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Pragmatism of doctrine: Salafi political discourse in digital spaces

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Article Info

Abstract

This research focuses on the political narratives of the Salafi (quietist) network in digital spaces such as YouTube and official Instagram accounts of Salafi scholars. The political narratives of the Salafi network are positioned to demonstrate the pragmatism of their doctrines in responding to the national political landscape. The study utilizes a virtual ethnography approach, gathering information and data from the social media accounts of Salafi scholars such as @DzulqarnainMS, @ElGadda, @FirandaAndirjaOfficial, @RodjaTV, and @khalidbasalamah. The analysis tool Nvivo 12 is also employed to aid in the transcription and coding of data. Several key findings are recorded in this study. Firstly, the political stance of the Salafi network is grounded in the doctrine of total obedience to ulil amri, applied rigidly. This doctrine of obedience is crucial in interpreting the relationship between Salafis and the state (politics). Secondly, the doctrine of total obedience to leaders does not apply in the context of democracy. Despite democracy being established as a legitimate system of governance, Salafi scholars consistently provide negative responses, always in opposition to Islamic law. Thirdly, the political narratives of the Salafi network are more extensive on social media, leveraging strategic national issues and positioning themselves as legitimizers of power.

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Introduction

The political stance of the Salafi group, which is not singular and fragmented, indicates the presence of doctrinal pragmatism within the Salafi community. Internal conflicts within Salafism and national socio-political demands drive them to dynamically and contextually position Salafi doctrines. Despite Salafis sharing a similar religious approach, they exhibit different interpretations regarding politics and contemporary conditions. Internal divisions within Salafism are based on differences in interpretation and contextual analysis rather than variations in beliefs (tauhid). All Salafis share the same belief (aqidah), emphasizing tauhid and rejecting the role of human rationality in understanding Islamic sources. However, the application of these beliefs involves contextual considerations related to socio-political conditions (Wiktorowicz, 2006).

Academics tend to categorize Salafis into three main groups: jihadi, political, and quietist/puritan (Haykel, 2009; Rabil, 2014; Wiktorowicz, 2006), distinguished by ideological and methodological differences, particularly concerning the Salafi group's relationship with the state, political authorities, and the use of violence (Collombier, 2020). In the Indonesian context, Salafi factions are also divided into several networks, with the disbandment of Laskar Jihad considered a starting point for internal divisions within Indonesian Salafism. Sunarwoto (2016), in his writing on Salafi preaching on the radio, illustrates the grouping within Salafi networks: the Luqman Baabduh network, Rodja network, Abu Turob network, and Dzulqarnain network. Meanwhile, Krismono (2017), in his analysis of Salafi ideology and political policies, divides Salafis into three factions: reformist Salafis, rejectionist Salafis (puritan, quietist, passive), and Salafi jihadis. The differing categorizations of Salafis in academic discourse indicate that the Salafi groups are undergoing dynamic developments. Therefore, an accurate, contextual, and comprehensive understanding is needed to grasp the movements and nuances within Salafism.

So far, research on the Salafi movement tends to focus on data exploration through literature and observation, while digital data related to Salafi discourse and activism is still relatively limited. The widespread presence of Salafism is closely related to their intensity in occupying digital spaces, both on websites and social media. Previous research tendencies can be classified into two categories. First, many studies have paid attention to the political existence of Salafism and its relationship with state authorities (Chaplin, 2021; Collombier, 2020; Krismono, 2017; Heurman, 2020). Krismono (2017), for example, shows that conflicts and internal disputes within Salafism originate from the diverse application of Salafi doctrines in Saudi Arabia, resulting in different approaches to state ideology. Second, studies that emphasize the authority and identity of Salafism, some focusing on Salafi media (Masduki et al., 2022; Sunarwoto, 2016), while others focus on educational institutions (Rohmaniyah & Woodward, 2012). Masduki et al. (2022), for example, point out that radio plays a crucial role in strengthening Salafi identity in the public sphere, although the struggle for this identity tends to be fragmented.

This research complements the shortcomings of existing studies by examining how political narratives are produced by Salafi groups in the digital space, which has implications for the implementation of doctrines in the national context. Due to the complexity of the Salafi network, the author adopts the Salafi typology from Sunarwoto (2016) and pays more attention to the Quietist Salafi network. According to Chaplin (2021), this type of Salafi tends to avoid political involvement and formal, hierarchical organizations, and their discourse obsessively focuses on monotheism and correct ritual practices rather than social and political issues. However, other facts indicate that the Albani network, as a representation of Quietist Salafi, actively and consistently addresses political issues (Olidort, 2015). Specifically, this research addresses how Quietist Salafi responds to politics and national policies in the digital space and how Salafi groups position their doctrines in the national social-political context. A profound understanding of the Salafi movement in the digital space provides an alternative perspective for understanding contemporary Islamic political activism.

The Salafi political activism in Indonesia is neither singular nor rigid but tends to be pragmatic. The transnational religious insights embraced by Salafi groups compel them to adapt to domestic social and political conditions. These adaptation efforts have been relatively successful, considering the extensive development of Salafi networks in major cities in Indonesia. The social capital, economic resources, and religious credibility they acquire push them to engage in politics, something that was previously considered taboo. Therefore, this research aims to comprehensively examine the political attitudes of Salafi groups in the digital space, such as their official websites and social media. Furthermore, this study emphasizes and ensures the pragmatism of Salafi doctrines from the political narratives produced in the digital realm.

Literature Review

Salafism Typology

Based on various studies, Salafi politics is realized differently in many countries according to social and cultural contexts. This has led many academics to classify Salafi groups into three factions: political Salafis, Salafi jihadis, and Salafi puritans (Haykel, 2009; Rabil, 2014; Wiktorowicz, 2006). Although Salafis share a similar approach to religious law, they often have different interpretations of politics and contemporary issues (Wiktorowicz, 2006). In other words, understanding the political stance of Salafi groups is key to comprehending the disputes among them. According to Sunarwoto (2021), Salafi competition is driven by the ambition to demonstrate religious identity and authority.

The political foundation of Salafism is based on doctrines that simultaneously serve as their main identity. These include making the generation of salaf al-shalih a role model in purifying missions, opposing religious innovation, prioritizing the teachings of tawhid (rububiyyah, uluhiyyah, and asma wa shifat), limiting legal sources to the Quran, hadiths, and the consensus of the companions, and using a textualist approach in interpreting theological texts (Haykel, 2009).

Political Salafis (haraki) apply Salafi ideology in politics to achieve the Islamic vision grounded in Sharia law, pursued through political channels. Some studies explain that Haraki Salafis view politics as a means to disseminate and defend doctrines, making them more accommodating to secular government systems and democracy (Gauvain, 2013; Heurman, 2020; Wahid, 2014). Meanwhile, Salafi jihadis advocate for a theocratic vision through violence, framing the interpretation of jihad as a means to realize their political ambitions (Kepel, 2006). Identity struggles and power contests are crucial domains in the Salafi jihadi network, as demonstrated in several studies (Al-Sarhan, 2015; Fitzgerald, 2016; Hegghammer, 2013). Additionally, Salafi jihadis also pay significant attention to the global anti-Shiite movement, prompting them to expand worldwide (Haykel, 2010; Steinberg, 2009; Wagemakers, 2020).

Salafi puritans (quietists) emphasize the spread of Islam without violence, through education and religious purification. They view politics as a disturbance and innovation (bid'ah) (Rabil, 2014). However, some studies indicate that Salafi puritans are not always anti-political; at certain moments, they are also involved in politics (Bonnefoy, 2018; Collombier, 2020; Olidort, 2015). This research places more focus on this type of Salafi and their political narratives in the digital space. The complex and continually evolving Salafi networks require accurate interpretation. More specifically, this study adopts the Salafi classification proposed by Sunarwoto (2016) as it is more relevant in the context of Indonesia.

Salafi and Politics

Understanding the dynamics and complexity of Salafi groups requires fundamental variables as preconditions to comprehend the causes. Salafi groups in Indonesia have undergone significant transformation since the global expansion three decades ago by Saudi Arabia (Hasan, 2010) Salafi networks are fragmented into several factions and tend to be dynamic. Therefore, comprehending Salafi networks becomes highly complicated if relying solely on old classifications, such as Salafi Yamani and Non-Yamani. Moreover, Salafi networks are heavily influenced by the socio-political aspects of a country in contextualizing their teachings. Additionally, the dominance of Salafi groups in the digital space, asserting authority and mobilizing masses, further confirms the complexity of Salafism. Therefore, the social movement approach proposed by Wald et al. (2005) seems relevant for addressing the issues in this research.

Wald et al. (2005) suggest that for religious ideas to manifest into political action, at least three conditions are necessary. First, religious groups must consider political action as a sacred duty. In general, Salafis identify political identity with religious obligation, positioning religion and politics as an inseparable entity. Second, the utilization of various internal resources. Salafi groups extensively use digital platforms to disseminate religious narratives. The digital realm serves as a Salafi resource to win the battle for religious authority and, simultaneously, leverage political policies. Third, understanding the political situations and conditions that may hinder these efforts. Furthermore, Wald et al. (2005) also emphasize understanding the motives, means, and opportunities in political activism; the motives underlying religious groups in political actions, the means that enable effective religious participation, and the opportunities that facilitate their entry into the political system.

Attitudes and political narratives of Salafi individuals in the digital space represent the interaction between ideology and local structures. Ibrahim (2018) states that the interaction between ideology and locality, including political opportunities, resources, and the framing of aspirations, signifies the presence of political contestation within Islam. Academics commonly employ social movement theories, such as the theory of political opportunities, framing processes, and resource mobilization, to study Islamic movements (Wiktorowicz, 2006). These theories are utilized to analyze the contestation of political narratives among Salafi groups and how Salafi doctrines are engaged in dialogue with the continuously changing socio-political conditions, as well as the potential orientation of these doctrines towards a more pragmatic approach. Although the data in this research are sourced online or digitally, the analysis employed remains grounded in a real understanding of the anatomy and movement of Salafism.

Methodology

The research employs a virtual ethnography approach. The goal of virtual ethnography is to present specific conceptions related to the urgency and impact of internet utilization. As part of the qualitative method, the virtual

ethnography approach is directed towards studying discourse and communication on internet platforms (Kozinets, 2022).

The object of this research is the official websites and social media of Salafi groups. Therefore, the researcher exclusively utilizes data from online platforms to be subsequently studied and analyzed in accordance with the research focus. Salafi websites include firanda.com, yufid.com, and dewanfatwa.com, while social media data are collected from Instagram accounts and YouTube channels of Salafi scholars such as @DzulqarnainMS, @ElGadda, @FirandaAndirjaOfficial, @RodjaTV, and @khalidbasalamah. Data collection is not limited to official Salafi websites and social media but also includes other media directly or indirectly related to the political stance of Salafi groups.

Data analysis employs the interactive model by Miles & Huberman (2007), beginning with systematic data collection and organization. Subsequently, data reduction involves abstracting and establishing a conceptual framework regarding the political narratives of Salafi groups. Data presentation is carried out by parsing and classifying data, allowing for data summarization and verification. In the final stage, data interpretation involves utilizing social movement theory. Data analysis in this research uses the QSR Nvivo 12 software. The use of this software ensures the accuracy and consistency of data during the coding process, minimizing researcher subjectivity. Online data are transcribed, and the messages contained in the data are traced based on three themes: Salafi doctrines, Salafi typologies, and political attitudes.

Results

Doctrine of Obedience to Leaders

Salafi quietists are considered to consistently limit themselves in practical politics. They tend to obediently follow whatever political policies the state formulates, even providing full legitimacy and support to government decisions. This attitude is grounded in one of the most crucial principles they uphold: total obedience to the ruler (ulu al-amr). This principle sharply distinguishes them from Salafi jihadis, harakis, and other Islamists in dealing with the state.

This research focuses on Salafi quietist or purist scholars determined based on their influence and intensity in the online world. Observations of their videos indicate that the political stance of Salafi groups is based on the doctrine of strict obedience to ulu al-amr. The Salafi scholars who are the subjects of this research can be seen in the following Table 1:

The doctrine of obedience is key to understanding the relationship between Salafis and the state (politics). Obedience to the government even becomes the determinant of authority and the claim to true Salafism. Labels such as ahlulbid'ah, khawarij, kafir, and thaghut are directed at those who contradict this doctrine. In other words, if someone opposes the doctrine of obedience, their Salafi identity may be questioned. As expressed by Riyadh Bajrey in one study titled "Understanding the Concept of Listening and Obedience," as follows:

> *"'Al-tha'ah wa al-sam'u, we all understand obeying the ruler in matters that do not contradict the principles and established rules of Sharia. When orders and directives contradict the principles of Sharia, we apologize, seek excuses, and cannot comply with them. However, in general, we still maintain listening and obedience, not using it as a reason to rebel and deny all their orders. Unlike the* **khawarij** *and others, when there is even one point that contradicts Sharia law, it becomes an argument to reject all government orders and rebel against the ruler. We do not do that, as in the concept of obeying parents"*
>
> (Riyadh Bajrey, October 23, 2021, @elgadda)

The doctrine of obedience to leaders is not absolute. It requires obedience to a government that calls to what is good (ma'ruf) and does not involve evil or sin. Nevertheless, they do not justify rebellion and resistance against a tyrannical ruler or a government that promotes evil. Yazid bin Abdul Qadir Jawas, in one of his videos on the Rodja TV account (November 18, 2020), explained this in detail, emphasizing that one of the principles of ahlussunnah is the obligation to obey the leaders of the Muslim community, as long as the leader does not command sin or sinful acts. Even if the leader commits unjust actions, the principle of obedience still applies. The tyranny or mistakes of the leader are caused by the tyranny or mistakes of the people he leads. In other words, a tyrannical leader is a consequence of the unjust behavior of his people.

Table 1 Youtube Accounts of Salafi Ustaz (quietist) and Subscribers until 20 July 2023

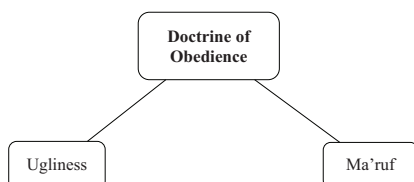| Salafi Ustaz	Youtube Account	Subscriber
Dzulqarnain MS	@DzulqarnainMS	268 thousand
Riyadh Bajrey	@ElGadda	58.6 thousand
Firanda Andirja	@FirandaAndirjaOfficial	668 thousand
Yazid Jawas	@RodjaTV	528 thousand
Khalid Basalamah	@khalidbasalamah	2.6 million

Figure 1 Classification of doctrines of obedience

Salafis under the Shadow of Democracy

The doctrine of complete obedience to the leader does not apply to the governing system in this country, namely, democracy. Although democracy has been accepted as a legal system and form of governance, Salafi scholars still provide negative responses and objections, even conflicting with Islamic law. Their responses are detailed in the following Table 2:

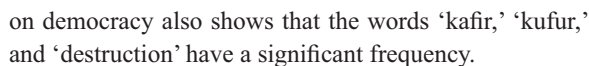In their view, democracy is opposed to Islamic law, and the term 'kafir' is used to criticize the democratic system. The 'word cloud' generated from their speeches on democracy also shows that the words 'kafir,' 'kufur,' and 'destruction' have a significant frequency.

Figure 2 Frequency of the word 'democracy' (50 Frequent Words)

Table 2 Salafi Ustaz's response to democracy

No.	Ustaz Names	Views on Democracy	Meaning
1	Dzulqarnain MS	Democracy is a system where the majority decides; if the majority votes for things that are forbidden, everything becomes permissible—adultery, drinking alcohol, engaging in LGBT activities—everything is allowed, as long as it has the majority's vote. In contrast, in the shura system, the members are experts with ideas and capacity. In democracy, anyone can enter, even those who are not experts. That's why you find artists, musicians, and even sorcerers participating in it.	Democracy legalises haram things
2	Riyadh Bajrey	Elections, including the product of democracy, are considered as laws from non-Muslims and not derived from Allah but created by non-Muslims. This needs to be agreed upon first. Participating in democratic elections is seen as an act of disbelief (kufur). Thus, scholars of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah unanimously agree that Muslims are prohibited from participating in an event considered as an act of disbelief. This consensus is known as ijma. Therefore, participating in such an event is fundamentally an act of disbelief. I am discussing the perspective of Ahlus Sunnah, not the views of groups that allow any means to gain power, regardless of their nature.	Democracy is a *kafir* product
3	Firanda Andirja	We know that democracy is a legal system not originating from Islam but adopted from outside Islam, originating from Greece. This means that truth is determined by the majority vote, laws made by the people for the people. Certainly, these are methods that are not in line with Islamic law due to the invalid customs present in democracy, such as equating all parties. There is no distinction between scholars and those who commit sins; a knowledgeable Quran memorizer is considered the same as a drunkard, and a person who frequents the mosque is deemed equal to someone who frequents bars. This is considered falsehood. Additionally, it generates legal rulings that are not derived from Islamic law, not from the Quran and Sunnah.	Democracy does not originate from Islam and is not in accordance with Islamic law
4	Yazid Jawas	Democracy is considered the greatest form of shirk (*syirkun akbar*), the major act of associating partners with God. It leads to destruction in matters of tawhid, faith, politics, and economics. If everyone adopts the democratic system, enormous amounts of money are spent on regional elections, how many trillions are wasted, whereas the Shura system does not incur such expenses.	Democracy is a great shirk (*syirk*)
5	Khalid Basalamah	The democratic system in Indonesia is chaotic and incoherent. This system allows anyone, whether stupid, intelligent, or even unbelievers, to win if they are strong. This is the wrong system.	Democracy is a wrong and distorted system

Discussion

Salafi scholars have a strict doctrine of obedience to leaders, but they vehemently reject the democratic system. This rejection is due to the incompatibility of democracy with Islamic law. The equalization of religious and social status in democracy is the aspect most contested by Salafi groups. The doctrine of obedience is not sufficient to make them fully accept a leader and his government. However, the doctrine of obedience to leaders is placed as a fundamental doctrine to legitimize the Salafi identity. Thus, they have a strong stance on obedience to leaders, but specifically reject the democratic system as a form of governance that does not align with the values and principles of Islam according to their understanding.

In this study, Salafi scholars are identified as "Salafi quietists" according to the terminology introduced by Wiktorowicz (2006). This type of Salafi has the characteristic of being apathetic toward political activities. They distance themselves from involvement in practical politics and focus more on non-violent methods in spreading their ideology, purifying religious understanding, and education (Sunarwoto, 2021). In other words, they tend to prioritize a peaceful approach in disseminating their views, avoid practical politics, and focus more on non-violent aspects in their efforts to spread teachings and purify religious understanding.

In Indonesia, the majority of Salafi groups tend to fall into the category of Salafi quietists or purists. However, it should be noted that an interesting development is occurring in Indonesia where they are becoming more actively involved in the political realm, even participating in the electoral process. This raises an important question in this research: whether there is a significant change in the views and attitudes held by Salafi groups in Indonesia. Wagemakers (2016) has made a significant contribution to understanding the dynamics of Salafi quietist groups. In his observation, Wagemakers divides these Salafi groups into three different subtypes in their approach to politics. First, there are pure Salafi groups that explicitly distance themselves from political affairs (aloofists). Second, pure Salafi groups that show strong loyalty to the government and support programs initiated by the government (loyalists). Lastly, pure Salafi groups that even promote the idea that having high loyalty to the government is an integral part of their faith and is also an obligation in obedience to the authorities (ulil amri). Thus, through the classification presented by Wagemakers, it can be understood that not all Salafi quietist groups have uniform political views; instead, there is variation in how they perceive involvement in political affairs and their relationship with the government.

The participation of Salafis in various government programs indicates their accommodation of the state. This accommodative attitude of Salafis is demonstrated by Sunarwoto in three issues: the democratic process, the national education curriculum, and anti-terrorism. For example, in the anti-terrorism and deradicalization campaigns, they pay special attention, but their involvement is not based on a national framework but rather on the global well-being of Muslims (Sunarwoto, 2020). Although in some respects pragmatic, the accommodative stance of Salafis can be understood as a manifestation of obedience to the leaders.

Despite disagreements with the government regarding democracy and elections, it does not lead them to resort to violence. They even acknowledge the authority of leaders elected through the democratic system (Wahid, 2014). The doctrinal obedience they hold dogmatically has shaped their stance to reject resistance efforts, violence, or rebellion against the legitimate government. This doctrine also makes their position and status relatively secure in the homeland.

The political activism of Salafi groups is carried out in an organized and systematic manner, contrasting with political Islamic groups like the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Hizb al-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), which tend to be more confrontational and direct. Digital spaces have become effective means for channeling political narratives. Besides being more cost-effective and rapidly reaching the public, digital media is also safer from direct conflicts. Therefore, since the early development of Salafi groups in Indonesia, digital spaces have been extensively and intensively utilized to propagate their fatwas and viewpoints. Kaptein (2004) mentions that widespread dissemination through various media allows fatwas to reach a broader and faster audience, influencing the perceptions and actions of Muslims and the general public regarding various issues addressed in those fatwas. Their concentration in digital spaces eventually gained them a large and devoted following, and their media outlets became popular religious references that rival, if not surpass, traditional scholars.

The involvement of Salafi groups in politics is motivated by various factors. The pursuit of religious authority and economic relations are among the motives that drive them to enter the political arena. Over approximately two decades of active engagement in preaching and education in Indonesia (Hasan, 2006), they have established sufficiently stable assets and networks, including Islamic boarding schools, mosques,

television and radio programs, publishing ventures, and business units. These assets and networks need to be maintained not only through religious influence but also through political mechanisms. In order to preserve their authority, assets, and networks, the motive for the involvement of Salafi groups in the political sphere can be understood.

This Salafi motive is reinforced by the means to channel religious views as their primary identity and commodity. Salafi groups predominantly utilize digital media in various forms as their means. The media tools owned by Salafi groups enable them to effectively engage in influencing public opinion while mobilizing the masses. The dominance of media and mass power ultimately provides them with access and opportunities in politics, both directly and indirectly. Therefore, as emphasized by Wald et al. (2005), the involvement of religious groups in political activism is always supported by motives, means, and opportunities that make it easier for them to participate in politics.

The increasing number of followers and growing public trust encourage them to participate in the democratic process, despite consistent statements from Salafi leaders rejecting democracy. This interesting fact is attributed, first, to the need to maintain their position and existence in Indonesia. Reflecting on the experiences of political Islamic groups (FPI and HTI) forced to disband and operate illegally, Salafi groups use this as a reference to accommodate government policies more. Second, it emphasizes Salafi identity. Involvement in the democratic process can be seen as an effort to distinguish themselves from other Salafi groups. This is related to the claims and authority disputes that occur within the internal Salafi community. Third, attracting public sympathy and creating a pro-NKRI image. Taking sides with the government and being loyal to NKRI become prerequisites for gaining sympathy and public support in Indonesia. The Indonesian society has historical trauma related to harsh and extremist religious groups, as seen in the Bali bombings of 2002. Understanding these historical facts is manifested by practicing peaceful and non-violent methods of proselytization, even though in other aspects, their religious perspective tends to overlook cultural aspects (Muhtarom, 2017). Thus, in practice, Salafi quietist groups actually adopt a more flexible or pragmatic view when dealing with national political dynamics. They tend to see democracy as a tool that can be used to achieve their goals, despite ideological differences or contradictions.

Furthermore, the acceptance of Salafi quietist/ purist towards the democratic process, according to

Sunarwoto (2020), is attributed to the strengthening of democracy and the nation-state. However, on the other hand, the government's strict policies against religious organizations that contradict the constitution could be the basis for Salafi preferences. Perppu Ormas No. 2 of 2017 is one of the regulations governing the movement of social organizations, providing a foundation for organizations to align with the spirit of Indonesian nationalism. This regulation is also considered by many to have the potential to be a tool of political power and undermine democracy (Ahmad et al., 2022). The existence of this regulation is one of the considerations for Salafi groups to accommodate, even legitimize, government policies. This stance is very similar to the Salafi-Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia, which consistently aligns with those in power. Their response to the 212 Rally for Islam (Aksi Bela Islam 212), among other things, confirms their firm stance, countering the phenomenal movement and launching narratives in defense of the rulers.

Nevertheless, Salafi leaders may not prominently engage in practical politics, but they are connected to political actors on a personal level. A militant and massive congregation undoubtedly becomes a plus point in the eyes of politicians. So far, the political activism of Salafi groups is challenging to identify because they operate without using specific organizational structures or institutions like other fundamentalist movements. They lack a distinctive organizational structure typical of general organizations, such as a clear hierarchy, a defined membership system, leader selection procedures, and administrative reporting (Adams, 2004). Therefore, the interpretation of the Salafi movement and its relation to the national political landscape will continue to evolve, especially since religious groups always play a determinant role in politics.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This article argued initially that there is pragmatism or a doctrinal paradox within the Salafi group (quietist) in responding to national politics. The Salafi group is typically associated with rejecting all forms of political activity, focusing instead on preaching and education. Findings in this research indicate a change in the Salafi group's stance, which has become more accommodating toward politics. One aspect of this change is evident in the Salafi group's involvement in democracy and general elections. Their accommodating attitude toward politics is understood as a manifestation of the doctrine of

obedience to ulil amri. Additionally, this choice of stance is also motivated by existential interests. Established preaching networks and substantial social capital need to be preserved by accommodating various government policies.

The Salafi group intensively amplifies political narratives in digital spaces. They possess a massive media network and dominate the contestation of religious discourse. This advantage is utilized by the Salafi group to propagate political narratives and legitimize authority. Although many of their religious beliefs diverge from mainstream Islam, often causing controversy within society, their avoidance of confrontation with authority allows for their relatively secure existence.

The Salafi movement and its evolving connection with politics necessitate a multidimensional and comprehensive approach. This research suggests considering the motives, means, and opportunities of each religious movement in political activism to achieve research accuracy. Furthermore, it is crucial to examine religious movements and their relationship with the use of digital space, as the tendency and dependence of society on online media have a significant impact on religious behavior. Like the Salafi, the digital realm has become a primary resource for promoting religious agendas and influencing political actions that support their views. This reflects how information and communication technology has transformed the way religious groups operate and interact with society and government in the digital era.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Fundings

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