayah Wan Sagaf Mosque's management has been taken over by a Salafi group. The Salafi members have dominated the management of the mosque for approximately eight years. Since then, some customs in the mosque have been diminishing, such as the *dhikr* after prayers, *adhan* that is now only called once without “*ma'ashiral*”, prayer between two sermons that is no longer performed, imams never coming from other than the Salafi congregation, the majority of Friday preachers being chosen from those who

agree with them. Aside from the Salafi *daurah*, only one *majlis ta'lim* remains active, led by Ustadz Hadran Faloga. After about eight years, the previous management, which included the mosque's heirs, was replaced. Eventually, a new chairman and secretary, who were not affiliated with the Salafis, were elected, and they worked to revive the mosque's traditional practices.

Complaints against the Salafis extend beyond technical matters like hygiene issues. There are also concerns about the substance of their teachings, particularly their tendency to easily label certain practices as heretical and condemn them to hell. The exclusivity of Salafi ideology is another source of frustration for the broader congregation, contributing to their disappointment with the Salafi group.

Salafi members denied some of these accusations. They are tolerant and understand the complaints. They also stated that they are not exclusive, proven by the *daurah*, which is carried out openly and welcomes anyone. The exclusivity perceived by outsiders mainly relates to religious views, where those outside the Salafi view are considered heretical, and only *daurah* from Sunnah religious teachers is accepted. It has been seen in mosques like Raudhah and Nurul Hidayah, yet it has not led to prolonged conflict. The Salafi members are still allowed to conduct *daurah* at these mosques.

Another case occurred at the Al-Furqan Mosque, the Muhammadiyah Mosque. The informant, P5, one of the preachers and Regional Executive Board of the West Kalimantan Muhammadiyah, reported this. His name was crossed out as a preacher at the mosque because he was accused of being a liberal Muslim. He believed this reasoning was artificial, as Muhammadiyah is not anti-rational. While there are ideological similarities between Salafi and

Muhammadiyah, fundamental differences remain, such as Muhammadiyah's rejection of a purely textual interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah. For example, Muhammadiyah rejects ankle-length pants (*ithbal*) and beards (*lihyah*).

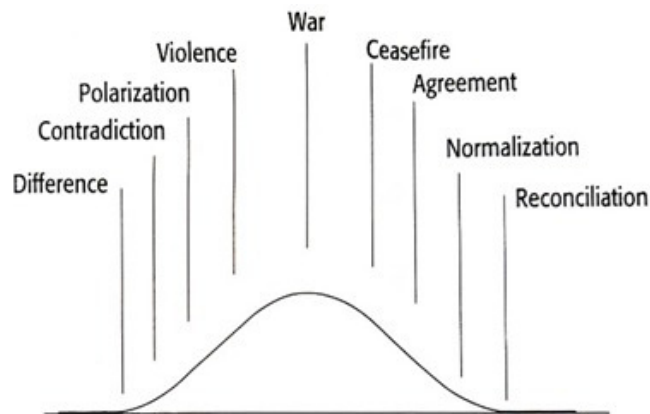
Later, upon verification, it was revealed that the accusations of liberalism against him originated from a cleric suspected to be affiliated with the Salafi movement. In other words, the clerics at the Al-Furqan Mosque, affiliated with Muhammadiyah, have been infiltrated by individuals connected to the Salafi movement. Initially identified as RS, this individual received a complaint from the management of the Muwahidin Mosque located on KH. Wahid Hasyim Street. This incident occurred on July 12, 2019, at Maghrib; the mosque management were forced to disperse the study group of Ustadz RS for the sake of the ummah. This dispersal was

based on the formal letter of the Management of the Muwahiddin Mosque.

These are some examples of friction that arose in several mosques in Pontianak City related to the presence of the Salafi congregation. However, this friction has not led to physical violence; once it is not resolved well, violence will rise (Fisher 2000; Galtung 1973, 1996; Galtung and Fischer 2013). This friction will continue to occur because the *daurah* of the Salafi group is held from mosque to mosque. It meant they would interact with the Pontianak community with different cultures and ways of worship.

Referring to the curve of conflict (Figure1), there is an escalation of conflict between the Salafi community and Muslims in Pontianak. Table 2 shows how the escalation proceeded.

Figure 1.
Conflict Escalation



Source: Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2005)

Table 2
Level of Conflict Between Salafi and Pontianak Muslim

Level	Salafi Muslim in Pontianak
Differences	Daily performance: short trousers, specific cap Religious practices: Religious community Terminology used by Salafi groups
Contradiction	Domination, Complaint, rejection
Polarization	Public images on the Salafi group The more institutions identified by Muslims in general as the institutions attached to the Salafi movement

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 2, it can be assumed that the conflict between Salafi group and local Muslim is on the level of polarization or concentration. The more Islamic boarding schools and religious foundations that carry the concept of Salafi, the practices of the *daurah* which is still shows dominance of Salafi members, and specific terms attached to religious teachers as ustadz Sunnah make the Salafi group alienated from the local Muslim.

This research in line to the study of Saroglou (2016), which found that conflict in many countries is triggered by religious fundamentalism in some areas mentioned. It is not like the finding of Ray and Esteban (2017), that conflict mostly triggered by economy, the polarization of the Salafi group and Pontianak Muslim was stimulated by the different religious belief and practices. In accordance to the view of Galtung (1973) and Fisher (2000) that whatever interest belong to person or community may become the source of conflict. It may be gender (Elizabeth et al. 2023), agrarian conflict (Dhiaulhaq and McCarthy 2020), and politics between countries (Druce and Baikoeni 2016).

The dynamics of conflict between Salafi and the outsiders is in the position of polarization,

and this is not yet apparent. However, if polarization becomes more exclusive, it will potentially escalate into violence (Fisher 2000; Galtung 1973). The Salafi group regards the traditional groups as 1) lowering the role of revelation rather than a reason by using *Ijma* and *Qias*; 2) contextual interpretation is considered to cause the rise of *bid'ah* and *khurafāt* behavior in worship. Non-Salafi Islamic groups reacted strongly to the Salafi views.

The impact of this opposition was mass anger. The community organized demonstrations and closed places of worship, forcing the Salafi da'wah to stop its activities.. To prevent the recurrence of such incidents, both community leaders and the government must recognize the potential for polarization. It can be achieved by fostering awareness and respecting differing beliefs [*tasāmuḥ*]. Additionally, religious ideologies that oppose others should not be propagated openly.

Conclusion

The Salafi movement in Pontianak is a religious movement with general and specific characteristics, similar to this one. With the socio-religious context in Pontianak, which has

traditional characteristics, the people of Pontianak actually have a fairly high level of acceptance. However, differences in religion, coupled with religious practices that take place in traditional Muslim groups' places of worship, give rise to conflict.

This study is a study of the religious phenomenon of a group in a specific social, cultural, and religious context. With the existing social, cultural, and religious diversity, this study has weaknesses, namely the limitations of its scope and approach.

These limitations certainly provide space for other researchers to conduct studies on the Salafi religious group within the Salafi diversity itself and the social, cultural, and religious context of the society in which the Salafi group lives and develops. The diversity of studies with various conditions of different communities in socio-cultural contexts and religions will certainly enrich the body of knowledge regarding religious groups.[]

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