



**THE DYNAMICS OF SALAFISM IN PEKANBARU:
FROM DEPRIVED MUSLIMS TO A COMMUNITY
OF MEMORY**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother, whose love and support, and to my father, whose unceasing encouragement enabled me to travel in this academic as well as 'spiritual' journey.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted, either in full or in part, for any other degrees at this or any other institution.

Andri Rosadi

March 25, 2019

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ABBREVIATIONS

- BPS: Badan Pusat Statistik (the Central Bureau of Statistics)
- DDII: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Board of Da'wa Islamiyya Indonesia)
- FSG: al Furqan Salafi Group
- IUM: Islamic University of Medina
- LIPIA: Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (Institute for the Knowledge of Islam and Arab)
- MUI: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Ulemas Council)
- NII: Negara Islam Indonesia; Islamic State of Indonesia
- NIF: Nadwa Islamic Foundation
- NU: Nahdlatul Ulama
- Persis: Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union)
- PERTI: Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah
- PLN: Perusahaan Listrik Negara (State-owned Electricity Company)
- RJ: Raudlatul Jannah
- SD: Sekolah Dasar (Primary School)
- UIR: Universitas Islam Riau (Islamic University of Riau)
- UNRI: Universitas Riau (the University of Riau)
- WAAG: World Association of Al-Azhar Graduates

NOTE FOR NON-ENGLISH WORDS AND TRANSLITERATION

This thesis contains many non-English words, in languages such as Indonesian, Javanese, Arabic, Minang, Malay and Arabic. I write the non-English words in italics, then provide an explanation in parantheses [] or brackets () for short meanings, or in footnote for the long one. For writing Arabic words, I use the transliteration system of the University of Paramadina, as follows:

a	=	أ	z	=	ز	f	=	ف
b	=	ب	s	=	س	q	=	ق
t	=	ت	sh	=	ش	k	=	ك
th	=	ث	<u>s</u>	=	ص	l	=	ل
j	=	ج	<u>d</u>	=	ض	m	=	م
<u>h</u>	=	ح	<u>t</u>	=	ط	n	=	ن
kh	=	خ	<u>z</u>	=	ظ	h	=	ه
d	=	د	'	=	ع	w	=	و
dh	=	ذ	gh	=	غ	y	=	ي
r	=	ر						

Short	:	a = اَ	i = اِ	u = اُ
Long	:	ā = آ	ī = إ	ū = أ
Diphthong	:	ay = آي	aw = آو	

ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism, represented by the Salafi movement in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. It focuses on how this movement tries to solve the problem of existential deprivation among non-religious Muslims by constructing a community of memory in which Salafis share values and beliefs, by referring to the interpretations of their pious predecessors or *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*. This deprivation is a result of the spread of *bid'a* and of the perceived negative impacts of modernity. The term *al-salaf al-sāliḥ* refers to the first three generation of Muslims, while Salafi (pl. Salafis) means the follower of *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*, and Salafism refers to the interpretations of *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*. This study addresses questions concerning how the Salafis develop and solve the problem of relative existential deprivation among non-religious Malay Muslims in Pekanbaru. In order to examine this phenomenon, I conducted ethnographic research in Pekanbaru from July 2015 to April 2016, in which I interviewed male Salafis and non-Salafis, and observed and became involved in the Salafi religious and social events.

Findings in this study are four-fold. First, derived from relative deprivation theory, I conclude that the return of non-religious Muslims to Islam is as a result of various relative deprivations they have suffered, such as economic, social, and—most significantly—existential deprivation. The expression of deprivation can be seen via various symptoms, including a sense of meaninglessness in life, being alienated from the community, and seeking religious arguments for beliefs and practices they hold. The return of non-religious Muslims to Islam is driven by the perception that religion serves as a compensator, capable of relieving their sense of relative deprivation by providing a theological explanation for the problems they face.

The second finding is that the return of those deprived Muslims is closely related to cultural position of Islam as an “official” religion of Malay people. In many ways this continues to play a significant role as a key orientating value. The expression of Islamic values within Malay culture can be found in daily language as well as traditional manuscripts, indicating that Islam is deeply rooted in Malay culture and is

a main constitutive element of Malay identity. It is, therefore, part of their collective memory. The return to Islam in this sense can be considered as the return to the essence of Malay culture, which has been influenced by Islamic values and systems. Due to this close relationship, the return of deprived Malays to Islam can be considered as reversion rather than conversion.

The third conclusion is that Salafism is seen as being able to meet the religious and cognitive needs of those new reverts. The former is related to the perception that Salafism is pure, simple and more legitimate compared to other Islamic currents and organisations. The latter, cognitive need, concerns how new reverts search for a way to remove themselves from the prolonged disputes between some Islamic organisations. Moreover, the culture of giving, strong solidarity, equality and humble atmosphere developed within the Salafī group have satisfied some groups of people, leading them to revert to Salafism. Once these new reverts join the Salafī group, they start to share and uphold new values, distinguishing them from their previous condition.

The fourth conclusion, derived from the theory of memory, is that the Salafī Group can be considered as a community of memory in which all Salafī members maintain a connection to the past (*al-salaf al-sāliḥ*), guided by the Salafī preachers who serve as the main referents. Within this community of memory, followers share the same beliefs and practices, and thus the community also functions as a social framework which gives individual members the means to recollect the past. To consolidate the unity of the members, the preachers use the concept of purity vis-a-vis *bid'a*. The first involves “us” and the second concerns “others”. *Bid'a* then serves not only as a religious category but also a social boundary, distinguishing Salafī members from others. As an “other”, *bid'a* should be abandoned and replaced by the “purity of Salafism” as taught by the preachers. By forgetting the *bid'a*, new room for memory is made, allowing a new interpretation—that of Salafism—to be stored through the process of recollection. Salafism finds its ground for growth in the conditions where corrupted teachings are proliferating and external negative values of modernity are

threatening people's lived experiences, and leading people to feel multiple types of relative deprivation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The role of Salafism in Indonesian communities is increasing¹, yet little has been written about its rise. Salafism remains a neglected subject of research particularly in peripheral areas of Indonesia. This study aims to explore the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism as represented by the Salafi movement in Pekanbaru, the capital city of the province of Riau, including how this movement tries to solve the problem of existential deprivation among non-religious Muslims. This deprivation is seen to be a result of the spread of illegal religious innovations on the one hand and the perceived negative impacts of modernity on the other. This issue is addressed in Salafism through the ongoing construction of a community of memory within which Salafis share values and beliefs by referring to the interpretations of their pious predecessors, or *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*. This term, *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*, refers to the first three generations of Muslims. Salafi (pl. Salafis) refers to followers of *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*, and Salafism refers to the interpretations of *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*.

To research this phenomenon, I conducted ethnographic research in Pekanbaru from July 2015 to April 2016, during which time I interviewed male Salafis and non-Salafis, and observed and became involved in the Salafi religious and social events. Due to religious reasons I was not able to conduct interviews with female Salafi informants, and as such this thesis deals only with male believers. My initial knowledge of Pekanbaru Salafism differed little from the haze that covered 80 percent of Sumatra from July to September 2015 during my fieldwork: grey and blurred. In order to obtain initial valuable information, I met with and interviewed Abu Rahmat, a lecturer at The State Islamic University Sultan Syarif Qasim, Pekanbaru, and graduate of the Islamic University of Medina (IUM), Saudi Arabia.

¹This can be assessed through looking at the increasing number of Salafi educational institutions in various provinces of Indonesia. In Java, for example, there are approximately 88 Salafi pesantrens, with more than 30 thousand students, scattered from Jakarta to East Java. See Jahroni (2015). In addition, online portals on the internet, radio as well as printed publications are also increasing.

This interview was very informative; it provided me with an historical background on the emergence of Salafism in Saudi Arabia and emphasised its political aspects.

The development of Salafi movement in Saudi Arabia, according to Abu Rahmat (interview, August 20, 2015), was a response to the dynamics following the break of the First Gulf War in 1990 in which the Muslim Brotherhood openly opposed the presence of the United State troops in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government created the Salafi movement and then used it as the vehicle to counter the Muslim Brotherhood's criticism. Thus, according to Rahmat, the emergence of the Salafis was closely related to the Saudi government interest. As Wahhabism is the official interpretation of Islam adopted by the Saudi government, it eventually affected the Salafi groups throughout the world, including in Pekanbaru.

The close relationship between the Saudi Wahhabism to Salafism can be seen from the fact that both groups share the same school of law (*madzhab*), i.e. Hanbalite, and Islamic creed (*aqida*) i.e. Ahl al Hadith². Unlike the Salafis, Indonesian Muslims generally belong to the Shafii School of law and Asharite³ creed. In the Indonesian context these differences have created variable dynamics, which are characterised by cooperation as well as tension. Some expressions of these dynamics, such as the issue of tolerance and mutual respect, have become of great concern among Indonesian Muslims as they may affect their personal and social relationships. For example on 2 September 2015, Randi hosted the program "Berita Islam Masa Kini" (News on Contemporary Islam), broadcasted by Trans TV channel Indonesia, in which he stated that the reward of *al-Fātiha*⁴ recited by a Muslim for his dead family

²Ahl al Hadith are the followers of traditions (hadith), which came into being at the beginning of the second century of Islam. This school is in opposition to the Ashab al Ra'y, the school which use extensive human reasoning and personal opinion. Ahl al Hadith is in alliance with the Hanbali legal school of thought. See Schacht, J., "Ahl al-Ḥadīth", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, edited by: P. Beeka, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

³ Asharite, Ash'ariyya, or Asha'ira, is a theological school, the followers of Abu al Hasan al Asha'ry (d. 935 AD). Currently, most Muslims worldwide belong to this theological school which in general, including in Indonesia, is in alliance with the legal school of al Shafi'i. The important members of al Ash'ary were al Djuwainy Imam al Haramayn (d. 1085) al Imam al Ghazali (d. 1111), al Djurdjani (d. 1413). In Indonesia, it is a dominant school which is best represented by the members of Nahdlatul Ulama, founded by Hashim al Ash'ary (d. 1947). See Watt, W. Montgomery, "Ash'ariyya", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs

⁴ These common practices have been challenged by the Salafis, which leads to the polemics with the Nahdlatul Ulama.

is not received by those who died. Randi is a famous film star who “reverted⁵” to Salafism under the guidance of a Salafi preacher, Ustadz Badrussalam. Soon after his reversion he changed his appearance. He now appears with a long beard and trousers above the ankle, typical of a Salafi appearance. Randi claimed that conducting such a ritual is a *bid’a*, or religious innovation in Islam. This statement clearly referred to the fatwa (legal opinion) issued by the Salafi preachers, who insistently state that every practice of *bid’a* should be avoided, including the recitation of the *al-Fātiha* for the dead person.

Unlike Salafism, reciting *al-Fātiha* as a “gift” for a deceased person is commonly practiced among Sunni Muslim in Indonesia, especially among the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)⁶ followers. The recitation is also commonly given for those who are suffering from an illness. The remark by Randi—who is now perceived as a Salafi activist rather than an opera actor—was controversial and led to polemics with mainstream Muslims, especially NU members. Most Muslims, except those Salafis, believe that recitation of *al-Fātiha* for the dead person is allowed. Moreover, it is only a *furū’* (non-principle) issue which does not exclude any Muslims from their creed. Randi’s remark, that such kind of practice was *bid’a*, was therefore highly unacceptable. Labelling a particular practice as a *bid’a* is a very sensitive issue in Muslim community due to the consequences it may cause. The Prophet in his hadith said that every practitioner of *bid’a* will surely go to hell. As such, labelling the recitation of *al-Fātiha* for the dead person as *bid’a* is equal to saying that its practitioners would go to hell. In response to this criticism Randi apologized, stating that he has just started to learn Islam and his remarks were solely caused by his lack of religious knowledge rather than fanaticism for a particular group. The controversy is, in fact, not solely caused by the essence of Randi’s statement, but also by his current religious affiliation to a Salafi group. To some extent, it can be said that NU rejection of Randi’s statement is directly related to NU’s opposition to the spread of Salafism in Indonesia.

⁵ The concept of reversion here means the return to the initial state of purity in beliefs and practices (further explanation is provided in Chapter 3).

⁶ Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is the biggest Muslim organisation in Indonesia, founded in 1926 by K.H. Hashim al Ash’ari.

Unlike Salafism, which emphasises the obligation to return to the purity of Islam in a strict sense, achieved by referring directly to the practices of the *al-salaf al-sāliḥ* in all aspects of life and avoiding all kinds of innovation, NU places a great emphasis on an accommodative strategy rather than a total rejection of un-Islamic practices or beliefs. Moreover, for the purpose of contextualising Islamic teachings, NU emphasises the inner spirit rather than outer symbols. For example, the appearance of NU followers is generally marked by a *sarong*⁷ and black *kopiah*⁸, which can easily be observed in thousands of NU pesantren throughout Indonesia. Salafis alternatively prefer to wear gamis and white hat (*kopiah haji*) as, according to them, it was the dress worn by the Prophet and *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*. The difference between NU and the Salafis is that NU see that the essence of wearing any kind of clothing is to cover the *aurat*⁹, regardless of the style, as it may refer to people preference in their own cultures, while the Salafis not only emphasise the essence (covering the *aurat*) but also on the style (Arab *gamis*). Due to these different positions, those Salafis are accused by NU members for trying to Arabise Indonesia rather than Islamise it. In return, NU is accused by the Salafis of practicing *bid'a*.

In response to this Salafī spirit of “Arabising” Indonesia, NU established the term *Islam Nusantara* in the NU Annual Conference in Jombang in August 2015. *Islam Nusantara*¹⁰, as explained by the NU Chairman, is characterised by four main features: (i) *al-rūḥ al dīniyyah* (religious spirit); (ii) *al-rūḥ al-waṭaniyyah* (spirit of nationalism) (iii) *al-rūḥ al-ta’addudiyyah* (spirit of plurality); and (iv) *al-rūḥ al-insāniyyah* (spirit of humanity). The declaration was the answer to the increasing challenge of Salafism which disregards the importance of conducting a dialogue with

⁷A traditional cloth in Southeast Asia wrapped around the waist or body.

⁸Also known as *songkok*. It is a cap worn by male Malay Muslims in formal occasions such as religious festival, as well as in daily life.

⁹It is the certain part of body that should be covered by clothing in order not to be seen by others. In Islam, the area of female and males’ *aurat* is different. For the details see, for example, al Quran, 24: 31.

¹⁰Nusantara is the Indonesian word for Indonesian archipelago, rooted from the time of Majapahit Kingdom when Patih Gadjah Mada declared his oath in 1336 to unite the whole ‘outside’ islands under the Majapahit power (Vlekke 1959). *Islam Nusantara* means a form of Islam that resulted from its prolonged interaction with numerous local values in Nusantara. For more explanation, see Dadi Darmadi (2016).

local cultures. Furthermore, Said Agil Siradj, the recent Chairman of NU, stated that the implementation of the spirit of Islam Nusantara should be based on three main elements: Islam, local cultures, and adaptability to contemporary life. Unlike Salafism, Islam Nusantara, according to the NU Chairman, is the typical Indonesian Islam which results from the prolonged interaction between the indigenous elements of Nusantara and Islam. To some extent, it can be said to be the “localised” Islam—distinguishing it from the perceived “Arab” Islam which is strongly upheld by Salafi adherents.

The accommodative nature of the NU to its local cultures, which is reflected in various religious practices and festivals such as *selamatan* and *wirid*, is the main point of dispute with the Salafi group. The Salafis perceive that such a festival was not practiced by the Prophet and therefore has no religious legitimacy, or *bid'a*. It is interesting that, as stated above, the declaration of *Islam Nusantara* by the NU Chairman is a response to the spread of Salafism. Similarly, the Salafi movement in Indonesia is a response to the accommodative nature of the NU to its local cultures which, according to the Salafi group, has contaminated the purity of Islamic teachings. In this thesis, I explore these dynamics concerning the spread of Salafism within an Indonesian context.

Salafism is an Islamic movement which has proliferated globally and can be found in various countries around the world (Meijer 2009). Despite its global character, this movement is difficult to define due to its ambiguity and internal divisions, including between purists (who focus on da'wa and education), jihadi (who employ revolutionary strategy) and politico Salafi (who engage in political activism) (Wiktorowicz 2006). In the Indonesian context, all three of these typologies can be found in Java, though they are not linked to each other. The existence of these Salafi groups in Java is not surprising as this region is still considered to be the center¹¹ of the Islamic movement, while other regions are peripheral. Most studies to date on

¹¹ If pesantren as the center of Islamic learning is used as the parameter, Java is undoubtedly regarded as the center of Islamic learning and discourse in Indonesia. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the number of pesantren all over Indonesia is about 25 thousand, with 3.65 million students. More than half of these pesantrens are located in Java.

Indonesian Salafism have focused on Java (Hasan 2006b; Jahroni 2015; Nisa, E 2012; Wahid 2014), with scant reference to other regions of Indonesia.

This thesis discusses the development of Salafism in another region of Indonesia, Pekanbaru. Unlike Salafi-Jihadi in Java, which is inspired by the global dynamics of Muslim countries, the Salafi Movement in Pekanbaru is a response to the internal dynamics of Malay society, such as the spread of *bid'a* among Muslims, Christian missionary activities and the feeling of existential deprivation felt by some non-religious Muslims (discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis). The Malay are the indigenous inhabitants of Pekanbaru who have long been known for their close relationship to Islam. Traditionally, it is said that being a Malay means being a Muslim, and anyone who converts away from Islam is no longer regarded as Malay.

Based on data found in my fieldwork, I determined that the only Salafi typology mentioned above which exists in Pekanbaru is the purist Salafi, or the Salafi da'wa. Habib (interview, November 26, 2015) and Zaid (interview, December 1, 2015) told me how one of the graduates of Pesantren al Furqan tried to establish a branch of Laskar Jihad, the hardliner Salafi in Java, in Pekanbaru, however gained no support. The absence of the jihadi and politico groups in Pekanbaru may be closely related to the religious culture of this region which is significantly different from that in Java (Zaid, interview, December 1, 2015; Daud, interview, November 30, 2015).

Pekanbaru shows markedly fewer signs of Arabic cultural influence than Java, as can be seen in the fact that no hadlram or habib institution is culturally recognised by the Malay people. As a result, Malay Muslims do not recognize a strong religious authority, such as played by the habib institution in Java. In Laskar Jihad case, habib and hadlram, with their religious authority, are the agents who connect Javanese Muslims to the center of Salafism in the Middle East, especially Yemen. Although Malay people have similar institutions to habib and hadlram, namely *sayyid* and *wan*, their existence is much more culturally oriented than religious. Therefore, they don't have such a religious authority as the *habib* and *hadlram* possess in Java. Moreover, unlike in Java where countries of origin of Salafism are more various, the only main

educational connection between Riau Malay and the Middle East is through the IUM in Saudi Arabia and al-Azhar University in Egypt. No Pekanbaru/Riau students had so far studied in Yemen as the center of the Jihadi Salafi. The nature of Malay culture, which places great emphasis on politeness, has become a natural barrier for the development of the politico and Jihadi Salafi in Malay society of Pekanbaru (Bahri, interview, August 8, 2015).

I understand that religion shapes and is shaped by people. As such, the notion some scholars maintain, that Salafism is a foreign element imposed on a particular society outside Saudi Arabia, should be questioned. The diffusion of religious thought, doctrines and practices are always followed by a process of selection by local people. This has led to limited processes of adaptation to the local context with Salafi group, as long as such process does not invalidate their *aqīda*.

According to its activists, theologically Salafism is the center of truth and non-Salafis are peripheral; resultingly the latter become the target of da'wa. Describing the process of reversion, it is common among the new comers of Salafi group to use the word "hijra" to describe their reversion to Salafism. Hijra means a movement from the phase of ignorance (*jahiliyya*) to the phase of truth, which is mainly achieved through the activity of da'wa. Those who have been hijra believe that they are more pious and attached to Islam. The process of da'wa has inevitably resulted in a change of the religious situation in Pekanbaru, developing from the accumulation of individual piety within the society as a result of their involvement in the Salafi movement.

Pekanbaru was selected as the research scene in this project for key reasons: (i) it is the biggest Salafi hub in Sumatra, supported by the largest Salafi educational network with more than 30 Salafi educational foundations members; (ii) more than 50 Saudi Arabian graduates of local origins openly affiliate to Salafism and are actively involved in the Salafi da'wa; (iii) the aforementioned reasons allow Salafi group to grow rapidly and gain authority within Malay society. However, this local

expansion is inseparable from the global Salafi movement, and exploration of Salafism from a global, regional and local perspective is provided below.

1.2. The Salafi Movement: A Brief Survey

This section discusses the conceptual ambiguities of Salafism, building from different typologies used by scholars. As Salafism is a global movement, I also explore several cases in different countries and then narrow my focus to Indonesian Salafism. The examples of global Salafi cases are mainly taken from European countries and South Africa, where Muslims form the minority of the populations, with the exception of Bosnia where Muslims make up the majority. My objective is to provide a background for understanding the relationship between Salafism and the particular context in which it appears and grows. This exploration is also an attempt to bridge the study of Salafism with the theory of Islamic revivalism, driven by relative deprivation, rooted both in internal and external dynamics of Muslim society (see Chapter 6).

1.2.1. Salafism: A Contested Concept

Definitionally, Salafism is an elusive term that is widely used to refer to those Muslims who call for the return to the teachings and practices of the pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-sālih*). The elusiveness of the term Salaf can be seen from the case described by MacDonald (2014). He explains that Tariq Ramadhan, a liberal Muslim thinker in the West, calls himself a Salafi reformist. Interestingly, Ramadhan also categorizes Sayyid Qutb as a Salafi reformist. It is well-known that Qutb's political ideology is different from that of Ramadhan. Therefore, placing Qutb in the same category with Ramadhan will be problematic.

Practically, it is an umbrella concept which incorporates a wide range of different Muslim communities which aim to purifying Islamic teachings and practices. The etymologically of Salaf means past time, or what happened in the past (al Thalibi 2006; Ma'luf 1986). Over centuries this concept has transformed and become attributed to a major Islamic current emerging in Saudi Arabia, aiming to purify Islamic teachings by referring to the Prophet Muhammad and his companions

(Adonis 1998; al Buthy 1998). Salafism is also known as Wahhabism (Ayoob 2009; Commins 2006; Sirozi 2005; WAMY 2006), and its global funding comes mostly from Saudi Arabia (Haghayeghi 2002) which, according to Gadzey (2005), still provides funds for 1500 mosques, 210 Islamic centers and almost 2000 colleges in various countries where Wahhabism is taught to local people.

Roy (2004) relates Salafism to the globalization phenomenon. He explains that responses to globalization in Islamic societies appear in various forms, ranging widely from widely accommodating to strongly rejecting it. Instead of accepting and adopting global values inculcated through globalization, the Salafi movement emphasizes for Muslims the need to return to the Quran and Sunnah, as interpreted by the pious predecessors (Salaf al salih). Such a spirit to return to the past results in the creation of a dichotomy in Muslim societies between Islamic and non-Islamic world.

Internal fragmentations have become the main feature of this movement. These have resulted in the creation and use of different typologies of Salafis. Wiktorowicz (2006) classifies Salafis into three categories: a) purists, who stress persuasive propagation and education; b) politicos, who emphasise the implementation of Salafi precepts on a structural level; and c) jihadis, who choose revolutionary strategies to achieve their goal. Wiktorowicz's categories are mainly based on the strategies that Salafis adopt to achieve their goals. It is unclear whether these categories are well-recognised within Salafis communities. I argue that these categories imply that fragmentations are essentially caused by strategic differences rather than religious reasons. It can be said that all Salafis are travelling on different paths but heading towards the same goal. Islam, as understood by Salafis, does not separate religion and politics. Islam is a way of life that encompasses all dimensions of life. The first category, that of the purists, does appear problematic as it could lead to the claim that the other two categories, politicos and jihadist, are unpurist. However, Wiktorowicz's categories have in fact described the real condition of Salafis in the sense that their understanding and practice of Islam is not as comprehensive as they claim.

Many scholars have investigated Salafi groups, and particularly the Jihadis, as this group stands against Western interests and those of its allies. Wiktorowicz agrees with Egerton (2011) who defines Jihadi-Salafism as “a movement inspired by a religious and political metanarrative that demands militancy in the face of alleged Western hostility toward Islam.” Jihadi Salafism, in this definition, does not stand as a natural element emerging from within, but rather as a reaction to Western attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. Unlike Wiktorowicz, Duderija describes Salafi on the basis of their methodology of interpretation for extracting meaning from the Al Quran and Hadith. As they are a modern phenomenon, but employ a traditional manhaj (methodology) to uncover the Quranic and hadith meaning, Duderija (2007) classifies these as Neo-Traditional Salafi. He also considers the label Neo-Ahl-Hadithism as being applicable to this group. Another type of Salafism is the one shown by the insider, Imam Samudra, the Bali bomber. As a Salafi activist, Samudra (2004) divides Salafis into two: the purists and the pseudos. The purists are those who struggle against the West for the sake of Islam, while the pseudos adopt a quiet strategy against perceived Western aggression. It is an interesting point that Samudra’s typology is closely associated with the way Muslims respond to Western interests. Salafism, in this case, is a political reaction rather than an internal purification process. The different typologies of Salafis indicate that they are not a united group or movement. Though they share some similarities, their differences may lead them to discredit each other.

1.2.2. Global Salafism

Salafism could be regarded as one of the most prevalent Islamic tendency in the world, particularly after the 9/11 attacks. It can be found in Europe, America, Africa, Asia as well as Australia. Olsson (2014) explains that Salafism in Sweden, represented by the Swedish United Da’wah Centre, is considered as having or adopting conservative thought and a “non-integrative” position to the wider society. This stance, according to Olsson (2014), is clearly different from “Euroislam” which makes an effort to contextualise Islamic teachings to European society. Olsson argues that the Salafis response to European societies is significantly influenced by their status as a minority group in a non-Islamic society. The perceived feelings of

threat and disagreement with European values lead them to avoid integration into European society.

The presence of Salafis with their conservative and non-integrative thought is not only found in Sweden, but also in other European countries. In the United Kingdom, the Salafis also compete for prominence with other Muslim groups, such as Tabligh Jamaa, Hizb al Tahrir and sufis. The Salafi group has dominated this competition due to the perception that its followers have broader and deeper religious knowledge than others (Hamid 2016).

In Bosnia, the emergence of Salafism was a result of external influences, particularly from Saudi Arabia. Karcic (2010) states that the transmission of Salafi ideas to Bosnia occurred through two main ways: humanitarian and financial aid provided by the Saudi Government with its charity institutions, and through foreign fighters who came to Bosnia soon after the 1992 Balkan War broke out. Karcic further stated that the Saudi Government spent more than US\$600 million to reconstruct social and religious facilities in Bosnia, such as an orphanage, Islamic centers, mosques and schools. In addition, the Saudi Government also provides scholarships for Bosnian students to study religious subjects at Saudi Arabian universities. It can be said that the role of Saudi Arabian government in disseminating the Salafi ideas was clear. Globalisation is also considered as the main provider of fertile ground for the emergence of Salafism (Karcic 2010), as many of its aspects have driven the feeling of “umma” (Muslim Global Community) among Bosnian Muslims.

However in Bosnia, Salafism, which refers to Saudi Wahhabism, is contested by the Turkish and Iranian models of Islam. The role of Turkey within Bosnian Muslims came through both state and non-state actors. The first is played by the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) and the Supreme Religious Council of Turkey (Diyanet) by providing scholarships for Bosnian students to study at Turkish universities and funding the restoration and reconstruction of various mosques, educational buildings and Ottoman heritage. The second is played by the Turkish Sufi orders which provide religious educations for Bosnian Muslims, including Quranic

schools. Similar to Turkey and Saudi Arabia, the role of Iran in Bosnia came through two sectors: the government and non-government sectors. The role of the first sector can be traced back to the time of war when Iran sent arms and various assistance to help the undersiege Bosnian Muslims. Since the war ended in 1995 this relationship has continued in academic and cultural levels, starting by the opening of the Iranian cultural center in Sarajevo. The presence of Shiite Iran has in many ways contested the spread of Salafism.

The case of Salafism in the Netherlands and South Africa is similar in terms of the social context which led to its emergence. Muslims in these two countries form a minority population. In the Netherlands, there is a feeling among of being threatened, discriminated against, and excluded from society (Buijs 2009; Koning 2013). Muslims feel that they are to some extent unwanted within the Dutch society. This feeling has obscured the process of integration on the one hand, and on the other hand has led Muslims to seek another way which could provide them with certainty and a moral guide in their life. Salafism offers all this to Muslims, acting as a moral asylum which saves “Muslim refugees” in the uncertainty of European society. Salafism in the Netherlands, according to Koning (2013), “presents itself as a moral guardian of Muslims.” Similarly in Cape Town, South Africa, Salafism is considered by certain people as a solution which provides the true and pure Islam (Dumbe & Tayob 2011). Moreover, the nature of Salafism, which refuses to imitate the Islamic law schools, has encouraged all Muslims to learn the Islamic creed and precepts directly from al-Quran and Hadith. This independent approach toward religion holds appeal for certain individuals (Dumbe & Tayob 2011).

The above explanation of Salafism mainly focuses on countries in which Muslims are a minority, and consequently feel threatened by their social and political environment. In its center, the Middle East, where Muslims are majority, Salafism experiences the same friction and fragmentation which has led to internal tension within the movement (Pall 2014). The tension is in fact not only within the Salafi movement itself, but also with the government. In Tunisia, for example, Cavatorta (2015) explains that the transitional period in which the Tunisian government adopts

a more liberal and democratic system allows various elements of society to rise, including the Jihadi Salafi. However, instead of supporting and contributing to strengthen this democratic system, the Jihadi Salafi stands against it. In the regional context, the rise of this Jihadi Salafi is inseparable from the mushrooming of the Salafis in the Arab region.

Further tension is caused by the Sunni—Shiite rivalry in gaining political and economic power. Regarding this phenomenon, it could be asked whether Indonesian Salafism is experiencing the same problem, despite the dissimilarity in its context and background. If this is the case, then which Salafism is most appealing within Indonesian Muslim society, and what are the factors that make it so?

1.2.3. Indonesian Salafism

Understanding Salafism as a religious as well as a political movement is challenging due to the complexities of the divisions leading to internal fragmentations. The divisions are mainly caused by different religious interpretations and strategies for propagation as well as political affiliation. One obvious example of a split within Indonesian Salafism is the ongoing polemic between some Salafi leaders, represented by Luqman Baabduh, Abu Bakr Baashir and Jaafar Umar Thalib. Luqman Baabduh, the leading figure of Salafi who lives in Jember East Java, has been accused of being *Murjia*¹² by the Ngruki group in Solo. Conversely, the Ngruki group has been accused of being *Kharijite*¹³ by Baabduh (2003). Furthermore, Baabduh also condemns Imam Samudera, the Bali bomb actor, and Hasan al-Banna as infidels. However, Baabduh's allegation about Al Banna has been denied by Zulfidar (2006), the Salafi preacher in Jakarta.

In general terms, the Indonesian Salafi proliferated a long time ago. *Persatuan Islam*, *Muhammadiyah* and the Paderi movement are strongly influenced by Wahhabism.

¹²*Murji'a* means the "upholder of irdja." It was initially a "politico-religious movement in the early Islam", and later on, the use widened to denote those who separated belief and practice (The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Brill online, 2015). In this context, this word is used to denounce opponents.

¹³ *Kharijite*, or *Khawarij*, is a dissenting group formed after the assassination of Uthman in 656 A.D.. They were so called because they had gone out from the umma and become an extremist movement which was responsible for the assassination of 'Ali ibn Abi Thalib. See Watt (2014) and Crone (2014). Similar to *Murjia*, in this context, the word *Khawarij* is used by the Salafis as a curse against those who disagree with them.

Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) is also closely related to Saudi Arabia for the purpose of overcoming Christian missions (Bruinessen 2004). All of these movements emerged in the frame of Islamic revival influenced by interaction between tradition and modernity, international influences as well as political tensions (Mehden, 2001). The Salafi explored in this project is not related to the general trends mentioned above but to the new current, referred to as “the new Salafi.”

Regarding the new Salafi, Bubalo and Fealy (Fealy 2005, p. viii) state that “Saudi Arabia plays a significant role in the emergence of a Salafi current within the Indonesian Muslim community.” Generally, the transfer of this current to Indonesia came through three ways: education, mainly in Saudi Arabia and Yemen; human movement moving around in international caravans; and internet and book publications (Fealy 2005).

The new Indonesian Salafi movement has been studied by numerous scholars. Syarifuddin (2012), a leading religious preacher in Aceh, discusses a specific topic related to the response of Salafism to the school of jurisprudence (madzhab). This is a significant topic due to strong rejection of Salafism to join any single madzhab in Islam. According to the Salafi, joining a madzhab is illegal. Instead, all Muslims should refer directly to the Quran and Sunnah. Syarifuddin, on the basis of his debate with a group of Salafi ustadz in a mosque in Medan, show the weakness of the Salafi position and its preference to only follow the Salafi ustadz.

Studying the suicide bombing in Indonesia, particularly in Java, committed by the Salafis, Rusli (2014) found that those Salafis are divided into two categories: those who support it, represented by the Jihadi Salafi, and those who totally reject it, represented by the Salafi Wahhabist. The latter argues that Islam does not allow its followers to commit suicide regardless of the reason. Another scholar, Jahroni (2013) focuses on the religious character of the relationship of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, in which Salafism is the main element in maintaining the Saudi influence in Indonesian Muslim society. He argues that LIPIA in Jakarta, which is fully funded by the Saudi government, can be regarded as the main agency to strengthen the present of Saudi religious authority.

Hasan (2006b) specifically discusses the hard-line Salafi represented by Laskar Jihad, arguing that the emergence of Laskar Jihad in Indonesian society, which is centralised in Java, is an assertion of their identity. The socio-political atmosphere at that time in 1998, when the tension between Muslims and Christians was at its peak, provided a fertile ground for the hard-liners to make their presence felt. Unlike Hasan, Wahid (2014) focuses his research on the role of Salafi *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Java. He sees these as playing a crucial role in nurturing a Salafi generation capable of teaching the Salafi path (*manhaj*). Wahid emphasises the importance of the Salafi path as it is considered the third Islamic source, after al Quran and Hadith, reflecting the belief and practices exemplified by the first three generations of Muslims. It is this *manhaj* that distinguishes Salafi from other reformist organisations in Indonesia, such as Muhammadiyah and al Irsyad (Wahid 2014). In another work, Wahid (2012) discusses particularly the emergence of the Salafi religious authority in Java, which challenges the traditional and modernist religious leaders, represented by *kiyai* and *ulemas*. The rise of a Salafi authority among Indonesian Muslims, according to him, has inevitably caused to the contest between the Salafis on the one side, and the traditional ulemas on the other.

Nisa (2012) discusses another aspect of Salafism: the status of women and how they interact and practice their religion with special reference to the wearing of the *niqāb* (veil). According to Nisa, among female Salafi students wearing the niqab is part of fulfilling Islamic obligation. They practice this obligation genuinely in order to be able to be a better believer. Nisa's (2012) research was, like that of the two aforementioned researches, mainly conducted in Java.

The above shows that only Salafism in Java has been discussed by scholars. My research on Salafism in Sumatra addressed the gap regarding neglected Sumatran Salafism. Moreover, how Salafism is being localised by its activists deserves to be studied further due to its different background and time¹⁴. It is assumed that Salafism

¹⁴ As the example of how Salafi being localised and involved intensively in religious discourse within community, see example of Ethiopia, Terje Ostebo (2011b), *Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia*. Leiden: Brill; Salafi as a reform movement, see also Ostebo (2011a).

in Sumatra is to be, to some extent, different from that in Java in terms of its strategies and agencies. Pekanbaru was the region where this study has been conducted.

1.3. Aims, Arguments and Objectives of the Study

Pekanbaru, one of the biggest cities in Sumatra, has witnessed the fast development of the Salafi group. This study addresses questions concerning how the Salafis develop and solve the problem of relative existential deprivation among non-religious Malay Muslims in Pekanbaru. The category of non-religious Muslims refers to those Malay Muslims who are not committed to the practice of Islamic beliefs and still involved in aberrant rituals. I suggest that the development of Pekanbaru Salafism represents a response to both the challenge of modernity as well as the spread of *bid'a* within Muslim society in Pekanbaru. Therefore, I argue throughout this thesis that the return of non-religious Muslim Malay to Islam is a result of both the multiple crises they have suffered because of the impact of modernity, and the inherited “deviated” Islamic beliefs and practices. The choice to revert to Islam as a way of solving their problems is reasonable because of Islam’s on-going role as the main constitutive element of Malay identity. The choice of Salafism among various Islamic organisations is due to socio-religious reasons: the exit strategy; the void of dominant Islamic organisation rather than political motives; and the perception that Salafism is considered as a return to the “purity” of the past (see Chapter Chapter 7). In this sense, the Salafi movement is considered part of Islamic Revivalism undergone by various Muslim societies across the world.

Exploration of the two interrelated dynamics (response to modernity and deviation of Islamic teachings) are in line with two theories: the theory of relative deprivation, which places emphasis on multiple crises suffered by Muslims as the main cause of the emergence of the Islamic revivalism phenomenon; and the theory of social memory, which emphasises meaning and identity. The first theory is relevant to answer the questions related to the causes of people’s return to religion. Religion, according to the relative deprivation theory is perceived as being capable of resolving the sense of relative deprivation by providing explanations about the

meaning of life. Religion, in this sense serves as the “compensator” which motivates people to choose it as the solution to their problem (see Chapter 6). In addition to this, Islam in Malay society still plays an important role as a key-orientating value, reflected in daily language, social structure and socio-cultural values. Islam, therefore, still constitutes the main part of the Malay collective memory and becomes the most visible resource to resolve the multiple crises they have suffered. Thus, this thesis employs two levels of theories which are linked to each other by interrelated issues. The first is relative deprivation theory which is used to reveal the underlying reasons of why Muslims in Pekanbaru return to Islam and then choose Salafism among various groups available in Muslim society of Pekanbaru. The second theory is to answer the next step of why those “reverted people” continue to adhere to Salafism and how they construct meaning and identity within this group. Employing this theory will open a possible different nuance of the phenomenon as a result of different localities. Thus, through this exploration, more of the diversity of this movement will be uncovered.

The Salafi mission is not only to teach and guide the people, but also to revert them to “the right Islam.” Identifying and describing the Salafi da’wa in Pekanbaru can be achieved by analysing the socio-cultural context of Malay society in Pekanbaru and the process of negotiation on the part of the Salafis within the locality of Riau. Hence, the objectives of this study are to identify: (i) the process of emergence of the Salafi community in Pekanbaru and the religious dynamics it creates as a result of their activities in purifying the Islamic beliefs and practices; (ii) the agencies, motive, strategies and social situation in which Salafi teachings are proliferating; and (iii) the role of Salafism in solving the problem of existential deprivation among non-religious Malays which finally lead them to revert to Salafism and join the Salafi community of Pekanbaru. Exploration of these aims will reveal the role Salafism plays in providing the solution for deprived non-religious Malays, experiencing the negative impact of modernity and deviated Islamic beliefs and practices.

1.4. Pekanbaru as the Research Scene

This section is devoted to providing a historical and socio-cultural context for the Salafi group in Pekanbaru. Providing this context is crucial due to the different social situation of Indonesian regencies which eventually affect the religious culture and patterns of religious change. The explanation starts with Riau as the province to give a general context, and then follows with Pekanbaru, looking at the specific context in which the research was conducted.

Riau is located in the middle of Sumatra Island, close to the Malacca Strait. Historically, this region has been inhabited since Pleistocene era (400.000—100.000 BC). Several antique artefacts from the Stone Age have been found near the Kuantan River, further proof of the long history of this region. During the Buddhism era, Riau was presumably part of Srivijaya, the biggest kingdom at the time (7th A.D.). The most obvious evidence is Muara Takus, a Buddhist temple in Riau (Luthfi 1977). The root of Malay culture and language can be traced back to the Srivijaya era. The emergence of Islamic Malay kingdoms in Riau is estimated at around 16 A.D. By then, Islam had spread widely in this area. During the colonial era, which began at the end of the 16 century, and lasted for 300 years, British colonialists and the Dutch divided the Malay kingdom into two separated administrations, based on the London Treaty in 1824. The Malay Peninsula was under British rule, and Riau–Lingga was under the Dutch. At this time, though Riau people were similar in terms of religion, ethnic group and language, they were scattered into several tiny kingdoms in sporadic areas. Among those kingdoms were Indragiri (1658—1838 A.D.), Siak (1723—1858 A.D.), Pelalawan (1530—1879 A.D.), Riau–Lingga (1824—1913 A.D.). Some other smaller kingdoms were Tambusai, Kampar–Kandis, Rambah and Rantau Binuang Sakti (Muhammad 1977; Suwardi 2007; Sinar 2007). In all these kingdoms, Islam was the most prevalent religion (Luthfi 1977). However, it should be noted that the long existence of Buddhism tradition has meant that local tradition has to a certain extent “infected” Islamic teachings and practice. Festivals, offerings, amulets, oracles and belief in supranatural powers are the most common examples of the Buddhism influence. After the independence of Indonesia in 1945, Riau became an Indonesian province, with its capital city Pekanbaru.

The name of Pekanbaru comes from the Malay words *pekan*, meaning market, and *baru*, meaning new. Administratively, since 2003 the city has been divided into 12 *kecamatan* (sub-districts) and 58 *kelurahan* (smaller area than kecamatan). In total, it covers an area of approximately 632.26 km², with a population of 1,011,467, making it the third largest city in Sumatra after Medan and Palembang. Demographically, 69.76% of inhabitants are aged between 15-64 years (i.e. productive age). The unemployment rate in 2014 was approximately 9.20% of the total population. In terms of education, 15.19% of people only completed elementary school, with 16.84%, 44.23% and 14.83% graduating from junior high school, senior high school and higher education respectively. The two biggest sectors which contribute to the economic growth of the city are construction and commerce, with respective values of 30.27% and 28.7%. In general, economic growth in 2014 was around 6.79% (Statistik Daerah Kota Pekanbaru 2015). Pekanbaru is geographically divided by the Siak River which flows in the middle of the city, from the west to the east, ending up in the Strait of Malacca. The Siak has provided direct access to the Malacca Strait for centuries and still plays an important role in providing water transportation for the city inhabitants. The Sungai Duku Port, on the bank of the Siak River, and Sultan Syarif Kasim Airport also provide both domestic and international flights.

Figure 1: Map of Pekanbaru



Sources: http://www.mapnall.org/en/map/Map-Pekanbaru_134486.html (accessed: 12 December 2018)

The city has developed rapidly, which is mainly supported by the operation of several large companies, such as petroleum, plantation, pulp industry, and service and commerce sectors. The appearance of economic growth can be seen from the establishment of modern market and entertainment centers. In addition to the

economic growth, urban and migrant flow from the neighbour regencies—particularly West Sumatra, North Sumatra and Java—increases every year, which causes changes to the demographic composition in Pekanbaru as well as Riau (Statistik Daerah Kota Pekanbaru 2015).

Table 1: Ethnic composition in Pekanbaru

No	Ethnicity	Percentage
1	Malay	26.10
2	Minang	37.96
3	Javanese	15.70
4	Batak	11.06
5	Chinese	2.50
6	Others	6.68

Source: BPS 2015.

Table 1 shows that Malay, the native of Riau, has become outnumbered by the migrant Minang who come from West Sumatra. There are also a significant population of Javanese. However, Minang and Javanese migrants are dominantly Muslims and, therefore, they live in accordance with Malay culture.

Migration and urbanisation, according to Haddad (1991), have been among the major factors which provide a fertile ground to the rise of Islamic revivalism. As a migrant destination, Pekanbaru also encounters problems experienced by many cities in the world, such as growing crime rates, alcohol and drug addiction, ethnic tensions and inequality of economic resources. Such conditions have led the inhabitants of the city to become relatively deprived from their religious and cultural roots leading them to

question authority and identity, which in most cases refers to Islamic and Malay cultural norms. Family breakdown is also worth noting, characterised by a shift from a focus on extended family to be a more individual-centered existence. In addition, parental authority is also in decline, leading to juvenile delinquency. Employing their religious influence, the Salafi preachers have been requested by the Local Police Office to run a program in which preachers address religious sermons to teenagers to help them avoid juvenile delinquency and the consumption of drugs and alcoholic drinks. In such condition, Salafis have commenced their da'wa by offering regular sermons and religious training in the Salafi mosques and establishing some educational institutions, ranging from pre-schools up to senior high schools.

As my fieldwork observation confirmed, the spread of Salafism is mainly centered in the capital and biggest city in Riau province: Pekanbaru. Haddad (1991) suggests that the revivalists tend to be more effective in reaching young, educated and urbanised people. This is also the case in Pekanbaru where Salafism becomes more appealing among the young, well-educated and urbanised members of society. Though I do not have quantitative data on the age of the Salafi members, the observational data from my fieldwork (see Chapter 6) shows that the attendees of the Salafi sermons and religious training are predominantly young and middle-age people. Many cities in the developing countries have to face poverty, lack of public facilities, unemployment and economic inequality. Disintegration, deprivation and alienation have become the main features of those cities. Due to the complexity of these problems, economic growth is not the only solution. A conscious Muslim will not let himself or herself be threatened by the city circumstances. Being relatively deprived can push a Muslim to find a mosque and listen to a sermon (see further explanation in Chapter 6). Mosques have become a “refuge” where a Muslim can escape the complexities of the city. In such circumstances, Raudlatul Jannah (commonly called RJ), the biggest Salafi Mosque in Pekanbaru serves the people by conducting regular prayer as well as offering continuous teaching about Islam, which are always attended by thousands of Muslims coming from around the city. One informant told me that he prefers to call the RJ as “Taubat Mosque¹⁵” (Arman,

¹⁵*Taubat* is a Malay word, means repent.

interview, 30 November 2015) rather than Raudlatul Jannah, due to the fact that a great number of people have repented sin in that place. The mosque is big and beautiful, and is complemented with a radio and television studio. Its construction was almost completed at the time of the fieldwork, costing around 13 billion rupiah, mainly generated from the Salafis donation and government aid.

Historically, Pekanbaru is a Muslim-dominated area where people can find mosques and religious schools easily. The voice of adzan can be heard 5 times every day. Below, Table 2, describes Pekanbaru's religion composition (BPS, 2012).

Table 2: Religion composition in Pekanbaru

No	Religion	Percentage (%)
1	Islam	84,8
2	Protestant	9,6
3	Budhism	3,46
4	Catholic	1,25
5	Others	0,89

Although mosques are easily found in Pekanbaru, the RJ Mosque is unique as it is beautifully constructed, dominated by Middle Eastern taste, and well-managed. The appearance of the mosque is very clean, including washing rooms, which attract people to pray and rest in it¹⁶.

A further underlying reason of the development of Salafism in Pekanbaru, compared to the two neighbour cities, Padang and Medan, is the close relation with the religious culture of Pekanbaru. Yunus (interview, August 26, 2015), a leading member of the Indonesian Ulemas Council of Riau, provided me with an analysis

¹⁶ It is worth mentioning here that unlike in the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque, most washing rooms in the community mosques are quite dirty due to various reasons such as a lack of economic resources to employ staff, and poor management. In the RJ, the management uses a high standard of cleanliness which accordingly attracts people to pray in it.

that in Padang, the most influential Islamic organisations are PERTI¹⁷ and Muhammadiyah. Both organisations are deeply rooted among the Minang people (the indigenous and major ethnic group of West Sumatra province) and have become the main constitutive elements of the Minang religious culture, which automatically become a natural barrier for the development of a new Islamic trend coming from the outside, such as Salafism. Therefore, although Salafism has already started its da'wa in this region, its development is quite slow, with only one Salafi foundation and school, and with less than five hundred students (Tarmizi, interview, March 13, 2016). Similarly, in North Sumatra, the great influence of al Washliyah Organisation among people has become a natural-religious barrier for the development of any Islamic trends coming from outside of Indonesia. In such a situation, the penetration of Salafism among Muslim people in both regions (Padang and Medan) is culturally and religiously challenged by the deep roots of PERTI, Muhammadiyah and al Washliyah.

Unlike Padang and Medan, where religious culture is strongly influenced by local Islamic organisations, Pekanbaru, to some extent, is an “unoccupied” region due to the absence of any deep-rooted Islamic organisations. PERTI, Muhammadiyah and al Washliyah all exist in Pekanbaru, but are not strongly established. In such a situation, there is still “room” for a new comer to compete with the existing organisations and thus fill the void, due to the absence of a dominant religious culture within this society. According to Yunus (interview, August 2015), the spread of Salafism in Pekanbaru has filled this void, allowing this group to re-shape the religiosity of its inhabitants. In addition to the void situation, Malay people are also well-known for their adaptive and open mind (Hamidy 2015; Yusuf 1996). In a particular interview, this is also confirmed by Amir (interview, December 12, 2015). To some extent, the spread of Salafism is also attributed to these natures, leading people to consider changes brought about by Pekanbaru Salafism (see Chapter 5).

¹⁷ It stands for *Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah Indonesia* (Islamic Education Association).

1.5. Methodology

1.5.1. Features of the field

After the Kubang conflict in 2008 (see Chapter 4), the Salafis have experienced high degree of resistance from Muslim community in Pekanbaru. Zaid, a Salafi preacher, told me that on one occasion he was invited to give a sermon in a local mosque. Unfortunately, before finishing his sermon, he was forced to ascend from the pulpit by the chief of *Rukun Tetangga* (RT)¹⁸ because of his affiliation with Salafism. Another preacher told me that police officers sometimes visit his pesantren to ensure that it does not become involved in any radical activities. The Salafi preachers were aware of this situation and therefore changed the strategies of da'wa, enabling them to gradually regain a positive image among people and the local government. This was done by establishing schools adopting government curricula combined with their own curricula (see Chapter 4). The Salafis have also kept a very close distance with some government officers in order to gain their patron as well as to obtain positive image of the movement (discussed later in Chapter 5).

The trace of this negative image has not totally disappeared however. Husen, the first principal of *Sekolah Dasar* (SD)¹⁹ Imam Shafii, described difficulties he faced during the first five years of the school establishment. Many questions were addressed to him regarding the status of the school and its affiliation to radicalism. He patiently answered these questions to convince people that his school has been in line with the government curricula. Fuad, the principal of SD Imam Shafii at the time of my fieldwork, frankly told his concern about the data he gave to me. However, he did not mind accepting me at his office as I was referred to him by another preacher. In spite of partial suspicion towards my project, he still expected I could be a voice for the Salafis. The interview run smoothly and was friendly, but he did not allow me to record it. I was unable to meet personally with Umami, the director of Pesantren al Furqan for girls. She was the wife of the late Buya Jufri, and is still highly respected by the Salafis in Pekanbaru. From a senior teacher at the *Sekolah Menengah Pertama*

¹⁸Literally means neighbourhood. It is considered as the lowest administrative division in Indonesian political system.

¹⁹ SD stands for Sekolah Dasar (SD), equal to primary school where students from 7-12 years old learn.

(SMP)²⁰al Nawawi, which belongs to the Ubudiyya Foundation, I learnt that Ummi called several Salafi preachers whom I had interviewed to collect information about me regarding my background and affiliation. During my fieldwork, I called her several times asking her to allow me to visit her pesantren, but she always replied “let me think (*nanti dulu ya*).” Finally, though she always laughed and seemed to me that she was very friendly during telephone conversation, she decided to neither accept nor reject my visit to her pesantren.

The experience of being suspected by people has made the Salafi preachers more careful and protective, to avoid intruders destructing their image or spying their activities. As such, it was not an easy task for me to get an access to the Salafi figures for research purposes, especially as a student of an Australian university. The situation slightly changed after a meeting with Husen, a leading Salafi preacher, at the end of August 2015. He was my roommate when I was studying at a pesantren in Ponorogo, East Java. His recommendation and reference allowed me to obtain a greater access to the Salafi institutions and figures. He served as the key informant for my fieldwork. During fieldwork, I experienced different levels of acceptance from the Salafis ranging from being very open, asking me to join them once I finished the study and allowing me to visit them various times and record all the interviews and talks, to being limited and allowing me only one interview without consent for recording.

1.5.2. Research Method

This research project employed historical, political and sociological approaches since the Salafi movement affects various aspects of life, including the religious, social and political realms. The first approach is used to answer the first aim of the research in relation to the historical emergence of Salafism and its dynamics within the two decades from 1997 to 2017. The second approach aims to reveal how political situations and affiliations affect the development of Salafism. This approach is also used to uncover the character of Salafi relationship with the government and how the former makes use of this relationship for the sake of its da’wa. The last approach,

²⁰ SMP means junior high school.

sociological, is to identify sociological conditions in which Salafism grows and becomes appealing among Muslim people in Pekanbaru. It is also used to scrutinize how the Salafis build their religious culture and identity among Muslims in Pekanbaru.

These methodological approaches aimed to explore how Salafism addresses the problem of relative deprivation among non-religious Muslims in Pekanbaru, with an emphasis on middle-aged and middle-class people. This aim was approached by focusing on the three main aspects: (1) the process of Salafism emergence in Pekanbaru, related to the agencies that are involved in the da'wa, the role of Saudi Arabia Government and Saudi individuals in that process, and the socio-cultural situation in which this Salafi group is growing; (2) the dynamics of Salafi group in Pekanbaru, reflected in the cooperation as well as tension within Muslim society as a result of its development—in spite of their claim of unity, the development of Salafism is followed by the growing of disunity both among the Salafis themselves as well as within the society; and (3) the reasons why people revert to Islam and then choose Salafism among the diversity of Islamic groups. Within the Salafi group, those reverted Muslims construct their own identity which distinguishes them from other Muslim groups.

In order to reveal these aspects, this study utilised case study and the ethnographic method. According to Benjamin (2005), the concept of ethnography may denote a “methodology,” “fieldwork practice” or “a product.” These three aspects are closely related and considered inseparable in this research. As a methodology, ethnography mainly focuses on the social and cultural contexts of the observed cultures; as a fieldwork practice, it allows the researcher to “be there,” at the location of research; and as a product, it offers an outcome in which the relevant data generated through fieldwork are written in the form of monograph. This method is suited to address themes of research related to perspective, world-views, social interaction and identity (Marvasti 2004). Religion has much to do with the way people see their world, as well as how they establish relationships with others as social beings. For religious activists, religion is also considered a crucial part of their identity. Thus, this method is best suited to the study of Salafism as a religious movement in a specific

location. The ethnographic approach places emphasis on the significance of time and context (Marvasti 2004). Highlighting these aspects, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) point out that “within any setting people may distinguish between a number of quite different contexts that require different kinds of behaviour.” Utilising this method to examine the Salafi movement enabled me to observe the complexities of Salafi relationships, either as individuals or members of society, in a specific setting in terms of time and context. It also allowed me to study processes of social interaction, “role and social types,” and “various kind of behaviours and events” (Babbie 2008) within the Salafi group.

Concerning the position of the researcher, which is usually referred to as a “field role,” Marvasti (2004) describes three “ethnographic roles” applied in the field, depending on the degree of the researchers’s involvement in the research field: “peripheral,” “active” or “complete membership.” The first requires only a minimal involvement in the observed culture, the second “a deeper sense of involvement,” and the last a “complete involvement” to the extent that the researchers’s experience not only strengthens the data, but also becomes data (Marvasti 2004). During the research, my position moved dynamically between these three positions depending on time and context. For example, when I was attending a sermon in the Salafi mosque, listening and observing to the preachers as well as the audience, I keep my involvement limited as I need to keep a distance from the context. In this situation, I never asked a single question of the preacher but rather was focused on the dialogue occurring between the preacher and his followers. In this situation, my involvement was “peripheral.” On another occasion, I was invited to attend the sermon and then join a social festivity, which allowed me to interact deeply and actively with numerous Salafis. In this sense, my involvement became “deep.” These interchangeable roles were made possible due to my status as a native Muslim Malay, which had both a positive and a negative effect on this research. In the positive sense, as a Muslim who was educated in a pesantren and at al Azhar University in Cairo, I was able to attend the Salafi activities and even to take part of them, for example participating in informal learning and congregational prayers in the Salafi mosques. These are usually open in the sense that every Muslim,

regardless of his or her association in terms of organisation or school, is welcome to attend. During the research, I attended numerous congregational prayers and informal learnings carried out in the Salafi mosques. Furthermore, as an educated Malay, I have been considered an “insider” and trusted to teach the “right” Islam to people. However, in this situation, the distance between the researcher and the researched can become blurred, and thus rises the question of neutrality and objectivity (Koning 2014). The issue of objectivity, involving the invisible role of the researcher, has been criticised by Koning (2014) as a “trick to maintain power,” a concern raised because of the need for the researchers to represent the “truth.” To replace this “objectivity,” researchers should pay more attention to their subjectivity (Koning 2014). Research, in this respect, is a reflexive process through which researchers transcend their own experiences, combining it with information gathered from the informants.

1.5.3. Type of Data, Source and Method of Generating Data

Data generated in the fieldwork relate to verbal expressions, behaviours, intentions, attitudes and life histories of the informants. Expressions of belief and feelings of religiosity of the informants are best reflected in their verbal expressions as well as their attitudes and behaviour, making all of these of primary importance. This data enabled me to better understand their religious beliefs, identity, intentions, values and developmental stages of their life. The life histories of those who were closely involved in Salafi activities were also important, as these are “a narrative about a specific significant aspect of a person’s life” (Chase 2008). Some life histories, presented as the case study in this thesis, reflect the stages in the life cycles people experienced, especially from being non-religious Muslims to be committed Salafi adherents. Moreover, as the method directs attention towards subjectivity, my personal experiences as the researcher were a source of data as well, taken into consideration a “sense of truth and integrity” (Marvasti 2004). Documents were also crucial to support the verbal data (Berg 2004). Documents have been understood on the basis of their “content rather than their status as things” (Prior 2003). These documents take the form of brochures, books, publications, Salafi foundations as well as Salafi school reports. Devices, such as CD, cassettes and computer files

containing recorded sermons in various formats relevant to this research are also part of the document category.

The interview data are classified into two categories, primary and secondary. The first is generated from the “competent members” (Blasi & Weigert 1976), as they are considered representatives of their group. In the context of Salafis, these are the preachers and teachers of the Salafi schools and important figures of the Salafi foundation. For this purpose, I interviewed twenty male Salafis as the key informants in Pekanbaru, coming from Pesantren Umm Sulaym, Pesantren Umar ibn al Khattab, al Bayyinah Junior High School, Pesantren Ibn Kathier, Imam Shafii Primary School, Imam Nawawi Junior High School, the al Nadwa Islamic Foundation and the al Ubudiyya Islamic Foundation. These informants are “members of the group who can talk directly about the group per se” (Babbie 2008). It is worth noting here that due to religious reasons, I was not able to interview any female Salafi informants. Salafis strongly uphold the belief that the mixture between non-*mahram*²¹ males and females are not allowed by Islam. Moreover, the theory I used in the research led me to focus on deprived Muslims who seek the truth rather than children. For this reason, the informants were male, middle age and middle class Salafis. Pesantren were chosen as they are considered the center of Salafism where a new generation of Salafis are nurtured (Wahid 2014). In Indonesian tradition, pesantren have long served as centers of transmission of religious knowledge, production of ulemas and preservation of Islamic tradition (Azra 2002). The choice of the Salafi preachers is based on their status as representatives of Salafism in Pekanbaru. Representation of religion, according to Jackson (2011), is established on the basis of power knowledge. This category meets the qualification of those informants as they are mainly scholars who graduated from the Saudi Arabian universities, and therefore, become authoritative among followers.

The secondary interview data were generated from “other actors or significant observers who constitute part of the society action” (Jackson 2011), which, in the

²¹a person by whom the marriage with him or her is religiously lawful permanently.

Salafi context, are both ordinary Salafi activists who are intensively involved in congregational prayers and pengajian in the Salafi mosques, and those who are not regularly involved in Salafi activities. Students, parents and members of the community are also part of this category. Twenty seven informants in Pekanbaru were interviewed for this purpose, constituting the ordinary Salafis and neutral members of society with no affiliation to Salafism. Identification of potential informants for this category (ordinary Salafis and non-Salafis) cannot be located precisely, and therefore I used snowball technique to identify them. This technique is based on the recommendation provided by the few interviewees on whom they believe they are the most influential informants for further interview (Babbie 2008). However, as the informants I had interviewed during the fieldwork were middle-aged and from middle-class families, their recommendations accordingly came from the same social status. This particular situation brought me to put an emphasis on this category and how Salafism functions particularly among this group.

Data during the fieldwork were collected through different methods. The first method was participant observation, which was conducted from July 2015 to March 2016. This was important as it enabled me to actually observe various events in the research area (Howe & Lewis 1993). Moreover, I sometimes found that a particular description given by an informant during the interview required an observation to validate it. For example, information given by a Salafi informant that the Salafis have strong solidarity among them can be validated by observing their attitudes and behaviour in religious rituals as well as social events which they regularly conduct. Similarly, how far a Salafi is attached to the Salafi group can be best seen from his involvement in the Salafi activities. In these cases, observation was an effective way to redress the lack of the interview method. I conducted this observation for 10 months across various occasions and places, including in the Salafis schools and mosques in Pekanbaru. Unlike interviewing, which to some extent has lost its natural setting and therefore considered a “negotiated text” (Fontana and Frey 2008), the participant observation method is an effective way to listen to the “natural” talk among Salafis in a natural setting. All data generated through participant observation were documented in the field notes. I divided my field notes into two kinds according

to Angrosino's (2007) categories: descriptive (narrative as they are on the site), and reflexive (having been mixed with personal interpretation).

During the fieldwork, I spent significant time in various social settings including *aqiqa* (birth festivity), chatting casually at restaurants and attending barbeque parties. Attending regular main prayers and sermons in the Salafi mosques allowed me to obtain various substantial information about the intentions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of the Salafis. I also visited some Salafi schools to talk with the teachers and principals in their offices, accompanied by a cup of tea served by them as a courtesy to a guest. The talk allowed me to observe the spirit of *da'wa* of those Salafi teachers, their insight about Islam and their aspiration about the "ideal" type of Muslim society. I was also lucky to obtain some documents related to the Salafi schools and foundation, given directly by the principal of Salafi schools. During my visit to some Salafi schools, I was also given some Salafi bulletins and periodicals which were no longer published due to various reasons, such as *Khazanah* magazine, published by *Pesantren al Furqan*.

The second method of collecting data was through in-depth interview. This method has a natural deficiency due to its dependence on interviewee's understanding, which is "influenced by the fallibility of their memory, their subsequent experiences, and changes in their circumstances and attitudes" (Howe & Lewis 1993). However, it is still commonly used in qualitative research to generate data due to how interviews can overcome the problem of scant textual information on the subject (Howe & Lewis 1993) and the method's effectiveness for going in-depth into one's personal behaviour and experience (Marvasti 2004). It is also beneficial for "overcoming distances both in space and in time" (Perakyla 2008). Salafi life histories and verbal data are mainly generated through interview. It is expected that employing this method can redress the bias of official written-information and its tendency to cover the "victors" rather than the "vanquished" (Howe & Lewis 1993). Furthermore, as members of the Salafi community are not well-represented in written tradition and in recording their activities and experiences, the interview technique becomes even more important.

During the in-depth interview, I used semi-directive questions in semi-structured questions to generate information from the informants. The in-depth interviews were conducted face to face in a location decided by the interviewees. Some were recorded and others were not due to privacy reasons. I interviewed the Salafi preachers, administrators of the Salafi foundations, laymen Salafi and non-Salafi members. For the preachers, I asked them about history of their acquaintance with Salafism, socio-educational background, their motives and insight about Salafism, their views about other Islamic groups and their role and strategy in spreading the da'wa. My questions also covered about their relationship with the Salafis in Java and their network with the Salafis in Saudi Arabia. The answers provided me with an understanding of the initial history and stages of Salafi development in Pekanbaru, the agency who actively involved in the da'wa, religious motives for their total devotion to Salafism, and internal and external factors that influence the spread of Salafism in Pekanbaru. For the administrators, I asked them about their life history related to the "turning point" which led them to Salafism, socio-cultural background, the reference group who influenced them over their choice on Salafism, reasons behind their choice, their role and expectations about joining the Salafi group. For the laymen, I asked them about their life history especially the turning point phase, socio-cultural background, their perception about Salafism and Salafi preachers, their expectations of joining the Salafi group and their views of non-Salafi preachers and groups. The answers to these questions gave me an insight into the "crises" they had suffered that led them to turn to Salafism and how Salafism functions as a solution for their problem. Moreover, those answers also provided me an understanding about the mode of believing that they expect and which suits their situations. For the non-Salafi members, my questions related to their perception on Salafism and Salafi groups.

For the above purpose, duration and frequency of my interview with the informants were mainly based on the level of informant's importance to the research. For the key informants, I interviewed several times on different occasions for the duration of one to two hours. Husen, for example, was interviewed two times with various

informal meetings in different places. Arman, Fauzi and Edi, who represented the case studies in Chapter 6, were interviewed three times with numerous informal meetings in the mosque and different casual restaurants. The two other case studies, Umar and Doni in Chapter 7, were interviewed only once with numerous other talks. In order to go in-depth into the religious thought, I regularly attended Umar's weekly sermons during the fieldwork. One interview with the most leading Salafi preacher was conducted by submitting the list of research questions, and the interviewee sent back the recorded answers one by one through the WhatsApp application. I met him personally to submit the list of questions. This was done after repeated cancellation of various appointments due to his time. All recorded interviews were transcribed and then combined together with other types of data.

The interview occurred in the Indonesian language. The recorded interviews were transcribed, while unrecorded ones were written down during the interview time. Only the relevant parts of the interviews were translated into English, which appear in the direct citation in this thesis. All informants were clearly informed about the purpose of the research and about my status as a PhD student at an Australian university. They were also given consent sheets before conducting the interviews. Some of them gave consent to use their real names in the thesis, while others expected me to use pseudo-names. However, to protect all the informants, all names in this thesis are pseudo-names.

The last method of collecting data was done through library research. This is applicable for written documents, such as school curricula, brochures and text books, or recorded activities, such as CDs or cassettes containing preaching and teaching. One of the Salafi teachers at the Pesantren Imam Nawawi provided me with some valuable information about their publications, mainly written by the alumni of the IUM, Saudi Arabia. He also provided me with the document related to the Foundation. In doing the library research, I spent most of my time in the Library of Islamic State University Sultan Syarif Qasim and the Soeman HS Library Pekanbaru. The chief of the *al Nadwa* Foundation also allowed me to access various recorded sermons in their computers located in the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque. I selected and

copied these recorded sermons, and listened one by one on the basis of their relevance to the study.

1.5.4. Data Analysis

Unit analysis of this study is based on individuals, characterised by gender (only male Salafis), age (middle age), social status (middle class, well-educated) and attitudes (religious and non-religious). These individuals are also classified on the basis of their membership in particular social groupings, such as layment Salafis, Salafi preachers, non-Salafi Muslims, organised and independent Salafis, and member of al Furqan Salafi Group and the non members.

All data used in this thesis was collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews and library research. In general, there are three stages of data analysis, namely “data reduction, data display, and conclusions and verification” (Berg 2004). For the purpose of data reduction, I organised and prepared the data in a way that makes them ready for reading by transcribing all the recorded interviews into Indonesian language. Based on these data, I described, classified and then labelled them, resulting in some categories and sets. For example, under the set of Salafi development, I can draw five categories of the stages of Salafi emergence in Pekanbaru: the arrival, the inception, the establishment, the fragmentation and the contemporary. Under the set of Salafi dynamics, I can draw two categories: tension and cooperation. Under the reversion process I can draw three categories: *hidayah*, *hijra* and *muallaf*. This is how a great number of raw data are reduced to produce some relevant concepts to the study.

After drawing some categories and sets, the next step was representing those data in a narrative, and then interpreting them on the basis of the theoretical framework employed in this study: relative deprivation theory and the theory of memory. Narrative refers to “displaying human existence” in the form of stories, which are “thematically organized by plots” (Polkinghorne 1995). Therefore, content and thematic analysis of personal histories is used as the type of analysis. To place the Salafi group of Pekanbaru in a broader context, comparative typological analysis is

also employed. Thus, there are two layers of analysis: first about the multifaceted factors and conditions which led to the emergence of Salafi group in Pekanbaru and how Salafism solve the problem of relative deprivation among, particularly, middle-age non-religious Muslims; the second is about “typical” elements of the Salafi group of Pekanbaru in a broader context of the Salafi movement. The outcome of this study is, therefore, the narrative of Salafism in Pekanbaru as a revival movement in solving the problem of existential deprivation among non-religious Malay, as a result of the negative impacts of modernity and the spread of deviated Islamic belief and practices.

1.6. Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 contains the introduction to the research area. Chapter 2 works to reconceptualise the understanding of Salafism as a case study of Islamic Revivalism in Indonesia using the relative deprivation theory and the theory of collective memory. This chapter also provides some background and explanation of Islamic Revivalism, from both a global and Indonesian perspective. The main argument in this chapter is that the emergence of Islamic Revivalism is closely related to the advent of modernity in Muslim countries. Modernity, which is characterised by a constant flux of change and a diverse understanding of religious doctrines, has led to uncertainty of beliefs and, for some people, “existential deprivation.” It is this impact that has led to some Muslims feeling deprived of their religion and seeking a solution to their problems by returning to the teachings of al Quran and Sunnah, exemplified by the *al-salaf al-sālih*. The reference to the *al-salaf al-sālih* on the path of the Salafis, involves remembering and forgetting: literally remembering certain teachings while forgetting others. In order to describe the process of reference, this chapter also provides explanation about the theory of collective memory. Generally, Chapter 2 contains an explanation of combination of two theories: the relative deprivation which is employed to describe the process of Salafi emergence, and the theory of social memory, which is used to explain mode of believing among the Salafis and how they become attached to the Salafi group as a community of memory.

Chapter 3 presents a conceptual explanation of the religious change which has taken place as a result of the development of Salafism. There are two main concepts explained: conversion and reversion. After providing comparative information about these two concepts, this chapter then shows that reversion is more relevant for this study. Moreover, as the process of reversion is highly influenced by the da'wa used by Muslims preachers, this chapter also provides a description about da'wa.

Chapter 4 addresses the emergence of Salafism in Pekanbaru and the role of Saudi Arabia in the process outlined in Chapter 3. Both the Saudi government and Saudi individuals play a significant role in disseminating and supporting global Salafism. On the basis of its distinctive characteristics found in every phase relating to the process of emergence, features and role of Jufri students, scope and strategy of their da'wa, this chapter classifies the stages of Salafi development in Pekanbaru into five phases: the arrival, the inception, the establishment, the fragmentation and the contemporary.

After discussing the process of emergence of Salafi group, Chapter 5 looks at the dynamics of the mainstream Salafi group in Pekanbaru: the way they define themselves amidst the ambiguity of the term Salafism; cooperation and tensions with the local community as a result of its development; and the response the Salafis receive from mainstream Muslims. Generally, the dynamics of Pekanbaru Salafism have created two contradictory facts: cooperation with the local government on the one hand, and tensions with some Islamic organisations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) on the other. This chapter argues that the Salafis, represented by the al Furqan Salafi Group (FSG), maintain their close relationship with the local government as part of their strategy to expand their influence at both governmental and societal levels.

Chapter 6 contains the analysis of the process of reversion to Salafism in Pekanbaru on the part of Muslims on the basis of relative deprivation theory. The return to Islam is considered by many as an initial solution to a feeling of deprivation which often

manifest itself as a form of spiritual “emptiness,” accompanied by anxiety, depression and a lack of direction in life. Findings show that those who join the Salafi groups have previously experienced a sense of relative deprivation which leads to the feeling of existential deprivation. It is this feeling which motivates them to search for the true and pure interpretation of Islam in an attempt to quench their thirst for spiritual understanding and comfort. This chapter also provides an explanation of the personal and sociological reason for the return of those deprived Muslims to Islam after not being religious for a certain period of time in their life. The most important reason discussed here is that religion has a structural connection to people’s memory, and therefore, the return to it is quite reasonable.

Chapter 7 presents an analysis of the underlying reasons why deprived Muslims choose Salafism and, having done so, how “new reverts” then become part of the Salafi group by employing the theory of collective memory. On the basis of this theory, the Salafi group is considered as the community memory, bound mainly by religious interpretations and feelings, socially constructed by the Salafi preachers through their teachings from the pulpit. This chapter also provides an elucidation of some features of the Salafi group and how they construct their identity, emphasising that recollection is the most effective way of reconstructing their identity. For the members of the Salafi group, the Salafi community functions as the social frame in which the new converts mix and interact with their senior Salafi brothers and share the religious memory.

Chapter 8 contains the conclusion of the thesis, drawing together the main arguments and the findings.

CHAPTER 2. RECONCEPTUALISING ISLAMIC REVIVALISM: THE SALAFI GROUP AS A COMMUNITY OF MEMORY

I had been searching for answers everywhere, but to no avail. Finally, I found them
in Salafism

—Isrul, December 2, 2015

I just want to follow the Prophet. That is why I prefer to wear gamis rather than
koko—Awang, February 26, 2016

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to reconceptualise the understanding of Salafism as a case study of Islamic revivalism in Indonesia using the relative deprivation theory and the theory of collective memory. Employing the first theory, I aim to reveal socio-cultural factors which trigger those non-religious Malay to revert to Islam; using the second theory I work to reveal the mode of believing of those reverted Malays including how they share and produce meaning in the Salafi community of Pekanbaru. It is expected that the combination of these two theories will result in a more comprehensive understanding of Salafism²² in the western Indonesian province of Riau in the sense of how Salafism, as a revival movement, solves the problems of existential deprivation as a result of the perceived negative impact of modernities by returning to the past. First, some background and explanation of Islamic Revivalism will be given, from both a global and Indonesian perspective. The close relationship between the advent of modernity in Muslim countries, as a result of their contact with the West through either a colonialisation or a modernisation process carried out by Muslim governments will be examined. Modernity (see below) is characterised by a constant flux of change and a diverse understanding of religious doctrines which lead

²² Recent literature on Indonesian Salafism is mainly based on normative and social movement approaches, see for example: Hasan (2006), Wahid (2014) and Idahram (2011).

to uncertainty of belief, and for some people, “existential deprivation²³.” I argue that the impact of modernity has led to some Muslims feeling deprived of their religion. If this occurs, some “deprived” Muslims seek a solution to their problems by, as they see it, returning to the teachings of al Quran and Sunnah, exemplified by the *al-salaf al-sālih*.

For the Salafis, their interpretation of the *al-salaf al-sālih* teachings is not only by the word of *al-salaf al-sālih*, but also the way they lead their life. This process of reference to the *al-salaf al-sālih* on the path of the Salafis involves remembering and forgetting: literally remembering certain teachings while forgetting others. To some extent, the Salafis strictly choose which interpretations and scholars should be followed and which one should be neglected. Fragmentation within the Salafi Group itself is a result of different loyalty to different ulemas. In this regards, they could also be identified on the basis of their loyalty to particular ulemas. For example, in the global context, some Salafis are known as *Surūriyyūn* (followers of Surury) and *al Madkhaliyyūn* (followers of Rabī’ al Madkhaly). In the Pekanbaru case, those Salafis can be identified as the al Furqan group (students of Buya Jufri) and non-al Furqan group. The process of forgetting and remembering within Salafi communities can be described by adopting the theory of collective memory, which is how the case of Salafism in Pekanbaru is explored in this thesis.

2.2. Features of Islamic Revivalism

Islamic Revivalism is a generic concept to describe the socio-religious phenomena of the return and growing awareness of Muslims of their religion. Its common platform is the call to return to al Quran and Sunnah, which in its expression varies from one country to others. Geographically, the Muslim world lies from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean; from South India to the middle of Africa, Siberia, Albania and Bosnia, excluding those who form the minority part of societies in Europe and Latin America (Nasr 1994). This still can include Muslims in Southeast Asia which are

²³ The existential deprivation I adopted here refers to the definition given by Dein and Barlow (1999) who assumed that a feeling of deprivation is not only related to an economic lack, but also existential needs.

concentrated in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and in the Southern part of Thailand and the Philippines. In total, the Muslim population is approximately 1.7 billion people, or one quarter of the global population (Grim & Hsu 2011), scattered around the world, with different perceptions and understanding about Islam. Renand, as cited by Haddad and Esposito (1991, pp. vii-viii) refers to this as “unity within diversity.” With this large geographical area, population and great diversities of understanding and groups, different phenomena of Islamic Revivalism can be found in Muslim countries.

Revivalism is another term for Islamic resurgence and is used interchangeably with fundamentalism, radicalism and reformism and even extremism in various pieces of literature (Choueiri 2010). Muzaffar described the Islamic resurgence as a struggle to adjust to what is perceived as Islamic behaviour and deeds, and to promote Islamic views (via Kuntowijoyo 1993). Choueri (2010) included the terms radicalism, revivalism and reformism within the frame of fundamentalism. Among these ambiguous terms, the choice of the word revivalism is most appropriate in this study to describe the case study, Pekanbaru Salafism²⁴. This is because the term “revival” implies a sense of restoration, rather than introducing something new; it simply revives the “neglected old” in Muslim life, and in the word of Sijapati (2011), makes it “vibrant.” A further reason for this lexical choice is that revivalism communicates the sense of a revitalisation of Islamic values, which are currently being neglected by many Muslim communities, in both private and public life. These neglected values and teachings, for example, can be seen from the da’wa of Tabligh Jamaa who insistently visits Muslims’ homes to request them to perform the main prayer at the mosques. This is because the Tabligh Jamaa believes that Muslims would not be able to step forward unless they pray in the mosque regularly so that the unity of umma can be created. All three above interpretations of revivalism (restoration, revitalisation and revival) can be found in the Salafi movement, which in many ways attempts to revitalise and revive the past and, therefore, the exemplary life of the *al-salaf al-sālih* can be restored in contemporary Muslim society.

²⁴ The features of Riau Salafism are discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis.

The term revivalism can also be interpreted to mean that the current way of life of Muslim societies is not “fully Islamic” (Sijapati 2011) and therefore requires a revival movement to re-Islamise them. This is in line with the view of, for example, Umar, a Salafi preacher, who said on one occasion at the RJ that many prevalent beliefs and practices among Muslims today are far away from the true Islam. Sijapati also argues that revivalism can equally be interpreted as there being only “one true” form of Islam. Attributing Salafism as the revival movement is in line with the Salafis’ claim that they are the only true group of Islam. A controversial book of Yazid Jawwas (2004), a leading Salafi preacher who accuses that the followers of Asharite are not Muslim, obviously expresses the Salafi perception towards their non-Salafi Muslim fellows. This thesis adopts all three of the above interpretations, arguing that, according to the Revivalist Movement, the “false-present practice” of Muslims needs to be replaced by returning to the original teaching of Islam.

Generally speaking, four characteristics of recent Islamic revivalism can be observed in most Muslim countries: the increased power given to religious clerics; ever-increasing implementation of Islamic law; the trans-national impact of Islamic movements; and the extreme concern of perceived negative impact which secularism has on religion (Gorman 1991, p. vii). In the case of Indonesia, the above four characters can be easily identified in certain Islamic movements: the Salafis, who strongly depend on the ulemas; the Islamic Defenders Front, which persistently calls for the adoption of Sharia; and the trans-national movement, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, which endlessly criticises democracy, the nation-state and the negative impact of the western systems on Muslim life.

Historically, the emergence of Islamic Revivalism is in response to Western powers, which for centuries occupied vast territory of Muslim regions²⁵. The use of the two perceived antagonistic entities, the West and Islamic world, is to some extent problematic. As Rane (2010, p. 219) argues, the terms imply “two monolithic blocs,”

²⁵Many Muslim countries were under European colonialization for long periods of time. For example, Indonesia was occupied by the Dutch for centuries; Malaysia was under British colonial rule; the Middle East countries were under the British, Italian and French; and North Africa was under Italian and French occupation.

and therefore, fail to cover the diversity and complexity of both Islam and the West. Thus these terms reduce various facts that could mislead reader perception. These terms also ignore the mutual influence between Islamic civilisation and the West. It is a historical fact that Islamic civilisation has influenced the West in many ways and in the same vein, the West has also influenced Islamic civilisation. Moreover, millions of Muslims are living in various Western countries, giving their contribution to the Western civilisation. The concept to some extent therefore does not refer to a clear dividing line because there is a mixture as a result of prolonged contact and interaction between both sides. However, in spite of the reductionist nature of these terms, I still use them in this thesis to suggest two different entities, bearing in mind the mutual influence between both sides.

Regarding the relationship between Islam and the West, it has been characterised by cooperation as well as conflict. There are three milestones which have significantly influenced this relationship: crusade, colonialism and Orientalism. Many Muslims for example perceive that colonialism was the continuation of the Crusade, which, according to them, can be seen from the coming of the Christian missions along with the colonial power. In Indonesia's case, it is no doubt that Christianity was brought to this country by the Portuguese, Spanish and the Dutch colonialists. Special focus should be given on colonialism, which according to Possamai (2015) was a result of modernity. Moreover, the special focus on colonialism is also driven by the historical fact that almost all Islamic Revivalism movements came into being during the colonial era. Colonialism, in this case, is the context which provides an unintended "fertile soil" for the existence of Islamic Revivalism.

As the most influential factor which pushed Muslims to realise their backwardness, colonisation had a profound impact on the Muslim world. Poverty, political disunity, penetration of Western culture and the decline of the role of ulemas within Muslim societies are among the most visible unexpected impacts of the West on the Islamic world. However, this experience has pushed Muslim scholars to find solutions for their problem. To some extent, colonialism can be said to be the catalyst for the emergence of new ideas and perceived solutions of many problems encountered by

the Muslim world. In response to the absence of political unity among Muslims under colonisation, Afghani (1838—1897), for example, called for the unity of umma through pan-Islamism. He also encouraged Muslims to avoid the *taqlid* (blind following) to the ulemas interpretations, but instead, referred to the al Quran and Hadith directly. It is also worth noting here that Afghani encouraged Muslims to learn Western language and technology. Abduh (1849—1905), another example of the early pioneer of Islamic Revivalism, also highlighted the use of intellectual reasoning and encouraged Muslims to use it instead of being *taqlid*. Abduh placed a strong emphasis on *tauhid* (Oneness of God) and perceived that the purity of *tauhid* is a pre-condition which must be achieved by Muslims in order to be able to step forward. The use of reason and maintaining the strong *tauhid* have widely been elaborated and spread by his student, Rashid Ridla (1865—1935). The movement of the three scholars (Afghani, Abduh and Ridha) is considered part of Islamic Revivalism.

The spread of Abduh's ideas was not limited to the Middle East but reached Southeast Asian regions as well which, in the meantime, were under British, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Dutch occupation. The idea of purification as upheld by Abduh and his disciple has led some Muslims to re-consider their Islamicity, who try to continuously identify which Islamic teachings are original and which are not. The establishment of the Muhammadiyah movement²⁶, according to many scholars, is very much influenced by Abduh's ideas which were received through the al Manar Magazine, published by Abduh's disciple Rashid Ridla. Therefore, like Abduh's Salafism, the idea of purification of religious teachings and the call to the return to al Quran and Hadith instead of *taqlid* has become the main feature of the Muhammadiyah movement.

The perceived challenge of the West, which is currently felt mainly through the modernisation process undergone by the Muslim governments, is a crucial factor to the realisation of the feeling of crisis in Muslim societies. This is characterised by a

²⁶Muhammadiyah is the second largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia, founded by Ahmad Dahlan in 1912 in Yogyakarta.

sense of general societal decay as a result of the perceived penetration of Western culture brought about by movies, the internet and television (Haddad 1991), and a feeling of being threatened by Western powers (Gautier 2002).

As previously mentioned, the phenomena of Islamic revivalism are closely related to the impact of modernity felt by Muslims in their life (Voll 1991). Modernity, which cannot be separated from secularism, with all its unavoidable impact, is perceived by many Muslims as a Western project (Nasr 2003). It is perceived that under the conditions of modernity many Muslim countries have faced educational, economic, intellectual and political crises (Mousally 1999; Nasr 2003; Niazi 2005). Modernity appears in many forms and through many ways: the nation state, loyalty to the nation on the basis of rational thinking (nationalism), the existence of various organisations such as political parties and accentuation on sciences instead of religious doctrines (Azmeah 2009). Many Muslims have realised that perceived challenge of modernity is the main cause which leads them to be far away from the ideal circumstances described in al Quran and Sunnah. Secularism, degradation of the ulemas role within society and the spread of Western values are among the examples of these unexpected circumstances (see below). In addition to these external factors, internal circumstances of Muslim societies deserved in fact to be noticed, such as the common negligence of the importance of sciences and their preference to taqlid over reasoning, which is mainly believed by many Muslim scholars as the main reason of the backwardness of the Muslim world. *Taqlīd* does not lead to progress, and the contemporary Muslim culture has become a culture of *sharh*²⁷ which is mainly based on the repetition and reproduction of past materials rather than invention and innovation. Moreover, the dichotomy of religious and secular sciences among Muslim societies, with their preference to learn religious sciences for teleological reasons, has also become a tough hindrance for Muslims to step forward. Islamic Revivalism is a response to these conditions by searching for a truly Islamic solution, applicable for all Muslims and relevant for all time. The complexities of the problems faced by the Muslim world have led to the rise of a variety of response in

²⁷ *Syarh* means explanation. This refers to the fact that many recent publications by Muslim scholars are not original works, but simply explanation or interpretation of various classical books.

what is so called Islamic Revivalism, among which is the Salafi movement. As the emergence of the Islamic Revivalist movements was happened mostly during the expansion of Western modernity which colonised Muslim countries, the following section explores its impact on the Muslim world.

2.3. Modernity and its Impact on MuslimWorld

There are various definitions of modernities proposed by many scholars. Foucault (1986) characterised modernity as the awareness of the break of time or tradition. Similarly, Schabert, as cited by Sajoo (2008), highlights the idea of break (gap) between past and present as a result of “aimless dynamism,” leading to continuous change. Hodgson (1974) refers to it as merely a cultural transformation. Expressing this elusiveness, Sajoo (2008) says that modernity has many guises; it is not singular but rather is a plural phenomenon produced in multiple sites by numerous actors and through various processes. The plurality of the actors, sites and processes lead to pluralities of expressions, which Eisenstadt (2002) calls multiple modernities. Confirming this multiplicity, Possamai (2015, p. 133) states that modernities are received in different ways around the world, especially in relation to religions. Turkey, for example, attempted to eradicate religion (Islam) from the public sphere to ensure that public life is fitted to the mould of secularism²⁸. In contrast, Malaysia combines the benefit of modernities with religion so that Islam, as state’s official religion, can adjust to the modernities ethos (p. 133). Similar to its plural definitions, the experience of modernity in Muslim societies has also varied from being widely selected or accepted to suspiciously rejected due to its attribution to Western civilisation.

Although there are ambiguities about the meaning of modernities, Berger et al (2008) state that there are still common features pertaining to the accentuation of science and technology as a result of the emancipation of reason. The wide scope of its phenomenon, according to Sajoo (2008), can be summarised into five common themes: (i) rationalism, resulting to the development of science and technology, and

²⁸ The Attaturk reforms, according to Masud (2009), was essentially not anti-religious, but rather they did not back up and justify the need and implementation of these cultural and social changes on the basis of Islamic tradition.

the differentiation of human life due to different functions they serve; (ii) secularism, as a result of social evolution of Western people, which is mainly based on rationalism—the most observable fact of secularism is a clear boundary between Church and state; (iii) individualism and human rights; (iv) democratic governance, which is based on the claim that nation-state sovereignty is accountable to the citizens; and (v) globalisation. Under the umbrella of these wide themes, the narrative of modernisation and Muslim modernities can be found. Another category of modernity is proposed by Tibi (2009) who distinguishes it into two elements: institutional and cultural. The former is related to power, modern sciences and technology and all their instruments while the latter is related to values and worldviews (pp. 303-4). In the light of Tibi's categorisation, Sajo's themes of modernity can be classified as being part of institutional modernity, while secularism and individualism are part of cultural modernity. In most cases, Muslim societies welcome warmly the institutional modernity, such as the progress of sciences and technology, and adopt and use these in their life. Fundamentalist Muslims are also in agreement with these progresses and highly use them for their purposes. However, the perceived negative impact of cultural modernity (individualism and secularism) is not only felt by the fundamentalists, but also shared by some moderate Muslim groups. The problems which are attributable to modernity as explained by Hashemi (2009, p. 41), such as high crime, high divorce rate as a result of the decline of marriage institution, drug addiction, neurological disorders and family breakdown are in fact related to Tibi's cultural modernity. On the basis of my fieldwork, what my informants understood about modernity mainly referred to cultural modernity with its detrimental impact (see Chapter 6). In this case, cultural modernity with all its effect has been perceived as the representative of modernity, which, according to some Muslims, should be rejected. These social problems have led some Muslims to search for a remedy to help extricating themselves from these social evils. In search for an identity, those Muslims then return to religious values and moral.

On the basis of the above explanation, I will discuss three main influential forms of modernity which shape Muslim life: secularism in the religious sphere; the nation-state in the political arena; and consumerism as a result of globalisation in the

cultural sphere. Discussing these three forms of modernity is important as their far-reaching influence in the Muslim life provides us with an understanding of the context in which Islamic Revivalism has emerged.

Possamai (2015) argues that instead of rejecting the conditions of modernities, religion had adopted some common features such as progress and emancipation in various forms. For this reason, Possamai claims that religion in secularised countries is not only back but also “reincarnated” and even is perceived to “take over the government” (pp. 131-2). However, Possamai argues that this case is not applicable to all countries due to their different responses. In many Muslim countries, particularly in the Middle East, secularism is a significant exception, as colonial heritage can work to weaken and dominate Muslim societies (Nasr 2003). This can diminish the status of Islam to be the sub-system of society (Tibi 2009); in this context, Islam loses its political power as well as its normative-cultural role. The negative image of secularism among Muslims, according to Hashemi (2009), is mainly caused by the fact that secularism “lacks organic root” in Muslim societies. Unlike in Western societies, where secularism is seen as a logical consequence of social evolution, in Muslim societies it was mainly introduced and “implanted” by a small minority of Westernised political elites through various state programs. It can be seen as introduced through a top-down approach, contrary to a more bottom-up development in the West. The lack of its organic root has led to its rejection, although secularism is still defended by a small Westernised elite of Muslim groups.

One of the obvious expressions of secularism is a clear delineation of the public and private sphere of life. In a secularised country, religion is supposed to be present only in the private sphere. However, many Muslims believe that Islam encompasses all aspects of life, provides universal morals and meanings, including in political arenas (Hashemi 2009). It is not surprising that in such conditions the dichotomy between public and private spheres does not exist in much Muslim thought and, therefore, many expressions of Islam still appear in various forms in the public spheres in Muslim societies. This causes some internal conflicts. In the Indonesian context, for example, the appearance of Islam in the public sphere is frequently perceived by the

secularised group as the “politicising of religion,” while traditional Muslims merely perceive it as part of the implementation of Islamic teachings. This gap is still found in many Muslim countries.

Hashemi (2009) argues that the privatisation of religion in secularised societies is closely related to the rise of individualisation and autonomy among people. The process of individualisation is linked to the increase of hostility to traditional authority, which in Muslim societies is mostly occupied by religious clerics or ulemas (Hashemi 2009, pp. 58-60). In line with this, Possamai (2015, p. 132) contends that secularisation has resulted in the reduced importance of “traditional religious institutions,” and a search for a “more personal connection to a religion (that is for spirituality) has increased.” Belief, according to Possamai (2015), does not disappear but only become more personal, individual and, therefore, more heterogeneous. In such situations, some impacts in Muslim societies should be noted—individualisation could lead to the democratisation of religious interpretations regardless of capability and religious knowledge. Religious interpretation would also be more plural and relativistic in nature. These notions have led to religious fragmentation among Muslims. Individualism is still widely perceived by many Muslims as contrary to the idea of collectivism in Islam which allows ulemas to conduct the da’wa to people. Moreover, the idea of autonomy in the religious sphere particularly could lead to the decline of the ulemas’ function and authority within society. Based on the above explanation, individualisation and autonomy as the expression of secular life have been approached cautiously by many Muslims. Considering the perceived negative impact of modernity within Muslim society, many Muslims reject it with their pre-conceived assumption that it is largely based on Western values.

Azmeh (2009) suggests that one of the main perceptions of Muslims of the West is the idea that Islam is being contaminated by Western secularism. In the light of this view, secularism is perceived as having no historical background in Islamic heritage. This means that some Muslims feel that if they adopt and implement secularism, they will be “contaminated” by Western ideas. With regard to this idea of

“contamination,” it is worth referring to the late renowned Egyptian scholar ‘Ali ‘Abd al-Rāziq (1888-1966) and his book, *al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm*²⁹ in which he used the words “secularism” and “modernism” long before they entered into common usage. He insisted on the separation of religion and state; by state he meant a nation state, since he rejected the notion that Islam intends to unify the whole world in a single Islamic state (Binder 1988). He also rejected the idea of Pan-Arabism, preferring to the multiplicity of states in the Arab regions. This idea was also rejected by many traditional Muslim scholars. Hourani (2013) stated that the rejection of Abd al Raziq’s idea was because he made use of the Western theory to explain his ideas regarding political Islam. In other words, it was claimed that he had been “contaminated” by Western thoughts, the most obvious one being that of secularism in the sense of the separation of the state from any religion and religious institutions. As the notion of “contamination” played an important role in shaping Muslim response, it is not surprising that the views of ‘Abd al-Rāziq provoked conservative Muslims’ anger at the time of the book’s publication.

Secularism, as an imported concept from the West and implemented by the nation state, has been ideologically defined by ulemas as contrary to the basic tenets of Islam. They argue that acceptance of a nation state and secularism will result directly in the marginalisation of the political role of Islam, since, as previously mentioned, a secular nation-state requires the separation of state from religion. Within such a state, Muslims are no longer able to enjoy their total freedom of religious expression³⁰. Moreover, a secular nation state also replaces the role of ulemas as legislators and magistrate. The privileged role of ulemas in the legal and educational spheres allows social and organisational power, including of rituals such as prayer and festivals. The adoption of the secular nation-state means the role of traditional Islam, as represented by ulemas, declines in various aspects of life. In addition to their power in legal and

²⁹*Al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm* (Islam and the Sources of Political Authority) was published in 1925, since when, it has inspired debate on Muslim political thought among Muslim scholars. Raziq’s main idea is that Muhammad was a Prophet and a spiritual leader, not a political leader, thereby arguing that there is no specific Islamic idea of state or government.

³⁰ Tunisia, under the rule of Ben Ali (1987—2011), and Egypt, under Mubarak (1981—2011), were clear examples of the antagonistic relationship between Islamic movements and a secular nation-state. During the rule of these two presidents, such movements or organisations were strictly controlled. As a result, many Muslim figures considered “opponents” to the state were imprisoned.

educational matter, politically, ulemas can also endorse the decisions of the sultan, finding religious legitimacy for their decisions and acts. One clear example of the use of the ulema's support to political decision was when The Turkish Grand National Assembly used the pronouncement of the ulemas to justify the abolition of the caliphate. The view of ulemas who perceive Islam as a message rather than a government, and as a religion rather than a state, coincided with the abolition of the caliphate. In addition to legal, educational and political power, ulemas have obviously enjoyed the privilege of stating their religious interpretations on all matters. In fact, no religious interpretation would be accepted by Muslims, unless interpreted by ulemas. However, the growing development of secularisation has deprived them of these religious and worldly roles. Given the situation described, it is not surprising that ulemas take the lead in Muslim societies in criticising secularism due to its direct impact to the marginalisation of their role and status.

Another face of modernity in Muslim countries is the use of the modern nation-state as a dominant concept, fostering secularism as the state's philosophy. As a result, Islam has lost its function as the main orientating value, particularly in the political arena. In addition to the declining role of Islam, the umma is also divided into various countries. Islam as a common denominator is no longer effective as the uniting factor, because loyalty to Islam has been replaced by loyalty to nation, known as nationalism. Legislation and education, which was carried out by ulemas prior to the adoption of the nation-state, now has been taken over by the state. As a corollary of this, the role of Muslim clerics in law, educational and political spheres is continuously declining in Muslim societies (Azmeah 2009). This form of nation-state is the most obvious presence of Western political influence in Muslim countries.

Along with the ongoing decline of the role of the Muslim clerics, the last element of modernity³¹ discussed in this study is how the strong orientation to materialistic life, or consumerism, has radically changed Muslim societies. Many argue that most Muslims, particularly the young generation, prefer to visit the malls rather than the mosques. Consumer spheres, represented by markets, malls, banks and recreation

³¹ Many studies in developing countries relate the consumption culture to modernity, suggesting that it is developing toward "a western-style consumer culture". See, for example, Wong (2007).

areas, which are heavily oriented to material culture, have undoubtedly challenged the role of mosques as the center of Islamic values production, with Abdullah already claiming in 2006 that Muslim cultures have become somewhat contested between mosques, market and state (Abdullah 2006). This decline in importance attached to mosques has meant that instead of Muslims performing their daily and weekly rituals here, they prefer to go to shopping malls. This condition reflects the decline of the role of the mosques on the one hand, and the strengthening of the market on the other, as the source of normative value in Muslim societies.

In such a changing situation, emerging Muslim awareness has started to be concerned with protecting religious identity. People see that their environment is no longer conducive to the implementation of Islamic values in which they believe. Islam, as the provider of their normative cultural orientation, gradually finds its significance within Muslim societies. Based on the above explanation, I approach the topic of Islamic Revivalism, with Salafism as the case study, using the relative deprivation theory.

2.4. How Do Muslims Come to Feel Deprived?

The theory of relative deprivation has been used by scholars to explain the root and development of social movements in which an individual or a group of people feel deprived in the cultural and socio-economic spheres (Ali 2012; Morrison 1971). Agbibo (2013), for example, claims that the emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria is caused by socio-economic and political issues resulting from elite corruption and the prevalence of poverty among people. Similarly, Dein and Barlow (1999) argue that the underlying reason attracting people to join the Hare Krishna Movement in London is a feeling of “existential deprivation.” From this explanation, it can be assumed that an individual can feel deprived in a religious or spiritual sense, reflected in feelings of emptiness, anxiety and seeing life as less meaningful.

Smith and Pettingrew (2015, p. 2) define the theory of relative deprivation as “a judgment that one or one’s in-group is disadvantaged compared to a relevant referent, and that this judgment invokes feelings of anger, resentment and

entitlement.” Relative deprivation itself is referred to as “a sense of deprivation” which involves comparisons with the “reference group” (Runciman 1966, pp. 10-1). The basic idea of relative deprivation is that the feeling of being deprived or dissatisfied largely depends on what someone desires to possess. This desire comes about as a result of comparing with the referent group (Morrison 1971; Runciman 1966; Webber 2007). In terms of scope, it may occur in an individual, which is referred to as “individual relative deprivation,” or in a group, referred to as “group relative deprivation” (Runciman 1966). Runciman further explains that the sense of deprivation may vary from one to another in terms of its magnitude, frequency or degree. The first term means “the extent of the difference between the desired situation and that of the person desiring it,” the second refers to the “proportion of the group who feel it,” and the last term refers to the strength of deprivation felt by an individual or a group (1966, p. 11).

Among the Salafis, when an individual is seen to be deprived of their religious roots, their condition is referred to as *jahiliya*³². It is interesting to note that the concept of *jahiliyya* in Islamic history was used to describe the situation in the Arab Peninsula prior to the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (570-632 A.D). During that time, the Arabs were still pagan, with more than 300 statues erected around the Ka’ba. Specifically among the Salafis, the expression *jahiliyya* refers to someone’s state before their “reversion” to Salafism, indicating they were “unguided” and had taken the wrong path. In other words, it is assumed that no Islamic understanding other than that of the Salafis is pure and right. The term *jahiliyya* is also used to distinguish between the past and present: the past *jahiliyya* being “unguided” and the present Salafi “right.” As a corollary of this, when someone converts and joins the Salafis, they are called “*muallaf*³³.” It is also worth noting here that the term *muallaf* in the Islamic tradition was initially used to describe a Muslim who had recently converted

³²Historically, the term “jahiliya” was used by Muslims to refer to the pre-Islamic period, before the coming of the Quranic revelation (Berkey 2003, p. 39); from a theological point of view, it is interpreted as “the time of ignorance”, and widely used in recent times to judge a state of mind, or behaviour that is perceived to be un-Islamic (see, for examples, Sayyid Qutb’s work *al Ma’alim fi al Thariq*, 1964; and Muhammad Qutb’s work, *Jahiliyyāt al Qarn al Isyrīn*.

³³ The term *muallaf* is commonly used to refer to a new convert to Islam, the process itself is often considered as a cutting line between the past and the future, at which point, many new converts also change their name. The use of this term among the Salafis indicates that they have created a “cutting line” between their past and future in spite of their adherence to the same religion, Islam.

to Islam from another religion. Due to their lack of knowledge about Islam, a new convert usually needs to be guided by the ulemas. In fact, there are at least two essential meanings implied by the use of the word *muallaf* among the Salafis: that an individual is not a Muslim, or not a true Muslim, before his or her conversion to Salafism. As a result of this, any knowledge of Islamic doctrines and teachings acquired before becoming a Salafi is no longer applicable, because it is impure and not in line with the understanding of *al-salaf al-sālih*. If an individual is being deprived of a religion which provides him or her guidance in life, there can be two possible responses: either returning to the religion or abandoning it. The idea behind Islamic revivalism is that Muslims return to their religion with a new and heightened commitment. In popular jargon, this is expressed as returning to al Quran and Sunnah.

How does a Muslim arrive at a state of feeling “deprived”? Runciman elaborates that there are three possible factors involved: education, social class and power. He elaborates that this can emerge in an individual through the process of comparison with external conditions. He describes the process thus:

If A, who does not have something but wants it, compares himself to B, who does have it, then A is ‘relatively deprived’ with reference to B. Similarly, if A’s expectations are higher than B’s, or if he was better off than B in the past, he may when similarly placed to B feel relatively deprived by comparison with him (1966, p. 103).

The basic idea discussed by Runciman is that the feeling of deprivation appears after conducting a comparison between “one’s lacks” to another’s surplus. Although Webber (2007, p. 107) argues that relative deprivation is a result rather than a theory, the most important contribution of Runciman to this study is the idea of “a comparative process.” In this process, there are two aspects that should be explained, the subjects and the objects of the comparison. The latter is also called as a reference group, which refers to an individual, a group or an abstract idea (Runciman 1966, p. 11). According to Runciman (1966, pp. 11-5), there are three types of such groups: “comparative reference group, normative, and membership group.” The first is the

group an individual compares the material possession he or she has with what others possess, which can lead to a sense of lacking. The normative group serves as the barometer of the value, and the membership group is the group to which someone feels belonging and the people with whom he or she is associated with.

In the context of Islamic revivalism, the comparison conducted by some Muslims is not a linear process, but rather involves a multiplicity of comparison with the non-Muslim represented by the West who has a better condition than him or her. The condition of contemporary Muslim societies is in multi-dimensional crises, with its “cumulative, pervasive and comprehensive” features (Dekmejian 1988, p. 2). On the macro level, Muslims are encountering crises of legitimacy, and cultural, political and military conflict. Egypt is a good example of how the government and the constitution are not properly functioning. These crises have driven many Muslims to seek a solution to their problems, with some comparing their unfortunate situation with their perceived ideal of glory in the past at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions and *al-salaf al-sālih*. From this, they conclude that if they, as Muslims, commit to the teaching of al Quran and Sunnah, as their predecessors did, they will achieve glory or the perceived golden time of the first three generation of the emergence of Islam, in which al Quran and Sunnah were fully implemented in daily life.

Why do some Muslims seek solutions for the problems they are facing today by returning to the al Quran and Sunnah? The past plays a vital role in the life of Muslims who in many ways seek to find legitimacy from the past to justify what they practice today. This multiple comparative process allows these Muslims to find the normative gap between their current behaviour and the way people behave in the past, particularly during the first three generations after the demise of the Prophet³⁴. It is this gap that triggers the feeling of being deprived; the feeling that they are no longer in line with the guidance of the Prophet.

³⁴ Imam Ahmad, died in 855 A.D., is considered by some Islamic scholars as the last ulema of Salaf.

This dilemma which they face in reconciling the present with the past can be further exacerbated when Muslims compare their own situation with the perceived prosperity of people in the contemporary West. Having become aware of their situation, Muslims try to find a solution by comparing themselves with the *al-salaf al-sālih*, which was clearly mentioned by the Prophet as the best “umma.” Given this situation, it is quite common to hear the Salafis use statements such as “I am eager to imitate the deeds of the Prophet’s companions” (*aku ingin meniru hidup para sahabat Nabi*) (Doni, interview, November 12, 2015). In the framework of the theory of social memory, these statements are understood as the expression of belief in which the constitutive elements of the past, such as the Prophet’s life, his companions and *al-salaf al-sālih*, are remembered by the Salafis. In this sense, the Salafis can be regarded as a community of memory³⁵, as their understanding of Islam involves remembering and forgetting.

2.5. Salafi Group as a Community of Memory

Having explored the relevance of the relative deprivation theory as a tool to illuminate the Salafi movement, the next question which arises is how the Salafi group, as a religious community, understand and interpret Islam. As the relative deprivation theory is inadequate to explain this, I use Hervieu-Leger’s concept of religion as “a chain of memory” (Hervieu-Leger 2000). This is “a form of collective memory and imagination based on the sanctity of tradition,” with tradition in this sense described as “the authorised version of the church’s collective memory” (Urbaniak 2015, p. 2). The authorised tradition is the main reference for the religious community, and when tradition—that is, the contemporised past—becomes the basis of religion, the understanding of the concept of memory becomes crucial.

There are various definitions of memory proposed by scholars. Urbaniak (2015, p. 2) describes memory as “the ability of the mind to store and recall past sensations,

³⁵ For a brief explanation about community of memory, see *Habits of the Heart* (Robert N. Bellah 1986, pp. 152-5). Bellah explains that the concept of ‘self’ is better understood in terms of the context of community, which is constituted by the past, and in this sense, we can speak about a community of memory. Another scholar, Irwin-Zarecka (2008) in *Frames of Remembrance* explains that a community of memory is created by ‘very memory’, and bounded by a “shared meaning” in that community.

thoughts and knowledge.” Halbwachs, on the other hand, places emphasis on the social aspect of memory by saying it is “the shared pool of information held in the memories of the members of a group” and “it does not exceed the boundaries of the group” (1992, p. 143). Another definition, proposed by Ricoeur (Urbaniak 2015, p. 2) emphasises the function of memory by saying that it is “the tie [process] by virtue of which the past persists in the present.” The two last definitions are relevant to this study because of the emphasis placed on both the function and social aspect of memory.

Although collective memory is closely related to the group and facilitated through it (Assmann 2011), the process of remembering and forgetting is conducted by an individual who share the same collective memory (Halbwachs 1992, p. 22). It can also be said that individual memory is constituted through the process of communication with other members of the group. “These others” are not only a group of people, but people who have a similar view of “their unity” and “peculiarity through a common image of their past” (Assmann 2011, p. 213).

Some scholars, as explained above, provide us with an understanding that memory is social in nature. However, they use different terms to refer to the similar meaning of the memory: collective memory (Halbwachs 1992), social memory (Sakaranaho 2011) and cultural memory (Assmann 2011). Assmann further explains that cultural memory is distanced from everyday life, because cultural memory has “fixed points.” significant events of the past which are upheld through “cultural formation” such as text, rites, ritual monuments, and institutional communications such as “recitation, practice and observance.” He referred to the above as “figures of memory” (2011). Assmann further claimed that cultural memory has some characteristics, such as strong attachment to the group and its reflexivity. The storage of knowledge serves as the source of consciousness of the group about their unanimity and peculiarity. As the source of consciousness, it also functions as the source of identity through which they define the “self” and “others.” The knowledge stored in cultural memory has a “binding character” in two respects: the first is “formative” and functions to educate

and enlighten members of the group; the second is “normative” which provides the rules and code of conduct for the members of the group (Assmann 2011, p. 214).

Seen from the perspective of the theory of memory, religion, as the chain of memory, has three constitutive elements: “the expression of believing, the memory of continuity, and the legitimizing reference to an authorized version of such memory, that is to say to a tradition” (Hervieu-Leger 2000, p. 97). The first element can be in the form of a narrative, verbal or behavioural; the second is something that is consciously endorsed by the religious community, which is connected to the authorised and legitimised past through the main figures or events, serving as the “main marker of their identity³⁶”; and the third element is the authorised tradition as the source of reference for the community of memory. It is interesting to discern the process of how a certain tradition becomes authoritative in a particular group. Broadly speaking, this can be explained through the process of recollection, which result with element that are remembered and others that are forgotten. The process of recollection, according to Sakaranaho (2011, pp. 139-40) is “a hermeneutic circle of memory in which certain key events of religious tradition are constantly reinterpreted and refashioned following a lineage of religious actors functioning as past and present witness.” Through the process of recollection, events relating to the actions of the founder and of his disciples are remembered and maintained in the form of oral or written testimonies. In the context of the Salafi, the Prophetic tradition, referred to as Sunnah, consists of codified testimonies which then become the main narrative which is continuously reproduced as the source of the Salafi identity. Sunnah in this case can be regarded as “the collection of memories” serving as the source of their consciousness.

It is commonly accepted among Muslims that Sunnah is the only authorised version of tradition. However, the Salafi have particular claims in this issue due to their strict reference to the understanding on the basis of Prophet’s disciples who lived during the first three centuries after his demise, known as the *al-salaf al-sālih* period. This is the name given to those men and women who were contemporaries of the Prophet

³⁶ Referring to the same meaning, Halbwachs (1992) used the term “landmark.”

and witnessed his acts, and their testimonies make up the only narrative which is continuously reproduced, revitalised and reinterpreted by the Salafi. However, inevitably something will be remembered and others forgotten over the years.

Al-salaf al-sālih, as the contemporised past, functions as the chain of memory, constituted by several markers of identities which distinguish one Salafi group from another. In respect to the Salafi group, those markers can be listed in general as: *al-salaf al-sālih*, primarily refers to Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855 A.D.), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 A.D.) and Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792 A.D.). The successors of these figures are mainly found in the thought of Sheikh Abd al Aziz ibn Baz (1912-1999 A.D.), Sheikh Utsaimin (1925-2001 A.D.), Nashir al Din al Albani (1914-1999 A.D.), Sheikh Muqbil ibn Hadi (1930-2001 A.D.), Sheikh Shaleh Bahri (b. in 1933) and Sheikh Rabi' al Madkhaly (b. in 1932). Different markers of identity lead to frictions among the Salafi groups. For instance, when one of the Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru mentions two choices to his congregations when giving his sermon, whether to follow al Imam al Shafii or to follow al Quran directly, it should be pointed out here why this seeming contradiction between al Quran and al Imam al Shafii could occur despite the fact that the latter is one of the *al-salaf al-sālih* figures. The reason for the different interpretation is that al Imam al Shafii is not regarded by some of the Salafis as being a main marker of their identity, and is therefore given no credibility.

There are various groups and institutions within society who have different collective memories (Halbwachs 1992), but this study focuses on the religious memory which has been constructed and shared within a group. That group can be referred to as a community of memory, as represented by the Salafi group in this study. Community of memory, as described by Zarecka (2008), is first made up of the memory itself, the “very memory,” and formed by “individuals who not only share a common experience but a shared sense of its meaning and relevance” (p. 48). In order to remember the past, a religious community retells collective histories which consist of exemplary narratives of men and women who represent their conception of goodness and virtue (Bellah 1986). In this context, the community provides “a social

framework for memory” (Savant 2013), and therefore functions as “a public framing of remembrance” (Irwin-Zarecka 2008, p. 56). The Salafis can be regarded as constituting a community of memory for two main reasons. Firstly, the emphasis they place on reproducing effectively that very memory to “copy-paste³⁷” all aspects of the past (the *al-salaf al-sālih*), including appearance, rituals, events and references (such as wearing Arab clothes)³⁸. Secondly, they constantly but literally retell the values, characters and stories of *al-salaf al-sālih*, recalling and re-enacting them in both rituals and daily life. Although these acts are also conducted by other Muslims, something that distinguishes the Salafis is their claim of being the only authoritative interpreters of the *al-salaf al-sālih*, and therefore, become the only “saved” groups among a diversity of Muslim communities³⁹. On this basis, the Salafi group is an example of the community of memory within its own Muslim community.

2.6. The Past, Memory and Religious Community

The past holds great appeal for the Salafi as the community of memory, forming a base for the present as well as their future life. The past is being perceived as the ideal model for contemporary Muslim life. It offers a simple, convincing and safe solution to current challenges, including rapid and continuous change of interpretation and understanding of religion. In the context of Indonesia, a Muslim society, there are several Islamic organisations which have different social and cultural backgrounds. Broadly speaking, they can be categorized into two types: traditionalist and modernist. Examples of the former are Nahdlatul Ulama, Al Washliyah⁴⁰, and Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah⁴¹. Modernist organisations include Muhammadiyah, al Irsyad⁴² and Persis⁴³. In addition, there are also Islamic groups

³⁷ Although speaking in Indonesian language, some informants, such as Doni (interview, November 12, 2015) used this expression to describe their willingness to imitate the exemplary life of the Prophet and the first three generations of Muslim society.

³⁸ This point will be elaborated later in Chapter 6.

³⁹ See, for example, the work of Yazid Jawwas (Jawwas 2008), an Indonesian Salafi preacher, “Syarah Aqidah Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah” (Explanation of the Creed of Ahl al Sunnah), in which he explained that the followers of Asharite and Maturidiyya have been deviated from the right path.

⁴⁰ Al Jamiyyah al Washliyyah was established by Ismail Banda, Arshad Lubis and Abdurrahman Shihab on 30 November 1930 in South Tapanuli, North Sumatra.

⁴¹ A Muslim organisation which is based in West Sumatra, founded on 5 May 1928 by Sheikh Sulaiman al Rasuly.

⁴² Al Irsy ad was established by Sheikh Ahmad Shurkati on 6 September 1914 in Jakarta.

which focus on the da'wa such as Tabligh Jamaa⁴⁴. The latent tension at a grassroots level between all these organisations has had a profound impact on Muslims, leaving them confused and looking for guidance.

For a Muslim, the choice he or she makes with regards to religious matters is of the utmost importance, as they believe this will not only greatly affect their life on this earth but also hereafter. This makes Salafism attractive to many, as it is seen as being pure and uncontaminated by conflict between Muslim theology and madzhab (school of law). One of my informants (see in Chapter 7) clearly stated that he sees no benefit in joining Nahdlatul Ulama or Muhammadiyah, since these organisations are very new, while Islam came into being in Saudi Arabia 14 centuries ago. Moreover, he stated that the Prophet has guaranteed that only the *al-salaf al-sālih* will go to heaven. Therefore, for him, this “guarantee” of eternal life in heaven has led him joining the Salafis, rather than more recent organisations (Edi, interview, November 2, 2015).

In recent decades, the past has been constructed and re-constructed in different ways and by different types of actors, these include academics as well as ordinary laymen. In fact, re-interpreting the past has become a “mass activity” (Sakaranaho 2011). In the context of Salafism, the internet and media have played a significant role and Salafi images and doctrines are widely available on the internet, some produced by people of authority, and others not. This surge of emphasis on the past has a logical consequence: it has become a contested area, creating further divisions between people of religious faith. It is interesting to note that some new Salafi converts acquired their basic knowledge of Salafism from the internet (particularly YouTube) as well as television and the Salafi radio (Arman, interview, November 10, 2015). The Salafi group in Pekanbaru, the focus of this study, is a new academic subject of study. The use of the two theories—relative deprivation theory and theory of memory—helps present a more comprehensive understanding of how Salafi group in Pekanbaru plays an important role in the purification of the Islamic beliefs and

⁴³ Persis was established on 12 September 1923 in Bandung by Haji Muhammad Yunus and Haji Zamzam.

⁴⁴ Tabligh Jamaa was established in 1926 in India by Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas al Kandahlawi.

practices by directing non religious Malay Muslims to return to Islam (Salafism) and then construct a community of memory in which they share the same values and interpretations of Islam.

2.7. Concluding Remarks

As part of the global Islamic revivalism, the emergence of Salafism cannot be separated from the sense of crises felt by many Muslims throughout the world. This sense of crisis has come about as a result of Muslims comparing the life they lead with that of the West, leading to a sense of “backwardness” and deprivation. In addition, the sense of crisis is also exacerbated by internal conflict within the Islamic world as a result of internal dynamics and globalisation. The accumulation of these double crises have led some Muslims to compare their contemporary life with the perception of their glorious past, which has led to the emergence of a desire to return to the “true” Islamic doctrines and practices, which are inline with the *al-salaf al-sālih* understanding.

The use of these two theories is mainly based on four reasons. Firstly, the close relationship between the emergence of Salafi group in Pekanbaru and the sense of crisis experienced by informants, resulting in their feeling of relative deprivation, is clearly connected to the theory of relative deprivation. Data found in the fieldwork shows that existential deprivation is the most common type of deprivation experienced by the informants who revert to Islam (see Chapter 6). Secondly, relative deprivation theory can only explain the causes of the return of those informants to Islam, and then Salafism, and is not sufficient to explain Salafi’s mode of believing, which emphasises the notion of the return to the past. Relation to the past constitutes the process of remembering and forgetting. Thus, the theory of memory becomes relevant. Thirdly, the choice on religion over other alternatives in the process of reversion is assumed to be driven by social memory which deeply connected to religion. Fourthly, it is a complex phenomenon where socio-cultural and economic factors are interlinked to each other. It is in this context that combination of the relative deprivation theory with the theory of social memory to explain how Salafism solves the problem of existential deprivation by returning to

the past becomes relevant. These two theories are applied for analysis of the findings in Chapters 6 and 7. Explanation in Chapter 4 and 5 does not centre on these two theories as the two chapters serve as the socio-historical background of the development of Salafism in Pekanbaru.

Based on the theory of memory, religion is constructed through the process of recollection, which contains two main processes: remembering and forgetting. The first allows an event to be preserved in the memory, and then transmitted through oral and written testimonies. In the case of the Salafis, these testimonies become narrative and are then shared by the community of memory that is made up of the Salafi group. Da'wa is the best way for the Salafis to share their interpretation of Islam to both their fellow Muslims and non-Muslims. Although many non-Muslims have converted to Islam at the RJ, the Salafi Mosque, this thesis will only focus on the reversion of non-Salafi Muslims. Da'wa to non-Salafi Muslims, carried out by the da'wa Salafi, has resulted in the returning of those non-religious Muslims to Islam. The return or reversion of those non-religious Muslims has contributed to the fast growth of Pekanbaru Salafism. The following chapter provides a conceptual explanation of reversion and conversion and the role of da'wa in that process.

CHAPTER 3. SALAFISM AND RELIGIOUS REVERSION: DA'WA AS THE MAIN INSTRUMENT

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a conceptual explanation of the religious change which has taken place as a result of the development of Salafism. The concept of reversion is used throughout this thesis to describe the process of moving from being a non-Salafi Muslim to becoming a Salafi. This process involves change, regardless of its cause, reason, depth or goal. For this reason, the process of reversion and change will be discussed within the frame of Salafi development in Pekanbaru. The following discussion regarding religious change addresses the research question related to the development of Salafism in Pekanbaru and the change it causes at both micro and macro levels. The former is personal change experienced by any Salafi members as a result of their reversion to Salafism, and the latter is the change it causes at the societal level. An example of this is the choice of mosque where the Salafis conduct their main prayers, which sermons they should attend and which school they should send their children (see Chapters 6 and 7). For the purpose of conceptual explanation and providing comparative information about the religious change, I will not only discuss religious reversion but also religious conversion as some causes and goals are similar to both. I will then present the case as to why reversion is more relevant to this study.

Reversion is a process in which an individual returns to his or her previous state practice or belief. Reversion can often mean returning to a worse state (e.g. in medical terms) or bad habits. In the religious sense it means the return to the perceived “correct” beliefs. It is believed to be correct because an individual has found the answer in it, as the Isrul’s case (interview, December 2, 2015), or feel a happiness in practicing it, as the Anwar’s case (interview, December 2, 2015) (see Chapter 6). The commencement of reversion is therefore considered to be “a new life,” or in a more common term, a “*muallaf*.” Many *muallaf* find the way to return to “the correct belief” after listening to the sermons given by religious preachers.

Anwar, for example, has returned to Salafism after being deeply touched by Zaid's sermon, entitled "I am coming, oh my Love" (*Aku datang wahai Kekasih*). Similarly, Isrul has returned to Salafism after joining the religious sessions (*pengajian*) at the RJ Mosque.

The case of the reversions above shows the importance of sermon and *pengajian* as the activities through which potential reverts find their way. These sermons and *pengajian* are commonly called da'wa, and are used by Muslims preachers to call or invite either Muslims or non-Muslims to revert or convert to Islam. Literally, da'wa is an Arabic word which means to call or summon someone, and is often used to describe when Muslims share their faith with others. For Muslims, da'wa is clearly endorsed by various Quranic verses and Hadith, and is therefore understood as a formal vehicle to justify the act of calling people to become pious Muslims. The da'wa way, according to Bukhari (interview, January 16, 2015), is the "path of the prophets"; it is "the way of life" (Fajri, interview, November 27, 2015). Due to the specific place of da'wa in the process of Islamic proselytising, the Salafis believe that Islam is a da'wa religion and therefore they have totally dedicated themselves to it. Emphasising the significant role of da'wa in the process of reversion, further explanation about this will also be provided below, following the discussion of the concept of religious change.

3.2. Defining Religious Change: Conversion or Reversion?

Religious change in different places and contexts is a topic which has been widely studied by scholars (Lofland & Stark 1965; Radford 2015; Rambo 1993). This chapter looks at various definitions and theories of religious change, focusing on the most relevant for the study of Salafi group in Pekanbaru. Broadly speaking, religious change occurs at two levels: firstly, within a given religious tradition (reversion) and secondly between religions (conversion). The former is manifested in the change of religious affiliation, preferences and participation, while the latter may involve converting from one religion to another, for example Christianity to Islam or vice versa. Since the context of this study is the Muslim society of Pekanbaru, as a result

of the development of Salafism, my focus is on reversion. However, for the purpose of comparative information, firstly overviewed is conversion.

Many scholars propose that change lies at the core of religious conversion. Halama (2015) defines religious conversion as “a change in religious attitude” when an individual adopts and incorporates a new religious belief different from his or her initial religion. He further highlights that the notion of change is the main issue in that process. To some extent, Halama’s definition is in line with that of Pargament (1997) who defines conversion as “a change in self-system” of what is considered sacred in an individual life. Onnudottir et al (2013) explores cases of conversion from one denomination to another and observes a shift in the “membership in a community” as a result of the transformation of an individual identity, even if it leads to the creation of “some rupture with past ideas and habits.” Due to radical transformation in individual belief and practice following the conversion, Clark, as cited by Barro, describes conversion in pejorative views as a form of “brainwashing” (Barro, Hwang & McCleary 2010, p. 16). Another scholar defines conversion as an individual return to and from a religion as a guidance of life (Rambo 1993). Taking a slightly different approach, Gooren (2007) argues that conversion is “only part of the story of people’s varying levels of religious participation during their lifetime” (p. 337). The definitions above clearly show that the notion of change lies at the core of the conversion process.

Although scholars are in agreement that change is the common ground of the process of conversion (Halama & Lačná 2011) many take different approaches, taking into consideration various factors and reasons why people convert from one religion to another. In mapping these approaches, Gooren (2007) concludes that there are at least five different approaches employed by scholars to elucidate conversion: (i) the social network model; (ii) socialisation, spoiled identity and religious seekers; (iii) religious market and rational choice; (iv) cultural factors; (v) conversion career approach. The first model of social networking, developed by Lofland and Stark (1965), states that the process of an individual conversion consists of seven stages:

- a. Tension, indicated by personal crisis

- b. The insight that religion is a solution
- c. Seekership, or seeking religious answers
- d. Turning points, or a moment in which an individual is open for change
- e. Establishing a strong relationship with members of a religious group
- f. Extra-cult affective bonds (the influencing relationships outside the religious group either become indifferent or are neutralised)
- g. Intensive interaction or the need for extensive involvement and participation in the religious group's ideas, activities and relationship (p. 863).

Gooren (2007) proposes some criticism of the seven stages listed by Lofland and Stark above. First, instead of seven, he argues this simply contains two phases: background factors (point a to c) and "situational contingencies," with three main factors underlying people conversion: social network, personality and contingency element. Moreover, Gooren (2007) evaluates this model as largely emphasising a type of "crisis determinism," ignoring other factors such as gender sensitivity, generational difference, and the role of previous socialisation.

The second model, socialisation, models how an individual finds a significant other through the process of socialisation, which eventually influences his or her identity. This "spoiled identity" leads an individual to be a religious seeker. According to Gooren (2007), this approach can be seen as encompassing "previous dispositions" which influence an individual in the process of conversion. In the light of this approach, conversion is simply the restorative process of meaning. Moreover, like the first model, Gooren (2007) criticises this second approach for still being based on "crisis determinism" in which people feel dissatisfied with their life at a time of rapid social change.

The third model, that of rational choice, is when an individual is able to identify the main factor that causes religious change in their life, having made the choice among various options available in the religious market. This model is developed by Gartrell and Shannon (1985) who present the individual case as a rational actor whose conversion is based on some expected tangible and/or intangible rewards. Such

individual choices depend to some degree on their level of education, the government regulation of their society and the role of their social networking (Barro, Hwang & McCleary 2010).

The fourth model developed by Rambo (1993), is largely determined by cultural factors and consists of a seven stages process:

- a. Context: the situation in which the conversion takes place
- b. Crisis: the situation which pushes an individual or group to find their limitation and then try to resolve it
- c. Search: an individual or group process in seeking a solution or fulfilment influenced by their emotional, intellectual and religious availability
- d. Encountering: bringing people into the context who are searching for an option among the available solutions
- e. Interaction or relationship with others
- f. Commitment, or the “consummation of the conversion process”
- g. Consequence, which can either lead a person to find a new life peace orientation, or not.

According to Gooren (2007), Rambo’s model is a synthesis of various models already outlined in this paper: context is a common concept in anthropology; crisis was influenced by William James and Lofland and Stark (1965); search, encounter and interaction are derived from Lofland and Stark (1965); and commitment is referred to in the work of Snow and Machalek (1983). Though Rambo’s model is useful, it lacks a recognition of the role played by gender and ignores the importance of different moments in the individual life cycle (Gooren 2007).

The last model developed by Gooren (2007), the conversion career approach, synthesises the elements of the previous models. This model “distinguishes five levels of religious participation: preaffiliation, affiliation, conversion, confession and disaffiliation” which are influenced by many factors—personality, social, institutional, cultural and contingency (Gooren 2007, p. 351).

In addition to conversion, the second key concept is that of reversion. Etymologically, this means “a return to a previous state, practice or belief” (Soanes & Stevenson 2010). Climenhaga and Dube (2015) use this concept to describe the “return” of people in Zimbabwe to their old religion or culture after becoming Christian. The reason given by Climenhaga and Dube (2015) for their reversion was that of a cultural clash between their identification as Christian and living in a Settler’s culture and a colonial system. The lack of acknowledgement given to the role of ancestors by the Christian Missionaries conflicted with the belief of the important role they are still believed to play in the life of the Zimbabwean people. The conversion to Christianity had broken a link which the converts felt with their upbringing, leaving them with a sense of dissatisfaction and a desire to revert to their original culture. Leaving a religion to return to the initial one, in this case, is a personal decision, taken by individual and not affected by outside pressure.

Onnudottir et.al. (2013) discuss the phenomenon of religious change to Islam among Australian Aboriginal people with Afghan ancestors, arguing that the change could be described as either conversion or reversion; conversion if the Aboriginal ancestors were not Muslim, and reversion if they were Muslim. Reversion, in this case, is seen as going beyond an individual experience, extending to the belief of one’s ancestors, in spite of a generational break. In this case, reversion or conversion “can involve continuity with the past” (Onnudottir 2013, p. 116). With reference to Muslim society, what are the previous states, practice or beliefs to which they are supposed to revert? Under Islam, the nature of a human being is traditionally defined by the concept of “*fitrah*,” that is “a God-given innate state or inclination to believe in God and to worship Him” (Mohamed 1995, p. 2) which is seen as the primordial nature of all human beings. One of the most popular arguments employed by Muslims to explain this concept is the Prophet Muhammad’s Hadith, which states “there is not a newborn child who is not born in a state of *fitrah*. His parents then make him a Jew, a Christian or a Zoroastrian.” According to this Hadith, all new born babies are doctrinally and philosophically in the state of *fitrah* as a result of given inclination to believe and worship God. In other words, according to the Prophet Muhamamd and his followers, they are born Muslim, and it is their misguided parents who may teach

them incorrect beliefs and practices that make them stray from their *fitrah*. From this Islamic perspective, it can be summarised that “following an aberrant path⁴⁵ is not due to the innate wrong within a person’s nature, but is rather due to the hedonistic self and/or negative effects of social circumstances” (Kadirov, Allayarova & Boulanouar 2016, p. 35).

In addition to its reference to the nature of the innate state, *fitrah*, as elaborated by Mohamed (1995, p. 2) can also be translated as “original purity or original faith,” in the core of which lies the unity of God (*tauhid*). The significance of the notion of *tauhid* can be seen from the fact that the mission of all prophets, from Adam⁴⁶ to Muhammad, was substantively to deliver the *tauhid*. This original faith which advocates the *tauhid* is represented by Islam, a monotheist religion, and therefore, according to Muslims, embracing Islam is a way of contextualising *fitrah*. In practice, the expression of *fitrah* in an individual is the inclination to pursue the right course of action and to submit to Allah (Kadirov, Allayarova & Boulanouar 2016). In the light of this concept, reversion, according to Muslims, can be understood as a return to *fitrah*—that is, to Islam.

In the light of the Islamic perspective explained above, there are two stages of reversions: from and to. The former is when individuals are judged as having strayed from *fitrah*, becoming non-Muslim or “incorrect” Muslims; the latter is the destination to which individuals are moving, that is “pure Islam.” In this sense, many Muslims consider that conversion and reversion to Islam are essentially the same thing. Discussing Maori conversion to Islam in New Zealand, Kadirov et al (2016), prefer to use the concept of reversion rather than conversion as, according to them, the initial state (or *fitrah*) of all human beings is Muslim. Conversion to Islam is, they argue, not the process of exchange of religion but rather a “return” to the initial state—the state of purity in belief and practice, in faith and action; it is a reclaimed or home-coming process.

⁴⁵ i.e. the path that is not in line with the teachings of al Quran and Hadith.

⁴⁶ In Islam, as clearly mentioned in the al Quran and Hadith, Allah sent a series of Prophets, which was started from Adam and sealed by the Prophet Muhammad.

On the basis of this, the question remains as to which concept is the most relevant in the context of this research: conversion or reversion? In the case of the Salafi, can we consider that an individual change in belief and practice from a non-Salafi Muslim to a Salafi is a reversion, if the individual now views Salafism as a “pure” interpretation of Islam and therefore they feel they have returned to a state of purity? Two main problems present themselves in regard to which concept is the most applicable for this research. First, the concept of reversion implies that those who revert have already been in that state or situation previously and their reversion can be understood as his or her retrieval of a former state, or a “second coming” in relation to a situation, practice or belief. In the light of the concept of *fitrah*, the initial state refers to all new-born babies who have not yet reached the age of *taklif*⁴⁷, and the return to Islam is only reclaiming that situation. According to Islam, as all new-born babies are in a state of *fitrah* and it is their parents who teach their children incorrect beliefs that make them atheist, polytheists, Jews or Christians. Exchanging religion (conversion) to Islam, according to this perspective, can be considered reversion. Following this interpretation, conversion is therefore only part of the reversion narrative. The second point which needs to be taken into consideration is that an individual convert may have undergone various changes in his life, including belief, values, behaviour and identity. Conversion, as explained by many scholars, involves searching for meaning in life and this process can culminate in the individual adopting a new religion. In the case of conversion to Islam, the awareness of a new convert about the doctrine of *fitrah* is acknowledged by them after they have been taught or informed about it by Muslim preachers. Then, this new concept becomes the core element in the construction of the new recruit’s identity. In this sense, the reversion, or return to *fitrah*, becomes part of the conversion process.

Due to the arguments outlined above the concept of reversion, rather than conversion, is used throughout this thesis to describe the process of religious change undergone by the Salafi members in Pekanbaru. The main reason for this is the firmly-held belief by the Salafis that all true believers are returning or “reverting” to

⁴⁷ The age of puberty when an individual is religiously considered mature and obliged to perform religious obligations, such as praying and fasting. For female, it is indicated by the first experience of menstruation, while for male, indicated by the first dream in which he emits sperm.

their original pure state. The core conviction of the Salafis is that this return to pure Islam means upholding and interpreting the Quran and Hadith according to the interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*, and it is the only possible way to return to the original state of *fitrah*. The idea of conversion may not include the notion of reversion, or it may become part of the narrative of the conversion. Moreover, since the process of religious change, from non-Salafi Muslims to Salafis still occurs within one religion, the concept of conversion to refer to religious change within one religion is uncommon in scholarship literature. Reversion is then more relevant to be used. Broadly speaking, on the basis of the above reasons, the use of reversion is relevant to describe the process of movement from non-Salafi Muslims to Salafis.

There are some key identifying factors involved in Salafi reversion. Firstly, the Salafis see a clear divide between their life prior to becoming Salafi and after reversion. This is considered in terms of belief values, tradition and behaviour, as manifested in their religious affiliation and participation. Their line of division is best expressed in the popular Salafi terms *jahilia*, *hidaya*, *hijra* and *muallaf* which sequentially describe the period of change from being a non-Salafi Muslims to a Salafi adherent. The first, *jahilia*, means the period of ignorance: the situation in which an individual has not yet joined the Salafis; the second, *hidaya*, is the time when an individual receives a guidance from God to join the Salafis; and the third, *hijra*, is the process of replacing the ignorance (*jahilia*) with becoming a Salafi. The last identifying factor of the first category is when those newly-reverted Salafis have totally abandoned their previous “incorrect” beliefs and practices and have now adopted the new interpretation. Adopting the new interpretation of Islam also leads to behavioural changes, which include being stricter and more selective in following the preachers and attending only Salafi mosques (many Salafis in Pekanbaru prefer to travel several kilometres from their home to attend prayers in a Salafi mosque rather than praying in their local mosque). Typically, the newcomer will be more zealous in practicing Islamic teachings than they were before and feel a stronger sense of solidarity with their fellow Muslims, particularly Salafi members; this often leads to their interacting exclusively with Salafis, sometimes leading to alienation from non-Salafi family and friends. For example, an extended family which has a Salafi

member would have limited dialogue and communication among them as a result of strict interpretation of the concept of mahram⁴⁸ in Islam. In addition to these, a person's appearance after reversion also changes due to the commitment to imitate the Prophet in all aspects of his life, including the dress (see Chapter 6 and 7).

As a result of the adoption of new religious interpretation, those Salafi perceived that to be Salafi means to be a new Muslim. This is clearly indicated by their use of the concept of muallaf to describe their condition after reverting to Salafism. They are reborn Muslims and therefore starting a new period of life guided by a true understanding of Islam: Salafism (Wahid 2014). The other change that takes place after reversion is that their sole affiliation is to Salafism, as the Salafis believe that theirs is the only "saved" group in Islam. Their reasoning for this is that the other Islamic organisations and schools of jurisprudence have many incorrect interpretations and practices, the most important of which is a lack of purity as a result of their ignorance to strictly adhere to the interpretation of Islam as taught and practiced according to *al-salaf al-sālih*.

The process of religious change in Muslim communities is greatly influenced by the activities involving Islamic calling, or da'wa. This is conducted by individual Islamic preachers as well as Islamic organisations and can thus be considered the main vehicle by which the process of religious change occurs, either through conversion or reversion within Muslim societies. Due to the importance which Muslims attach to da'wa and the fact that the Salafis of Pekanbaru see themselves as representing the Salafi da'wa (as discussed in Chapter 4), further information about what this involves is discussed below.

3.3. Da'wa as the Vehicle for Religious Change: Factors, Issues and Features

As mentioned earlier, da'wa means literally "call" or "invitation" and is used by Muslims to refer to acts of communication aimed at calling people to follow the path of God. The most noticeable act of da'wa is commanding right and forbidding

⁴⁸*Mahram* is a person by whom the marriage with him or her is religiously unlawful permanently because of blood relationship, breastfeeding and marriage ties.

wrong, and includes endeavours to convert non-Muslims to Islam as well as to reinvigorate and deepen the faith of Muslims themselves (Meuleman 2011). However, the meaning of da'wa has expanded since the second half of the 20th century when it began to be used to refer to the mushrooming of Muslim participation and the appearance of Islamic symbols in the public sphere⁴⁹. In this sense, the scope of da'wa not only refers to the reinforcement of Islamic rituals among individuals but also to the rise of Muslim activities in the secular spheres, such as in economic and politics. It is for this reason that the mushrooming of da'wa activities is regarded by many scholars as part of the phenomena of Islamic revivalism. In addition, da'wa is also closely related to the need to compete with other religions, primarily Christian missions which have combined religious, political and social welfare projects in their activities.

There are various internal and external situations in the Muslim world which stimulate the spread of da'wa. Jamaa Tabligh was established in India by Maulana Ilyas al Kandahlawi in 1927 to reinvigorate the Islamic faith among Indian Muslims. At that time in India, Muslims had strayed from the Islamic teachings and mosques were largely empty due to a lack of awareness among Muslims of praying there. Tabligh Jamaa in this sense is a response to the internal situation of Indian Muslims society, and therefore its da'wa is mainly aimed at developing a deeper awareness of Islamic teachings among Indian Muslims. As many Muslim countries have similar case with that of in India, the Tabligh Jamaa then spread throughout the Muslim world. Unlike Tabligh Jamaa, the da'wa movement of Muhammadiyah, which was established in 1912 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, was established to respond to external factors, among which are the Christian missions in Java (Shihab 1995). Unlike Tabligh Jamaa which uses the traditional way of doing da'wa by visiting mosques and then giving sermons (Ali 2012; Bustamam-Ahmad 2015), Muhammadiyah adopts a modern strategy, such as building educational institutions and health facilities throughout Indonesia in order to reach broader audiences of da'wa. Following the model of Christian missions, Muhammadiyah combines religion and economics and develops a wide variety of social welfare projects available to

⁴⁹ There are plentiful literatures about Islamic da'wa in the Indonesian context. For examples see Millie (2008), Nisa, (2012), Sakai (2012) and Meuleman (2011).

Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Muhammadiyah has established thousands of educational institutions ranging from kindergarten to universities throughout Indonesia, as well as health clinics, orphanages and various advocative bodies with the aim of empowering the marginalised people, including fishermen and peasants (Fuad 2004; Nakamura 2012). Da'wa, according to Muhammadiyah, encompasses all aspects of life and is not simply an invitation to perform particular rituals in order to worship God correctly. As a result of its activities, Muhammadiyah is well-known in Indonesia as the largest organisation of da'wa.

Another factor that has helped stimulate da'wa is the development of transportation and communication. The preacher's movements are of a high level due to better land, sea and air transport, allowing them to reach a broader audience in different places. Further, information technology plays a very obvious role in supporting and spreading da'wa. The recorded sermons of Salafi preachers, for example, are easily found on YouTube channels and social media, such as Facebook. In addition to this, many Salafi groups in Indonesia have set up their own radio and television stations for the express purpose of da'wa, two examples of this in Pekanbaru being ERJE TV and Hidayah Radio stations; while reaching a broader audience on a national level, Yufid TV is the most influential Salafi TV station. Habiburrahman el Shirazy, one Indonesian Muslim writer uses film media as a vehicle for da'wa (Sakai 2012), allowing him to reach a wide range of young Indonesian Muslims in more effective way than delivering sermons to them in the mosque. In this respect, technology has encouraged da'wa activities, helping preachers to extend their scope and vary their delivery.

Another motivating factor of the da'wa movement is inspired by the aspiration of many Muslims to unite the Muslim world under one political entity. Malik Bennabi (1905—1973), an Algerian scholar, for example, called for the creation of an Islamic state confederation, and the religious movement, Hizbut Tahrir (HT)⁵⁰ advocates

⁵⁰This religious movement was founded by Taqiuddin al Nabhani (1909—1977) to convey the Islamic da'wa to the world. In an attempt to ensure Muslim's commitment in implementing Islam as a way of life, HT has made the effort to restore the political unity of the Muslim world by reviving *khilafah*.

rigorously to revive the khilafah, uniting the Muslim world under this political entity. The scope and aim of da'wa in the case of HT is not only to implement Islam as a religious entity but also as a political power. Soon after its creation in Palestine, it spread to many countries throughout the world, including Jordan, Tunisia and some European countries. In Indonesia, instead of claiming to be a political movement, HT has consistently promoted itself as a da'wa movement in which politics is just one of the many components.

The idea of the formation of a modern nation state has also encouraged the spread of da'wa for a wide variety of reasons. From the 1960's onward, Meuleman (2011a) stated that various regimes of Muslim countries, the most extensive of them being Saudi Arabia, have illustrated their deep commitment to da'wa by establishing several organisations. *The Rābithah al 'Alam al Islāmy* (Muslim World League), founded in 1962, and *al Nadwah al 'Alamiyah li al Shabāb al Islāmy* (World Assembly of Muslim Youth), founded in 1972, are two examples of da'wa organisations that have a close link to the Saudi regime. The Saudi role in da'wa is, in fact, not limited to these organisations, but extends to other means of promoting Islamic teachings, including providing scholarships for Muslim students throughout the world to study at Saudi Arabian universities, the most important of which is the Islamic University of Medina (IUM). It is important to note that many Saudi graduates have become avid promoters of Salafism upon their return to their home countries, including Indonesia. The main thrust of their da'wa is to promote the purification of Islam without tolerating any illegal religious innovation; they do this by calling people to return to the Quran and Hadith, following strictly interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*, acquired through the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab. Indeed, the issue of purification has become the “trademark” of the IUM graduate da'wa.

The development of Salafism has heightened the competition for authority between various doctrinal traditions and Islamic legal schools within Muslim communities. Indonesian Muslims, for example, mostly belong to the Shafii School of Law and Asharite in *aqida*; Salafism, however, belongs to Hanbaly School of Law and Ahl al

Athr/Ahl al Hadith in *aqida*. The goal of Salafi da'wais not only to give Muslims a deeper understanding of Islam and invite them to practice it correctly in all aspects of life, but also to replace their old doctrinal traditions (Shafiite and Asharite which have been followed for a long time by Indonesian people) with the pure "unadulterated" Salafi one. The main issue behind this replacement, according to the Salafis, is the lack of purity of the Shafii School of Law and Asharite *aqida*, and they are not prepared to compromise this "purity" by conceding to any accommodation or acculturation with local traditions. This has, inevitably, created tension among Muslim communities, as I discuss in Chapter 5.

In addition to Saudi Arabia, some other Middle Eastern countries have also played an important role in da'wa, including Kuwait, Qatar, Libya (during the Qaddafi era) and Egypt. Unlike Gulf countries and Libya, which support the da'wa due to a large amount of oil funds, the role of Egypt in Islamic da'wa can only be seen from the role of al Azhar University which has become the center of Islamic studies, especially for Muslims from Southeast Asia (Bano, M 2015). Currently, more than four thousand Indonesian students are studying various Islamic subjects at the al Azhar, some of whom receive al Azhar scholarships, while others rely on their own resources. The al Azhar University has become attractive to many Muslims throughout the world for several reasons. The most important of which is its identification of this institution as the vanguard of moderate Islam (*al wasatiyya*, middle-way). The idea of *al wasatiyya* is placed at the core of the al Azhar da'wa. Upon completion of their studies, the alumni who have been nurtured and taught with the "*wasatiyya*" version of Islam bring it to their own countries, including Indonesia, and spread it within local communities. The face of *wasatiyya* Islam brought by the al Azhar alumni is to a large extent more acceptable by Indonesian Muslims due to its moderate and accommodative but selective natures to the local version of Islamic practices and belief.

Historically, the wave of students going to al Azhar from Southeast Asia came about largely due to a major incident at the beginning of the 20th century, when the Wahhabi powers assassinated Syekh Abdullah Zawawi, one of the leading ulemas

and mufti of the Kingdom of Borneo who belongs to the Shafii School (Shiozaki 2015). News of this assassination spread fast among the Southeast Asian Muslims, leading them to reconsider studying in Saudi Arabia. Gradually, many opted to study at al Azhar in Cairo instead. In support of the growing number of its alumni, al Azhar University has created the *al Munazhomah al 'Alamiyah li al Khirrij al al Azhar* (The World Association for al Azhar Graduates, WAAG) which has numerous branches in various countries, including Indonesia. The creation of this alumni association is important in maintaining the ideological link between the center (al Azhar University in Cairo) and the thousands of its alumni throughout the world. The creation of WAAG links the da'wa of Indonesian Azhar alumni with that of the international network of al Azhar, allowing them to offer mutual support in various aspects of life including economic and political issues. The WAAG Indonesian branch, for example, has conducted several seminars on moderate Islam and Islamic finance, including halal tourism. Moreover, some representatives of Indonesian branches have also attended international seminars on Palestine held by the central office in Cairo. The feature of da'wa conducted by the al Azhar alumni has already extended beyond traditional religious activities, such as sermons and personal rituals. Its da'wa encompasses economic, social and political issues encountered by Muslims in various parts of the world. The wide range of aspects covered by the al Azhar da'wa has, to some extent, distinguished it from features of the IUM alumni da'wa, which focuses only on the religious aspect in relation to rituals and observance to God. However, the alumni of the two universities, al Azhar and IUM, are largely in agreement with regards to the need to protect Islam from what they perceive as the challenges of Western culture, such as hedonism and consumerism.

Unlike the da'wa of the IUM alumni, the main feature of al Azhar da'wa is to promote moderate Islam and at the same time to oppose leaning towards either liberalism or radicalism within Muslim communities (Zoepf 2005). Maintaining this mid-way position is central to the al Azhar da'wa as the representative of the "tolerant voice of Islam" among the Sunni, in opposition to the rigid stance of Saudi Wahhabi Salafism (Bano, M 2015). Regarding the idea of moderate Islam promoted by al Azhar, this can be seen from its firm position against all kinds of violence on

behalf of religion. Al Azhar also recognizes the four mainstream Islamic schools of law: Maliki, Hanafi, Shafii and Hanbali, and three major trends of aqida: Ahl al Hadith/Ahl al Athr, Ash'Ariyyah and Maturidiyyah, as the truth path in Islam. This ideological position is very important considering the great diversity of Islamic interpretations and Muslim cultures in the world. According to al Azhar, adherents of the four mainstream Islamic schools of law (*mazhab*) and the three aqidashould promote tolerance towards each other, avoiding any truth claim related to furuiyyah (Arabic: branches) matters in order to support the unity of umma. In light of this, purification has never become the main issue of da'wa among the al Azhar alumni; rather, emphasis is placed on acculturation and accommodation for the purpose of contextualising Islamic teachings.

The alumni of IUM and al Azhar University are the most prominent agents of da'wa in Indonesia, in spite of some differences in regard to certain issues. As previously mentioned the da'wa activities of the IUM alumni are in fact a continuation of the Salafi da'wa in Saudi Arabia, as is clear from various features it contains. To some extent, it can be said that the Salafi da'wa in Pekanbaru is a "copy-paste" of the Salafi da'wa in Saudi Arabia, in that the former have adopted the principles of their da'wa from the book of a Salafi scholar, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Muhammad Sidhan (2000), *al-Maālim fi al-Tharīq al Ishlāh*. This book is used as the manual of da'wa, delivered weekly in the Salafi Umar ibn al Khattab Mosque, both to followers and public visitors pray there. Explanation of the various milestones of the Salafi da'wa in Pekanbaru will be given below, following guidelines from the manual and further explained by the sermons of preachers, as well as their writing in Salafi magazines published by the Salafi foundation in Pekanbaru.

3.4. Milestones of the Salafi Da'wa in Pekanbaru

It is a generally accepted fact that if a Muslim is asked about the basic reference of Islam, their answer would be al Quran and Sunnah (Hadith). The former is considered to be God's revelation to man, whereas the latter pertains to the sayings of the Prophet. Despite this general agreement, the Salafis, as expressed by their preacher, Ibrahim, considers that many Muslims are still far removed from these two

basic forms of guidance, the reason being their lack of correct understanding of these two main sources—not referring to the Prophet as interpreted by his companions and *al-salaf al-sālih*. In order to bring people back to what they consider to be the right path, the Salafis highlight some principles of da’wa that they claim to be in line with the spirit of al Quran and Sunnah. These so called principles relate to the basic tenets of their da’wa, its da’wa, and the characteristics of the *da’i* (Islamic caller). The following section expands these three issues.

3.4.1. The Basic Tenets of Salafi Da’wa

There are several tenets of da’wa adopted by the Salafis in Pekanbaru, all adhered to regardless of any problems encountered in their dissemination. Information about these tenets is solely based on the interview with a Salafi preacher, Bahri (interview, August 20, 2015) as well as weekly pengajian conducted at the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque and Umar ibn al Khattab Mosque. I attended the pengajian, talked with the preacher and I was given two books related to the principal of da’wa according to the Salafis. All books are in Arabic, published by Saudi Arabian publishers. The first principle is upholding the sanctity of al Quran and Hadith, and making them the sole references to solve all religious matters. According to the Salafis, Muslims are not at liberty to create new forms of methodology (*manhaj*) regarding da’wa despite changing times and spatial considerations, because this original methodology was already stated in al Quran and Hadith. This is: imitate the Prophet, his companions and *al-salaf al-sālih*. According to the Salafis, the only way to gain a perfect understanding of Islam is through the perfect imitation of their Prophet, Muhammad. The Salafi argument for this principle is founded on certain selected Quranic verses and Hadith, among which is al Quran, Chapter al Nisa’: 59.⁵¹ The method taught to implement this verse is based on other Quranic verses in Chapter Yusuf: 108⁵² and

⁵¹‘O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination’.

⁵²‘Say (O Muhammad):’This is my way; I invite unto Allah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allah—Islamic monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allah, i.e. to the Oneness of Allah—Islamic monotheism with sure knowledge). And Glorified and Exalted is Allah (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not the *mushrikun* (polytheist)

Chapter al An'am: 153.⁵³ Syukur, a Salafi preacher, concluded that these verses explain very clearly that the method of da'wa is given by God (*tauqīfiyya*), and is not a Muslim invention (by *ijtihādiyya*). Therefore, our only job is to imitate that given method and avoid creating new ones, which will lead to the incorrect path. According to Syukur, the reason why Muslims should literally follow the path of the Prophet as outlined is mentioned in al Quran Chapter al Tauba: 100.⁵⁴

In conclusion, the effort to hold the al Quran and Hadith would not be correct unless following the path of *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*, because they imitated the Prophet in every aspect of life thus gaining the approval of both God and the Prophet. It was for this reason, according to Syukur, that Imam Malik (714—800 A.D.) stated, “this umma would not be correct unless they follow the path that made their predecessors correct” (*lan yushliha akhira hadzihi al umma illa ma aslaha awaluha*). To the Salafis, this statement ensures that imitation is the only acceptable way to return and uphold the al Quran and Hadith. In fact, all Muslims are in agreement with this method (*manhaj*) of da'wa which places an emphasis on the imitation of the Prophet. However, there are variations in how this is interpreted and applied. The Salafis, for example, follow this method strictly and literally, while some other Muslim scholars have a more flexible approach, adapting Islamic teachings to the diversity of local context in which Islam flourishes.

The second tenet of da'wa is placing the message of the unity of God (*tauhid*) as the first priority, regardless of time and spatial context. The citation in this regard comes from al Quran Chapter al Anbiya: 25. The calling to *tauhid* is the principal of da'wa whereby people are purified from any obedience to anyone or anything but Allah, the only God. The Salafis call this method *tashfiyya* (purification) which they execute by

⁵³ Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects (all kinds of religious sects), you (O Muhammad) have no concern with them in the least. Their affair is only with Allah, Who then will tell them what they used to do.

⁵⁴ And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhajirun (those who migrated from Makkah to al-Madinah) and the Ansar (the citizens of al-Madinah who help and gave aid to the Muhajirun) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.

inviting people to worship Allah. The correct *tauhid* would lead a Muslim to have the feeling that God is present in every aspect of their life, including in social interaction, and therefore lead him or her to worship Him sincerely. Although belief in returning to al Quran and Hadith, and the purification of aqida, is shared by almost all Muslim groups, the Salafis practice these in a way that trademarks their da'wa; the strong emphasis they place on the idea of *tauhid* has made them known as ahl al *tauhid* (people of *tauhid*), and their da'wa as *tauhid* da'wa.

3.4.2. The Goal of Salafi Da'wa

The goal of da'wa according to the Salafis is to call people only to worship God. The only correct way of worship is the way taught by the Prophet Muhammad, transmitted by his companions and *al-salaf al-salih*. Muslims need preachers (ulama) who teach them about this matter. The Islamic preachers in this sense are the bridges which connect the Prophetic era with the recent time. The Salafis are very selective in choosing the referent ulama because the correct knowledge about Islam can only be derived from good preachers. Having correct knowledge about God and knowing how to worship Him will lead Muslims to live in accordance with the God's command. In so doing, according to the Salafis, human interest is defined on the basis of human obedience to the rules of God: implementing all His command, and abandoning all the things He prohibits. The goal of da'wa is to bring people to this stage of enlightenment. The ten essential qualities which a Salafi da'i should have are presented in the next section.

3.4.3. Characteristics of Salafi Da'i

The last principle of da'wa is related to the characteristics of the da'i. The da'i should have the following attributes to ensure that the goals of the da'wa can be attained. These characteristics are taught every week in the Umar bin al Khattab Mosque and referred to in the book *al Ma'ālim fī al-Tharīq al-Da'wa* (al-Sidhan 2000) They include: (i) sincerity and optimism in conducting the da'wa since the supreme goal of the da'wa is to obtain the approval of God. The da'i should not be trapped in material gain provided by people. There should be nothing bigger than God in this life; (ii) correct and sufficient knowledge about the topic of da'wa. There are several

branches of Islamic sciences, including *fiqh* (Islamic law), *tafsir* (Quran interpretation), hadith (the Prophetic tradition), *tasawwuf* (Sufism) and *sira al nabawiya* (Biography of the Prophet). In practice, it is very hard for the da'i to master all these specialisations. Consequently, it is generally accepted that each individual preacher will have a particular specialty (e.g. hadith). It is also expected that a da'i does not offer fatwa (Islamic legal opinion) beyond his or her expertise as this could lead people down to the wrong path. Knowledge and da'wa are inseparable, with knowledge being a pre-requisite for da'wa, and da'wa the duty of those who have knowledge; (iii) a role model. The da'i should set an example for people in that they had already practiced the Islamic teachings they pass on to others. They should practice what they preach; (iv) patience in teaching and sharing of their knowledge in da'wa. The Salafis are aware that when following da'wa it is not all roses, but rather full of risk and thorns; (v) ability to focus on quality rather than quantity since quality cannot be attained without the acquisition of knowledge and sincerity in worshipping God; (vi) giving attention to every issue faced by Muslims, however seemingly small or insignificant; (vii) avoidance of all mistakes and improper behaviour that could undo the work of da'wa; (viii) refusal to tolerate any mistake in relation to the aqida; (ix) appreciation on the part of the da'i for every effort made in the field of da'wa; and (x) continuous prayer to God by the da'i asking for the success of his or her da'wa. All these characteristics are considered to be basic requirements of the Salafi da'i.

3.4. Concluding Remarks

This chapter contends that the concept of reversion is relevant for this study. The meaning of reversion is interlinked with the concept of *fitrah*, and the spirit to return to al Quran and Hadith in the Salafi thought by upholding and interpreting the Quran and Hadith according to the interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*. The notion of conversion is not relevant because it may be encompassed with the narrative of reversion. Moreover, as Salafism is one of the Islamic currents, the process of religious change from non-Salafi Muslims to Salafis still occurs within one religion. All informants which were interviewed during the fieldwork are Muslims. Therefore,

reversion is more appropriate to explain the process of religious change as a result of Salafi development in Pekanbaru.

The process of religious change in the Islamic context is very much influenced by the activity of da'wa, in which Muslim preachers call or invite other Muslims or non-Muslims to revert to Islam. Da'wa can be said to be the main vehicle of the process of reversion. I have explained that Islamic da'wa is motivated by different issues and factors, and has different features, and therefore the da'wa activists have different characteristics depending on their social and religious background such as their school of law and aqida. There are two outstanding universities that shape the Islamic da'wa in Indonesia through their alumni: IUM and al Azhar University in Cairo. The IUM alumni, for example, belong to the Ahl al Hadith and are mostly promoters of the Salafi da'wa. The al Azhar alumni are well-known for their accommodative but selective natures, and promote the wasatiyya version of Islam. The close relationship between Salafism in Pekanbaru with the Saudi Salafism can be observed from the adoption of the Saudi Salafi's thought as the milestone of da'wa of Pekanbaru Salafism. Through da'wa activities, Salafism in Pekanbaru has gradually emerged and increased significantly. Da'wa, conducted in various ways, is the method by which Salafis purify aberrant beliefs and practices within Pekanbaru Muslim society. This purification also fulfills the need of those who have experienced existential deprivation (see Chapter 6). Generally, the process of da'wa has resulted in an increasing number of non-religious Muslims reverting to Salafism, leading to the emergence of a new Salafi generation in Pekanbaru. This is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. EMERGENCE OF SALAFISM IN PEKANBARU, RIAU

4.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the emergence of Salafism in Pekanbaru and the role of Saudi Arabia in that process. The spread of Salafism throughout the world cannot be separated from the influence of Saudi Arabia (Bano, MS, Keiko 2015; Farquhar 2015; Fealy 2005; Hamid 2016; Hasan 2006b, 2007; Wahid 2014). As the country of origin of Salafism, the role of Saudi Arabia can be divided into two parts: the government and the individuals. In most cases the Saudi government pioneers the spread of Salafism worldwide, including in Pekanbaru, supported by the Saudi individual. In one way or another, this can be said to be the continuation of the government's role. While the stages of Salafi development differ from place to place, the growth of Salafism in Pekanbaru can be classified into five phases: the arrival, the inception, the establishment, the fragmentation and the contemporary⁵⁵. This classification is based on the distinctive characteristics found in every phase relating to the process of its emergence, its features and the role of Jufri's students, and scope as well as strategy of its da'wa (proselytizing of Islam).

4.2. Saudi Arabia: The Government and the Individual Role in Disseminating Salafism in Pekanbaru

The Government role can be traced back from the scholarship it provides to thousands of students across the world to study in Saudi Arabian universities, mainly at the Islamic University of Medina (Farquhar 2015). Students around the globe who are studying at this university are fully funded by the Saudi Government, including accommodation which is provided in residential area, tuition fees and living allowances. Unlike other universities in the world, the study at the IUM would not be possible unless the students are funded by the Saudi Government; no students attend under private funds. For the process of selection of the scholarship awardees, the

⁵⁵ These phases are borrowed from Sadek Hamid (2016) in *The Sufis, Salafis and Islamis* in which he discussed the emergence and development of some Islamic groups, including the Salafis, in the United Kingdom.

Saudi Government sends their representatives to Indonesia to select the applicants through face-to-face interviews, allowing them to personally know applicants. Once students are accepted, the Saudi Embassy in Jakarta grants visas and provides plane tickets. During the four-year study at the IUM, students are strictly controlled (see below) to ensure that they meet the desired results. Students may return to Indonesia once a year, during the summer break, with a ticket provided by the IUM. The government role can thus be understood through its authority in deciding who is accepted at the IUM, to whom to grant the visa, through the provision of living allowances and the other controls it exercises over students during their studies. However, the generous package of scholarship lead to the formation of an imbalanced power relation between the university and its students, which according to Farquhar (2015, p. 28) creates a “superordinate-subordinate relationship.” In addition to this financial capital, the process of training and learning at the university causes the creation of uneven relationship as the students are “systematically observed, ranked, corrected, recorded, rewarded and punished” (Farquhar 2015, p. 29). In these circumstances, students are instructed and gradually shaped to embrace the ideas of Salafism. After graduating, students tend to return to their home countries as missionaries carrying ideas acquired during their study at the IUM. Among 15 of the IUM graduates in Pekanbaru, 13 of them belong to the al Furqan Salafi group (FSG) as they were graduates of Pesantren al Forqan, Pekanbaru, while the two other were the graduates of Pesantren Darul Nahdlah, Pekanbaru.

Commonly, the pioneers of the Salafi movement in various countries are graduates of the IUM (Thurston 2015). However, not all graduates of the IUM accept the ideas and instruction about Salafism which are taught there; in some cases, they even reject it completely. An example of this can be found in the case of Abu Rahmat (interview, August 20, 2015), who, after obtaining a PhD from the IUM, returned to his native Pekanbaru. Having become one of the fiercest critics of Pekanbaru Salafism, he sees that the recent growth of Salafism globally is part of conspiracy between the United State and Jews to break the “unity” of Muslims community⁵⁶. Abu Rahmat further

⁵⁶ Such a conspiratorial thinking is commonly found in Muslim communities to explain various phenomena they encounter, particularly related to the influence of the West in Muslim countries. According to Abu Rahmat and several non-Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru, the emergence of recent

claimed that local Salafi preachers are only the “pawns” who implement the “scenario” designed by “invisible hands.” The fact that there are a number of the IUM alumni who reject Salafism presumably indicate that it is not strongly imposed on foreign students by the Saudi government. Instead, it is rather a consequence of their choice and interpretation as a result of their study and interaction with the Salafi ulemas in Saudi Arabia. Farquhar (2015) explains that some students are pragmatic as they have already oriented themselves to non-Salafi doctrine before studying at the IUM, and therefore their study did not “convert” them to Salafism. Farquhar (2015) further explains that some students use their education at the IUM to improve their financial situation rather than religious knowledge, for example, by saving their monthly stipend to provide funds to build houses in their home countries. The emphasis on saving money gained from a monthly stipend and the salary from casual jobs they undertake during the hajj seasons is often at the expense of their religious knowledge expertise. As a result, instead of bringing thousands of religious books when they return to Indonesia, they bring thousands of Saudi Riyal with only a very limited number of books. It is clear from the above that although the Saudi government uses the granting of scholarship to entice students into the study of Salafism, their intention does not always result in the desired outcome. However, as most Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru are graduates of the IUM and LIPIA Jakarta, it can be said that in the case of Pekanbaru, the Saudi government role, represented by the IUM, can be clearly seen.

The Saudi government role is felt not only in the form of material support, but also, as described by Chaplin (2014, p. 218), in how it provides a model for “an imagined pious society” supported historically by its status as the Land of the Two Holy Mosques. Saudi Arabia, as stated by Armen (recorded sermon), is perceived as a

Salafism is closely related to the Gulf War I (1990) and II (2003) when the United State troops built their base camp in Saudi land. The US present was criticised by the Muslim Brotherhood (*al Ikhwan al Muslimun*; IM). The IM has strong influence in the Saudi educational system (Commins 2009; House 2012; Jones 2009), including at the IUM, which can be seen from the obvious affiliation of many lecturers to this organisation. Under this condition, the Salafi movement has emerged to compete the influence of IM at the IUM in particular, and in the Saudi Arabia in general. Following this contestation, in 2002 IM was banned in Saudi Arabia due to its political activism. Along with this, the Salafi movement grows rapidly with the total support of the Saudi government. In this sense, Usman (interview, October 12, 2007), alumnus of the IUM and student of Sheikh Abu Bakr al Jazairy, a leading hadith scholar at the IUM, said that Al-Jazairy once stated that Salafism is “*al harakah al siyasiya wa laisat diniyyah*” (a political movement rather than a religious one).

country where Islam is implemented comprehensively, therefore it becomes the only reference country among the Salafis in implementing the Islamic teachings. Armen justified his opinion by citing the Prophet Hadith and stating that the faith (Islam) will return to Madina⁵⁷ as a snake returns to its hole. In this time when Islam is highly fragmented and even conflict internally, according to Armen the Islamic version of Madina, as taught in the IUM, is the only reference of the truth. In the Indonesian context however, it is not only the IUM which shapes the Salafi missionaries, but also LIPIA (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab*, Institute for the Knowledge of Islam and Arab), funded by the Saudi Arabia Government. According to Jahroni (2013), LIPIA, which was founded in 1980, is the largest Saudi educational project in Indonesia, playing an extremely significant role in the emergence of the Salafi network throughout the country. It has become the main destination for Salafi students who graduate from the Salafi pesantren, including Pesantren al Furqan in Pekanbaru. The importance of LIPIA can be seen in the fact that several Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru are graduates of this institute. Also, a great number of students, before departing to Medina to study at the IUM, had spent their first year in LIPIA. Students at LIPIA also receive full scholarships from the Saudi government, including a monthly stipend, and can also easily engage with the Salafi global network, including semi-state and individual philanthropic organisations that enable them to expand financial resources for the preaching of Islam (Jahroni 2013).

The role of the Saudi government ends when the students complete their study and return to their home country. In the case of those students reverted to Salafism, they may then start proselytising Salafism to non-Muslims and to Muslims who are perceived to have deviated from the right path. For the most part, these alumni have returned to their home country, deeply impressed by the generosity of the Saudi government for having financed their studies and feeling they owe a debt of gratitude, they consequently dedicate themselves to the da'wa. Fajri (interview, November 27, 2015) is a case in point. Unlike Abu Rahmat who had rejected the rigidity of Salafism, Fajri felt strongly that since all his needs for study in Medina had been covered by the Saudi government, it was absolutely unacceptable to use it

⁵⁷It is the city of al Madina al Munawwara, Saudi Arabia, where the Prophet spread the Islamic da'wa until he passed away. In this city, his tomb is located.

for personal gain, and he dedicated himself to da'wa. In this case, as in the majority of the cases from my fieldwork, the desired influence of the state-funded IUM continues after the material benefits have ceased, with the IUM being perceived as a breeding ground of Salafi preachers spreading all over the world.

In addition to the government role, the individual also plays a significant role in developing Salafism in the world. This is done mainly through material aid provided to local Salafi preachers to help them build mosques, religious schools or finance their Salafi institutions (Rusli 2014). Some Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru and Padang whom I interviewed stated that they obtained aid from what they called *muhsinin* (Arabic: "those who do goodness") from Saudi Arabian individuals in order to establish mosques and Islamic schools⁵⁸. Zaid (interview, December 1, 2015), the principal of Pesantren Ibn al Kathier, told me that the construction of pesantren's mosque was funded by the Saudi muhsinin. The muhsinin prefer to disseminate their aid to Salafi preachers due to the similarity in their interpretation of Islam, and also to former IUM students whom they knew. In addition to material aid, the role of Saudi individual can also be seen from the pattern of relationship between the IUM alumni and their former teachers in Medina, which is characterised by the "patron-client" relationship. On various particular occasions, the Pekanbaru Salafis request the fatwa from the Saudi ulemas to solve their problems⁵⁹. Some Saudi individuals also regularly—usually once a year—visit the Salafi pesantrens in Pekanbaru and the neighbour area. The individual role, therefore, serves as a continuation of the pioneering Government role.

The role of individuals in spreading Salafism is, in fact, not unique to Pekanbaru. In many cases, this process can be found nationwide. Pesantren Royah al Islam in Sukabumi, for example, is funded by Saudi individuals. Some pesantrens in Central Java and Yogyakarta, including Pesantren Jamilurrahman and Pesantren Bin Baz, are

⁵⁸ Based on my interviews, these Salafi institutions obtained the private fund from Saudi Arabia: Pesantren Ibn Kathier, Pesantren al Furqan, Pesantren Umar bin Khattab, al Iman Foundation and the RJ Mosque.

⁵⁹ For example, when the dispute occurred between Ustadz Amin and his al Furqan colleagues, the al Furqan ustadzs asked the fatwa from their former teacher in Madinah. Having been informed that al Furqan was in the correct position, Ustadz Amin then excluded from the group.

also funded by some individuals of Saudi Arabia. In summary, like other parts of Indonesia, the development of Salafism in Pekanbaru has been variously influenced by a combination of institutional support by the Saudi government and grassroots activities.

4.3. Stages of the Salafi Development in Pekanbaru

The historical development of Salafism in Pekanbaru can be divided into five stages. The distinction of every stage is based on some features relating to their strategy of da'wa, pattern of internal relationship among those Salafis, the role of the alumni after the death of Buya Jufri and the scope of their da'wa. These phases of the Salafi development in Pekanbaru include: arrival, inception, establishment, fragmentation and contemporary. The use of this periodisation is borrowed from Hamid (2016, pp. 106-10) who explains the evolution of Islamic activism in the United Kingdom. Some similarity in the processes of development, context and agency of the two cases (explained later in the last section of this Chapter) make these concepts relevant in this study. Below is the explanation of these stages respectively.

4.3.1. The Arrival (1985—1986)

In 1985, Jufri Effendi Wahab, the only Riau student who had studied at the IUM, returned to his home village Pekanbaru after completing his master degree. It was broadly narrated among his students that before his return, the Saudi government offered him the opportunity to do a da'wa in Brunei Darussalam instead of Indonesia, but he rejected this and decided to return to Pekanbaru. The return of Jufri, well-known as Buya Jufri among his students, can be considered as a milestone of Salafism in Riau. Shortly after his return, Buya Jufri started to convey his da'wa based mostly at his home in Jalan Bintan Pekanbaru, which was facilitated by Rawi Kunin, a distinguished lawyer and one of the Riau figures who met Jufri in Medina when he was performing *hajj* and Jufri was a student at the IUM. When they met, Kunin ardently requested Jufri to return to Pekanbaru once he completed his study, and Jufri kept his promise. As the founder of the Islamic University of Riau⁶⁰ in

⁶⁰ Known in Indonesia as Universitas Islam Riau (UIR).

Pekanbaru, Kunin also appointed Jufri as lecturer of Islamic studies at the UIR. This opportunity allowed Jufri to expand the scope of his da'wa encompassing university students. It can be seen that the early period of Jufri's da'wa was centered in two places: his home in Jalan Bintan and UIR, both facilitated by Kunin. Kunin became Jufri's supportive patron in many ways: Kunin has introduced him to the public of Pekanbaru; he provided Jufri a large home in the middle of the city, allowing him to convey the da'wa to Pekanbaru Muslim community; and opened him an opportunity to teach at the university level. Most of his devoted pupils came from these university students.

During the first year of Jufri's da'wa, most of his followers were students of the University of Riau (UNRI) and UIR studying exact sciences such as chemistry, biology and mathematics. These students were attracted to what they perceived as his logical and strong arguments in explaining Islamic belief and practices. Two of his students gave the following accounts:

The way Buya taught his students was very interesting and challenging. He invited us to discuss the subjects on the basis of our reasoning as well as textual arguments. He showed us various books to support his argument that made us unable to counter his opinions. We were very comfortable with this method as we were hard science students who solely based our argument on empirical evidence and logical reasoning (Abu Syukur and Jafar, interviewed, December 2, 2015).

Jufri always invited his students to challenge him if they have a stronger argument. However, none were capable of challenging him due to their limited knowledge about Islam and their inability to read Arabic sources. Abu Syukur, one of Jufri's students, recounted how he was attracted to Jufri's da'wa:

I was invited several times by my friend to attend Jufri's class, but I didn't want to because I love music and smoking, both of which Buya Jufri strongly prohibits. As my friend insistently invited me to join, finally I decided to join the class to know more about it. At dawn, I went by bicycle to Buya Jufri's house to learn about religion. Once I arrived, my friend

introduced me to Buya. He asked my name and whether I could read Arabic, as I had graduated from a religious senior high school. Unfortunately, I can't read it. I was so upset and shy. Then I decided to learn Arabic for one year and submitted the deferral form to the university. At the end of the year, I was happy I could then read Arabic. I became more involved in religious studies and finally decided to resign from the university and became Buya's student (Abu Syukur, interviewed, December 2, 2015).

Hard science students who were learning in Riau University and the Islamic University of Riau became a precious asset for Jufri as they had been psychologically matured to help him spread the da'wa. This became obvious when Jufri received an endowment from a Malay donor in 1987 in the form of land, to establish a pesantren (religious school) in Jalan Duyung, Pekanbaru. This was a swampy land, covered mostly by water and bush, but Jufri, with the help of his initial students, was able to construct some humble buildings as the embryo of the pesantren, al Furqan. This was a milestone in the spread of the Salafi da'wa in Pekanbaru. Since its first establishment, al Furqan has served as the preliminary level of the Salafi education before continuing their study at the IUM in Saudi Arabia or LIPIA Jakarta.

4.3.2. The Inception (1987—1997)

The inception period for the spread of Salafism in Pekanbaru began in 1987, with the completion of Pesantren al Furqan. Pesantren is an important institution in Islamic tradition in Indonesia, in which young Muslims are taught and educated in Islamic subjects. Referring to Salafism, Wahid (2014) states that pesantren also plays a crucial role for the development of Salafi as it nurtures the next generation preparing them to teach the Salafi manhaj. Al Furqan is located in Jalan Duyung Pekanbaru. At the time of its establishment, there were no building established around it. The only access was via tree logs laid down on the soil which serve as a footpath. In addition to the difficult access, there was another trouble: mosquitos which bite and annoy the students when they were learning or sleeping. In spite of these difficulties, a student, Armen Fajri Naro, accompanied by his father, came to enrol at the pesantren. He was

the only new full-time student at al Furqan for the first year, in addition to the part-time students coming from the University of Riau and the Islamic University of Riau.

The attractiveness of Buya Jufri was the biggest draw for students to seriously study Islam and Arabic as well as memorizing al Quran. Jufri was a humble person, sincerely loved his students, and even sent some of them to continue their study to Java from his personal funds. He was also a very knowledgeable person in Islamic studies and Arabic, equipped with thousands of books brought from Saudi Arabia. His religious authority made him a highly respected preacher not only among his students but also within the Malay community. His total dedication to da'wa was unquestionable. These were clearly seen and felt by his students.

In addition to Jufri's charisma, another motivation of students to learn seriously was inspired by the achievement of Buya Jufri: he was the only Riau native who held a master degree from the IUM, reputed to teach Islam from the original source in a "pure" environment. Many students wanted to follow his step, learning in a "pure" place where Islam is taught and practiced. The following year several students came to enrol at al Furqan, who later became the leading Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru including Dr. Bukhari, Husein, Umar, Zaid, Amin and Zaki. To help him manage the pesantren, Buya Jufri gave responsibility to his senior students to teach the juniors while continuing their own studies.

In 1997, while on visit to his native village of Pangean, some 150km from Pekanbaru, Jufri was killed in a car accident. He was only 40 years old and had intended to build a pesantren for fatherless children there. His sudden death left an enormous void in the Salafi spiritual leadership so soon after the inception of the da'wa. As a result, the initial plan to build a pesantren in Pangean was abandoned. However, there was a strong commitment among his senior students that Pesantren al Furqan in Pekanbaru should not be left in limbo after the demise of their spiritual leader. One of these students, Razak, then took over the responsibility of running the pesantren, becoming its first headmaster after the demise of Jufri.

During the inception decade of da'wa, from 1987 until 1997, Jufri had managed to send 20 of his students to study at the IUM with the scholarships from the Saudi Arabian government. In addition to Medina, some of his students, including Abu Syukur and Jafar, continued their studies at LIPIA Jakarta. Later on, the return of these students contributed to the mushrooming of the Salafi da'wa in Pekanbaru in particular and Riau in general. Towards the end of 1997, Abu Syukur and Jafar completed their studies at LIPIA and returned to al Furqan to take over responsibility for developing the Salafi da'wa. The return of these alumni highlighted the new phase of da'wa: the establishment stage.

4.3.3. The Establishment (1998—2007)

The establishment stage of Salafism in Pekanbaru began with the return of al Furqan alumni from their studies at the IUM or LIPIA. They collaborated with UNRI and UIR students who had learned about Islam from Jufri, many of whom had promised Jufri that they would commit to the Salafi da'wa after they graduated. In fact, shortly after his death some re-activated a religious foundation, the Ubudiyya Foundation (*Yayasan Wakaf al Ubudiyya*), which was established in 1983 but had been relatively inactive. The Ubudiyya Foundation had several aims. First, the founder perceived that people had become too occupied with worldly gain, giving little thought to their afterlife. This meant that religion was not important for them. Secondly, it was felt that the process of da'wa was not progressing because noone was taking responsibility for it. Thirdly, any existing da'wa was being conducted individually and sporadically⁶¹. The hope was that the establishment of the Ubudiyya Foundation could unite the Salafi activists in one official organisation to allow them to share the experience and help each other. This can be seen as the first step towards consolidating the da'wa to sustain the Salafi development in Pekanbaru.

Under the new burst of enthusiasm in spreading Salafism, the Ubudiyya Foundation outlined strategic programs to enhance the Salafi da'wa, the most important of which were the establishment of Salafi schools and pesantren. In 1998, a year after the

⁶¹ This information is cited from the Ubudiyya Foundation document, given to the researcher by Habib, the Foundation secretary on September 15, 2015.

death of Buya Jufri, the Foundation established the first Islamic school for girls: *Pondok Pesantren Putri Ummu Sulaym* (The Ummu Sulaym Islamic Girl's Boarding School), located in Jalan Melur Indah, Pekanbaru.

4.3.3.1. The Ummu Sulaym Islamic Girl's Boarding School

This school, which caters for both junior and senior high girls, was the first of its kind for providing young Muslim girls with Islamic knowledge as well as Quranic memorisation. As previously mentioned, a deep concern of Salafi activists has always been the influence of western culture, brought about by globalisation, and the consequent problems faced by Muslims in knowing what is in line with Islamic teachings and what is not. On the basis that this lack is due to their poor knowledge of Islam, the Salafis established educational institutions as part of a strategic plan to provide Muslims with a better knowledge of Islam. The Ummu Sulaym was created for just such a purpose, with the purported aim of preparing Muslim girls to "journey" safely in this globalised era. As with all Salafi schools, at Ummu Sulaym the main emphasis is the teaching of Islam according to the interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*. The six targets of Ummu Sulaym are: (i) cultivating the correct aqida according to the interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*; (ii) guiding the students to "imitate" the Prophet and his companions, thereby preparing them to actively spread goodness among the community; (iii) educating a Quranic generation who understands and implements Quranic teachings; (iv) providing Muslim girls with the correct interpretation of Islam and being patient in propagating it; (v) having sufficient knowledge of Islam and being sincere in da'wa; and (vi) mastering Arabic which will enable them to acquire their knowledge from the primary sources. According to the Salafis, Muslim girls will thus be enabled to encounter this globalised world as well as to take part in the da'wa.

However, Salafi activists are also well aware of the importance of students acquiring what they call secular knowledge in order to be equipped for the challenge of the world. Therefore, in addition to studying the hadith, tafsir, sirah al nabawiya, Arabic, al Quran, fiqh and ushul al fiqh, the curricula also include social and natural sciences, such as English, mathematics and Indonesian reading, writing and literature. These

subjects are the same as those taught in government schools, which means students at the pesantren are prepared to sit at the national examination. It is worth noting here that in Indonesia students are only allowed to enrol at university if they have passed the national examination. Through the combination of the curricula, set out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education, Pesantren Ummu Sulaym provides its students with a more rounded education than the regular pesantren, which only focus on religious studies.

A common problem faced by all Indonesian pesantren is that they are perceived by many Muslims as providing an inferior education to government schools. Pesantren, literally meaning “place of the santri” (pupil) is also referred to as “pondok,” meaning a hut built of bamboo, wood or other light materials (Pringle 2010). The usage of these words, pondok pesantren, reflects its humble origin and affects its image among Indonesian Muslims. Pesantren is also a traditional institution, in which students are only taught the classical Islamic tradition of knowledge according to the Shafii School of law. The responsibility of teaching and management lay on the hand of kiyai (ulama), who often the graduate of the same traditional pesantren (Azra, A, Dina Afrianty, Robert W. Hefner 2007). In order to address this problem, Pesantren Ummu Sulaym combines the government and local curricula, as mentioned previously, and provides fully qualified teachers for both religious and secular subjects⁶². In Pesantren Ummu Sulaym, the teachers of religious subjects are graduates of the IUM and LIPIA, while for secular sciences the teachers are all graduates of UNRI and the State University of Padang. The Pesantren broadcasts these facts, which has led to a steady increase in enrolments. Currently, there are around 700 students, mostly from Pekanbaru and surrounding districts.

Another attraction is that, unlike non-Salafi pesantrens which have no school on Friday, Pesantren Ummu Sulaym is lesson-free on Sundays, which means parents can visit their daughters at the Pesantren. It should be noted that the vast majority of student parents at the Pesantren are government employees who do not work on

⁶² To be considered a qualified teacher, the government requires that they have graduated from a government recognised university.

Sundays. Having looked at a single-sex Salafi pesantren in Pekanbaru, I will now outline the education given in a nearby co-educational Salafi-run pesantren.

4.3.3.2. Islamic Boarding School Umar bin Khattab

Pesantren Umar bin Khattab was established by the Ubudiyya Foundation in 1999, two years after the Pesantren Ummu Sulaym. This co-educational primary, junior and senior high school, which is located in Jalan Delima, segregates the sexes both in the classroom and in the school complex. A concrete wall totally separates the boys' quarter from those of the girls. The Salafis are highly conscious of this need for gender segregation, believing it is a requirement of Islam (Duderija 2011). However, male teachers are allowed to teach girls, and vice-versa.

The underlying goals of Pesantren Umar bin Khattab are the same as those of Pesantren Ummu Sulaym. The dangers of the penetration of Western culture, and the need to encounter them are highlighted in the pesantren brochure and on their website. The Salafis firmly believe that Westernization poses serious dangers for the Muslim community, and that young Muslims need to be well-equipped in order to defend and protect themselves from such temptations. Education as offered by the pesantren system is considered the best way to prepare young Muslims not only for the "real world" but also to produce future generations of high quality representatives of Islam.

Pesantren Umar bin Khattab measures the quality of its graduates in various ways, the most important of which include having the correct aqida, memorizing at least 12 chapters of al Quran and 300 hadiths, the ability to write and speak Arabic as well as conducting rituals in the correct manner, including shalat and dzikr, according to the interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*. In addition to religious subjects, as with Pesantren Ummu Sulaym above, secular subjects including English, mathematics, Indonesian, social and natural sciences are taught in the pesantren. Sport, especially swimming, is also encouraged for all students, and the pesantren has a large artificial lake used by students for swimming. A sport ground is also available for students. As previously

stated, the Salafis believe that students who have been equipped with religious and secular subjects are more capable of dealing with the challenges of modernity.

Since the quality of a pesantren is greatly dependent on the quality of its teachers, the Pesantren Umar bin Khattab employs graduates of IUM, LIPIA, UNRI and African International University in Sudan. These formally qualified teachers who are restricted to the classroom only make up a part of the overall programme. For the informal learning in the mosque, the pesantren management regularly invites some well-known Salafi preachers from Java. These include Aunurrafiq Ghufron, Khalid Basalamah, Zainal Abidin, Abu Qotadah and Syafiq Reza Basalamah. Java can be said to be the center of Indonesian Salafism, where hundreds of Salafi preachers, graduates from various Middle Eastern universities, are living and conducting the Salafi da'wa through numerous media, including establishing educational institutions, publishers, mosques and radio and television stations. ERJE TV, one of the most influential Salafi TV is also located in Java⁶³.

Both the Pesantren Ummu Sulaym and Pesantren Umar bin Khattab are examples of the rounded education, as seen by the Salafis, that they give to their students. I will now give an example of how they attempt to extend their influence to the broader community.

4.3.3.3. Primary School (Sekolah Dasar [SD] Imam Shafii)

In 2000, one year after the establishment of Pesantren Umar bin Khattab, the Ubudiyya Foundation founded a new primary school, Sekolah Dasar (SD) Imam Shafii. The Foundation hoped to attract parents who were cautious about enrolling their children in the pesantren system. In line with government primary schools, SD Imam Shafii does not require its students to live in school dormitories: they only attend school from 7am until 4pm during weekdays (three hours more than government primary schools) to allow time for religious education.

⁶³ For further information about the strong presence of Salafism in Java, see Jahroni (2015), Hasan (2006) and Wahid (2014).

The aim of this primary school is to instruct students in the basic tenets of Islam, including the correct *aqida* and ensuring they know how to conduct rituals in the manner taught in the Quran and Sunnah according to the interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*. The school also ensures that the graduates will be capable of reciting al Quran correctly, even having memorised at least 2.5 chapters by the time they leave Primary School. Another target is to instil in them a great love of learning al Quran and Hadith as well as to love all knowledge and practices as conducted by the Prophet's Companions and *al-salaf al-sālih*. In addition to these religious targets, the students are taught the basics of science, such as maths, physics and biology as well as technology in order to prepare them for life. The Principal of SD highlighted that the school provides its students with national and local competency by combining religious and secular sciences in the curricula. As evidence of its success, the school has been awarded an A listing by the government. This is the highest level of accreditation that can be reached by any school in the Indonesian educational system. It is this high quality which has attracted middle-class families to enrol their children at the SD Imam Shafii (Fuad, interview, November 29, 2015).

The three schools outlined above were founded by the Ubudiyya Foundation, which belongs to the Salafi group of Pekanbaru. As stated, all founders of the Foundation were students of Buya Jufri. Thus, it can be said that this Foundation is a continuation of the Salafi da'wa after the death of Buya Jufri. The al Furqan alumni who returned from either IUM or LIPIA include Abu Syukur, Jafar, Husein, Abu Zaid, Umar and Bukhari, Zaki and Amin who joined this Foundation to spread the Salafi da'wa in their home city. It therefore can be regarded that this Foundation is "home" to the students of Buya Jufri, a place where they can unite and consolidate their da'wa. They are well aware that without this establishment they would not be able to conduct an effective and efficient da'wa, therefore all of them contribute greatly to the Foundation according to their capabilities.

Although the Ubudiyya Foundation was established for the purpose of the consolidation of da'wa, some internal frictions occurred in 1999 as a result of

different viewpoints⁶⁴ regarding policies. The Foundation document⁶⁵ described this friction as an “internal crisis,” claiming it could be relieving the chairman of Foundation of his duties. Raihan not only resigned from his position as Chairman, but left the organisation completely, followed by some other members. This was the first fragmentation of the Salafi since the death of Buya Jufri, but not the last. In 2008, a major confrontation between Salafis and non-Salafis in neighbouring Kubang had a devastating knock-on effect on the Salafi da’wa in Pekanbaru. This was the starting point of the fragmentation stage.

4.3.4. The Fragmentation Stage (2008—2010)

Fragmentation is a common feature of the Salafis across the world, partly as a result of their rigid understanding of Islam and, to some extent, their hostile attitude towards non-Salafi Muslims (Hamid 2016; Høigilt & Nome 2014; Meijer 2009). According to Roy (2004) the Salafis are obsessed with boundaries, such as what they wear, which push them to distinguish themselves from non-Salafi Muslims. Various categories of Salafism proposed by scholars are clear evidence of the vulnerability of this group to the risk of schisms. Wiktorowicz (2006), for example, divides the Salafi into three groups: the purist, the politicians and the jihadis. Another scholar, Mneimneh (2011) classifies Arab Salafism into four groups: scholastic, activist, loyalist and jihadist. In the Gulf countries, Pall (2014) classifies the fragmentation of the Salafis into two main groups: the purist and the haraki. In the Salafi group of Pekanbaru, this fragmentation not only occurred internally among the Salafi members but also externally with the non-Salafi community, the first of which was the Kubang conflict that greatly affected the development of Pekanbaru Salafism.

Administratively, Kubang is a small village in the Siak Hulu sub-district, but geographically it is closer to Pekanbaru, the capital city of Riau Province, than to Desa Sawah, the capital of the Siak Hulu sub-district. Due to its close proximity to Pekanbaru, this village is considered as one of its suburban areas and therefore within the catchment area of the Salafi da’wa, centered in one mosque, where regular

⁶⁴ Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain a detail-valid information about the main issue of this conflict. The informant only stated that it was related to the Foundation policies.

⁶⁵ Unpublished Foundation report which was given to the researcher.

religious teaching sessions are carried out to the public. The most influential Salafi preacher in this area was Amin, a former student of Buya Jufri and graduate of the IUM. In 2008, hundreds of villagers, equipped with various weapons such as knives and daggers—but no guns as these are strictly regulated in Indonesia—laid siege on the mosque where ustadz Amin was preaching. He and his followers were unable to escape and found themselves under siege. Fighting took place, with dozens injured from both sides.

The Salafi followers were completely outnumbered, and if the conflict had escalated there would undoubtedly have been fatalities on both sides, particularly the Salafi followers as they were carrying no weapons. Sarifandi (2014) noted that the conflict was caused by the strict attitude of the Salafis who always criticise other Muslims for conducting *bid'a* and shirk, which the Salafis claim are not in line with the teaching of the Prophet. Specifically, it was reported that the provocative Salafi preacher, Ustadz Amin, conveyed in his sermon that reciting Sura Yasin as regularly practiced by people was a *bid'a*, and this sin was equal to having sexual intercourse with one's own mother. The conflict ended by expelling all the Salafis from the village. The Kubang incident was the first major conflict between the Salafis and non-Salafi people. This was, as narrated by Yunus (interview, August 26, 2015), a Salafi preacher, created a negative impression of the Salafis among other people. He further accounted that since that time, many Salafi ustadz were banned from preaching in various mosques.

The next internal Salafi conflict occurred in 2000, when Ustadz Amin, the Principal of Pesantren al Furqan Pekanbaru, clearly stated and broadcasted the “fact” that al Furqan was the official branch of *Laskar Jihad*⁶⁶, founded by Jaafar Umar Thalib in Yogyakarta. Ummi, wife of the late Buya Jufri, the founder of al Furqan, was extremely angry with Amin for bringing the pesantren into political conflict. As a result, with the support of other Salafi ustadzs in al Furqan, Amin was dismissed from the al Furqan. Along with his Salafi friends, Amin then established a new Salafi pesantren, Ta'zhim al Sunnah in Rimbo Panjang, 19.5 kilometres from Pekanbaru.

⁶⁶ For a detailed explanation about Laskar Jihad, see Noorhaidi Hasan (2006a).

Currently this pesantren is only attended by approximately 30 students, who live in semi-permanent dormitories. They came from surrounding districts, including from Jambi. Comparing to other Salafi pesantren, the progress of Ta'zim al Sunnah is very slow, which, according to my informant, is caused by their rigid understanding of Islam. Those who join this pesantren tend to be family members of the students. In this way, family lineage is the main factor of Salafi development in Rimbo Panjang. Broadly speaking, unlike the Kubang conflict which took place between the Salafis and the non-Salafis, the al Furqan conflict was among the Salafis themselves as a result of different ways of thinking and policies.

A similar internal conflict also occurred in Pesantren Umar bin Khattab when the Pesantren released a *tahzir* (warning) that Ustadz Amin had already deviated from the right path, and therefore should not be followed. In retaliation, Amin warned his followers that it was the Pesantren Umar bin Khattab itself which had already deviated from the right path. This is further evidence that the Salafis are vulnerable to conflict as a result of their rigid attitude toward different religious interpretations. However, most of the Salafi ustadzs in Pekanbaru are highly conscious of this risk and encourage close communication among them, sharing their thoughts and experiences as well as supporting each other in their common goal of da'wa. Currently, there are regular monthly meetings in Pekanbaru, attended by members of the Board of Trustees of approximately 30 local Salafi foundations who come together in order to coordinate and consolidate their da'wa. In addition to these meetings, Ustadz Abu Zaid, an influential Salafi preacher, created a Whatsapp group so that the Salafi preachers can easily keep in touch and communicate with each other. However, this Whatsapp group does not include Amin or his supporters as the rift between the two different groups appears to be permanent.

In 2011, those Salafi ustadz who are actively involved in the al Furqan and the Ubudiyya Foundation began to build Raudlatul Jannah Mosque (RJ Mosque), which later on became a new hub for the Salafis. The RJ Mosque can now be regarded as the mainstream Pekanbaru Salafi, and Pesantren Ta'zhim al Sunnah, which is led by ustadz Amin, can be regarded as the one that split away. The establishment of the RJ

Mosque is considered to be the current state of Salafi development in Pekanbaru, as explained below.

4.3.5. Contemporary period (2011—2017)

As explained above, the initial activities of the Salafis centered primarily around the Salafi pesantren, schools or religious learning sessions in a small mosque with a small number of attendees. However, today the Salafis have adopted a new strategy to spread the da'wa, enlarging its scope by trying to reach broader audiences and varying their activities and programs. It was only possible by building a larger mosque, located in a public area rather than one having limited access due to its location in a pesantren or Salafi school complex; that mosque is the Raudlatul Jannah, which, in April 2017, was 90% built. However one informant (Anas, interview, December 10, 2015) told me that the aim of building the RJ is, in fact, to compete with al Nur Grand Mosque which belongs to the Riau Government and managed by the Indonesian Ulemas Council (MUI). Apart from this controversy, the construction of the RJ, which is considered by the Salafis to be a Sunnah Mosque, is therefore an expansion strategy on the part of the Salafis to enlarge the scope of their da'wa.

The RJ is located in Jalan Tambusai, in the center of Pekanbaru city, and building began in 2011 after the Foundation received an endowment (waqf) in the form of land from a volunteer. By April 2017, it had cost over AUD \$1.3 million (AUD \$1= 10,000.00), and is designed to be a Salafi center to disseminate the Salafi da'wa not only in Pekanbaru city but also throughout Riau Province. According to the Foundation members, this goal can be reached by: (i) guiding and educating Muslim youth as volunteers of da'wa; (ii), conducting religious sessions, from one hour long to a week's duration; (iii) employing mass media, including social media, to disseminate the da'wa; (iv) improving the quality of umma through education and training; and (v) running social events.

The RJ, with all its activities, is administered by the al Nadwa Islamic Foundation (NIF) which was established on 15 March 2007 by the first Buya Jufri student in

Pesantren al Furqan, Armen Fajri Naro, a charismatic preacher and graduate of the IUM. Armen was considered the rising star among the Salafi leaders. Unfortunately, only 8 months after the establishment of the Foundation, Armen passed away suddenly. With none to replace him, the NIF became inactive for four years until the return of Bukhari and Umar from the IUM in 2011. Bukhari and Umar then took over the NIF and put themselves forward to take over the administration of the Foundation. Under the new management, Bukhari and Umar reactivated the NIF program and speeded up the RJ construction by encouraging the congregation to develop a culture of giving. In this way, they were able to collect a large number of donations to cover the cost of the construction of the mosque.

The RJ mosque has become the landmark of Salafism in Pekanbaru, offering various activities such as regular religious learning sessions, guiding muallaf (those who have just converted from non-Islam), traditional medical practice (*sinshe*), self-defence sports, *zakat* collection and disseminating aid to those living in the countryside. All these activities are managed by members of the NIF, including the preachers. Among all these, religious learning sessions play the most important role in cultivating the Salafi teachings to the congregations. Regarding the schedule of learning, this can be accessed from the RJ Facebook page⁶⁷ or WhatsApp group. To be a member of the group, one simply sends his/her mobile number to the group administration. A variety of the programs and the way those programs are circulated among the congregation reflect the wide scope of the Salafi da'wa and its new strategy.

Table 3 shows topics of religious learning sessions which are held regularly in the RJ Mosque, either in the morning after the Dawn Prayer or in the afternoon after Maghrib Prayer.

⁶⁷The RJ Facebook account can be accessed through this website:
<https://www.facebook.com/masjid.raudhatul.jannah/#>

Table 3. Regular weekly topics of religious learning sessions in the RJ Mosque.

No	Topics	Time	Preachers
1	Ushūl al-Tsalātsah (the Three Fundamental Principles)	5.30am—6.30am	Umar
2	Tafsīr al Sa'dy (the Interpretation of Ibn al Sa'dy)	5.30am—6.30am	Bukhari
3	Fiqh al-Ibādah (Islamic Jurisprudence of Rituals)	6.30pm—7.30pm	Fajri
4	Ta'lim al-Kabāir (Teaching about the Major Sins)	6.30pm—7.30pm	Husein
5	Minhāj al-Da'wa (Methodology of Da'wa)	6.30pm—7.30pm	Husein
6	Sharh Fath al-Bāry (the Explanation of Fath al Bary, compilation of sound Hadith)	5.30am—6.30am	Bukhari
7	Fiqh al-Akhlāq (Islamic Jurisprudence of Morality)	6.30pm—7.30pm	Ahmad Doni
8	Fiqh al-Muā'malah (Islamic Jurisprudence related to Islamic economics)	6.30pm—7.30pm	Abu Syukur
9	Fadlāil al-A'māl (Good Deeds)	6.30pm—7.30pm	Ahmad Doni
10	Riyādl al-Shālihīn (Garden Righteous People)	6.30pm—7.30pm	Heri Purnomo

In addition to religious sermons, which are given daily, the RJ conducts regular daura and training in for example entrepreneurship and Islamic economics, in order to improve people's understanding of Salafism (see Table 3). The daura and training are

usually conducted on a monthly basis at the RJ Mosque. For this purpose, the Salafis have never invited ustadzs who are not Salafis to teach at their mosque. The RJ mosque even refused to accept Muhammad Shaleh al Hadlramy when the latter visited al Nur Grand Mosque in Pekanbaru, although the latter was a student of Sheikh Utsaimin, a prominent Saudi Arabian scholar. The scholars the Salafis choose from are either local Salafi preachers or selected guest speakers from other provinces such as Java. The training programs are fixed, such as Islamic funeral training, but themes of *dawra* are subject to change depending on the context and expertise of the preachers.

Table 4. Title of *dawra* and training

No	Title of <i>dawra</i> /training	Preachers
1	Islamic Funeral Training	Team of preachers
2	<i>Dawra</i> for the Youth	Bahri, Ade Agustian, A. Doni
3	<i>Dawra</i> : Plenty but Useless	Umar
4	<i>Dawra</i> : Obstacles to Receiving the Truth	Zainal Abidin
5	Guiding New Converts	Team of preachers
6	<i>Dawra</i> : the Call of Love	Umar
7	<i>Dawra</i> : Picking the Truth from <i>al Fatiha</i>	Bukhari
8	<i>Dawra</i> about Islam	M. Tarmizi
9	Building a House in Heaven	Aunur Rofiq Ghufron

The NIF also created a TV and Radio channel, called ERJE TV and ERJE Radio respectively to broadcast sermons given in the mosque. These media outlets are referred to by the Salafis as T.V. Sunnah and Radio Sunnah. For those who missed a sermon, they can download what they want to hear from sermon files provided by the RJ management, which are available to anyone. The RJ Mosque has been equipped with up-to-date technology with the aim of reaching a wider audience.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

The formation and transformation of the Salafi Group in Pekanbaru can be understood through five stages: Arrival, Inception, Establishment, Fragmentation and

Contemporary. These stages are borrowed from Hamid's work (2016). Therefore, a comparative analysis between Hamid's work and the case of Pekanbaru Salafism will be elaborated by providing differences and similarities between them. There are some key differences. Firstly, unlike the case of Pekanbaru which only covers the development of Salafi group, Hamid applies these stages to delineate various Islamic trends in the UK, including Tabligh Jamaa, Salafi group and the UK branch of Hizb al Tahrir. In spite of these complexities, Hamid still found that those Islamic trends have passed similar stages, and therefore, the above stages are still applicable. However, there is a nuance in every stage of each trend. Secondly, the issue of agency of the two cases is different in the sense that Islamic trends in the UK are brought about by the migrant Muslims and then continued by the second generation who were born in the UK, while in the Pekanbaru case the agency is entirely indigenous people who studied in Saudi Arabia or in LIPIA Jakarta. Thirdly, the social context of the two cases is also different. While Muslims in the UK form a small minority of the UK citizens, in the Pekanbaru case Muslims form a great majority of citizens. Different demographic composition has led to different levels of feeling of uncertainty among Muslims in the two regions which lead to different strategy and level of attachment to Islam. Finally, the emergence of the Islamic trends in the UK was an unintended consequence of domestic and international events such as the issues of identity, gender relationships, discrimination and Islamophobia, while in the Pekanbaru case the Salafi emergence is mostly a result of internal dynamics, rooted from the awareness that Islamic beliefs and practices have been corrupted on the one hand, and the perceived negative impact of modernity on the other.

Besides above differences, there are also some similarities which can be encompassed as follows. Firstly, the fast growing of the Islamic trends in the UK and Pekanbaru is strongly stimulated by the introduction of new technology, mainly communication technology. Examples include the website, radio and TV channel to broadcast the da'wa, and how the recorded or digital version of almost all sermons given by the Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru can easily be accessed from the computers provided by the RJ Mosque management in one of the corners of the mosque. Secondly, in spite of its fast growth, both cases in the UK and Pekanbaru

suffer from internal divisions due to various reasons, the most important of which is their competition over religious authority. Thirdly, fanaticism toward their own group has also led to the various splits. To sum up, despite these similarities and differences, the formation and transformation of religious trends in the UK and Pekanbaru have caused religious change, which eventually led to the evolution of diversities of Islamic organisations including the Salafi group in Pekanbaru, Riau.

In the case of Salafi group in Pekanbaru, it is worth noting the specific influence of both the Saudi government as well as the Saudi individuals in the process of the emergence of Salafism in Pekanbaru. The Saudi Government functions as the pioneer in the spreading of Salafism throughout the world due to the educational opportunities it offers with full scholarships. The education of the pioneers of Pekanbaru Salafi preachers was also funded by the Saudi Government. When the preachers returned home, they became agents of Salafism in Pekanbaru. While conducting the da'wa, although all Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru were students of Buya Jufri, fragmentation occurred due to diverse opinion, dispute over strategy and affiliation. Following this split, the mainstream Salafi then changed their strategy to enlarge the scope of their da'wa, not only focusing on the pesantren but also establishing the RJ, a large mosque, located in a public area which can be easily accessed by the public.

As the development of Salafi group in Pekanbaru is characterised by internal conflicts, which inevitably leads to the rise of a negative image, there is an awareness among its elites to exit from this “prevalent burden” by being essentialists⁶⁸ who focus on the essence and content of the faith rather than being formalists who emphasise on the label or brand (see next chapter). However, religious tension is still found among Muslim society of Pekanbaru as a result of its development. This dynamic is responded differently by Muslims in organisational levels, such as the

⁶⁸ This is an original word used by Bukhari to define Salafism in Pekanbaru. He meant by that as the shifting of the definition of Salafism, from an exclusive to more inclusive one. The former is limited to those who have clear affiliation to Salafism, while the latter includes those who are in line to the Salafi manhaj but do not state clearly their affiliation to Salafism. As the opposite of this, he used the concept of formalist.

Indonesia Ulemas Council (MUI), and individuals, represented by some non Salafi Muslim scholars. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5. THE DYNAMICS OF SALAFI GROUP IN PEKANBARU

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored the emergence of Salafism in Pekanbaru, Riau and the role played by the Saudi Government and Saudi individuals in that process. The continuous growth of the Salafi group in Pekanbaru has created dynamics among the Muslim community that have manifested through tensions as well as cooperations. This chapter will look further at these dynamics, focusing on the mainstream Salafi group in Pekanbaru: the way they define themselves amidst the ambiguity of the term Salafism; in cooperation and tension with the local community as a result of its development; and the responses the Salafis receive from mainstream Muslims. This exploration provides an understanding of how the Salafi group of Pekanbaru tries to expand the da'wa in order to purify what it perceives as prevalent aberrant beliefs and practices. In doing so, the Salafis need the government as a patron to secure their position. Due to this position, the dynamics of Pekanbaru Salafism have created cooperation with the local government, and tensions with some Islamic organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Indonesian Ulemas Council (MUI) on the other. I will argue that the Salafis, represented by the al Furqan Salafi Group (FSG), maintain their close relationship with the local government as part of their strategy to expand their influence at both governmental and societal levels. Having government approval can help diminish the negative image of the Salafis, which followed the conflict in Kubang in 2008, and decrease the risk of their being put under surveillance by the police who are concerned with identifying those involved in promoting terrorism. Maintaining a close relationship with the government also goes some way towards reinforcing the position of the Salafis vis-a-vis the local people, the target of their da'wa. The first part of this chapter seeks to define the emerging Salafis in Pekanbaru as a distinctive Salafi group in Indonesian.

5.2. Definition of Salafi Group in Pekanbaru: Grappling with the Facts

This section provides further discussion about definition of Salafism, which was briefly covered in Chapter 1. This explanation is needed in order to be able to place the local case of Salafi in Pekanbaru in the context of global Salafism. Finding a single definition of Salafism, which encompasses all aspects of the group, is difficult due to the complexities of strategy, political affiliation, group reference, moral sentiment, agency and their interaction with the local cultures. Due to their political activism, Mneimneh (2011), for example, argued that Salafis overall can be regarded as Islamists who seek to place Islam at the core of politics. However, to Mneimneh (2011), Salafism is ideologically clearer and more dynamic than other Islamist groups because of its claim to religious purity and availability of oil funds provided by the Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Fradkin (2008) does not distinguish between Islamism and Salafism, claiming they are synonyms. The various definitions of Salafism above are based only on the Salafi engagement in politics regardless of their personal piety, commonly called the security-political approach (Račius & Norvilaite 2014).

Unlike Mneimneh (2011), Fradkin (2008) and Wiktorowicz (2006), who primarily focus on the security approach, Ostebo (2011b) who studies Ethiopian Salafism focuses on the role of the local Ethiopian agency in spreading Salafism. According to him, the Salafis reform movement “was not something imposed on the local actors from outside, but was a home-grown movement introduced, maintained, and appropriated by a diverse body of indigenous actors” (Østebø 2011a, p. 644), including merchants, preachers and returning students from Saudi Arabia. According to Ostebo (2011a), although Saudi Arabia still plays a significant role in disseminating Salafism in Bale, Ethiopia, that kind of Salafism has been moulded into the locality of that country. The concept of locality, as explained by Ostebo (2011b), refers to spatial space, human agency and local culture. This approach tries to understand the phenomenon of Salafism on the basis of actors, their networks and how those actors interact and negotiate Salafism in local contexts.

From another point of view, it can be argued that Salafism is also dependent on its main figures, such as al Jamiyah (the followers of Muhammad Aman al Jami, d. 1994) and al-Madkhaliyah (the followers of Rabi' al Madkhaly). Mneimneh (2011, pp. 32-3) calls this "loyalist Salafism." This typology is different from scholastic Salafism, which is explicitly apolitical and avoids political issues, particularly in Saudi Arabia. The focus of this Salafi group, according to Mneimneh (2011) is on the matters of theology and Islamic jurisprudence, not political engagement. Overlapping categories are therefore unavoidable.

The aforementioned typologies have shown that Salafism as a phenomenon is complex. According to Meijer (2009), it is these complexities that make Salafism ambiguous and prone to fragmentation. Though Salafism has been fragmented into various groups, there is still one common ground found in it, which, according to Haykel (2009), is the religious and social reform spirit aimed at purifying Islamic beliefs and practices. Though Salafism shares this common ground with other reform movements, such as Muhammadiyah, it differs in terms of the unity of the movement, political stance and degree of adaptation to the local cultures. It can be said that Salafism is, in fact, a multifaceted reform group, divided by various socio-religious as well as political factors. Amidst these complexities, is it possible to pin point the local features of Pekanbaru Salafism? Dr. Abu Rahmat, the first informant whom I interviewed in August, 2015 told me that revealing and understanding the origin of modern Salafism is not an easy task, if not impossible. However, following Bonnefoy (2011) and Estebo's (2011a) approach that Salafism is not a totally foreign element imposed on the local people but rather a "home-grown movement" developed by "indigenous actors," this chapter seeks to identify the specific characteristics of Salafism in Pekanbaru, thereby arriving at a clear definition, on the basis of its political affiliation, strategy and pattern of relationship with the local government.

In general, the Salafism in Pekanbaru can be categorized as the scholastic Salafism of Mneimneh. The main reason for this is due to their refusal to be involved in any political affiliation or activities and their absolute rejection of any kind of violence.

Moreover, they have also a strong commitment to focus only on da'wa by establishing educational institutions. Since the main focus of this study is the Salafi of Pekanbaru, the al Furqan Salafi Group (FSG) discussion of Pekanbaru Salafism refers principally to this group, in spite of several individual Salafis in Pekanbaru who choose not to belong to any particular group.

In addition to their religious stance of non-violence, the FSG pledges unconditional obedience to the government. An example of their total obedience to the government was evident in 2009 when a Government committee invited a well-known Indonesian music group, Gigi⁶⁹, to give a concert in front of the al Nur Grand Mosque. Naturally, this provoked a lot of anger among various Muslim figures and organisations including MUI, Muhammadiyah and NU who united in calling for a cancellation of the concert, since it was an insult to Islam to play such kind of music let alone in a sacred place, a mosque which is usually referred to as “rumah Allah” (the House of Allah). The FSG however remained silent, refusing to be drawn into any criticism to the government, which was obliged to cancel the concert a couple of days before the proposed event. One of the reasons why the FSG are not involved in political activities is because of the strong emphasis they put on da'wa which is, for them, a way of life to be conducted peacefully at all times.

Emphasising the importance of da'wa, Bukhari (interview, August 27, 2015), the most influential figure of FSG, explained that he prefers to emphasise the deeper essence of Salafism rather than the label, as the latter has been both widely misused and misinterpreted. According to Bukhari, Pekanbaru Salafis are essentialists who focus on the essence and content of their faith, rather than being formalists who emphasise on the label or brand. As da'wa is the essence of Salafism, Bukhari further explained that the Salafis cannot be separated from it: talking about Salafism means talking about da'wa, which, according to him, is:

not attributed to a particular group; it is principally a da'wa which totally relies on the deeds of the Prophet, which were entirely based on the knowledge of al Quran and Sunna. The Salafi da'wa is in line with the

⁶⁹ Gigi, literally meaning tooth, is a famous Indonesian pop-rock band group. Since its establishment in 1994, this group has released more than 15 albums.

interpretation of the Prophets' companions (*ashāb*), *ashāb*'s disciples, i.e. *tabīn* and *tābi' al- tabīn*. The aim of Salafi da'wa is to spread [religious] knowledge and perform the *amal* [religious behaviour which is theologically rewarded by God allowing the doer to enter heaven. Thus, it is a combination of the correct creed [*aqīda*], the right rituals and noble character (*bukanlah memberikan kesan tentang sebuah kelompok, tetapi dia pada hakekatnya adalah dakwah yang berlandaskan kepada dakwah yang telah dilakukan oleh Rasulullah, yang mendasarkan dakwah itu di atas ilmu yang berasaskan al Quran Kitabullah dan Sunnah, sesuai dengan pemahaman generasi terbaik umat ini, yaitu Nabi Muhammad dan para sahabatnya, berikut murid-murid para sahabat Nabi, yaitu generasi tabi'in dan generasi setelah mereka. Dakwah yang dibina di atas menyebarkan ilmu dan memarakkan amal. Gabungan antara ilmu dan amal. Memprioritaskan aqidah yang benar, ibadah yang lurus, akhlaq dan budi pekerti yang tinggi*) (interview, January 16, 2016).

Bukhari further explained that:

Thus, Salafism is not an organised group, led by a leader with a clear administrative structure. No. Those who conduct da'wa on the basis of what I have explained above can be found anywhere. I have also never boasted that I am the only Salafi (*Jadi dia bukan sebuah kelompok yang memiliki pemimpin, ada strukturnya, dan ada markas dan tempat rujukannya. Tidak. Dan orang-orang yang berdakwah berasaskan apa yang telah saya jelaskan tadi ada dimana-mana. Dan saya juga tidak pernah berkoer-koer menyebarkan bahwa saya berdakwah dengan dakwah Salafi, atau dari kelompok Salafi*) (interview, January 16, 2016).

Da'wa is the core of the Salafi spirit in Pekanbaru. Bukhari clearly explains that da'wa is part of the religious rituals conducted by all the prophets, from Adam to Muhammad, who were sent for this purpose. He further argued that da'wa is *sabilullah*, the path of Allah. According to him those who walk on this path are walking on the pathway of Allah, the only right track for Muslims to follow. This

da'wa may be conducted in many ways, including teaching and delivering religious sermons. Explaining his reason for his involvement in da'wa, Bukhari pointed to two arguments found in al Quran and al Sunna. The first, based on the Quranic verse in Chapter *al-Nahl* (the Bees; 16), verse 215.⁷⁰ A calling for people to follow the path of Allah path is clearly stated in this verse, and therefore Bukhari argues that the Salafi has a very strong argument for doing da'wa. The second argument put forward by the FSG for their emphasis on da'wa is based on the Prophet's Hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn al Mas'ud, the Prophet's companion. He recounted that on one occasion, the Prophet explained his way of life by drawing a straight line on the ground and saying "this is my way." He then drew other lines on either side of the first line to illustrate the stray way, saying the first line is sabilullah (the path of Allah), and the others were not. Using this illustration, Bukhari wants to ensure that the basis of Salafi da'wa is strongly religious and the content of their da'wa unquestionable, due to their obedience to the *al-salaf al-salih* interpretation.

Up to this point, the FSG understanding of da'wa is generally accepted by mainstream Muslims. In fact, Bukhari (interview, January 16, 2016) admits that da'wa belongs to all Muslims, whatever their religious group or institutions; da'wa does not specifically belong to the FSG. However, the FSG da'wa practically diverges from the mainstream when they explain how the guidance of da'wa must be in line with the *al-salaf al-salih* interpretation, which has become their trademark, distinguishing it from others. Following on from this, they call their da'wa a "da'wa for Sunnah"; their mosques "Sunnah mosques" and the FSG ustadzs who conduct the da'wa are called "Sunnah ustadz." They also have other things attributed to Sunnah, including Sunnah Radio and Sunnah TV.

The main feature of the FSG is that da'wa is conducted through both formal and informal education, the former taking place in the FSG schools and the latter during religious instruction sessions in their mosques. The great importance which the FSG

⁷⁰'Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is Best Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.'

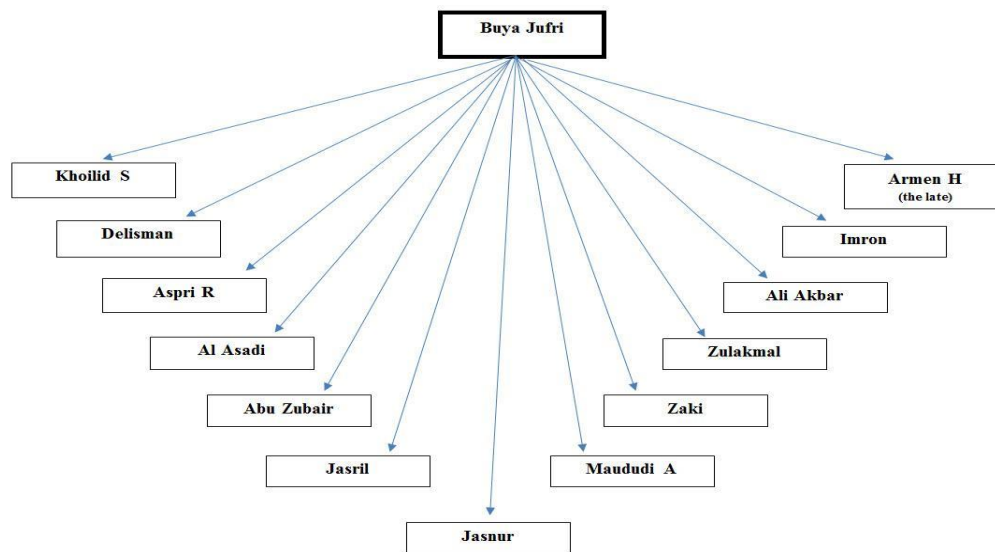
attach to education is closely related to the strategy to adopt when conducting da'wa, which consists of three main points: preparation with sufficient knowledge, determining priority of da'wa, and ordering the implementation of Islamic pillars (Bukhari, interview, January 16, 2018). In addition, being familiar with people's circumstances is also a requirement in order to be able to determine the priority of da'wa (Bukhari, interview, January 16, 2018). For example, the Salafi preachers should know the socio-cultural background of people—whether they are well-educated, rich or poor, practicing *bid'a* or keeping their aqida pure—as this will help them choose the most relevant strategy to adopt in the da'wa. Ustadz Armen Fajri (2005), the first Buya Jufri student, divides the process of da'wa into two: tashfiah and tarbiyah. The former is purification of Islam from any foreign element; the latter is educating people according to the *al-salaf al-salih* interpretation. These two methods are run in parallel with Salafi preachers placing different emphasis depending on the people they are addressing. Based on Armen's insight, Salafi da'wa is clearly a reform movement aiming at the purification of Islamic teachings and practices.

In the context of Pekanbaru, the FSG da'wa is accepted by some of the local people and rejected by others, leading to cooperation with the former and tension with the latter. It is these opposing reactions which create the dynamics of Salafism in Pekanbaru. The increasing number of FSG institutions, as well as the growing number of RJ attendees, show that FSG is successfully attracting increased cooperation and gradually overcoming its opposition. As previously mentioned, the FSG is the main representative of the Salafi da'wa in Pekanbaru. However, on the basis of the da'wa strategy they adopt, the good relationship they enjoy with the government and da'wa motives, the Salafi da'wa can be divided into two types: the organised (al-Furqan Salafi Group [FSG]) and the independents. This classification is primarily determined by the attitude of the Salafi preachers, which in turn affects their followers, as will be explained below.

5.2.1. Al-Furqan Salafi Group (FSG)

As previously mentioned, Pekanbaru Salafism primarily consists of the graduates of Pesantren al Furqan. They organise the Salafi da'wa through educational institutions they have established, such as pesantren and schools, which they teach both formally and informally. The number of FSG followers has multiplied over three decades, with several thousand new members since 1985. Although leaders spread out in several institutions, they hold a monthly meeting in order to coordinate their programs and share their experiences of da'wa. According to Yunus (interview, August 26, 2015), this regular meeting is also important in order to offer each other mutual support. The fact that they were all students in al Furqan and taught by Buya Jufri gave them common ground, which contributes significantly to the development of Pekanbaru Salafism.

Diagram 1: Current FSG preachers who were students of Buya Jufri



5.2.2. The Independent Salafis

In addition to the FSG, there are also a small minority of Salafi preachers who graduated from various Middle Eastern universities. These include Dr. Abu Rahmat and Dr. Asraf (graduates of the IUM), Dr. Sofyan and Dr. Huda (graduates of a Sudanese university) and Dr. Haidar (graduate of a Moroccan university). Like the preachers of the FSG, all these graduates are totally committed to the da'wa, as can

be observed from their extensive activities in various religious events, Islamic institutions or organisations. For example, Dr. Abu Bukhari has various positions in both governmental and private bodies: a lecturer at the State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Qasim Pekanbaru, member of Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah Indonesia (Perti), Mufti of Siak district, Head of Fatwa Commission at the Riau MUI and member of NU. Dr. Asraf is a lecturer at the UIN Pekanbaru as well as an acting director of the government funded Bangkinang Islamic Center in Kampar District. Dr. Sofyan is Chairman of Ikatan Dai Indonesia (the association of Indonesian [Islamic] callers), an organisation which hosts Islamic preachers regardless of their social and cultural background. In spite of their involvement in a particular organisation, these preachers mostly conduct their da'wa individually to broader audiences than FSG preachers, who mostly limit their teaching in a Salafi mosque. It is worth noting here that although the independent Salafis have excellent qualifications in Islamic studies, they have never been invited by the FSG to preach in the RJ Mosque or other FSG school networks. This indicates that the FSG disapproves of these individuals. Below is a brief comparison between the FSG and the independent Salafis, illustrating in which ways they are different and disconnected from each other.

5.2.3. Comparison between al-Furqon Salafi Group and the Independent Salafis

Whereas the FSG has a very specific way in which they conduct da'wa, the independent Salafis are more flexible in their interaction with people, both within the Salafi community and with non-Salafis. This can be seen by the fact that they are involved with a diverse range of people and groups, regardless of their political affiliation and *mazhab* (school of law) (Abu Rahmat, interview, August 20, 2015). Unlike the FSG, whose socio-educational institutions are governmentally approved and registered, the independent Salafis relies heavily on individual skills. Two examples of these figures are Dr. Abu Rahmat and Dr. Asraf, both graduates of the IUM but conducting inclusive da'wa in various different Muslim communities. The establishment of officially approved foundations form an umbrella under which all FSG activities are managed, controlled and developed. The initial background of the

establishment of the Ubudiyya, the oldest Salafi foundation in Pekanbaru, was documented as follows⁷¹:

Time elapsed and the Salafi activists became scattered in various areas...the da'wa activities significantly declined. For several years, the da'wa was run sporadically, disconnected to each other. Finally, one of the activists suggested to others to hold a meeting in Pekanbaru to discuss about the establishment of a foundation allowing them to coordinate and control the da'wa activities...by being joined in an organisation, every individual could diminish unsafety feeling.

There are approximately 30 of these foundations, the most important of which are the Ubudiyya Foundation, al Bayyinah Foundation and al Nadwa Islamic Foundation (NIF).⁷² The first two carry out formal learning in schools, whereas NIF only provides informal learning, centered in the RJ Mosque in the center of Pekanbaru city. However, the increasing influence of the RJ mosque in the Salafi da'wa has led to it becoming the hub of Salafism, providing various forms of informal religious learning and hosting a variety of religious events, including aqiqa (birth ceremony). Dr. Bukhari, Umar and Abu Zaid are the most prominent preachers in this group and the scope and far-reaching influence of these three foundations have made them leaders of Salafi activities in Pekanbaru. It is for this reason that any discussion about Pekanbaru Salafism always refers to the al Furqan Salafi Group.

Within the FSG, there are several preachers including Bukhari, Abu Zaid, Umar, Husein, Abu Syukur, Bahri and Murtadlo. They are valued differently from each other by the congregations. Doni (interview, September 20, 2015), an informant, narrated that the above named preachers are classified into two categories: first class and second class. This classification is based on the perceived criteria, such as

⁷¹There were some activists involved in the establishment of the Ubudiyya Foundation, such as M. Hasbi, Delisman, al Asdi, Imran and Zulakmal. All of them were students of Buya Jufri (Foundation document given to the researcher).

⁷²Under the management of the Ubudiyya Foundation, there are Pesantren Umm Sulaym, Pesantren Umar bin al Khattab, SD IT Imam Shafii, SMP IT Imam Nawawi and Pesantren Imam Nawawi. Under the al Bayyinah Foundation, there are al Bayyinah orphanage, al Mishkat Kindergarten and Junior and Senior High Schools for girls.

experience, knowledge, academic background and the way they give the sermons. According to him, this class difference can easily be observed from the number of attendees in the RJ mosque and availability of parking space when the preachers deliver their sermon. With the three first class preachers, Bukhari, Umar and Abu Zaid, the mosque and the car park are almost always full, while the opposite is the case when the other preachers deliver their sermons. In daily conversations, the sermons and opinions of these three preachers are the most frequently referred to by the followers. To some extent, this fact shows the selective behaviour of the FSG congregations even within their own group.

Below in the Table 6 are the names of some of the FSG's proponent activists and their rank according to the followers. Among 14 of these preachers, I interviewed 12 of them at different time and places, all located in Pekanbaru.

Table 5: Rank of Some Leading FSG Activists in Pekanbaru.

No	Name of preachers	Rank	Current position
1	Dr. Bukhari	1st	Advisor of the NIFand al Ubudiyya foundation
2	Umar, Lc.	1st	Advisor of al Bayyinah School and the NIF
3	Abu Zaid, Lc.	1st	Principal of Pesantren Ibn al Kathier
4	Husein, Lc.	2nd	Principal of Pesantren Umm Sulaim for girls
5	Heri, Lc.	2nd	Teacher and preacher
6	Bahri, Lc.	2nd	Teacher and preacher
7	Fuad, Lc.	2nd	Principal of al Shafii primary School
8	Fajri, Lc.	2nd	Principal of al Bayyinah Junior High School
9	Abu Syukur, Lc.	2nd	Teacher and preacher
10	Jafar, Lc.	2nd	Teacher and preacher
12	Daud, Lc.	2nd	Teacher and preacher
13	Yamin, Lc.	2nd	Teacher and preacher
14	Ziyad, Lc.	2nd	Principal of Pesantren Umar ibn al khattab

Another differentiating factor between the two groups of Salafism is that the FSG keeps a distance to the government, but totally obeys it. On the opposite, the independent Salafis are very close to the government but maintain their critical mind over various matters. Illustration of this different stand point can obviously be seen from an event when the Government wanted to invite the music band Gigi to give a concert in the front yard of the al Nur Mosque. In this case, the FSG refused to share their objection over this concert, which was proposed by people, including the independent Salafi figures. In another case, in spite of some criticism from various religious preachers, including from the independent Salafis, over tight-budget policy causing a significant reduction to the MUI budget, the FSG firmly refuse to respond. These two examples illuminate how the independents Salafis maintained a degree of individual freedom vis-à-vis the Government while the FSG, despite maintaining a distance, dedicate their blind support to the government. This paradoxical situation is illustrative of the difference between the two groups of Salafism in relation to the Government. The table below shows differences of the two Salafi groups, the FSG and non-FSG.

Table 6: The difference of the FSG and the non-FSG

No	Al-Furqan Salafi Group (FSG)	Non FSG
1	Organised	Independent
2	Distanced from the government	Involved in government programs and active in the government bodies
3	Government and government officers as the target of da'wa	Government as a means of da'wa, allowing them to reach broader audience.
4	Total obedience to the government	Maintains a critical position towards the government

5.3. Dynamic in the Local Context: Cooperation and Tension

This section focuses on the FSG, as the dominant Salafi group in Pekanbaru, showing how the dynamics of cooperation and tension exist at all levels of society, including Islamic organisations and certain government institutions.

5.3.1. The FSG Cooperation

In the area of cooperation, the FSG undoubtedly see this as a good strategy by which they can expand their da'wa, especially in the area of education. Fuad (interview, November 11, 2015), the principal of a Salafi school narrated:

Our relationship with the Government, especially the Department of Education is good. We are not an exclusive institution. We cooperate with the Government for the sake of our students...we support the Government program, therefore the Head of Education Office knows us well, and sometimes we invite him together with the educational supervisors to attend our program (*Hubungan kita dengan pihak dinas luar, kita tidak eksklusif. Tentunya kita bekerjasama dengan mereka sejauh mana yang kita bisa untuk kemaslahatan anak kita...ada program-program Pemerintah. Kita membuka diri, kita mendukung sehingga Dinas Pendidikan Kota mengenali sekolah kita ini. Dan dalam moment tertentu, kita juga mengundang kepala dinas dan pengawas pendidikan*).

The FSG's cooperation with the government maintains a specific character which allows it to enjoy an independent status while keeping a close relationship with the government. Pesantren al Furqon, for example, has never sent its representatives to the meeting held by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (interview, Ade, August 25, 2015) and also rejected the ministry funds provided for pesantren development project. This is mainly caused by the feeling of fear of government intervention in the pesantren's policies and programs after receiving aid. In contrast, the government aid to the RJ mosque was warmly welcomed by the al-Nadwa Islamic Foundation (NIF). This was because the aid was "unconditional" and therefore could all be used to build the mosque (interview, Joko, November 27, 2015). The Salafi behaviour

expresses a “cautious relationship” with the government, leading to the need for continuous negotiation on the part of the Salafi.

As explained previously, in spite of this cautious relationship, the FSG places a great emphasis on the importance of the total obedience to the government. Responding to an attendee’s question at the RJ Mosque about the obligation of every Muslim to fight radical group, such as Kharijite, Bukhari (recorded sermon, December 17, 2015) explained that:

Kharajite is an ideology, which has deviated from the right path. It considers other Muslims as disbelievers. We need to cooperate with the government to fight this sect (*khawarij adalah orang yang berkeyakinan keliru, bersifat ideologis yang mengatakan bahwa di luar mereka adalah kafir. Kita harus bekerjasama dengan pemerintah untuk menumpas kelompok ini*).

Sanctity of the state is typical of the Salafi da’wa from Saudi Arabia. The FSG political stance suggests that it is influenced by the Salafi da’wa of Saudi Arabia. In a *tabligh akbar*⁷³ held by the FSG in al Nur Grand Mosque, Ustadz Ghufron (recorded sermon, November 11, 2015), a Salafi preacher and graduate of the IUM clearly states that wise people are those who obey their government unconditionally. He expanded on this, saying that if a Muslim’s property was confiscated by a corrupt ruler, he should give it up and pray to God to replace it with a better one. This obedience is illustrated further by Wujud (recorded sermon, 8 March 2016), a Salafi preacher citing the Prophet hadith: *sam’un wa ta’atun, wa in ta’ammara ‘alaykum ‘abdun habsyiyyun* (listen and obey, although your leader is a black Ethiopian). The use of “black Ethiopian” is understood metaphorically, to emphasize the obligation of obedience regardless of the status of the ruler.

Confirming the obligation of Indonesian Muslims to obey the government at all levels, Dr. Ali Semjan Putra (recorded sermon, 20 February 2016), a graduate of the IUM and leading Salafi preacher stated that the Indonesian government has already

⁷³Indonesian language, derived from Arabic, means general religious assembly.

implemented the Sharia, which can be seen from the accommodation of Islamic values to positive laws. Family law, for example, accommodates to a large extent the Islamic values found in fiqh. The government also provides particular budget to fund orphanage and to build mosques in various areas. In this sense, Putra concluded that the highest imam of the Salafis is the Indonesian President. Total obedience to the government, thus, according to the FSG, is based on strong legitimacy derived from both religious understanding and political facts.

The FSG obedience to the government can also be seen from Bukhari's explanation in a particular morning speech (recorded sermon, December 17, 2015), when he was asked by one of the congregation about Muslim's obligations to prevent members of the Shiite sect from conducting their rituals in Pekanbaru. This question is in fact common among Indonesian Sunni Muslims due to their view that Shia Islam is a deviated sect in Islam. Therefore, preventing the Shiite members from conducting their rituals is regarded as part of "nahy al munkar" (preventing the evil). In response to this question, Bukhari explained that although those Shiite have clearly deviated from the right path, only the government has the right to prevent them. Bukhari's explanation was based on his firm belief that the government is the "ulil amri"⁷⁴ which must be obeyed by all Muslims. The FSG political stance toward the government, inspired by their religious understanding, has enabled them to expand the da'wa freely.

The FSG obedience to the government is not only delivered through religious sermons in the mosque, but also taught in their schools. As previously mentioned, the FSG schools accommodated entirely the government curricula. However, the FSG acceptance to the government is also ambiguous due to religious reasons. When visiting various FSG schools, I noticed that there were no pictures of the Indonesian president and vice-president or the image of *Burung Garuda*⁷⁵ hanging inside the principal's office. The reason for this is the belief that Islam does not allow pictures, and therefore hanging them in the office is religiously unacceptable. However, when one of the FSG schools wanted to obtain government accreditation for meeting the

⁷⁴ Legitimate ruler.

⁷⁵ *Burung Garuda* is the national emblem of Indonesia.

national standard, these pictures (considered state symbols) were displayed in the office for the duration of the visit and removed when the officials left.

Another example of the FSG cooperation with the state institutions is the close relationship they have with the Indonesian National Police. It is widely spoken among the FSG that the Chief Commander of the Pekanbaru Police, Colonel Arif, is a Salafi adherent. Furthermore, he has become their patron, supporting their da'wa on various occasions. One regular program conducted by the Pekanbaru Police is designed to decrease the rate of juvenile delinquency, such as skipping school, taking drugs and student fighting. The FSG ustadzs, such as Abu Zaid and Umar, have regular sessions in this program to deliver their sermons, teaching the students that such kind of delinquency is strongly prohibited in Islam. Abu Zaid (interview, November 11, 2015) narrated that his pesantren was visited various times by police, giving him an awareness that his pesantren was under police surveillance. The surveillance finally terminated when he joined the police program aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency. His involvement in the local police program has given him the social and political benefit. Another program which the FSG held on 30 December 2015, in collaboration with the Pekanbaru Police, was a *tabligh akbar* (general religious assembly) entitled "Preventing Terrorism in Malay Land," attended by Chief Commander of Pekanbaru Police, the Mayor of Pekanbaru and Governor of Riau, and the speaker, a Salafi from Java. Hasan (interview, February 22, 2016) told me that the Salafi collaboration with the local police in that *tabligh akbar* has given a positive image for the Salafi group.

The FSG's decision to hold the above assembly in the al Nur Grand Mosque created tension between the FSG with some non-Salafi figures. The Imam of the Mosque and the MUI were totally opposed to the Grand Mosque being the venue for the assembly. The Imam argued that the Grand Mosque is a symbol of unity for all Muslims in Riau, and therefore cannot be used by the FSG, which is considered a splinter group causing growing division within the Muslim community. The conflict between the FSG and MUI was mediated by the Chief Commander of the Riau Police in his office, with the MUI and the al Nur Mosque proposing three conditions

in order for the FSG to be allowed to use the Mosque: (i) the speakers should include the MUI ustadz as they are representative of mainstream Muslims; (ii) the FSG should sign a declaration provided by the al Nur Imam, stating that they will no longer accuse the non Salafi groups, such as NU, Tabligh Jamaa, Perti, Persis and Hizbu Tahrir of deviating from the right path; (iii) the FSG should be open to inviting non-FSG ustadzs to their mosques to show that they do not consider themselves to be an exclusive group within the Muslim community. After a fierce discussion, the FSG finally accepted the first requirement and rejected the other two with the al Nur Imam nevertheless agreeing that they could hold the General Assembly in the Mosque.

When I attended the Assembly at the al Nur Mosque, I observed that it was full of the FSG followers, with male and female attendees separated by a curtain, stretching in the middle of the Mosque. The first speaker was the Salafi preacher and the second was the MUI ustadz. The selective behaviour of the FSG can be seen in that most of them left the venue after the first speaker, the Salafi preacher, gave his speech. When the second speaker from the MUI stood up to address the congregations, only one third were still there. This deplorable behaviour angered the MUI members who accused the FSG members of showing no respect towards non Salafi preachers. To some extent, Daud (interview, November 30, 2015), a more moderate FSG preacher, confessed that the majority of those FSG members emphasise the creed (*aqīda*) over *akhlāq* (social norms). This can be seen from the case when those Salafis encounter something that is not in line with their interpretation of aqida, they would prioritise the aqida at all cost, including being disconnected with their own family and neighbourhood. My informant (Hidayat, interview, January 10, 2016) narrated that during a burial process in his housing complex, the family of the dead person recited *adzan* in front of the dead. One of the Salafi members interrupted angrily shouted that it had never been practiced by the Prophet and *al-salaf al-sālih*. He left the location and since then became disconnected with his own neighbour. It is this rigidity that creates trouble within the wider Muslim society in Riau.

The main issue discussed in the assembly was the problem of Islamic terrorism, a very sensitive issue for Indonesian Muslims due to the widespread image that it is closely related to Islamic teachings and therefore Muslims. As a result of this firmly held belief, various Islamic organisations are being watched by the Indonesian government. The FSG worked in conjunction with the Pekanbaru Police to conduct this assembly for two main reasons: to clear their name so that they would no longer be a police target, and expand their influence within government institutions (interview with Hasan, February 2, 2016). This would suggest that the FSG cooperation with the government contains a high degree of self-interest for the purpose of their da'wa.

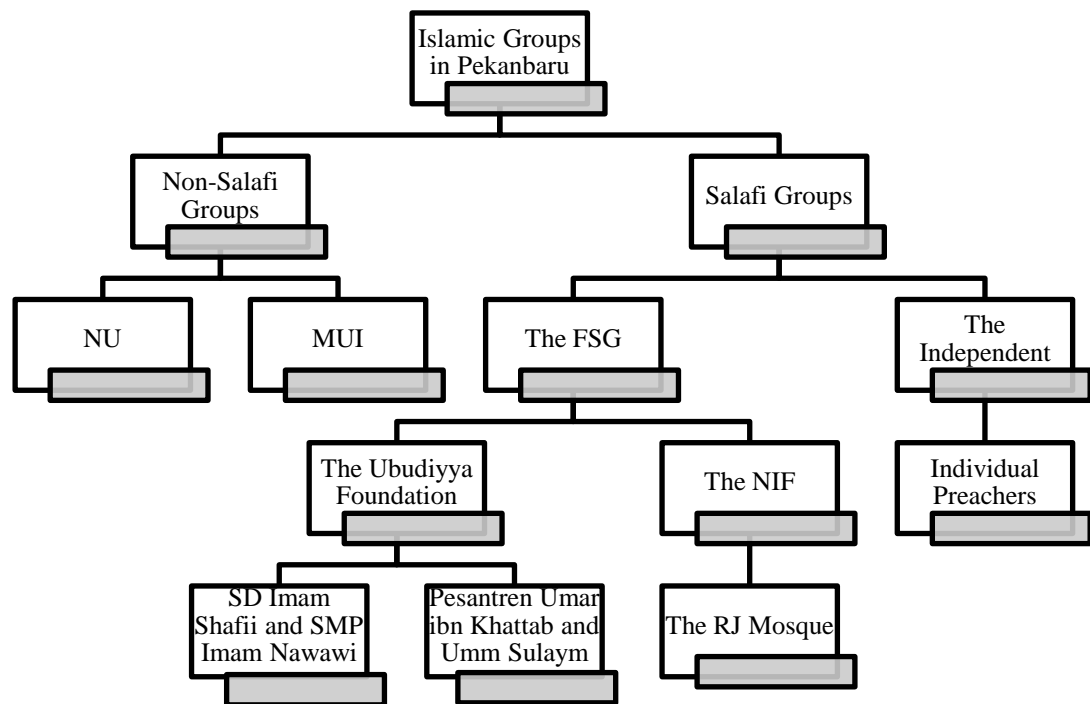
In addition to their excellent relationship with the government, the FSG also cooperates with some key figures of the Muhammadiyah organisation. This degree of cooperation can only take place due to the close ideological relationship between the FSG and the Muhammadiyah. Armen Fajri, the first Buya Jufri student clearly stated that among the various Islamic organisations Muhammadiyah is the only one which has continued the da'wa for Islamic reform started by Imam Bonjol in Minangkabau in 19th century.

The shared goals of the FSG and the Muhammadiyah allow them to work together on some occasions. For example, the FSG da'wa in Tembilahan was initially conducted in a non Salafi mosque until they were expelled due to their rigid teachings. The FSG then continued their da'wa in the private house of one of its Salafi members until neighbours objected and reported them to the local authority who said they were not permitted to have gatherings of this nature. Having no place to conduct their da'wa, the Muhammadiyah allowed them to use the Muhammadiyah mosque in Tembilahan. Similarly, the FSG also have the use of the al Fida Mosque in Pekanbaru which belongs to a Muhammadiyah organisation. None of the above examples of cooperation take place on a formal basis but rather as a result of personal interaction on both sides. The FSG, in this way, only cooperate with those whose ideas are in line with the core spirit of their da'wa: the purification of Islamic teachings from any foreign elements. The FSG cooperation with various members of local community

has allowed them to enjoy several benefits, including a good relationship with the Indonesian National Police and more places for conducting their da'wa.

In addition to these advantages, the FSG have needed to build their own facilities to accommodate a large number of people and extend their da'wa. The FSG preachers seek out leading Salafi businessman in Pekanbaru and the surrounding districts to ask for financial assistance in building new amenities. The latter are usually happy to oblige and such cooperation can be clearly seen in the building of the RJ Mosque and setting up of ERJE TV and ERJE Radio stations. Furthermore, these donors become members of the RJ charity foundation which disseminates its funds to the needy in the suburban areas of Pekanbaru as well as in rural areas of Riau and West Sumatra provinces. Another example of successful collaboration between the FSG and Salafi businessmen is the al Bayyinah Foundation. This educational foundation has an orphanage as well as kindergarten and junior and senior high schools, and the establishment of all school buildings is entirely due to the generosity of a few wealthy men who dedicated large sums of their money for the furthering of the Salafi da'wa. Such mutual cooperation has created positive dynamics within the FSG, contributing to its positive growth in Pekanbaru.

Diagram 2: Islamic Groups in Pekanbaru.



In order to enlarge the scope of their da’wa, members of the FSG regularly visit the country areas around Riau and the province of West Sumatra, disseminating material aid and giving sermons to the local people. On such visit, typically a group of about 15 Salafis led by an ustadz drive (mostly on motorised bikes, and some by cars) out to the countryside where they spend a few days conducting da’wa. This activity is referred to as “safar” which, coming from Arabic, etymologically means “journey,” although in the Salafi context it refers to a journey undertaken in order to spread the da’wa of Islam. In this sense, the use of the word *safar* distinguishes the Salafis from similar activities conducted by the Tabligh Jemaa, referred to as “*khurūj*”⁷⁶. It is only possible for *safar* to be carried out successfully if there is a cultural connection which has been built up between the Salafi visitors and their target location—usually it is the home village of one of the Salafis. This has the added benefit of extended family and neighbours being encouraged to come along and take part in the *safar*. In

⁷⁶*Khurūj* (Arabic) etymologically means go out, or leave one place to another place. In the Tablighi Jemaa context, it is defined as a religious journey in a certain period of time to teach people about Islam. The substance of *safar* and *khuruj* is obviously similar, but the Salafi have never used the word *khuruj*, as it has become the trademark of Tablighi Jemaa. For a good discussion about Tabligh Jemaa, see Ali (2012) and Bustamam-Ahmad (2015).

this respect, *safar* differs from *khurūj* where locations and people are chosen randomly.

The FSG has also established a strong network with certain members of the Javanese Salafis whose belief are similar to their own. These Javanese preachers are occasionally invited to give sermons in FSG institutions, such as the RJ mosque and Umar ibn al Khattab mosque. The FSG and Javanese Salafis cooperation has enabled the FSG to enlarge the scope of the Salafi da'wa in Pekanbaru as a result of a broader religious legitimacy received from their fellow Salafis in Java. This connection also allows some of the FSG preachers to attend the Salafi dauroh held by the Javanese Salafis in Trawas, Mojokerto, East Java, allowing them to expand their knowledge. Bahri (interview, August 20, 2015) is one of the preachers who has attended the Salafi daura in Java.

The poster is for a public invitation to attend a sermon. At the top, it says 'HADIRI & IKUTILAH' in white on a black background. Below that, 'Rangkaian' is written in a cursive font, followed by 'TABLIGH AKBAR' in large, bold, yellow letters on a black background with a yellow banner effect. The main text reads 'INSYA ALLAH BERSAMA UST. AUNUR ROFIQ GHUFRON' in white, with 'PIMPINAN PONPES AL FURQON AL ISLAMI GRESIK' below it. The central theme is 'Menjadi Rakyat Yang Bijak' in large, bold, yellow letters. Below this, it says 'MASJID AGUNG AN-NUR PEKANBARU' in white. The date and time are '17 SHAFAR 1437 H, PUKUL : 09.00 - 11.30 WIB' and 'AHAD, 29 NOPEMBER 2015 M'. There are two smaller event announcements: one for 'SABTU' (28 NOPEMBER 2015 M) at 'MASJID UMAR BIN KHATTAB' with the theme 'Kiat Menggiring Anak Taat Kepada Allah', and another for 'AHAD' (29 NOPEMBER 2015 M) at 'MASJID RAUDHATUL JANNAH' with the theme 'Membangun Rumah di Surga'. The bottom section lists sponsors and organizers, including 'RA AL-UBIDIYAH', 'SD IT IMAM ASY - SYAFI', 'PONPES UMMU SULAIM', 'MASJID UMAR BIN KHATTAB', 'SMP IT IMAM AN-NAWAWI', 'MASJID & PONPES IMAM AN-NAWAWI', 'Selektour', and 'Garuda Indonesia'. It also includes a contact number '0812 755818' and a small logo for '1034'.

Figure 2. Public invitation to attend the sermon at the al-Nur Grand Mosque, given by a guest-Salafi preacher from East Java.

However, despite the considerable positive growth of Pekanbaru Salafism, there are also negative dynamics locally as a result of the FSG da'wa, which have led to a certain degree of tension within the wider community.

5.3.2. Tensions: Splitting within Unity

The tensions portrayed here are confined to the relationship between the FSG and three groups: the Indonesian Ulemas Council (MUI), the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and some leading Muslim scholars within Pekanbaru Malay society. In this study, these three groups have been considered as representative of Pekanbaru Muslim society due to some reasons: the MUI is the only government-recognised ulema organisation; the NU is the biggest Muslim organisation in Indonesia (Pringle 2010), and the Muslim scholars are relevant due to their social and political role in Pekanbaru.

In regard to the MUI, Muhammad Atho' Mudzhar ((2002, pp. 315-6) explained that it was historically established in 1975 to meet four main objectives:

- To gain acceptance within society and to construct good relation with various Muslim organisations
- To maintain good relation with the government
- To encourage Muslim participation in development programs
- To maintain harmonious relations with the non-Muslim religious groups.

The first objective of the establishment of the MUI, as clearly stated above, is for internal Muslim relationship: to construct good relations with various Muslim organisations such as Muhammadiyah, NU, Perti, al Washliyah and al Irsyad. To this end, the MUI became a “formal house” where members of the various organisations could meet and discuss issues of common interest, in particular religious issues faced by the Muslim society. In its adopted role, MUI regularly invites all Muslim organisations to its central office to discuss a wide range of issues, not only religious, such as blasphemy issues, but also the political situation of the country. However, the FSG have never accepted the invitation to join these discussions. According to the

MUI, the FSG has become a splinter group detaching itself from the mainstream Muslims due to its perceived religious peculiarities.

The FSG have an ambiguous relationship with the MUI; despite giving total obedience to the government, the FSG refuse to participate in the MUI, which was created by the government to bring together all groups of Muslims and Islamic organisations. One Salafi informant (interview, 29 January 2016) gave me some reasons why the FSG distance themselves from the MUI: (i) the MUI ustadzs are widely perceived among the Salafis as being too materially oriented, and therefore not sincere in da'wa; (ii) some MUI ustadzs have publicly expressed their disapproval of their Salafis in sermons; (iii) the MUI ustadzs are perceived as being "too soft" towards the splinter groups; (iv), in many cases, the MUI tends to follow the "desire of the masses" rather than firmly upholding the religious texts; and (v) the Salafis have no supporters in the MUI institutions. As a result of all the above, the Salafis have no trust in the MUI as a religious institution. By stereotyping the MUI in this way, the FSG creates further divisions between themselves and mainstream Muslims, sustaining latent tensions.

The outright refusal of the FSG to engage in the MUI programs or activities has disrupted the function of MUI within Pekanbaru Muslim society, even leading to various religious disputes. These have mainly been caused by the attitude of the FSG who do not distinguish between the principle (*aqīda*) and the secondary (*furūiyya*) issues, which in Islam have different religious effects. For example, the false practice of the *furūiyya* rituals has never invalidated the Islamicity of a Muslim, while the false practice of the *aqida* has directly impacted the status of a Muslim in that he or she could no longer be considered a Muslim. Elevating of the *furūiyya* to the level of *aqida* has a profound effect in Muslim society. Such polemics were supposed to be debated within the confines of the MUI level and not for public consumption, but the FSG preachers brought it out into the open creating further divisions within their local community. Therefore, the implementation of the objective of the MUI to be the main actor to maintain unity among the umma has been challenged by the behaviour of the FSG preachers.

As one of the MUI members, Umar has tried to resolve the growing disunity among the Muslim community, which has been caused by two hubs of Muslim activities in Pekanbaru: the RJ Salafi Mosque, and the al Nur Grand Mosque. According to Anas (interview, December 10, 2015), a former MUI chairman, a charismatic ulema, Buya Bachtiar Daud, had already cautioned that the establishment of the RJ Mosque had in fact been to compete for the role of al Nur Grand Mosque. Umar was very aware of this issue and in order to unite the two mosques, he invited Ustadz Abdullah Shaleh al Hadlramy, a Javanese Salafi and disciple of Syeikh Utsaimin for four years in Mecca, to speak at the al Nur Mosque. Following this, Umar asked the RJ Mosque if they would like Ustadz Abdullah Saleh al Hadlramy to give a sermon. In spite of having been taught by one of the most influential Salafi ulemas of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah was rejected by the RJ management, primarily due to his having mingled with various Muslim communities and ulemas, as a result of which he had been transformed into a new Salafi: more inclusive in his thinking and more flexible in his relationships with Muslims of various schools of thought. For example, unlike the FSG, Abdullah clearly stated that the followers of Asharite and Maturidy are among the “saved groups” (*firqa al najiya*). He also stated that various Muslim groups, such as Muhammadiyah, NU, Persis, Hizbu al Tahrir, al Irsyad, Tablighi Jemaa are part of the correct Sunni which follow the steps of *al-salaf al-sālih*. Abdullah’s acceptance of a range of Muslim groups has, according to the FSG, excluded him from Salafism and therefore he no longer has any authority to talk about Islam. This is yet another example of the exclusivity of the FSG, only accepting those ustadzs who fall in line with their understanding.

In addition to the exclusive nature of the FSG, their failure to adopt an appropriate strategy to convey their perceived correct belief to people has caused many rejections from people. Culturally, people’s acceptance of the da’wa mainly relies on two aspects: the essence that must be correct and good, and the method which respects people’s belief as reflected in their tradition. The Salafi’s emphasis on the first aspect (essence) and ignorance of the second one would only result to people rejection. Udin (interview, April 21, 2016), an informant, told me of how a communal conflict

almost broke out when a group of the FSG members used a mosque in his housing complex, despite having been warned several times not to do so. The reason they ignored the warnings was because some of their Salafi followers lived within this housing complex. Udin further recounted that such tension was primarily caused by the intolerance of FSG's followers towards other people's belief and practices. He explained that it is not acceptable culturally if those FSG preachers from outside the housing complex use people's amenities while at the same time accusing them of deviating from the right path. In this case it is not only a religious issue, but this is also related to socio-cultural values on how to show respect to members of the community.

The rigid attitude of the FSG is closely related to its strict adherence to the Hanbali School of law. This literalist school of law is strict (Al-Azmeh 1988) with regard to religious matters. Eclectic behaviour, in the sense that all good things can be accommodated into Islam, regardless of the sources, including from local cultural values, has never been acknowledged by the FSG. In this regards, Idham (interview, November 15, 2015), an anthropologist from the University of Riau, is highly critical of the FSG:

It is true that those Salafis depart from the Quran and Hadith, but they never see the reality of Malay people and do not understand at all how they interact with Islam. They then criticise them on the basis of al Quran and Hadith. The da'wa that these Salafis do disconnected the Malay people from their culture...don't do it instantly as it will not be accepted by people...it is the anthropological key of the da'wa (*Memang inyo batulak dari Quran dan Hadith sudah betul. Tapi inyo ndak pernah melihat kenyataan, macam mano urang Melayu dengan Islam tu, inyo ndak pernah tau dengan topek. Lalu urang Melayu ko dikritik dari sudut Quran dan hadith, jadi ndak bisa nyambuang...jangan sakali tutua, ndak tolok dek urang awak do...jadi pahami kunci antropologis tu*).

The FSG's disrespect towards local culture is also a consequence of the priority it gives to the religious texts, regardless of situation, over *akhlāq* (social norms). As

previously mentioned in Chapter 4, the Kubang conflict was a result of this strict understanding. The FSG's nonconformity stance over culture is very different from the strategy of da'wa adopted by the NU preachers who, in many ways, always seek the less risky path in order to reduce social discontent. In this regard, the NU prefers to adopt a gradual change strategy allowing the people to re-think and reconsider the Islamic da'wa. The NU reason for placing great emphasis on dialogue is their strong belief that the universality of Islam relies on its capability to have dialogue with various localities, believing this will enrich Islamic doctrine itself. The FSG on the other hand, considers this to be a *bid'a*. These differing viewpoints have characterised the relationship between NU and the FSG, making them like water and oil which can never be mixed. The obvious example of this is a dispute over a commemoration of the dead of a family member conducted on the day of seventh, twenty first, fortieth and one hundred after his or her dead. The FSG rejects it for a simply it was no precedent in the Prophet era, while the NU emphasises the socio-cultural aspects of this event regardless of the absence of the strong argument in the religious text.

This polemic on the part of the FSG can also be seen in their relationship with mainstream Muslims. An example of this is a question put to the Prophet concerning hell:

A man came to the Prophet asking the fate of his father in the hereafter. The Prophet replied that his father would be in hell. The man then left the Prophet feeling sad. The Prophet then called him back, saying that my father and your father are in hell (*Min Anas, anna rajulan, qāla yā Rasūlallah: aina abī? Qāla fī al-nār. Falamma qaḥḥa, da'āhu faqāla: inna abī wa abāka fī al-nār*) (narrated by Muslim).

Yunus, a leading MUI ustadz, graduate of al Azhar University in Cairo and a lecturer at the Islamic State University of Pekanbaru, interpreted the meaning of “*abī*” in that hadith as uncle—that the passage in fact referred to the Prophet's uncle, Abu Thalib, who refused to convert to Islam. To support his argument, Yunus cited some narrations from the work of al-Imam al-Suyuthi, Syeikh Abu Bakar al-Jazairy and Murtadla al-Zabidi who explain that it was common practice among the Arabs to use

aby to refer to uncle instead of father. Unlike Yunus, the Salafi preachers such as Khalid Basalamah, Firanda Andirja, Umar and Abu Zaid openly stated that the word *abī* only referred to father. Therefore, they believe that the Prophet's father, Abdullah will enter hell. This interpretation is psychologically unpalatable to most Indonesian Muslims who have great respect for the Prophet's family, including his father and mother. It is interesting to note here the way those FSG preachers refute Yunus's interpretation. On 25 November 2014, one of the FSG preachers, a graduate of the IUM, commented cynically in front of his followers, that Arab people have never used aby when referring to their uncle. "None of the Arabs use *abī* to refer to their uncle. What kind of Arabic is that?" (*Mana ada orang Arab memanggil "abī" kepada pamannya. Bahasa Arab mana itu?*), he commented with laugh. Students who listened to his interpretation then added the comment: "it seems that Egyptian Arabic is very different from the Arabic in Medina" (*ternyata lain ya, Bahasa Arab Mesir dengan Bahasa Arab Madinah*). All the attendees laughed because of this comment. For the FSG, however, the above dialogue shows that they made no reference to Islamic classical books to refute Yunus's interpretation. Instead, they interpreted it literally regardless of the context of the text. Instead of proposing a valid argument, they used Medina, the city of the Prophet, as the source of authority or legitimacy; therefore, the Salafi ustadz who are graduates of the IUM are more authoritative than a graduate of al Azhar University of Cairo.

5.4. Concluding Remarks

The above explanation provides an understanding of the dynamics of Salafism within the local context of Pekanbaru. On the basis of its strategy, political affiliation and religious understanding, Pekanbaru Salafism can be categorised into the purist Salafis or the Salafi da'wa. In spite of its unobtrusive strategy in conducting the da'wa, the Salafis in the sense of the FSG have created two situations as a result of their approach: cooperation with the local government on the one hand, and tensions with some elements of Islamic organisations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Indonesian Ulemas Council (MUI) on the other. Maintaining a close distance and dedicating their obedience to the government allow the FSG to obtain benefits from both sides, expanding the scope of their da'wa and extricating themselves from the

National Police watch, as stated by the two Salafi preachers Abu Zaid and Hasan. It also ensures that other religious groups with whom they have friction are less able to prevail upon the government to side with them in these disputes, which could be highly detrimental to the FSG. Overall, this chapter has discussed the process of the growth of the Salafi group and how they have tried to attain the place among Muslims in order to be able to guide them to the right path, and offer a solution for their existential deprivation.

The dynamics of Pekanbaru Salafism also provides an understanding of how it develops within the Muslim society of Pekanbaru in the terms of how it overcomes the negative image of recent Salafism by becoming essentialists rather than formalists. However, it becomes appealing only in the part of non-religious Muslims who are being existentially deprived, leading them to seek the truth and certainty. Salafism, in this case, offers the solution for those deprived non-religious Muslims. The following chapter will discuss these issues.

CHAPTER 6. THE SALAFI GROUP: FROM DEPRIVED MUSLIMS TO REVERSION TO ISLAM

I have had enough adventures in this mundane journey on earth. I don't need any more. All I need now is to worship God and expect a good life in the hereafter. Yes, I was disappointed with life before, because I was betrayed by others. Now, if I want something, I just ask God, not a human being. I have observed that those who worship God regularly have a pleasant life and face no hardship
—Fauzi (interview, November 11, 2015)

6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the dynamics of Pekanbaru Salafism and how its development has created tensions as well as cooperation. The dynamics experienced by the Salafis allow them to attain a place among Muslims, so that they can ensure their existence and continue the da'wa. Pekanbaru Salafism becomes appealing mainly among those non-religious Muslims who experience an existential deprivation, leading them to revert to Islam in order to find the truth. This chapter will explain how Salafism solves the problem of relative deprivation among those non-religious Muslims. The analysis will start from the process of the reversion of non-religious Muslims in Pekanbaru to Salafism. This return to Islam is considered by many as an initial solution to a feeling of deprivation which often manifests itself as a form of spiritual "emptiness," accompanied by anxiety, depression, and a lack of direction in life. Having allowed Islam to lapse in their lives, they begin to feel deprived and attempt to re-embrace their old belief. This, however, no longer brings them satisfaction, leading many Muslims to revert to Salafism.

Data generated during the fieldwork show that those who join the Salafi groups have previously experienced a sense of relative deprivation which lead to the feeling of existential deprivation. It is this feeling which motivates them to search for the true and pure interpretation of Islam in an attempt to quench their thirst for spiritual understanding and comfort. In many cases, the process of reversion to Salafism is not

linear and is accompanied by doubt, contemplation and, for some informants, opposition from their families. Despite these challenges, the participants felt they had finally been able to stop searching once they had found Salafism. This will be discussed below, arguing that both social and normative factors such as strong solidarity and purity attract people to join the Salafi group. The discussion is based on three case studies of Salafi members, detailing their reversion to Salafism and the personal and sociological reason for their choice to return to Islam after being not religious for a certain period of time in their life.

6.2. Deprived Muslims: In a Quest for Meaning

On 29 November 2015, the Salafi Pekanbaru held a *tabligh akbar* entitled “How to be a Good Citizen,” delivered by a guest speaker, Ustadz Aunur Rafiq Ghufron, a Salafi proponent from Gresik, East Java. The topic is quite relevant for the Salafis as a trans-national movement, as they are suspected of having no loyalty to the state. Thousands attended came from around the city; most of them were, as expected, the Salafis. Such kind of *tabligh akbar* is conducted regularly by the Salafi group, covering various topics and held in different places around Pekanbaru in order to enlarge the scope of their community.

I attended the event and listened to the sermon for a couple of hours. After the speech I went to a favourite place for the young people in Pekanbaru, Café Savanasana, accompanied by Fauzi to meet some new informants who he introduced me to. When I arrived at the café, four young people were waiting for me: Yani, Desi, Yesi and Ida. They were young and well-educated. They were united by the same factor: searching for a solution for their existential deprivation. Yani (interview, November 29, 2015) was in his first step of joining the Salafi group, as he had attended various sermons in the RJ mosque. Telling me about his main reason for “returning” to Islam, he narrated that he has been married for six years but has no children. When he was conducting *umra* (non-compulsory short visit to Mecca), he had been praying near Ka’ba asking for God to give him children. Surprisingly, a couple of months after coming back from doing *umra*, his wife was pregnant and finally, he got children. This experience triggered his interest to return to Islam, which was

neglected for a long period of time. The Salafi was his first acquaintance with an Islamic group.

Another person, Yesi (interview, November 29, 2015) had also attended various sermons, but in a non-Salafi mosque. This young woman graduated from the Political Department of Gadjah Mada University, one of the best universities in Indonesia. She has a critical mind in the sense that no explanation is given unless being critically questioned. She has looked for something in religion that could convince her. Being unsuccessful to quench her thirst, she then started to learn Arabic in order to be able to read religious sources in its primary language. She was a perfectionist, never satisfied with something. She was approximately 35 years old, but had divorced twice because of her perfectionism. She told me that she is thinking “too critically” and there is no room left for something which is taken for granted. In her quest for the truth, Salafism is one among the groups from which she learns about Islam. The two other informants, Ida (interview, November 29, 2015) and Desi (interview, November 29, 2015), share the same situation: they are dissatisfied with life and have been trying to find a solution by returning to religion (Islam). To some extent, they could be regarded as being relatively deprived, and assume religion has a remedy for their deprivation. The interview with these four informants provides a socio-religious background of the middle-age crisis in Pekanbaru and how they tried to find a solution for their main problem: existential or spiritual deprivation. While I do not have a reliable data of the exact number of deprived people in the whole population, my interaction with these informants has to some extent provided preliminary information about middle-aged individuals in Pekanbaru.

According to Fauzi (interview, November 11, 2015), the Salafi group, with all its religious programs, is assumed to be able to provide a solution for those deprived Muslims. This led me to get involved deeper into this group, trying to understand how the process of reversion happens and how Salafism provides a solution for the deprived Muslims. The first interview with Bahri, a Salafi preacher, was very informative (interview, August 18, 2015). Having been contacted via telephone, he asked me to see him at the Raudlatul Jannah (RJ) Mosque after Ashr prayer, around

4pm. It was my first time at that mosque and he and I participated in congregational prayer, after which we met at a pre-arranged corner inside the mosque. He was easily identifiable with a long beard, wearing non-isbal trousers and a shirt. In our talk he explained the milestones of Riau Salafism, and how it is adopted from Saudi Salafism. This first informant can be regarded as key to this research because he was a gateway to other Salafi figures in Pekanbaru; it had a snowball effect that allowed me to become acquainted with some influential figures within the Salafi group.

After this interview, I became more involved in the Salafi community in Pekanbaru, with its several mosques and educational institutions. Among the 30 Salafi activists whom I interacted with and interviewed, I have chosen three informants to represent specific case studies. They represent different professions and types of experience of deprivation. Fauzi suffered from existential deprivation only. Arman, a former drug dealer, suffered from both existential and social relative deprivation. Edi suffered economic and existential relative deprivation. The purpose of these case studies is to show that although the informants suffered from different types of deprivation, they all turned to Islam as a solution to their problems. Indeed, as with many other “lapsed” Muslims, Salafism was their choice from among various Islamic organisations and schools of jurisprudence. The following outlines the cases of Fauzi, Arman and Edi respectively.

6.2.1. Case Study One: Existential Deprivation

Fauzi, a 40-year-old man, has been a civil servant in Pekanbaru since he completed his undergraduate degree in Economics. He witnessed many collusions and conflicts among his staff, making him uncomfortable working in a government bureaucracy. His worldly-orientated life was very strong, and he would easily become angry if he was unable to get what he wanted. He would suffer from migraines if he wanted to buy a new car but could not afford to do so. For many years he chose not to spend weekend with his family in Pekanbaru but rather with his boss, either in Batam or Singapore, both well-known for their glamour and luxurious life style. He felt that he had done and experienced “everything” in life except dying.

Fauzi's first encounters with Salafism occurred when he went for umra, a short, non-compulsory pilgrimage for Muslims, to Mecca in 2007, guided by Ustadz Armen, an influential Salafi figure in Pekanbaru. He shared a room with Armen during their stay there and Fauzi was deeply moved by the simple guidance and teaching of this ustadz. After returning home, he started to follow Armen's sermons in various mosques, but his commitment to Salafism was short-lived and he returned to his previous lifestyle. The turning point for Fauzi was one night in 2014 when he was at home:

I stared at my sleeping son and suddenly began to cry because I realised I had experienced everything in life except dying and did not want my son to follow in my footsteps. The only pious friend I have is Pai. He told me that if I was not capable of providing a good example for my son, my son would not obey me. So, since that time, I began to repent and learn the basics of Islamic teachings from many daurohs (religious workshops) conducted by the Salafis so that I can teach my son religious basics. I don't want him to be a civil servant, because they are morally broken. It would be better for him to be a merchant or farmer (*Aku lihat sikap anakku tidur, nangis aku. Nagisnya tu, aku ini banyak yang aku jalani, jadi mati aja yang belum lagi, hahaha....janganlah sampai anakku ini macam aku. Teman aku yang baik cuman Pai ajo nyo. Dia bilang, kalua kau tak mencontohkan dengan diri kau, payah anak kita menerima. Tobat aku sejak itu sampai kini, aku belajar lagi di daurah supaya nanti bisa membekali anakku. Aku tak mau juga anakku jadi pegawai, biarlah dia jadi petani atau pedagang aja. Rusak pegawai tu*) (interview, November 11, 2015).

Before joining the Salafi group, he discussed the matter with a close friend of his who had graduated from a pesantren (Islamic boarding school), who was able to reassure him as to its credibility. From that time on, Fauzi began attending religious sermons and informal teaching at the RJ mosque, eventually finding what he was looking for. Fauzi then demonstrated his commitment to Salafism by celebrating the

‘*aqīqa*⁷⁷ of his new-born baby at the RJ, the Salafi mosque. The most important impact that joining the Salafi has had on his life is his feeling that he is getting closer to God; he no longer feels anxious because of an unhappy life. He stated that he had become a better husband and father for his family. Also, his trust in God is getting stronger and he believes that God has managed all things for him (interview, Fauzi, November 11, 2015). Fauzi explained what made him aware of the importance of religion as a guide in his life:

I have had enough adventures in this mundane journey on earth. I don't need any more. All I need now is to worship God and expect a good life in the hereafter. Yes, I was disappointed with life before, because I was betrayed by others. Now, if I want something, I just ask God, not a human being. I have observed that those who worship God regularly have a pleasant life and face no hardship (*Udah cukuplah petualangan di dunia ini. Tak ada lagi. Awak ibadah aja lagi. Ada juga kecewa sama dunia ini, ya kan? Sama seperti kawan-kawan, dikhianati. Sekarang kita minta sama Tuhan aja lagi. Minta sama dunia ini, kacau lagi kita nanti...aku lihat, orang yang melakukan ibadah itu, hidupnya lapang-lapang aja, ya kan? Ndak ada kesusahan. Dia mau apa, ya udah, gampang aja. Mulus aja jalannya mencapai sesuatu itu*) (interview, November 11, 2015).

Continuing to compare his way of life before joining the Salafi group and life as a Salafi activist, Fauzi recounted that:

Before joining the Salafi, I was very active earning money, whereas the people in the RJ mosque have a completely different outlook on life. They focus on giving, providing *sedekah* (alms giving). Since I have joined the Salafi, I have felt calm, and no longer worry about life. This change has surprised my wife (*dulu aku krasak-krusuk, orang di RJ ndak di level itu*

⁷⁷*Aqīqa* is an Islamic ritual to welcome, protect and purify a newborn baby. It comprises of various things with depend on the cultures of origin, such as the naming, shaving the baby's hair and rubbing the baby's palate with sweet things, most commonly with honey. However, the only compulsory thing is a sacrifice of sheep (two sheeps for a male baby; and one sheep for a female). The meat is then cooked for the feast by inviting the neighbors and relatives. The *aq īqa* is often conducted on the third, seventh or fortieth day after the baby birth. See, Aubaile-Sallenave, Françoise, “‘Aqīqa’”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, three*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 17 January 2019.

lagi, udah di level sedekah, ndak di level krasak-krusuk mencari lagi...sekarang sejak masuk Salafi, aku jadi tenang, taka da lagi yang nyesak di dada ni. Tak ada lagi krasak-krusuk. Salut istri aku dibuatnya) (interview, November 11, 2015).

At the time of the interview, Fauzi had been an active Salafi in the RJ Mosque for one year, having undergone a major psychological change. He narrated:

I felt the change in my life took place during Ramadhan 2015. I never miss praying and fasting and was consistently encouraged by the ustadz to do good which made me feel good. When Ied al Fitr came⁷⁸, I felt a sense of calm and had no desire to buy new clothes. I had also no desire to compete materially with others, something which had always been important to me in the past (*Rasanya dari Ramadhan dah terasa deh Pak. Dari Ramadhan itu aku gak pernah lagi tinggal salat dan puasa. Sejak itu, aku diajak terus berbuat baik, dan aku dah mulai mearasakan hidup yang lapang. Ketika lebaran datang, aku nyantai-nyantai aja. Aku gak ada lagi ingin beli baju-baju baru, istriku juga...aku tenang-tenang aja. Gak ada kita pengen menyaingi orang lagi, dah hilang tu perasaan*) (interview, November 11, 2015).

Despite the fact that Salafism is relatively new to Pekanbaru, compared to Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and some other Muslim organisations, Fauzi related to this group for several reasons. One reason was that the Salafi preachers only referred to *kitab* (religious books) using simple language which moved him deeply⁷⁹:

The sermons are heart-touching...the way the Salafi preachers deliver them is very interesting with a very simple language, suitable for the layman. If their language was too complicated, it would not be understood by people like me who went to secular schools (*Sampai ke jantung kita ni, apa yang dia sampaikan tu...Cara penyampaiannya itu bagus, runtut. Bahasanya itu*

⁷⁸It is culturally acceptable, even compulsory among Indonesian Muslims to prepare new clothes for the sake of Ied al-Fitr. This tradition has, however, become a social burden for those unable to afford it.

⁷⁹ Method of the teaching is, the Salafi ustadzs read the Arabic text, and then translate it into Indonesian using simple words.

runtut dan enak dimengerti sesuai dengan bahasa awam, bukan bahasa orang yang sudah lama di pesantren atau apa. Kalau bahasanya sulit, aku kan tak ngerti, karena aku tamat SMP dan SMA. Kalau yang tamat pesantren, dialah yang ngerti, awak mana ngerti) (interview, November 11, 2015).

In addition to the simplicity of the language, the politically neutral stance of Salafism also appealed to Fauzi. He explained about one particular preacher, ustadz Abu Zaid:

Ustadz Abu Zaid has an Islamic boarding school. The government wants to offer him aid, but he has turned it down because if he accepts it, he will be part of the government, so no longer able to maintain a neutral position. Abu Zubai believes that there are many other people who will be willing to offer him aid for his pesantren with no strings attached (Ustadz Abu Zaid itu punya pesantren, mau dibantu oleh pemerintah kota, dibangun gedungnya, kan ada gedung yang belum selesai. Tapi ditolak sama ustadz itu. Kenapa? Pemerintah mau memberi bantuan beberapa milyar, tapi akibatnya, ustadz jadi bagian dari penguasa. Makanya, ndak mau dia, ditolaknya. Toh, masih banyak lagi orang yang mau nyumbang) (Fauzi, interview, November 11, 2015).

These interview excerpts highlight some of the reasons why Fauzi reverted to Salafism. He also mentioned that the character of the Salafi preachers were a great contributing factor in attracting people to join the group. He told me that ustadzs were very sincere in their da'wa, and showed great wisdom in dealing with the people who consult them on religious matters.

To summarise, the first reason why Fauzi joined the Salafi group was because he has grown tired of his old life and was looking for some answers. Salafism appealed to him more than other Muslim groups for the reasons explained above. The sense of relative deprivation Fauzi experienced can be similarly observed in the following case study.

6.2.2. Case Study Two: Social and existential Deprivation

Arman is a single 40-year-old man, a television journalist and small shop owner. His work as a journalist opens up networks to many people, including those of dubious character. He frankly confessed that he was not proud of what he did as a journalist. For many years, he never thought about integrity. Though he comes from a religious family, he never prayed, and even admitted to me that he didn't know how to pray. Arman was particularly drawn to the sense of social cohesion (al-ukhuwwah al-Islamiyah) he felt among the congregation at the mosque, the respect and love shown to one's brother, meaning none was left without guidance or help. For Arman, this sense of acceptance had a profound psychological effect. Arman was well aware of the wrong path his life took and he wanted to change it, but didn't know how. One day, he visited his home village in West Sumatra and stayed for many days. His decision to stay in Kampong was spiritually important as the starting point of his return to Islam, as he went to an ustadz asking his advice on how to re-orient his life. The ustadz simply told him to start praying in the mosque and disconnect himself from his "evil" friends. The "hidayah⁸⁰" comes to him. When he returned to Pekanbaru, he started praying at mosques, moving from one to another, from the small musalla to a grand mosque and listened to many preaching but was never satisfied. His first visit to a mosque didn't impress him. He narrated:

my first visit to a mosque made a bad impression on me because I didn't know the procedure. When I entered the mosque, I said 'assalamualaikum' but nobody returned my greeting. They even laughed at me (*Pai hari partamo ka musajik, asing awak rasonyo. Awak alun tau system urang tu. 'assalamualaikum', kecek awak. Galak urang tu.*⁸¹).

His feeling of emptiness was not answered until he had prayed at the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque, which is administered by the Salafi group. He listened with attention to the sermons given there. Only then did he feel calm and thought that his thirst had been quenched. Since he began attending that mosque, he has become actively involved with its many good works, including serving others. Then, one of his

⁸⁰ It means guidance from Allah in Indonesian.

⁸¹ Culturally, Indonesian Muslims do not say "assalamualaikum" when entering the mosque. Arman said it is simply because he did not know about this custom due to his rare visit to the mosque.

friends suggested to him to visit the RJ, the Salafi mosque. Arman recounted his first experience there and his involvement in Salafism:

I visited the mosque alone. Every day, after conducting Maghrib prayer, I sat behind the same pillar, reading a book just to pass the time, because everybody in the mosque was reciting al-Quran. After a couple of days of doing the same thing, some members of the congregation started to pay attention to me and shook my hand. Because of their friendliness, I began to feel at home in the mosque and started learning about Islam. I chose the RJ to learn about Islam for two reasons: the members of the mosque didn't discriminate against a person like me, and they always showed respect to me even though I asked them simple or silly questions [*Pai wak surang Sinan. Awak ado ciek tunggak, satiok sasudah solat Maghrib, duduak wak di balakang tunggak tu, baco-baco buku apo kan. Padahal baco buku ndak masuk gai di awak tu do. Cumo, urang mangaji, kamanga awak lai. Babarapo hari ambo taruih seperti itu, lamo-lamo, urang tu mulai mancaliak, mamparhatikan awak. Mulai awak disalami dek urang tu. Akhirnyo mulai awak akrab dengan musajik tu. Mulai awak ikuik baraja disitu. Setelah tigo bulai, awak la baranti total dari sabu. Awak bisa batahan di RJ tu, sebab urang tu ndak ado mambedakan urang do. Satiok pertanyaan ambo selalu dijawab dengan baik tanpo ado yang melecehkan*] (Arman, interview, November 30, 2015).

Now, Arman is very active in attending the sermons and event in the RJ mosque. He also prays regularly, including *tahajjud*⁸², and proudly showed me the wallpaper on his mobile phone which was a picture of the RJ mosque. The following case study shows a common thread, which is spiritual or existential relative deprivation, running through the stories of the participants in this study.

6.2.3. Case Study Three: Economic and Existential Deprivation

Edi is a 45-year-old man, who was selling ice cream when I met him. Riding his old motorbike, he travels around public schools within the Pekanbaru area, where

⁸² Tahajjud is an optional prayer, conducted between midnight and the dawn.

students are his main customers. He wears Arab *jalabiyya* and has a long beard, which make him easily identified as a Salafi. His first acquaintance with the Salafi ideas started when his father enrolled his younger sister in Pesantren al Furqan, the oldest Salafi pesantren in Pekanbaru. Since then, he was regularly asked by his father to drop a package of food off for his sister. This experience gave him an initial experience with Salafism. His contact with Salafism through his sister ended when he got a job as a fish supplier for a petroleum company in Rumbai, a suburb of Pekanbaru. He was kept very busy and was well paid, but he told me that for him, the money was not a *berkah* (blessing). His father was not happy about him mixing with what he regarded as “vulgar” people in the fish market, and they grew apart. Progressively, Edi felt that his life was meaningless, and he was adopting bad habits such as drinking alcohol. After 13 years, he felt that he did not receive God’s blessing as his sufficient income had not make him happy. He decided to resign from company and started selling ice cream. He said:

I had sufficient money, but I spent it on useless thing. I decided to give up my job and search for the real meaning of life. I started going to places where I could join informal religious learning, including Tabligh Jamaa on Sumatra Street. I just felt that my life was meaningless if I didn’t learn about Islam [*Saya punya banyak uang, tapi uang itu habis tak tentu arah. Ketika saya memutuskan berhenti bekerja, saya mulai ingin hidup, gimana merasakan hidup ini sebenarnya; bagaimana apa yang harus kita cari dalam hidup ini. Kemudian saya mulai mendatangi beberapa tempat untuk mencari kajian agama. Saya datang ke Jalan Sumatra [center of Tablighi Jamaa in Pekanbaru]. Kalau kita gak belajar agama, sesuatu yang kita miliki rasanya hampa saja*] (interview, November 11, 2015).

However, Edi’s involvement with Tabligh Jamaa, a Sunni group on Sumatra Street, Pekanbaru, only lasted a few months. He recounted:

the preaching began after Maghrib (6 pm). I met some of my friends there. I am originally from Pekanbaru. After listening to several preachers, I felt that it was only indoctrination; there was no discussion or dialogue [*Kajian dimulai ba’da maghrib. Saya bertemu teman teman disana, karena saya kan*

anak Pekanbaru asli. Beberapa kali kesana ikut kajian, yang saya rasakan cuma doktrin aja, majelis ilmu gak ada. Kita gak ada tanya jawab disana. Kita hanya doktrin agama saja: Rasul seperti ini, dan sebagainya] (interview, November 11, 2015).

The turning point in his life occurred when his sister gave him some Salafi clothes: above the-ankle trousers, a white and grey ankle-length Arab dress, and a white Islamic head piece. He felt comfortable wearing them, and grew a beard. Psychologically he felt calm, as if he had found something he had been searching for a couple of years. He remembered his past experience with Salafism and decided to become involved further in their activities in order to quench his thirst for inner peace. This led him to visit the RJ Mosque every day after work to spend a couple of hours listening to religious sermons, and followed the Salafi commitment of fasting two days a week, on Monday and Thursday. He narrated:

I have been active in the RJ Mosque for many years. In spite of my economic situation, which is economically unlucky, I have never been insulted or discriminated against by the others. That is why I am so comfortable within the Salafi group. Though I sell ice cream every day, I never feel tired when I arrived at the RJ Mosque. The feeling of tiredness usually comes when I arrive home [*Aku sudah bertahun-tahun aktif sebagai Jemaah di RJ, walaupun kondisiku serba kekurangan, tapi tidak ada tindakan diskriminatif yang membedakan antara kaya dan miskin. Walaupun aku sudah berjualan seharian, namun ketika sampai di masjid RJ, rasa lelahku jadi hilang, dan baru muncul kembali ketika sampai di rumah*] (interview, November 11, 2015).

During his involvement with the Salafi, he realised that many of the rituals he had performed previously when praying were incorrect and the Salafi guided him onto the right path. In addition, he found that the sense of solidarity, ukhuwwah, was very strong among the Salafi members. He received many forms of both material and emotional support from his Salafi peers. For example, the Salafi foundation covers the school fee of his children studying at pesantren and two lumps a year towards

other expenses. He also felt that the friendship in the Salafi group was based on loving God. Finally, he had found his “real home” where he could quench his spiritual thirst.

Edi’s commitment to Salafism is so strong that after travelling from school to school on his motorcycle from 6am until 4pm, he would attend the mosque until 9pm, after which he would travel the 9 km home. He continued getting up at 4am and only going to bed after 11pm for several years, but still felt energised on an average of 4 hours sleep at night. He also mentioned that he never visited his local and closer mosque, once he had found Salafism.

6.3. Deprived Muslims: a Reversion

The above three case studies all have a common thread: an initial lack of spiritual direction in life with its accompanying sense of meaninglessness, dissatisfaction with other Islamic groups due to uncertainty about their purity, and then finding “the truth” in Salafism. Following on from the personal accounts given by participants, this section looks at different types of deprivation.

Glock and Stark (1965) list five types of deprivation: economic, social, organismic, ethical and psychological. Dein and Barlow (1999) adds a sixth: existential. In this study, an existential kind became the most common deprivation, faced by 12 out of 14 Salafi informants, excluding the Salafi preachers. Economic and social deprivations are respectively found in two and one cases, while the three others (organismic, ethical and psychological) are not relevant to the phenomenon of Salafi development in Pekanbaru. Organismic deprivation refers to deficiencies in either physical or mental health; ethical deprivation refers to the sense that society does not offer appreciation to an individual life; and psychological deprivation refers to the lack of psychic rewards felt by an individual, such as love and affection (Stewart 2010). The table below shows domination of the existential deprivation compared to social and economic one.

Table7: Domination of the existential deprivation among the reverts to Islam.

No	Name of informants	Types of deprivation		
		Social	Economic	Existential/spiritual
1	Isrul			√
2	Dedi			√
3	Musa			√
4	Hasan			√
5	Fauzi			√
6	Arman	√		√
7	Edi		√	√
8	Doni			√
9	Wira			√
10	Bilal			√
11	Yani		√	√
12	Joko			√

As a common thread of deprivation, the sense of existential or spiritual deprivation felt by the informants can be categorised into two types: a sense of meaninglessness in life, and dissatisfaction with the existing Islamic groups due to their belief that those Islamic groups are no longer pure and therefore deviate from the truth. For some informants, the two categories above can be experienced simultaneously. The first category, the feeling of emptiness, initially comes when one begins to question what one is doing in life and begins to make change. This can be termed as self-identification acts (Sablonniere, 2008). In the process of change, self-identification is an act to assess one's situation; it is a precursor that is followed by a reaction to get out of the situation. Age is one of the factors that triggers one's awareness. Isrul (interview, December 2, 2015), for example, started to question the meaning of life when approaching 40. For him, turning 40 was a very crucial point in life in the sense that if he was unable to find the answer to the questions he had searched for for years, he would not be able to change his life to a better spiritual condition. As a graduate of a secular university, his background was insufficient for helping him interpret the experiences of his life. He was well-established economically but was poor spiritually. For him, reverting to Salafism has totally changed his view about life: Allah has become central of his identity, represented by his willingness to spend his life in the mosque instead of in the kampong (native village). In a similar way, Anwar (interview, December 2, 2015) also expressed his anxiety about life when becoming 40. Being financially secure did not help him finding a remedy for his emptiness until he listened to a sermon

delivered by Ustadz Abu Zaid, a Salafi preacher, entitled, “Aku Datang Wahai Kekasih (I am coming, oh my Love).” Anwar confessed that it was this sermon that totally changed his life. Along with his Salafi friends, he donated a great amount of his wealth towards establishing al Bayyinah School, a leading Salafi school in Pekanbaru. He also decided to resign from his high position, saying that he no longer needed a salary.

In line with Anwar’s case, Joko (interview, November 27, 2015) and Dedi (interview, November 27, 2015) have searched for a way to “invest” their wealth for the after life. Being economically secure, both Joko and Dedi are aware that human life in this world is short and their chance to enjoy their wealth is also limited. Islam offers an explanation for people about the meaning of wealth, allowing them to enjoy it in this world as well as in the hereafter by using it for da’wa. The expected rewards of the invested funds on da’wa has become an important meaning bestowed by Islam, allowing the owners to enjoy a new opportunity to be involved in da’wa by donating their wealth instead of giving sermons.

Unlike the two informants above, Saleh (interview, November 29, 2015) returned to Islam after his prayer to have children was granted by Allah. The sentiment that God has been present in his life is strongly felt after doing umra, and this led him to get involved more deeply with religious activity, particularly in the RJ mosque where regular teachings are available during the week days. Being closer to Allah, achieving through religious activities helps him understand about his destiny; he believes that it is Allah the Almighty who manages everything, and therefore the return to Islam is a reasonable choice for those who seek the meaningful life.

The second category, dissatisfaction with the existing Islamic groups, is also part of the existential deprivation. This feeling is related to the need to acquire more authoritative version of Islam which so far cannot be fulfilled by the mainstream Islamic groups. Hasan’s (interview, February 15, 2016) experience is worth narrating here. He was recruited as a member of a movement which aims to establish an Islamic state of Indonesia when he had been an undergraduate student. His main task

was to recruit people, and in order to do so, a deep knowledge about Islam was highly required. He was thirsty for religious knowledge but his organisation did not provide it. This had made him anxious. As a member, he was indoctrinated that all Muslims are disbelievers unless they join his group. However, when he was pursuing a master degree in the al Hadith sciences, he started to think differently, but did not know what the right answer was. Hasan recounted:

I was thirsty of learning religious knowledge, but so far, I just learned in the scope of this group only...times elapsed and I started to be confused. What I learned in the group was contradictory to the creed of Ahlussunnah which I had learned previously. One of my friends then suggested me to join the Salafis, because they are able to explain the arguments that I have searched for (*Aku haus dengan kajian, tapi yang ada hanya dalam ruang lingkup NII saja...lama kelamaan saya mulai bingung, karena apa yang saya pahami dalam NII ternyata bertentangan dengan akidah Ahlussunnah yang pernah saya pelajari. Kemudian ada pesan dari teman, coba turut dengan orang Salafi, katanya, karena mereka banyak dalil-dalinya. Siapa tau cocok*) (interview, February 22, 2016).

He then visited Tarmizi, a Salafi preacher, discussing various religious matters that had made him anxious. After a series of discussion with Tarmizi he found the answers that led him to abandon his Muslim group. Salafism now provides him with arguments which, according to him, are “very logical and in line with his thoughts.” In the same way, Bilal (interview, August 26, 2015) returned to the “right path” as a result of his dissatisfaction with the Islam Liberal, which cannot satisfy his religious thirst. According to him, the *Islam Liberal*⁸³ approach places an over-emphasis on reasoning instead of al-Quran and Hadith. This approach did not touch deeply his heart. In addition, the proponents of Islam Liberal are highly influenced by Western thoughts, which in many cases affect their interpretation of the religious texts. This can be seen from the main issues upheld by this group, such as supporting womens’

⁸³ The *Islam Liberal* is a group of young Islamic scholars who promotes, what it claims, the progressive values of Islam, which in many ways, different from those of upheld in the mainstream Muslim groups. It is based in Jakarta and funded by United States donor, the Asia Foundation.

emancipatory movement, freedom of religion and secularism, and allowing interfaith marriage.

In a similar vein, Doni (interview, November 12, 2015) and Wira (interview, October 13, 2015) express their disagreement with existing Islamic organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, emphasising that what Muslims need is only imitating the *al-salaf al-sālih* which were guaranteed by the Prophet Muhammad as the best example in Islam. It is clear that being a member of certain Islamic group did not ensure that an individual will obtain satisfied explanations about Islam, as seen from the case of Hasan and Bilal, and this therefore led them to search for more trusted answers from another Islamic group. The strength of Salafism, in this case, is its capacity to provide reliable and confidential answers, based on the al Quran and Hadith, which could meet the need of some Muslims. In addition to the dissatisfaction of the existing Islamic organisations, the perceived truth of Salafism is also an important factor which leads many people to revert to the Salafi group. Syukur (interview, December 2, 2015), Jafar (interview, December 2, 2015) and Habib (interview, September 15, 2015) resigned from their secular university due to their perception that secular sciences they had been learning was not recommended religiously, and therefore will not be useful for them in the hereafter. This awareness arose after attending the pengajian in which Buya Jufri explained the outstanding position of Arabic and religious knowledge compared to the secular one. Following this, they decided to learn Arabic and religious knowledge at the pesantren instead of secular sciences at university. Currently, they are teachers of religious subjects at the Salafi schools. Salafism, in this case, has re-oriented their life and led them to prioritise the Salafi teachings over other matters, including secular sciences taught at university.

In a slightly different narrative, Razaq and Musa (interview, December 2, 2015) have found healing for their thirst of religious knowledge by joining Salafism without resigning from the university in which they studied secular sciences: mathematics and chemistry. Although both Razaq and Musa were actively engaged in Lembaga

Dakwah Kampus (LDK)⁸⁴, they were not satisfied with what they obtained. Musa narrated his journey before deciding to join Salafism:

I was active in LDK and became the leader of LDK University of Riau. Some of my friends joined Tabligh Jamaa and Darul Arqom. In the meantime, I joined Buya Jufri to learn some religious knowledge. Buya Jufri didn't tell me about those activism (i.e. Tabligh Jamaa and Darul Arqom). I also read the works of Sayyid Qutb, Muhamamd Qutb, al Maududi and Ali Syariati. I still keep all their books until now (*Saya aktif di Lembaga Dakwah Kampus, dan saya pernah memimpin LDK Universitas Riau... Kawan-kawan saya ada yang masuk ke Tabligh Jamaa dan Darul Arqom. Sementara dengan Buya Jufri, saya hanya mengaji kitab. Beliau tidak menyampaikan bagaimana harakah-harakah itu, sehingga saya membaca buku-buku harokah itu sampai habis semuanya Saya membaca buku-buku pergerakan karya Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Qutb, al Maududi, termasuk Ali Syariati, sampai sekarang masih saya simpan. Majalahnya adalah Sabili*) (interview, December 2, 2015).

However, finally Musa decided to get involved more in Salafism due to the perceived purity it holds. In order to be able to take double courses at the university and pesantren, both Musa and Razaq decided to live in a pesantren dormitory which allowed them to learn and interact with Buya Jufri intensively. By doing this, they were able to complete both their academic degree at the university and religious training in pesantren.

Similar to Musa, while doing his master degree in Colorado, United States, Razaq became thirstier for religious knowledge. He regularly listened to the sermon given by Nashiruddin al Albani, a leading Salafi ulemas in Saudi Arabia. For this purpose, he saved his monthly stipend to pay the internet connection, allowing him to listen to Albani's preaching frequently. Currently, he is a university lecturer. However, the experience living and learning in the Salafi pesantren have kept both Musa and Razaq active in the Salafi da'wa. Razaq and Musa are presently Head of Department

⁸⁴It is a campus mosque body, which is responsible for the training and mentoring programme of Islamic events and knowledge. Further information about it, see Latif (2008).

of Education and Chairman of the Ubudiyya Salafi Foundation respectively. The cases above show that the informants have reverted to Salafism after being deprived for a certain period of time. In the process of reversion, Salafism functions as a referent group for the reverts to which the purity and an ideal standard of Islam is attributed.

Regarding the referent group, Runciman (1965) explains that there are three types of referent: group, individual or an abstract idea. In the process of reversion as shown in the case studies above, these three types of referent group can be found in Salafism by the reverts, represented respectively by the Salafi community (as referent group), the Salafi preachers (individual referent) and the Salafi doctrines (idea/abstract referent). The new reverts compared their own communities in which they are living with the Salafi group, their religious commitment and piety with the piety of the Salafi preachers, and their beliefs and understanding with the beliefs taught and upheld by the Salafis. In this process, those new reverts found their lives lacking compared to the perceived ideal of Salafism. These three types of referent groups are interlinked, with the individual referents (Salafi preachers) playing the most important role in encouraging the reversion process on the part of the reverts. The following table shows informants' perception toward the ideal condition of the Salafi group, Salafi preachers and Salafi teachings, which lead them to revert to Salafism.

Table 8: Perception of the informants toward the referent groups

No	Salafi community as a group referent	Salafi Preachers as an individual referent	Salafi doctrine as an abstract/idea referent
1	strong solidarity	sincere	simple
2	gives culture	wise	pure
3	Sincerity of friendship due to love of Allah	Non-political	Based on al-Quran and Hadith, therefore authoritative
4		Respect the layman	
5		Expert in Islamic sciences	

Reversion is a slow process in which some potential reverts have to resolve matters relating to their relative deprivation. Data generated from the informants identified that choosing Salafism as a resolution for their crises was mainly based on two reasons: searching for a new sense of self and having had previous experience with Salafism. Arman and Fauzi represent the former, where Arman had first listened to sermons in other mosques but found they did not address his needs, while the strong sense of community in the RJ mosque appealed to him. In addition, the large numbers of people attending prayers impressed him, particularly at the Dawn prayer. It should be pointed out that in Indonesia most Muslims are still in bed at the time of the Dawn Prayer, whereas thousands congregate in the RJ mosque regularly for this event.

In spite of his sinful past, Arman felt accepted at the RJ Mosque, and proudly told me that a couple of months after regularly attending the mosque, he was asked by the Salafi Foundation to join the Qurban committee⁸⁵ and the Salafi team to disseminate aid for the needy in the countryside. For him, his previous alienation was replaced by a strong sense of community and religious experience. The Salafi preachers and the Salafi community were the two crucial referent groups which satisfied his needs. Arman (interview, November 30, 2015) sums up his perception on the Salafi group:

I came in and out numerous mosques in Pekanbaru, but none of them had a strong ukhuwwah as I had found in RJ mosque. As a layman, my question about Islam was always answered politely (*aku sudah keluar masuk berbagai masjid, namun tidak ada yang ukhuwwahnya islamiyahnya melebihi di RJ; sebagai orang yang sangat awam tentang agama, pertanyaanku selalu mereka jawab dengan penuh kesungguhan tanpa adanya tindakan melecehkan*).

Fauzi also found that his existential deprivation was resolved by Salafism, which he found was a simple and straightforward way to understand Islam on the basis of al Quran and Sunnah. He was touched deeply, and attributed this to the sincerity of the

⁸⁵*Qurban* is animals (cow, buffalo, camel, goat, sheep, and lamb) that are slaughtered during the days of Eid al Aldha, as an act of worship to Allah. The *qurban* meat is distributed to poor Muslims.

preachers, whom he felt spoke from the heart, and the simplicity of their teachings. He recounted:

I started to be more selective to listen to the preachers; I don't want to listen sermons other than those conveyed by the Salafi preachers (*aku sekarang dah mulai pilih-pilih ustadz, ni. Tak mau lagi aku dengar sembarangan dari berbagai ustadz*).

He explained further:

I found peace and sincerity in the Salafi group. They develop the culture of giving rather than receiving (*Aku menemukan kedamaian dan ketulusan dalam Salafi; iklim yang dikembangkan adalah untuk memberi, bukan menerima*) (interview, January 15, 2016).

In a similar vein to Arman and Fauzi, Edi felt that he had become aware of the false practice of prayer he had conducted for many years, which the Salafi claimed was not in line with the teachings of the Prophet. He stated that Salafism had taught him the correct way to worship God.

Table 9: Mental state of the informants and comparison with referent groups.

Informants	Mental state of the informants	State of the referent group within the Salafi group.		
		Individual	Idea	Group
Fauzi	Consumed material pleasure. Feelings of anxiety. Being a bad Muslim.	Sincerity of Salafi preacher	Purity of Salafi and authority of its teaching.	Salafi culture rising above material culture.
Arman	Never prayed. Involved in deviant activities. Felt anxious and alienated	The sense of calm and sincerity of Salafi followers.	The simplicity of Salafi teaching.	The high attendance at Salafi mosques. Sincerity of friendship among the Salafi.
Edi	Relationship with	The Salafis	The purity and	Strong sense

	his father not warm. Felt not blessed by God. Lack of meaning in life.	only consume halal. The wisdom and sincerity of the Salafi preacher.	authority of Salafi teaching.	of solidarity (ukhuwwah). The Salafis helping each other in God's name.
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Table 9 shows that the informants experienced existential and social relative deprivation before they felt their needs were met when they reverted to Salafism. The comparison they made with the referent groups, the individual Salafi, the doctrine of Salafism and the Salafi community can be viewed as the initial identification they experienced prior to seeing their problem resolved.

Among the three referents, the Salafi preachers as the individual referents play an important role, because they function as a type of window through which the new-comer can see inside Salafism. Fauzi was strongly influenced by the humble life of Ustadz Armen, the Salafi preacher, who taught him that Islam is quite simple. Similarly, Edi and Arman were impressed both by the extensive knowledge and humble life of Ustadz Bukhari. Salafism as taught by these ustadzs is considered simple, pure and therefore authoritative. The Salafi preacher interpretation of Islam is then implemented by Salafi laymen. The reference to the Salafi ustadz then creates homogeneity within the group. It is clear that the Salafi ustadzs has played a significant role in attracting people to join the Salafi group.

From the above accounts given by informants concerning their reversion, Salafism appears to offer some positive advantages, such as relief from anxiety, creating social solidarity, and satisfying their cognitive needs through the explanations given by the Salafi preachers. When describing the process of reversion, all informants use the word *hijra*. The underlying reason which motivates them to do *hijra* is God's *hidaya*. Proponents of Salafism describe the condition before reversion as being one of *jahiliyya*. *Jahiliyya* is a situation where an individual is deprived of religious experience. The process of moving from being unguided to guided is called *hijra*. The new convert Salafi is called *muallaf*. Table 10 below explains the relationship of these four sequences, *jahiliyya—hidaya—hijra—muallaf*.

Table 10: Sequences of reversion to Salafism and its equivalent condition according to relative deprivation theory.

Jahiliyya	Hidaya	Hijra	Muallaf
<p>Existential deprivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-practicing Muslim • Practicing but still doing <i>bid'a</i> • Practicing rituals but do not understand the dalil/argument 	<p>Assessment/act of identification then finding a solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being conscious of one's Muslim's identity • Being aware of positive advantages of Islam 	<p>Turning point: From <i>bid'a</i> to Sunna</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving from an unconscious state of one's Muslim identity to a fully conscious one. 	<p>New-born Muslim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the dalil • Imitate the Prophet in all aspects of life

6.4. Relative Deprivation and the Return to Islam

It is commonly believed among those who support socio-economics deprivation theory that people's reversion or return to religion is as a result of feeling material deprivation (Wimberley 1984; Durkheim 1951; Weber 1946). Their hypothesis is that people are subjected to one or more types of deprivation, such as socio-economic deprivation, and will strive to find solutions for their thwarted social and material desire (Glock 1964; Runciman 1965; Stark 2010; Wimberley 1984). On the basis of the deprivation theory, religion is perceived as being capable of alleviating people suffering through providing explanations that refresh their understanding of life and its meaning. In other words, it can be said that religion serves as

“compensators” (Stark and Bainbridge 1980). Some other scholars, such as Berger (1969), Davidson (1977) and Stark and Bainbridge (1980) also consider that the socio-economic deprivation proposition leads those who are economically unlucky to religiosity. The capacity of religions to provide profound meaning of life can be used by the materially deprived people as a justifiable excuse to solve their problem. Stark (2010), for example, cites observations of the underlying reasons that drive people to join Pentecostal group in Latin America: poverty, illiteracy and health problem. However, Stark (2010) explains that the reversion of disprivileged people to Pentecostal religious groups in Latin America were not caused by material deprivation as such, but also influenced by social ties and spiritual satisfactions. The absence of the rich in those groups is only because they do not appeal to the rich. Spiritual satisfaction should be highlighted here as the most important goal pursued by people in religions, therefore, deprivation theory should not be confined to material aspects only, but extended to include religious or spiritual deprivation (Stark 1984), as the case of Salafi group in Pekanbaru.

The gist of spiritual or religious deprivation theory is that people will seek supernatural solutions to overcome their “thwarted existential and moral desires” (Stark 2010). This hypothesis is relevant to explain the underlying reason of the process of reversion in Riau Salafism, in which most of its members are financially secure but religiously unhappy. Instead of pursuing material reward from their reversion, they seek the spiritual happiness provided by Salafism. How they reach that happiness is through learning religious teachings and maximising the use of their wealth for religious purpose, such as helping the needy and constructing religious building. In general, there are various reasons why people tend to return to religion at the time of deprivation. Geertz (1973), for example, states that religion is a universal element of human cultures due to its ability to satisfy human spiritual needs; it is also considered to be the most powerful force in human society influencing human relationship with each other (McGuire 2002). The return to Islam, in this case, is a reasonable act due to its potential to solve the problem of deprivation.

The way religion offers meaning about life is by providing an explanation about “situations and events in terms of some broader frame of reference” (McGuire 2002). The Salafis believe that Allah has already managed everything in the world, and therefore complaining about poverty is understood as complaining about Allah’s will, which is not allowed in Islam. A total surrender to Allah’s will is regarded as the highest level of sincerity for a Muslims. Adopting such kind of interpretation could avoid resentment towards the rich, and inculcate a deep consciousness to the rich people that all their properties belong to God, and should be used differently in legitimate ways. After resigning from his well-paid job, Edi sells ice cream using his old motorcycle. Despite the sharp decline of his economic condition, he genuinely accepted it and even felt happier and more satisfied. To give another example, Fauzi did not feel too sad when one of his family members died due to his awareness that it is only a matter of time; all people will return to God as they belong to Him. Explanations about the different destinies of people provided by religion that linking this to God’s will can offer a conservative perspective that makes people psychologically calm and gives them a more meaningful approach to life. The role of religion in providing meanings for people is significant as the meaning itself “is not inherent in a situation, but is bestowed” (Berger 1967). As a result, it is commonly found that similar phenomenon is understood in different ways depending on the strength of one’s attachment to a religion. For example, a tragedy faced by an amnesic/deprived Muslim could be understood as a burden in his or her life, while a committed Muslim may have a different outlook by perceiving it as God’s will to elevate him or her to a higher degree. The teaching that Allah will not let a Muslim upgrade his religiosity without giving him or her comprehensive and continuous trial in his or her life is clearly mentioned in al Quran. In this sense, a total submission to God’s will has led people to understand his life challenges in a positive way: to upgrade this religious level, which eventually could affect his or her socio-economic conditions.

In addition to the previous explanation that religion serves as “a compensator” to those who suffer from existential deprivation, Hervieu-Leger (2000) looks from another point of view and argues that traditionally, religious symbolism is part of the

collective memory of society. She not only claims that religious memory is part of everyday language, and inherent in their thought, but also that there is a structural connection between memory and religion. In light of this, I argue that in Riau-Malay society the basis of Malay ethnic identity is intrinsically linked with their relationship with Islam, which is deeply rooted in their cultural memory.

Prior to Islam coming to the Malay region the basic loyalty of Malay people was *raja* (king) (Polkinghorne 1995), which had a profound root in their Indian-influenced past (Milner 1981). *Kerajaan*, the Malay word for state or government, literally means “the condition of having raja” (Milner 1981, p. 49). During this time, the nature of Malay relationship was vertical: the king on one side and the common people (*rakyat*) on the other. According to Nagata (1984), the gradual conversion of Malay loyalty and identity, from a political bond to a more ethnic tie, can be traced from 19th century sources such as the *Tuhfat al Nafis* (The Precious Gift)⁸⁶ and *Hikayat Abdullah*. This gradual fusion is a result of a prolonged interaction between Islam and various elements of Malay culture from the 16th century to the 20th century, resulting finally to the fusion of Islam with Malay culture (Nagata 1984). Similar to Nagata, some scholars including Suwardi (2007), Ambary (2007), Sinar (2007) and Luthfi et.al (1977) highlight the close relationship of the Malay Kingdom with Islam. Following this fusion, the Malay loyalty is not only given to the *raja* (Polkinghorne 1995), but also to the ulemas, Islamic scholars. Since this time, Malay and Islam have been inseparable. Any outsider who reverted to Islam was automatically considered a Malay; entering Islam is equal to becoming Malay (Nagata 1984; Suparlan 2007). The arrival of European colonialist and Chinese-tin seekers to the Malay regions strengthened this fusion. This is due to the fact that the power that colonised the Malay land and left a traumatic experience among the Malay also spread Christianity. The wave of Chinese-tin seekers migration to Malay land also soon became the rivals for Malay. The perceived challenge and threat brought by the Western power and rivalry with Chinese-tin seekers then led to an

⁸⁶ This book, written by Raja Ali Haji (1808—1870) is his greatest work, and considered by many scholars as the most important Malay historical work, in which, Raja Ali Haji recorded the history of Malay Kingdom and its relationship with Bugis (an ethnic group, which is originally from Sulawesi) and colonial power (Riddell 2001).

opposing Malay political and cultural consolidation. The emergence of strict dichotomy in which Malay identified themselves as Muslims/believers and the European as infidels/unbelievers is as a result of this period.

As the core of Malay identity, Islam not only re-orient people's lives in the sense that Islam guides them in this world and in the hereafter, but also provides people with the scripts⁸⁷, which are well-known as the Arab-Melayu scripts, along with the absorption of a vast new vocabulary from Arabic to enrich Malay language. This contribution had strengthened the fusion between Islam and Malay culture, as those scripts and new vocabularies are "essentials precondition to the development of an effective theological and educational tradition and the foundation of an *ulama-guru* class" (Nagata 1984, p. 8). The introduction of the script, according to Anwar (2007), has enabled the Malay to develop Malay literatures, philosophy and religious knowledge. Rushdiyah Club in Pulau Penyengat was the example of these intellectual activities as a corollary of the introduction of the script. It was found that most Malay sources, particularly written in the 19th and 20th century were written in Arab-Melayu scripts with Malay language, which is highly influenced by Arabic. Various expressions of Malay language for daily conversation, philosophy, court, rituals and trades are derived from Arabic. Moreover, there are two privileged social classes within Malay society due to their attribution to the Prophet Muhammad and Arab. The first is sayyid, who is considered as the Prophet descents, and the second is wan, or the mixture between Arab and Malay (Amir, interview, December 18, 2015).

There are three traditional-orientating values in Malay culture: Islam, customs (*adat*) and tradition (*resam*) (Hamidy 2015). The first provides a blueprint for the vertical relationship with God; the second provides guidance for social relationships among people; and the last provides guidance for people in their relationship with nature. Among these three guidances, Islam is the most influential element in Malay culture which shapes Malay life (Rab 2007). Even the most syncretic aspect of Malay life,

⁸⁷ Malay script use Arabic alphabets, which is known as *Arab Melayu or Jawi* alphabets. All Malay manuscripts written during the era of Islamic kingdoms in Malay region were found in Arab Melayu alphabet, but in Malay language.

shamanism, is mainly influenced by the *tariqa* (sufi order) (Idham, interview, November 15, 2015). Moreover, explaining how Islam has deeply blended in Malay culture, Idham narrated:

As Malay people, if we found some pages of al Quran were being scattered on the floor, we will burn it and eat it. This is to show our respect and obedience to God, though we know that it is not a proper conduct. Our preachers know well how Islam has blended in our culture...it can obviously be seen from the Malay mind (*urang Melayu awak tu, kalua ado Quran baserak, dibakar dek murid mangaji dan dimakan. Baitu inginnyo urang tu tunduak kek Tuhan, walaupun caronyo ndak botual. Para ulama mengetahui bagaimana kualitas Islam dalam kehidupan orang Melayu. Itu yang parolu tau. Itu dari antropologisnyo. Bagaimana Islam dilarutkan dalam budaya Melayu? Itu nampak dalam alam pikiran Melayu*).

Summarising his view, Idham stated that:

System of values of Malay people, which is found in adat and resam is Islam. Adat is placed under the control of Islam, therefore it is said that adat is based on Islam. Resam, which is part of adat, should follow the adat...so don't create any new resam which is not in line with our religion (*system nilai urang Melayu kan agama Islam, adatnyo, tradisinyo. Dek adat tunduk kek agamo, mako adat basandi syarak. Tradisipun harus mengikuti adat yang basandi syarak...jadi jangan buek tradisi yang baru lagi yang justru mangacau agamo awak sendiri*) (interview, November 15, 2015).

Practically, Islam is the only religion recognised by Malay people and therefore a native Malay who converted to another religion, such as Christianity or Buddhism, would no longer be considered Malay (Ahimsa 2007; Hamidy 2015). Malay customs and traditions are also obviously influenced by Islamic teachings and values. This can be seen, for instance, from the traditional views of Malay people that life should be humble and avoid greediness; an individual Malay should keep the balance between the inner-worldly and out-worldly space, as reflected in an old Malay sayings: “*apabila hidup hendak selamat, dunia dicari akhirat diingat*” (those who

want to be saved, they should always remember the hereafter while working for their world) and “*apabila hidup hendak sejahtera, ilmu dan iman sama setara*” (those who seek for a prosperous life, should balance their knowledge and faith). They should also keep a strong commitment to avoid any sexual acts outside marriage, gambling and alcoholic drinks. The popular example of literary resources containing these three orientating values (Islam, customs and tradition) is the work of Raja Ali Haji, *Gurindam Dua Belas*, in which he explains the philosophy of life of Malay people. Finally, the best description of the fusion of Islam and Malay culture is reflected in the Malay principle “*adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah*” (Malay customs is based on Islamic Sharia, and Sharia is based on al Quran) (Hamidy and Dairi 1993). This statement highlights the close relationship between Malay culture and Islam, illustrating how Islam constitutes the core values of Malay people. Given this, the fact that many of them return to Islam is sociologically understandable. Islam, within this culture, still plays an important role as a key orientating-value for people in their personal and social life.

However, as Islam is diverse, which Islam do those Malays refer to? There are at least two major currents exist: the purifying and traditional. The division between purifying current and Muslims that affiliate with tradition in Indonesia has existed for a long time. In Sumatera, it can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century when the Paderi War broke in West Sumatera. This war pitched those who affiliated with the purifying current, well-known as the Paderi, against those Muslims who affiliated with the customary law (*hukum adat*) (Radjab 1954). One century later, in the beginning of the 20th century, the division still existed with a different name but the same trend: between Kaum Tua (those who affiliated with *adat*, or customary law) and Kaum Muda (those who affiliated with the reform movement in Saudi Arabia (Abdullah 1971). Two centuries after its first emergence, the tension between the two trends still exists today. The Salafi group in Pekanbaru, on the basis of its leading preacher, is a continuation of the Paderi spirit in purifying Islamic beliefs and practices. The prolonged tension between the two groups is not only related to sociological and historical background, but also a religious one in which each group competes for authority in the here and hereafter

6.5. Concluding Remarks

This chapter contends that those who return to Islam have suffered from a sense of relative deprivation, particularly existential deprivation. Being relatively deprived leads those non-religious Muslims to seek the truth which, in the cases presented above, is influenced significantly by the Salafi community, preachers and doctrines. In the light of the Islamic revivalism phenomena the feeling of relative deprivation is presumed to be closely related to negative impact of modernity. In the case of Pekanbaru, this can be seen in feelings of lacking meaning and being disoriented in life, or being involved in religious prohibited deeds. Moreover, dissatisfaction with the existing Islamic groups due to their perception that these kinds of Islam are not pure and less authoritative led some of the informants to leave and join Salafism, which is perceived as being more authoritative and genuine. The case studies presented show that the return of those non-religious Muslims to Islam suggests that they obtain positive advantages for their spiritual and cognitive needs provided by Islam, i.e. Salafism. Finally, it can be said that Salafism, as the representation of the Islamic revivalism phenomenon in Pekanbaru, plays an important role in providing a solution for the middle aged Muslims who experience existential relative deprivation.

Many people in Pekanbaru think of Islam as the solution to their problems because it has structural connection with their social memory. This structural connection can be seen in their daily language, social structure and socio-cultural values. For example, *adat*, *tradisi* and *resam* of Malay people have deeply blended with Islamic teachings. In this respect, the return to Islam is a logical choice. As Islam is not a unified entity but scattered into various sects and schools of jurisprudence, it is also interesting to examine why people choose Salafism instead of other Islamic sects or organisations. After joining the Salafi group, it is also important to understand how the Salafis “revive” the past to allow them to live as closely as possible to the examples practiced by the Prophet. This topic will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7. THE SALAFI GROUP: MEMORY AND COMMUNITY

Let's make our religion an old religion. We don't need to reform it. We should trace it back to the Prophet era, 1400 years ago. We don't need an innovative one as everything was clearly explained and taught by the Prophet. There is nothing left that was not explained by the Prophet. Whatever we need to understand today, the Prophet undoubtedly explained it earlier. Islam has been perfect since the Prophet era
—Umar (recorded sermon)

7.1. Introduction

As previously explained in Chapter 6, the structural connection between memory and religion has led my Muslims participants to return to Islam as a solution for their existential deprivation. However, Islam is not a unified entity which joins all Muslims together with a common understanding and practice. Theologically, Muslims in Indonesia are divided into three main *aqidas* (Islamic creed)⁸⁸ and four schools of jurisprudence⁸⁹. Sociologically, there are a number of Islamic organisations spread throughout the country. This means that there are multiple choices of Islam for Muslims, among which is Salafism. The importance of Salafism is that it provides an understanding through which the informants could solve their feeling of relative deprivation by offering “purer” and “more authoritative” Islamic beliefs and practices. The Salafi community functions as a social frame through which memory about the past is maintained.

This chapter presents an analysis of the underlying reasons why deprived Muslims choose Salafism and, having done so, how the new reverts become part of the Salafi group. This community of memory is bounded mainly by religious interpretations and feelings, socially constructed by the Salafi preachers through their teachings from the pulpit. In common with other religions, the pulpit is an institution in Islamic

⁸⁸These are: Ashariyya, Ahl Hadith, and Maturidiyya

⁸⁹ These are: Shafii, Hanbali, Maliki and Hanafi.

society which relies largely on oral media. Word of mouth, in this case, is the most significant factor in re-modelling and reconstructing the understanding of Salafism. Some features of the Salafi group and how they construct their identity are discussed below, emphasising that recollection is the most effective way of reconstructing identity. In the process of recollection, the preachers play the most important role as they are capable of identifying the pure teachings from the *bid'a* one.

Among the Salafi adherents with whom I interacted, I have chosen two informants as the case study of this chapter, representing the Salafi preacher and member respectively. The first case illuminates how the Salafi preachers influence the Salafi members and the second case illustrates how religious behaviour of the Salafi members is greatly influenced and shaped by the preachers. In this relationship, according to the theory of memory, this preacher could be considered the figure of memory, functioning as the main actor who reconstructs the memory of the followers. The purpose of these case studies is to show the role of Salafi preachers in reconstructing the Salafi community in which all Salafi members interact and share the same value, interpretations and understanding about what they perceived the true Islam to be. The following outlines the case of Umar and Doni.

7.2. Two Case Studies

7.2.1. Case Study One: 'Let's Make Our Religion an Old Religion'

Umar is a 40-year-old man. After graduating from Pesantren al Furqan, Pekanbaru, he continued his studies at the IUM where he obtained his degree in Islamic studies. Upon completing his degree, he soon returned to Pekanbaru and since then he has started the Salafi da'wa. Umar became involved in various activities of Salafi da'wa, among which are teaching in various Salafi pesantren, giving sermons in various places, including a regular weekly sermon in the RJ Mosque, practicing *ruqya* and visiting the countryside to distribute the Salafi aid for the needy people. When visiting the countryside, he always travels in a convoy with a group of Salafi members, frequently riding motorcycles, followed by a car which brings their materials for aid. In this convoy, Umar can be considered as the central figure to

whom all convoy participants consult the on-going issues encountered during that trip of da'wa.

The centrality of Umar's role can, in fact, be found in every event conducted by the Salafis. In the RJ Mosque, Umar gives a regular sermon on *aqīda* based on the book written by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Ushūl al-Thalāthah*⁹⁰. This book is the main reference of the Salafis in the field of *aqīda*. Illuminating the influence of Umar's sermons on the Salafis, an informant (Toni, interviewed, December 2, 2015) considered him among the first class of Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru, along with Ustadz Bukhari and Ustadz Abu Zaid. He belongs to this category due to a large number of attendees coming to his sermons, particularly in the RJ Mosque. His sermon, according to Doni (interview, December 1, 2015) is highly anticipated and greatly influences Salafi members; indeed, many frequently refer to his opinions in order to explain various Islamic matters. Illuminating the centrality of his figure, I observed during the fieldwork that after the morning sermon every Saturday, Umar always takes a seat in the mosque canteen to have a chat with the Salafi members who sit down around him.

In addition to the da'wa in the RJ Mosque, along with Ustadz Abu Zaid, Umar also regularly gives sermons in an event held by the Local Police Office of Pekanbaru. This has expressed his close relationship with some police constables, allowing him to expand the scope of his da'wa. As one of the central figures of the Salafi da'wa in Pekanbaru, Umar always calls for Muslims to return to the al Quran and Sunnah unconditionally. In one of his sermons, he stated:

Let's make our religion an old religion. We don't need to reform it. We should trace it back to the Prophet era, 1400 years ago. We don't need an innovative one as everything was clearly explained and taught by the Prophet. There is nothing left that was not explained by the Prophet. Whatever we need to understand today, the Prophet undoubtedly explained

⁹⁰The book contains three principles of Muslim faith related to the belief to Allah, the belief to the Prophet and some principles issues related to Islamic beliefs. Due to the significance of *al-Ushul al-Thalathah* (*The Three Principles*), some Saudi Arabian scholars, such as Shaikh al Utsaimin, Syaikh Ibn Baz and Shaikh Shalih al-Bahri, wrote its commentary, and along with the original book, these commentary books are used widely by the Salafis around the world.

it earlier. Islam has been perfect since the Prophet era (*mari kita kunokan agama kita, bukan kita perbarui. Kita tarik ke alam yang kuno, zaman Rasul...1400 tahun yang lalu. Kita tidak butuh hal-hal yang baru, karena semuanya telah dijelaskan oleh Nabi Muhammad. Seandainya kita membutuhkannya saat ini, tentulah telah diterangkan oleh Nabi Muhammad pada masa dulu. Tidak ada yang tersisa yang belum diterangkan oleh Nabi. Jadi, Islam itu sudah sempurna. Kalau itu Islam, pasti sudah diajarkan oleh Rasul*).

According to Umar, Muslims have no obligation in their religious life except imitating (*ittibā'*) the Prophet and *al-salaf al-sālih*. Those who refuse to imitate are considered *bid'a*. Umar clearly explained in the RJ Mosque that Tabligh Jamaa has strayed from the right path because their da'wa does not adopt the Prophet's teachings. To sum up, Islam, according to Umar, is already "fixed" and thus leaves no room for innovation. This fixed Islam, represented by Salafism, is therefore deserving to be chosen by those Muslims who seek the purity of Islamic beliefs and practices.

7.2.2. Case StudyTwo: 'We Want to Copy-Paste the Life of the Prophet'

Doni is approximately 38 years old. He is an electrician who works at the Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN)⁹¹, Pekanbaru Branch. He is economically secure but aware of his lack of religious knowledge. For this reason, he joined the Salafi group. He has been active in the Salafi activities for three years, during which time he has attended prayers and regular sermons in the RJ Mosque. Like other Salafis, he always wears an Arab dress for praying in the RJ mosque with a small bag containing a notebook and pens to write down the sermon of the preacher. It is also interesting to note that during the Dawn Prayer, along with other Salafis, he always brings a medium size thermos containing hot tea or coffee, so that they could enjoy the morning session zealously. He also keeps his sparse beard growing as according to him letting it grow long is part of the implementation of the Prophet's Sunnah, whatever it looks

⁹¹PLN is an Indonesian Government-owned company in electricity.

like⁹². For Doni shaving the beard is totally unacceptable. This indicates his strict attachment to the Prophet's Sunnah. Illustrating how his beliefs about his beard could shape his religious behaviour, he told me that his strong rejection of Ustadz Yunus, the MUI member, is because the latter shaves his beard. According to Doni, by shaving his beard, Yunus has obviously undermined the Prophet's Sunnah. In this case, he does not take into consideration another opinion which maintains that keeping the beard is an optional matter instead of compulsory.

In a talk with him after the Dawn Prayer, he told me that his favourite preacher is Umar. To him, compared to the MUI preachers Umar is more authoritative due to his knowledge and strict commitment to implement the Sunnah. Doni also compared Salafism with some Islamic organisations in Pekanbaru, including Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, which he thinks have strayed from the right path. He further narrated that, unlike Salafism which obviously is rooted in the Prophet's era, and its prominent figures were guaranteed of entering heaven by the Prophet Muhammad, the Muhammadiyah and NU have no historical background in Islamic history; therefore Muslims should not join them. He told that all Muslims should be a Salafi instead of Nahdliyyi⁹³ or member of other Islamic organisations. To summarise, by joining the Salafi group, wearing Arab dress and maintaining the beard, Doni has made his best effort to keep his life as close as he can to the exemplary life of the Prophet and *al-salaf al-sālih*. Imitation, according to Doni, is the best way to share the memory of the past during the Prophet's era. The perfectness of Islam and imitating the Prophet are the two key words found in the case studies which illuminate the mode of belief of the Salafi preachers and members. Along with other qualities, Salafism then becomes the "final" choice for some Muslims.

⁹² Some non-Salafi Muslims, like Ustadz Yunus, take into their consideration the beauty aspect of that beard: if it grows properly and thickly, they will keep it, but if it grows sparsely, they prefer to shave it despite their belief that maintaining the beard is the Prophet Sunnah. However, the Salafis maintain their beard regardless of its appearance.

⁹³ Means member of Nahdlatul Ulama.

7.3. Salafism: the “Final” Choice

It is interesting that among the numerous Islamic organisations and groups in Pekanbaru, Salafi is one of the fastest growing, with more than 30 educational institutions scattered around the city, and thousands of students coming from Pekanbaru and neighbourhood districts. This does not include those who learn about Islam from informal religious gatherings, such as pengajian and *tabligh akbar* in the Salafi mosques. There are various reasons why people are attracted to Salafism. According to Abdurrahman (interview, November 13, 2015), part of its appeal lies in its commitment to conducting regular religious teaching sessions for the public at the Raudlatul Jannah (RJ) Mosque, center of Salafism in Pekanbaru. In non-Salafi mosques, such teachings tend to be spasmodic. In the RJ mosque, various topics on the subject of Islam are explained according to, as they claim, the interpretation of *al-salaf al-sālih*. Some of the standard books used during the teachings are Fatḥ al Bāry (book of hadith), Ushūl al Thalātha (book of *tauḥīd*), Riyādl al-Shālihīn (book of hadith) and Tafsir al Sa’dy (Quranic interpretation). The preachers recite particular pages of the books in Arabic and then translate into Indonesian language and explain its meanings. The attendees write these explanations down on their notes. The preachings are closed by questions and answers sessions. Regularity of the sessions and the used of the original books in Arabic created positive image among the Salafi followers. It can therefore be said that in terms of the teachings of Salafism, its consistently high-standard attracts people who want to gain a deeper understanding of the pure teachings of Islam.

Since most of the Salafi ustadzs graduated from the Islamic University of Medina (IUM) in Saudi Arabia (11 were graduates of IUM, and 5 were graduates of LIPIA⁹⁴, Jakarta), their claim to authority in Islam and the purity of their teaching is generally accepted. This is because to many people these two cities, Mecca and Medina, are still highly symbolic of the purity and authority of Islam. Based on the interviews and talks with numerous Salafi informants, such as Arman (interview, November 30,

⁹⁴*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia dan Arab* (Institute for Islamic and Arab Science), the branch of the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh which was established in 1980 in Jakarta, aims at training Arabic language teachers and specialists in Islamic sharia. For the profile of the university, see <http://www.lipia.org/>. see also Jahroni (2013); Hasan (2006).

2015), Saleh (interview, November 29, 2015) and Fauzi (interview, November 11, 2015), their preference for the Mecca and Medina graduates over Egyptian or Malaysian university graduates were obviously expressed. This attraction is commonly recognised in the Salafi movement around the world, with the Two Holy Sanctuaries being among the main reason why people join the Salafi in France (Aladroui 2009). These iconic landmarks in Saudi Arabia (the preacher country) were described by Aladroui (2009) as “where Muslims practice Islam in its purest purity.” In addition to the Saudi factor, the Imams who lead the congregational prayers in Salafi mosques recite extremely uplifting Quranic verses, which touch the hearts of the congregation. Eka (interview, November 30, 2015), spoke very highly of the Imams he had heard at the RJ Mosque, praising their clear and beautiful voices that made him love the prayer. A special feature of the RJ Mosque is that, unlike non Salafi mosques, they have a regular Imam who is well-versed in recitation and religious knowledge, instead of every member of the congregation having an opportunity to lead the prayer, regardless of his religious understanding or communication skills. Given the above, it can be seen why people join in Salafi activities at the RJ as a gateway to go deeper into Salafism.

In addition to the Salafi teachings, Salafism carries none of the historical burden of the prolonged sociological and religious dispute over various matters, which occurred between the two mainstream trends: modernist, which is represented by the Muhammadiyah movement, and the traditionalist, which is represented by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) (Doni, interview, December 1, 2015). However, the fanatical members tend to be from an older generation. This is one reason why during the fieldwork I observed that the attendees in Salafi mosques and religious events, such as *tabligh akbar*, are predominantly middle aged. This trend can be viewed, according to Hirschman (cited in Aladroui 2009), as an “exit strategy⁹⁵,” developed by Muslims approaching middle age to extricate themselves from the religious fragmentation, brought about by strict attachment to particular Islamic organisations.

⁹⁵ This expression, borrowed from Albert Hirschman, was used by Aladroui (2009) to describe the reason for young French Muslims choosing Salafism: their unwillingness or inability to adjust to French society. In the case of Pekanbaru, Salafi was perceived as ‘the exit’ from prolonged conflict of Islamic organisations as a result of their different strategies and schools of jurisprudences.

These typically well-educated Muslims are looking for something to replace the religious fragmentation. Due to the perceived burden-free nature of movement, Salafism becomes an asylum for those who want to experience the undisputed Islam, as practiced during the era of *al-salaf al-sālih*.

While there are no reliable demographic statistics regarding the number of Salafi followers in Pekanbaru and particularly the number of the new members, based on my observation during the fieldwork in various Salafi mosques which largely included the RJ, hundreds of members attend regularly. The number significantly increases during particular prayers, such as Friday prayer and Eid prayer. Another fact worth mentioning here is that most of the congregation consists of middle-class and middle-aged Muslims. Saiful (interview, February 12, 2016), the chief of IKMI (the Union of Indonesia Muballigh), Pekanbaru branch, stated that unlike the NU followers the Pekanbaru Salafis come mostly from economically secure families. This is illustrated by the fact that the vast parking area in the RJ mosque is unable to accommodate the cars driven by its Salafi members. This fact can also be seen from the socio-economic background of the Salafi students. Fuad (interview, November 29, 2015), a principal of a Salafi school, stated that the majority of his students come from middle-class families, as the fees are high. Due to parents being comfortably off financially, these educated Salafi members are able to afford the school fees. Instead of spending it on religiously useless things, such as keeping up with the latest fashion, the Salafi preachers encourage them to donate that money for the sake of da'wa, such as donating to the mosque, financially supporting Salafi preachers to spread the "truth," and to safeguard their own place in the afterlife.

It was for the above reasons that Dedi (interview, November 27, 2015) and Joko (interview, November 27, 2015) joined the Salafi, with the latter becoming leader of the al Nadwa Islamic Foundation (NIF). Both men expressed their relative lack of religious understanding and relief at being able to use their other skills, such as business acumen. When recounting why he first joined the Salafi, Joko stated:

I have found a pure [religious] source...the ustadz provide sufficient space for us to take part in da'wa according to our capabilities [*Saya ketemu pada*

sumber yang jernih...ustadz memberikan ruang yang cukup kepada kita; apa yang kita miliki untuk berperan serta di dalam dakwah...berkolaborasi. Yang unggul di bidangnya, dicarikan kanalnya sehingga semua merasa potensi yang dimiliki bisa dikontribusikan...ustadz memberikan ruang untuk saling bahu-membahu] (interview, November 27, 2015).

The preachers (ustadz) have their allocated calling to spread the religious teachings of the Salafi, whereas someone like Joko has both the business skills and the money to lead an organisation. In addition, due to his outstanding management skills, he was the obvious choice as Principal of the NIF, centered at the RJ Mosque. Similarly, Dedi (interview, November 27, 2015) recounted that he was drawn to the Salafi group due to the collaborative management system used by the Salafi leaders in Pekanbaru. In this system, all stakeholders are expected to contribute on the basis of their skills or capability (Yunus, interview, August 26, 2015). In the case of Agus, this lay in his ability to provide infrastructure for da'wa so that the ustadz could preach to the congregation in the knowledge that the provision of relevant technology, such as a speaker system, would be professionally handled.

Unlike Dedi and Joko, who joined the Salafi due to the opportunity it gave them to contribute towards da'wa, Isrul recounted his first interest in the group:

I had been searching for answers everywhere, but to no avail. Finally, I found them in Salafism. After becoming a Salafi, I knew that all Islamic rituals should be based on valid arguments. Salafism provides me with those [Saya mencari kemana-mana, namun tidak menemukannya. Akhirnya saya temukan dalam Salafi...makin dalam makin dalam. Saya jadi tahu bahwa semua yang dilakukan harus ada dalilnya...insha Allah saya temukan jawabannya disini] (interview, December 2, 2015).

In Salafism, conducting religious rituals such as praying in the correct manner are only considered legitimate if based on al Quran and Sunna, with an understanding of why they are done, thus offering a feeling of certainty—there is only black and

white, and grey areas, commonly referred to as *shubhat*, do not exist. Bukhari (interview, August 27, 2015), a senior ustadz and an adviser to the NIF, confirmed this; if an individual Muslim faces two uncertainties in religious matters, he or she should follow the one which has the stronger argument. However, as commonly happens, the stronger one is by no way referred to the Salafi interpretations due to its attribution to the *al-salaf al-sālih*. Furthermore, Islam, to the Salafis, is simple: to do everything as practiced by the Prophet. Therefore the Salafi argument for rejecting religious festivals, such as the commemoration of the Prophet's birth, is simply that it was not practiced by the Prophet, his companions or the *al-salaf al-sālih*. If it was not practiced by the Prophet and his Companions, it is out of the Salafi memory.

As previously discussed, the quality of the Salafi preachers also attracts people, partly because of their perceived neutrality. One informant (Interview with Fauzi, November 11, 2015) recounted how Ustadz Abu Zaid had been offered a large amount of money by the Riau government to support his school but turned it down for various reasons, the most important of which was his fear of losing independence. The Salafis believe that this neutrality can be maintained because of one reason: sincerity, for the sake of Allah. Many Salafis express their appreciation of the Salafi ustadz as they have dedicated their whole life to *da'wa*, regardless of the obstacles they encounter. *Da'wa* for Fajri (interview, November 27, 2015), a Salafi preacher, is a way of life, chosen sincerely as a devotion to Allah without expecting any material reward. He narrated further that he obtained a scholarship from the Saudi Government to study at the IUM where he spent 4 years. The Saudi government had already paid for his Islamic instruction, and he felt that the Islamic knowledge he had obtained should be used to improve the quality of the Muslim community, not for selfish gain. In Islam, sincerity is the most important attribute, and if an ustadz is considered to be a sincere Salafi preacher, he will be highly respected as a spiritual leader.

Along with their obvious sincerity, Salafi ustadzs are held up by their followers as being both tolerant and wise. For the ordinary Salafis, the expression of preachers' wisdom can be seen from their attitude of ignoring criticism and attending an

invitation for a debate from non-Salafi ulemas, including that of the Indonesian Ulemas Council. The reluctance of the Salafi preachers was confirmed by Abdurrahman (interview, January 25, 2016), the chief of Fatwa Commission in the MUI, who told me that several invitation letters from the MUI to those Salafi preachers to discuss the recent issues within society had received no reply. Similarly, Saiful (interview, December 2, 2015), the chief of IKMI also expressed his disappointment to the rejection of the Salafis to attend a religious discussion held by the IKMI office. This has led to an image among non-Salafi ustadzs that the Salafi preachers are stubborn and intolerant. However, the Salafi members tend to ignore such images due to their preference and strong loyalty to Salafism.

All of the above have been contributing factors in attracting the new convert to the Salafi group, where the members of the collective group interact with each other, developing a social framework for memory to recall the teachings and behaviour of the Prophet in the past. Recollection is, in this case, the process of bridging the time and practice of the past with the contemporary Salafi life, hence the present-Salafi life becomes legitimate. Those who break the chain between the past and present are considered absent (Irwin-Zarecka 2008) or amnesic (Hervieu-Leger 2000) and therefore recollection is required to bring them back to the “true” Islam.

7.4. Salafism: Absence and Recollection

As the word suggests, absence is when an individual is not there. This can be used in the physical, mental or emotional sense. In the case of the Salafis, if a person is absent, he is regarded as not being part of the entity of Islam. An individual's absence can be their failure to present themselves in an Islamic manner. Of primary importance to the Salafis is the emphasis they place on recollection or religious memory; the absence of this indicates that the individual has forgotten about the true Islam. An individual is considered un-islamic or absent by the Salafis if they take part in false rituals, such as conducting a commemoration of the Prophet's birth and doing *tawassul* (intercession), and believing in incorrect *aqida* (creed).

Aqida is the basic tenet of Islam, a fact which the Salafis continuously emphasise in their regular sermons. Haykel (2009) points out that theological views of the Salafi focus on six points: the return to the authentic belief and practice of the first three generations of Muslims (*al-salaf al-sālih*); emphasis on particular understanding of aqida, namely the Oneness of Lordship (*tauḥīd al-rubūbiyya*), the Oneness of Godship (*tauḥīd al-ulūhiyya*) and the Oneness of Names and Attributes (*tauḥīd al-asmā' wa al-sifāt*); fighting unbelief, particularly those who have committed *shirk* (polytheism); al Quran and Sunna are the only valid sources of religious authority; purification of Islam from *bid'a*; and the perception that al Quran and Sunna contain specific answers to guide all Muslims anywhere in their life, regardless of time and place. Due to the significance of pure aqida, Umar, a leading Salafi preacher in Pekanbaru, stated that if someone's aqida is false he or she would not be able to think properly (recorded sermon, January 30, 2016). He further indicated that things that can invalidate aqida include believing in and asking for anything from any other person, God or object other than Allah, such as believing that a stone, a grave or a tree has hidden power. Muslims have to purify their creed from this situation. The issue of the purity of aqida is particularly significant in Indonesia where many Muslims have a syncretic faith, or, as seen by the Salafi, their belief has been contaminated by foreign elements coming from outside. The purity of aqida, according to the Salafi, is not only related to having the correct understanding but also the right implementation.

Unlike other Sunni groups, which recognise the aqida of Ahl al-Hadith, al Maturidiyya⁹⁶ and al Ash'ariyya, the Salafis only recognise the aqida of Ahl al Hadith and consider the other two deviant in that they are not rooted in the teachings from the al Quran and al Hadith (Jawwas 2004). Since the vast majority of Indonesian Muslims belong to al Ash'ariyya, the Salafis accordingly consider that most Indonesian Muslims are absent or amnesic from the true Islam. In December

⁹⁶ Al Maturidiyya is a theological school, named after its founder Abu Manshur al Maturidy (d. 944 CE). It is one of the recognised orthodox Sunni kalam schools, along with Ahl al Athr/Ahl al Hadith (Hanbalis) and al Ash'ariyya. Al Maturidiyya is closely associated with the legal school of thought, Abu Hanifa. Al Maturidiyya is dominant in Turkey and Central Asia, and among the outstanding members of this school were al Nasafi (d. 1310 CE) and Ibn al Human (d. 1457 CE). See Madelung, W., "Māturīdiyya", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, edited by: P. Beeka, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

2015, as a requirement for the use of the al Nur Mosque, the chief management of the mosque requested the Salafi preachers to sign a contract in which they will no longer accuse non-Salafi Muslims as being deviant from the right path. The Salafis refused to do so. Within this socio-religious context, the Salafis encourage and commit to living Prophet-like lives through recalling the life of the Prophet and the lives of his companions and their followers. The substance of recollection is to imitate the Prophet in every aspect of life, including the conducting of ritual, appearance and physical exercise. In Doni's words:

I want to copy-paste the life of the Prophet and *al-salaf al-sālih*, from their personal life such as the way they eat and drink, the way they interact with their family to all aspects of their life (*aku ingin copy-paste kehidupan Rasul dan para al-salaf al-sālih, mulai dari makan dan minum, kehidupan di rumah dan seluruhnya*) (interview, November 12, 2015).

In a similar vein, Wira stated:

do what was practiced by the Prophet, and leave everything that was not taught and practiced by him (*lakukan apa yang pernah dilakukan oleh Nabi dan tinggalkan apa yang tidak pernah diajarkan dan dikerjakan oleh Beliau*) (interview, October 13, 2015).

In this way, circumstances of the Prophet's lifetime can be 'presented' today

7.4.1. Recollecting the Rituals

The process of recollection is generally conducted in several ways, the most important of which includes rituals and remembering religious events connected to the life of the Prophet and his companions. Regarding the former, religious ritual is very important in the process of recollection because it contains religious memory, which has been condensed and preserved, thereby enabling an individual Muslim to find a chain which connects him or her to the past. This returning to the past is crucial for the Salafi followers as it is the source and basis of religious memory.

There are various rituals in Islam which are understood and practiced differently by various Islamic schools of jurisprudence. This disagreement among Muslims about

how to correctly conduct rituals is seen by the Salafis as primarily caused by the fact that most ritual traditions practiced by Muslims are, in fact, invalid, or to use the Salafi word, *bid'a*. The Salafis believe that if all Muslims only referred to al Quran and Sunna, such differences would not have emerged. Following on from this, Salafi rituals in Pekanbaru are claimed to be in accordance with the Salafi interpretation. For example, the Kelompok Bimbingan Ibadah Haji al Ubudiyah (Travel Agency for Hajj and Umra al Ubudiyah), which belongs to the Pekanbaru Salafi group, tries to persuade those who intend to participate in the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) to join the Salafi travel company, assuring them that only the Salafi guidance is in line with Sunna. Recollection, in this case, is maintained by keeping a strong commitment to uphold the purity of rituals and reject all kind of *bid'a*.

KELOMPOK BIMBINGAN IBADAH HAJI
KBIH AL-UBUDIYAH
 ALAMAT : MASJID UMAR BIN KHATTAB. JL. DELIMA XII KEL. DELIMA KEC. TAMPAN-PEKANBARU
 No izin Kementrian Agama 141/2013

Menerima Pendaftaran
Haji Reguler
Pembayaran Porsi Awal Rp. 25.000.000,-
 Sudah Mendapat No Porsi dari KEMENAG

Melaksanakan Manasik
Sesuai Dengan
Sunnah Rasulullah

Contact Person :
 Nedriyanto : 0813 7126 0121
 Syahrul Hasan : 0812 7600 1680
 Faizal : 0852 6559 8844

Porsi Pelunasan :
Pemberitahuan DEPAG

Dibimbing Oleh :
JST. TAMATAN TIMUR TENGAH DAN YANG TELAH BERPENGALAMAN.

Figure 3. Pilgrimage Travel Agency, owned by the Ubudiyya Foundation, selling their main brand: performing the hajj in accordance to the Sunnah Rasulullah, and guided by experienced guides.

As part of the Salafi commitment to reject the *bid'a*, compulsory prayer in Salafi mosques is not followed by *doa bersama*⁹⁷ as it is in other mosques led by the Imam. Husein (interview, August 26, 2015), a leading Salafi preacher in Pekanbaru, argued that *doa bersama* was not done during the life of the Prophet and so has no precedent. The Salafi interpretation only allows praying which is conducted individually.

⁹⁷Prayer (invocation), which is recited after the main prayer, led by the *imam*, while the *ma'mum* (followers) only say 'amen' together, confirming that they are in agreement with the *imam* asking God for something.

Therefore, it is commonly seen in Salafi mosques that the congregation breaks up after conducting the main prayer, some of them conducting optional prayer (*shalat al nafilah*) or reciting al Quran. It is also interesting to note that the Salafis show different external ways of conducting the praying (*doa*). They raise their hands slightly above the head, instead of only to the level of the chest as other Muslims do. During that praying, they also look up to the sky or the roof of the mosque. After the praying, unlike mainstream Muslims, they do not run their hands down their face. According to the informant (Edi, interview, November 11, 2015), such practice is *bid'a* and therefore should be abandoned. It is clear from the above that in their commitment to imitate the Prophet's life, the Salafis are very strict and reject everything that was not practiced by Him, considered it *bid'a*, and therefore such practices cannot be recalled as they are outside the lineage of belief.

A further ritual which the Salafis reject, along with *doa bersama*, which is recited after the main prayer, is *qunut*⁹⁸, which non-Salafi Indonesian Muslims recite during the main prayer. This has distanced Salafis worldwide from their fellow Muslims, and in the context of Indonesia has also led to a rift between the Salafi and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). One way in which this religious divide can be seen is in the refusal on the Salafis to invite MUI ustadzs, such as Yunus, to preach. Reason given for this are that Yunus allows congregations to conduct *qunut* and *doa bersama* after *shalat* (main prayer), *tawassul*, shaving of beards, and being an active member in the sufi order (Yunus, interview, August 15, 2015). To the Salafis, none of these rituals were practiced by the Prophet, and therefore do not make up part of the Salafi memory. One informant, Said (interview, October 13, 2015), criticised these prevalent and invalid practices, describing those who practiced them as being "foolhardy" to deviate from the path given by the Prophet. The Salafis leave no room for negotiation or discussion on these matters. The Salafi rejection of any ritual which was not practiced by the Prophet himself continues to create a major divide between them and other Muslims.

⁹⁸ The supplication type of prayer, recited in the second *rak'ah* of the Dawn Prayer, or at the last *rak'ah* of *salat al witr*.

In regards to the above, Ilyas (interview, January 12, 2016), graduate of the IUM, pointed out that this disagreement between the Salafi and the mainstream Indonesian Muslims was caused by the fact that the former do not recognise the ulemas' classification of Muslim rituals into two: *ibada mahdla* (those which are explicitly mentioned in the al Quran or Hadith, and the Prophet clearly explained how to conduct it) and *ghair al mahdla* (rituals which are open to interpretation). The Salafis hold that since the Prophet clearly explained how to conduct *ibada* (rituals), so these rituals are solely based on observance or obedience to Allah. Examples of these are *salat*, Ramadhan fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, *zakat* (alms giving) and *wudlu* (taking water ablution before praying). It is agreed among all Muslims that there is no room for innovation in these rituals; they were fixed by the Prophet and applicable for all time and place. According to mainstream Muslims, the concept of *bid'a* or illegal religious innovation can only be applied in this area. However, in the case of *ibada ghair al mahdla*, the rituals were not established yet by the Prophet. The principle behind these rituals is the benefit they provide for Muslims. Thus, as long as they are beneficial and do not harm others, they are permissible. Examples of these rituals are doing *da'wa*, *zikr* and *doa* (including congregational *zikr* and *doa* after main prayer). However, because the Salafis only acknowledge *ibāda al-mahḍa* and reject *ibāda ghair al-mahḍa*, the non-Salafi tradition to conduct *ibāda ghair al-mahḍa* is continuously accused of being *bid'a*. The Salafis believe that the only Islamic teaching, including ritual that is pure and uncontaminated is that thought and practiced by the Salafis.

As the main element of recollection is maintaining the purity of rituals, these are non-negotiable as part of the Salafi commitment to uphold Prophet-like lives. Inevitably, this has affected the way they interact with other Muslims. Abdurrahman (interview, November 13, 2015), head of the fatwa commission in the MUI Riau, was invited by the management of Ittihad Mosque in Rumbai to deliver Ied al Fitr sermon (become a khatib) in which most of the congregations were Salafis, although the mosque did not belong to them. As commonly understood and practiced by the vast majority of Indonesian Muslims, Abdurrahman delivered the sermon in two parts. This was unfortunate as the Salafis believe that the sermon should be given all

at once. After the prayer and sermon, the congregation usually shake hands with the Imam and khatib, but on this particular occasion it was only the hand of the Salafi Imam which was shaken, with all members of the congregation refusing to even speak to Umar. He finally realised that he was considered to have committed *bid'a* by dividing the sermons into two parts, and therefore should be avoided (*hijr*). This is a clear example of how seriously the Salafi take their commitment to maintain the purity of rituals. Deliberately shunning anyone, let alone Abdurrahman, a preacher who holds a PhD degree, is totally alien to the Indonesian culture of courtesy and respect.

Another differentiating factor between the Salafi and other Muslim groups which I discover, is the time lapse between al adzan and al iqoma (the first, call to announce that prayer time has come, and the second, announcing that prayer is about to begin). In non-Salafi mosques, this is five to ten minutes, but the Salafis allow thirty minutes in order to accommodate members of their congregation who travel from further field. It is a Salafi requirement that to ensure the purity, their ritual should take place in a Salafi mosque, regardless of the distance. So, it is commonly found that the Salafi congregations in the RJ mosque, for example, have to travel many kilometres. The how, the where, the when and the why of conducting rituals are not the only identifying factors of the Salafis. The 'remembering' of Islamic events also plays an important role in the process of recollection. These events are considered significant because they contain Islamic beliefs and teachings.

7.4.2. Remembering the Religious Events

According to Sakaranaho (2011), religious events, which generally relate to the founder of each particular religion, can be historical or mythical. The former are found in the historic religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and the latter in the "primal religions." However, mythical events are also found in the historic religions such as Islam due to the use of invalid reference by its adherents. Concerning Islam, as with other religions such as Christianity and Buddhism, Islam pays great attention to the seminal phase of its emergence and development, centering around where the Prophet, his companions and followers of his companions (*tabiin*) lived. During this

formative period, Muslim traditions produced hagiography containing various charismatic figures, ranging from the Prophet, as the founder of Islam, to the third generation after his demise, namely *al-salaf al-sālih*. According to the Salafis, the hagiography of the *al-salaf al-sālih* contains a correct interpretation of Islam, and therefore functions as the core of Islam. In line with the core status of *al-salaf al-sālih* among the Salafi, Ghufron, a Salafi preacher (recorded sermon, November 15, 2015) explained that there are only three sources of knowledge: *qāl al Allāh* (word of God), *qāl al rasūl* (words of the Prophet) and *qāl al shahāba* (words of the Prophet's companions). Although these three sources of knowledge are those used by all Muslim groups, the Salafi interpret them literally, along with adopting only what was practiced by the Prophet and ignoring what he never practiced. It can therefore be seen that one of the most distinctive differences between the Salafis and other Muslim groups is the emphasis that the former place on imitating, through recollection, the words and practices of the Prophet.

One of the simplest but most common ways to recollect the time of the Prophet and *al-salaf al-sālih* is through re-telling the exemplary stories about the charismatic figures of this era. *Sīra al-nabawiya* (Prophet's biography) and stories about the Prophet's companions are regularly taught to Salafi students and audiences, both formally and informally. The most influential preacher on this subject in the Pekanbaru Salafi community Pekanbaru is Ustadz Abu Zaid, headmaster of Pesantren Ibn al Kathier. As Fauzi (interview, November 11, 2015) narrated, this charismatic ustadz has a way of telling stories that touch his audiences deeply, as if they had been brought back to the Prophet's era. Doni (interview, November 12, 2015) agreed, stating that listening to the Salafi ustadzs' sermon touched the "deepest part of his soul," as if all his body had been covered in "cool water"⁹⁹. The aim of re-telling or recollecting for the audiences is to learn about and experience the *al-salaf al-sālih* era, and feel its presence in their hearts and in their everyday lives, connecting them with the Prophet.

⁹⁹Bear in mind that Indonesia is a tropical country due to its position in the middle of equator line.

It is not only the way the exemplary stories are told by the Salafi which differentiate them from other groups, but also the manner in which they refer to institutions. For example, the non-Salafi pesantren use names such as Pesantren Darussalam (literally meaning abode of peace), Pesantren Bahrul Ulum (ocean of knowledge), Pesantren al Hikmah (wisdom) and Pesantren Babussalam (gate of peace). The popular names for the Salafi educational institutions, however, are named after the Prophet's companions, classical Islamic scholars or something closely related to Sunna. Some examples of Salafi schools in Pekanbaru include Pesantren Umar Ibn al Khattab, Pesantren Ibn al Kathier, Pesantren Umm Sulaym, Pesantren al Furqan, Pesantren Imam al Nawawi, SD IT Imam al Shafii and Pesantren Ta'zhim al Sunnah. This repeated reference to the Prophet's companions and classical scholars is commonly found in the Salafi community throughout the world. Koning (2012) mentions some of the Salafi institutions in the Netherlands: the Fourqaan Mosque, the Soennah Mosque and the Tawheed Mosque. Similar naming can be found in Salafi institutions in France (Aladraoui 2009) and the United Kingdom (Hamid 2009). The importance attached to names of the past and Sunna is an example of the Salafi effort to maintain the chain of memory from the past to present.

The next way in which the Salafis revive the past is in the area of sport, encouraging only those practiced and recommended by the Prophet: horse riding, swimming and archery. The Islamic boarding school for boys, Ibn al Kathier in Pekanbaru, owns six horses for the use of students and staff, who receive regular training after school hours in the large field provided. In other Salafi schools they also have a large swimming pool and gymnasium. Although other sports, such as football and badminton are also provided, the clear emphasis at school is on the sports practiced by the Prophet.

The process of recollection can also be conducted through the way the Salafis dress. Unlike most Indonesian Muslims who wear a sarung, koko shirt and black kopiah to perform congregational prayers in the mosque, the Salafi prefer to wear gamis (Arab dress) and a white hat, referred to by Indonesian Muslims as kopiah haji, to the mosque. Musa (interview, December 2, 2015), a Salafi preacher, told me one reason

for this, namely ‘kami hanya mau ittiba Rasul (we only want to imitate the Prophet). Trousers are allowed as long as they are above the ankle (non-isbal), as according to the Salafis understanding wearing isbal¹⁰⁰ trousers could lead someone to hell because his ritual prayers will not be accepted by God.

Another way in which the Salafis revive the past is through establishing a village in which all residents are expected to implement the Salafi teachings in every aspect of their life. In cooperation with a Salafi fund provider from Jakarta, Ustadz Abu Zaid (interview, December 1, 2015) was able to purchase 40 hectares of land near his pesantren in Rumbai, Pekanbaru, where he plans to build 2000 houses along with a mosque, a school, a hospital and a market. Something that distinguishes this complex from non-Salafi is that its residents are expected to learn Arabic and then use it in their daily conversation, since this was the language spoken by the Prophet and his companions. In addition, signposts will be named after the members of *al-salaf al-sālih*, further creating a sense of the past in everyday life. Although this residential complex is still at the planning stage, all the houses have already been sold, mainly to Salafi members in Pekanbaru. This complex can be seen as an enclave, functioning as a social frame to commemorate the past.

The next way in which the Salafis recollect the past is through making a clear distinction between Sunna and non-Sunna in regard to both physical appearance and religious practice. Only the former (Sunna, embraced by the Salafis) is considered true. Confirming their attachment to Sunna, they classify Muslim practice and appearance into two, *nyunna* and *not nyunna*, only the former being in line with Sunna. *Syar'i* is another well-known word to specify the appearance of Muslims that has been in line with Sunna. For example of these, the Salafi classify the *jilbab* (headscarf) into two: *jilbab syar'i* and non-*syar'i*. The difference between the two is that the former is longer, nearly covering the whole body of the user, whereas the latter is shorter, only reaching the shoulder or chests of women. The Salafis argue that non-*syar'i* jilbab is not sufficient to cover female *aurat* as part of her body can easily be observed by others. The same argument is applied for the female-Salafi

¹⁰⁰Isbal means wearing the trousers which hang below the ankle with the lowest part touching the floor.

preference to wear loose-*gamis* as it covers the whole body of women. The use of these kinds of garments among the Salafi is to differentiate their appearance from the prevalent costumes among female Muslims which emphasise the style rather than its functions to cover the aurat.

Placing an emphasis on style over the function, many female Muslims, for instance, prefer to wear *gamis* to cover their aurat, but skin-tight on the body. To Salafi, such kind of *gamis* does not meet the Sharia qualification for covering the aurat. Having classified the Muslims into two, the Salafi considered that those who already *nyunna* as part of “us,” as opposed to others. Relating to this category, a Salafi informant criticised a musician, Duta from Sheila on Seven Group for his involvement in Tablighi Jamaa, one of the Sunni groups, saying “*bukan kito, inyo JT* [Jamaa Tabligh]” (He is not “us, because he belongs to the Tablighi Jamaa”). The classification of the garments into Sunna and non-sunna is an effort to ensure that the Salafis are still in line with the *al-salaf al-sālih*, and therefore this classification can be perceived as the way to recollect as well as practice the past in the daily life as well as to establish a ‘boundary’ between us and others.

For the purpose of maintaining and ensuring the purity of the process of recollection, the Salafis show deference only to Salafi ulemas and Salafi ustadz. Arifin (interview, January 12, 2016), a member of MUI Riau who graduated from the Al Azhar University in Cairo, recounted unwelcoming behaviour he had encountered on the part of the Salafis when his friend Dr. Asraf, a Salafi preacher, had invited him to preach at the Bangkinang Islamic Center in 2014. When he ascended the pulpit and the audience realised that their usual teacher had not come, all the Salafi members of the congregation (making up about 80%) walked out in protest saying “*ini bukan guru kito*” (he is not our teacher). Arifin found this behaviour offensive as he was preaching from the same book which was used by the usual teacher. This selective behaviour on the part of the Salafis is, according to Anto (interview, December 2, 2015), a security staff at the RJ mosque, not surprising as the Salafis do not seek knowledge but rather fanaticism for their group. Anto argued that if the Salafis truly wanted spiritual understanding, they would not confine their religious learning to

Salafi preachers only, but welcome different preachers of the same faith. The selective behaviour in the name of recollection has led to deep divides within Indonesia in general, and Pekanbaru in particular.

The process of recollection as practiced by the Salafis above requires a principle, or the Salafi code of conduct, which can be summarised as: (1) understanding Islamic teaching based on al Quran and Sunna, in accordance with the interpretation of the *al-salaf al-sālih*; and (2) implementing those teachings in daily life. On this basis, it can be seen that the main function of Salafism is to relate the present to the past, because only in this way can the chain remains intact. An individual Muslim who belongs to the Salafi group is one who is capable of bridging the present to the past, the latter functioning as the source and basis of the present.

7.5. The Construction of the Salafi Community

The Salafi group is made up of a community of memory, consisting of experiences and a sense of their meaning and relevance. From this develops a “chain of memory” which becomes a collective memory. These chains attach individual believers to the community, making them members (Davie 2000). Within the Salafi group, these chains can be traced back to the era of *al-salaf al-sālih* which, as previously mentioned, is regarded as the only legitimate era in which the authoritative figures of Muhammad and his companions lived. This era, therefore, functions as the only valid reference. By adopting *al-salaf al-sālih* as the only point of reference, with no other interpretation tolerated, the Salafis claim to have established a sense of total unity not only among themselves but throughout the Muslim world.

Since the Salafi community of memory stretches back to the original *al-salaf al-sālih* of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., they seek only to ensure that mould of theological thinking they created, arguing that only in this way can there be unity in Islam. Relating to the Salafi commitment to refer to the same mould, namely *al-salaf al-sālih*, one informant (interview, 15 November 2015) stated that he had asked the same questions to different Salafi ustadzs in Pekanbaru and Java (more than 1000km apart) and received almost identical answers, backed up by the same argument. This was proof to him that everything in which the Salafi ustadzs believe and preach, was

passed through the same filter, returning to the *al-salaf al-sālih* interpretation of passages from al Quran and Sunna. It can therefore be seen that according to the Salafis there is only one way to achieve unity in Islam, and that is to adhere to the original teachings of the *al-salaf al-sālih*.

7.5.1. Salafism and the Idea of Total Unity of Islam

The importance the Salafis attach to the aspiration of total unity in Islam has come about as a result of the 73 different sects, with numerous more sub-sects, into which Islam has divided over one thousand years. Among these, only one sect is considered saved, which is called *al-firqa al-nājiya* (the saved group)¹⁰¹. Since the emergence of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th A.D, it has spread to various parts of the world, interacted with numerous cultures and been incorporated alongside various local religions, thereby being influenced in many ways both in terms of beliefs and practices. As a result, Berkey (1996) argued that Islam has become more colourful, and closely associated to the context of a particular place and time. Similarly, in his report on Islam in Java, Geertz (1976) classified Javanese Muslims into three groups: *santri* (committed Muslims), *abangan* (syncretic Muslims) and *priyayi* (Javanese elite). Instead of denoting these as categories of Islam, he referred to them as “religion of Java.” This colourful face of Islam, as a corollary of its prolonged interaction with various local cultures, can be said to be a historical product, which is responded to differently by today’s Muslims. In general, there are two different responses in regards to this historical process. Some Muslims believe that local or foreign elements which have been accommodated into, or mixed with Islam, enrich Islam itself; others, such as the Salafis believe that those processes have deviated Islam from its origin. The emergence and growth of Salafism has largely come about as a result of this perceived lack of purity. To the Salafis, Islam as a religion is no longer pure when it has syncretic elements added to it, and therefore the process of recollection begins by a memory selection: separating the pure from the *bid’a*, and then reconstructing the way of thinking and behaving based only on the pure elements. Upholding the pure tenet makes an individual Muslim part of the lineage

¹⁰¹ There are approximately fifteen hadiths which narrate about the division among Muslims with different number of sects, ranging from 70 to 73 sects. For the detail discussion about this, see Yazid Jawwas’s work, *Ar-Rasaa-il*, (2004).

of belief, which can be traced back to the *al-salaf al-sālih*, and according to the Salafi this is the only true Islam.

As previously mentioned, according to the Salafis, to be a Muslim means to follow the Prophet and his companions. The interpretations of their teachings function as landmarks and constitute a lineage of belief to which the Salafis attach their own belief and understanding. *Al-salaf al-sālih*, in this case, is like a mould into which the Salafis fit their understanding of Islam. Any innovation that does not fit the mould is unacceptable. The importance of the narrative of Sunna and *bid'a* in the construction of the Salafi group finds its importance in light of this issue. To Salafi, Sunna, which was interpreted by the *al-salaf al-sālih*, is “us” because it serves as the chain bridging them to the past, while *bid'a* is “other” because it breaks the chain between the present and the past. Accordingly, the present life has no religious basis. Those who break the chain are considered outside the lineage of belief; they fail to be Muslims.

If an individual Muslim fails to build the chain with the past, there are two general responses from the Salafi: *ghirah* and *hijr*. *Ghirah* means protectionism in the sense that the devout members of the Salafi group will be deeply concerned if one of their brothers or sisters is being misled with impure teachings and they will do their best to guide him or her to the correct path, and by so-doing, guide himself or herself. In a printed document given by Abdurrahman¹⁰² which contains a debate between Abdullah Shaleh al Hadlramy, a leading but moderate Salafi preacher, with Surya, a Salafi activist, the latter criticised the open mind of the first due to his acceptance to various non-Salafi groups. According to Surya, Abdullah’s openness is not acceptable and accuse him of being irresponsible with the safety of his fellow Muslims in the hereafter. Surya wrote, “where is our *ghīrah* as a Muslim if we let our brothers in the wrong path due to their involvement in Asha’irah, Ahmadiyah, Jahmiyah and Shia.” The expression of *ghīrah* in the Salafi life is the feeling of protectiveness not to let their Muslim brothers and sisters go unguided. If this should fail, the next step, *hijr*, is to exclude the ignorant from their group and by so doing

¹⁰² I visited to Abdurrahman’s house various times for either courtesy visit or interviews, during which I was given several documents, including the debate and some MUI letters related to its effort to invite Salafi group to join into MUI.

they hope that he or she will see the error of his or her ways and return to the “true Islam.” Bahri (interview, August 20, 2015), for example, stated that Amin, a Salafi preacher, has been excluded from the FSG due to his disagreement with the group in several aspects. The act of exclusion is expected to give pressure which accordingly leads someone to reflect and then return to the right path. To steer their Muslim brothers or sisters to the right path, the Salafis should engage in religious discourse through which they propose the Salafi narratives to the ignorant Muslims. This is done by setting up the TV and radio channels as well as regular religious sessions in the Salafi mosques.

To construct a sense of community, the Salafis create “others” that are outside of this select group—hence they used the concept of *bid’a* on the basis of their own interpretation, and ignored other interpretations which contradict them. The way the Salafis engage in religious debates and polemics is very typical in the sense that they already have a firm position, and therefore the debate they attended or polemics they are involved with are to remind (*tahdzīr*) those non-Salafis to return to the correct opinion. It is one of the reasons why the word *bid’a* is popular among the Salafis as it plays a major part in constructing their identity. This is not a new phenomenon in the field of religion. In the case of Christianity, Halbwachs (1992) wrote that the founders of Christianity originally constructed it by differentiating it to traditional Judaism. Similarly, the Salafis conceived the purity of Salafism by contrasting it to those who practice *bid’a*. The sense of being pure, because they only imitate the Prophet and his companions, becomes the bonding element which unites the Salafis in their group. This sense which is socially shared by the members functions as a repository of memory that enables the Salafi community to recall it at any time.

Another bonding element which unites the Salafi community is the shared social values in their daily life, such as commitment to consume only the halal in a strict sense. These values are rooted from legitimate sources, al-Quran and Hadith. The commitment to these values led one informant (interview, November 12, 2015) to sell the house he had bought before his reversion to Salafism because it was funded by a bank loan with interest, which is illegal according to their interpretations.

Shared social values have also motivated the Salafi members to live in an area where the residents are constituted largely by Salafi members. In Pekanbaru, the Salafi are mostly living in Delima Street, a complex where the Salafi pesantren Umar bin Khattab is located. In Rumbai, a suburban area of Pekanbaru, a Salafi housing complex is being reconstructed. By upholding these social values, the Salafis are motivated to live in an enclave in which their values will not be disrupted by somebody else.

Historical consciousness also plays an important role in constructing the Salafi community. Their historical landmark refers to the first three generations of the seminal phase of Islam, which is religiously regarded as the glorious past; they were best generations, and therefore, guaranteed to enter the heaven. Although all Muslims place emphasis on the importance of the *al-salaf al-sāliḥ* the Salafis differ from other Muslims in many ways. Unlike other Muslims, the Salafis claim that they are the only true Muslims who follow the *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*. Also, they select who among the *al-salaf al-sāliḥ* should be imitated. Salafi's collective memories rests on this perceived ideal past, and their existence today is to imitate all aspects of the life of the Prophet and his companions through the practice of memory, which serves to distinguish them from mainstream Muslims, and they do this through distinctive ritual observances and appearance.

The process of construction of the Salafi community in Pekanbaru is highly influenced by Salafi preachers. These preachers are connected to the past *al-salaf al-sāliḥ* through the chains of Salafi ulemas, which is recently represented by the Saudi Arabian ulemas. By referring to them, the Salafi preachers reconstruct the past through two main forms of media, premodern and modern. The former includes oral presentation, written documents and commemorative objects such as hagiographic texts, naming practice, oratory and ritual observances. The emphasis is given to the ritual observances as they are considered memory's most common medium. The latter, the modern media, is closely related to the product of recent technology such as television, radio, website and films. Schwartz (2014) explains that these media are vehicles for memory to flow so that the information could be conveyed. In the Salafi

community, most of these media, such as hagiographic texts, ritual observances, television and radio studio and websites are simultaneously used to create and enlarge their community.

The Salafi preachers are the actors who extensively use all the aforementioned media centralising on two places: mosque and pulpit. Mosque and pulpit are institutions in Islamic culture, characterised by both religious and public features. The mosque is highly based on oral culture, symbolised by the role of pulpit. Due to this feature, it is commonly found that mosque programs are mainly based on orality, such as sermons and religious public assembly. In the RJ, the television studio which broadcasts all religious sermons conveyed in the mosque is also located in their religious building. Historically, the mosque has been the center of Islamic teachings since the emergence of Islam in the Arabia Peninsula in the seventh century. In Indonesia during the colonial era, it also functioned politically as the center of Islamic movement against the Dutch rule. As a religious institution, the teachings in the mosque have always been led by preachers and, as was previously mentioned, communication in the mosque is based on oral media with the pulpit playing an important role as the main arena. It should be noted that pulpits are not found exclusively in mosques, but frequently erected in public places such as in town squares, parks and schools. Communication via the pulpit, whether in the mosque or elsewhere, carries authority due to its association with a religious institution which has a public character (Fath, 1981). The Salafi have also used mosque and pulpit as the main media to construct and enlarge their community.

There are three main programs used widely to reconstruct the Salafi community: regular religious teaching (*pengajian rutin*)¹⁰³, *dawra*¹⁰⁴ and *tabligh akbar*. The first, regular religious teaching, is a teaching which is conducted in regular term, usually every day or once a week. In the Salafi mosque, the Raudlatul Jannah, the regular teaching is conducted every day after the Dawn prayer and Maghrib prayer. The

¹⁰³ Regular teaching (*pengajian rutin*) is conducted every day from Monday to Friday, designed to improve a better understanding for Salafi members. It is conducted in the RJ mosque in the afternoon after Maghrib prayer (around 6.30 pm), or in the morning after Dawn prayer (around 5.30 am).

¹⁰⁴ Arabic word, means training.

second, *dawra*, means a series of public sermons with certain topics in the mosque or pesantren. Usually teaching or sermon in the dauroh is given by a well-known guest-speaker (ustadz) from Java. The last program, *tabligh akbar*, is a general religious assembly which usually takes place in a big mosque or outdoors in public places. For all programs, the mosque and the pulpit serve as the most important places in the reconstruction of the Salafi identity.

7.6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has outlined how the individual choice to embrace Salafism is based on several factors, among which is the availability of regular religious teaching in the Salafi mosques. The reversion to the Salafi is also considered to be an exit strategy by some Muslims that allows them to get out of both the historical conflict with some Muslim organisations and lack of authority of recent Islamic currents. In addition, equality among the members of the Salafi group in the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque, the center of Salafism in Pekanbaru, along with a strong sense of solidarity have contributed to the growth of Riau Salafism. Another factor which attracts people to join the Salafi group is the implementation of a collaborative management system which allows the Salafi members to contribute for da'wa on the basis of their capabilities. The apparent simplicity and certainty which Salafism offers its followers also play an important role in attracting people to join the group, and because these attributes are highlighted by graduates of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia University, they become authoritative. The last factor that persuades people to join the Salafi is the quality of its preachers, who are perceived as being sincere, wise and tolerant.

In order to recollect the past, the Salafi maintain the purity of their rituals and commemorate the events connected to the life of the Prophet. The past not only contains Islamic doctrine but also exemplary stories about the charismatic figures of *al-salaf al-salih*; re-telling stories about them becomes important for the Salafi community. Another way to recollect the past is through the naming practice. It is commonly found that the Salafi prefer, for instance, to name their institutions after the Prophet's companions, classical Islamic scholars or something related to Sunna. They also encourage the sports recommended by the Prophet. In their

appearancethere is a preference to wear Arabic dress, as is assumed was worn by the Prophet during his lifetime.

The process of recollection allows the Salafi to bridge the past with the future in a social frame called the Salafi community. In order to create this community, the Salafis create unity through the process of homogenisation of the Salafi memory. Further activity to ensure the process of unity is through intensive involvement in local religious discourse, employing various means such as sermons, websites and television and radio broadcasts. They also show the deference only to Salafi ulemas and ustadzs.

To strengthen the sense of belonging within the Salafi community, the preachers create “others,” that is *bid’a*. *Bid’a* serves as the socio-religious boundary which defines “us” and “other.” Historical consciousness, which relies on the glorious past, also plays an important role in defining the Salafi identity. To sum up, inspired by Schwartz’s category, the use of both premodern and modern media by the Salafis implies that the Salafi memory can be distinguished into four dimensions: the past; the teachings, which refer to linear representations of the past in the forms of oral and written accounts; the enactment of those teachings; and religious collective memory which refers to how an individual thinks and feels about the past. These four dimensions constitute the Salafi collective memory, manifested in the Salafi community. In Pekanbaru, the Salafi community is the social frame in which the new reverts mix and interact with their senior Salafi brothers and share the religious memory. The shared meaning experienced by the Salafis in the Salafi community is the most important binding element that unites them. Finally, this chapter has shown how Salafism becomes authoritative and appealing for those deprived Muslims. The Salafi identity is maintained through the construction of a Salafi community which serves as the social frame through which the past is recollected and practiced.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

The principal proposition of this study is that the emergence of Salafi movement in Pekanbaru is closely related to the socio-religious condition of its Muslims population. The spread of *bid'a*, and the perceived negative impacts of modernity, have led non-religious Muslims to feel deprived of their religion. Under these circumstances, Salafism becomes appealing among non-religious Muslims. Throughout this study, I have shown how Salafism in Pekanbaru plays a significant role in solving the problem of existential deprivation suffered by non-religious middle aged Muslims. In response to these issues, the Salafis call for Muslims in Pekanbaru to practice the pristine Islam by returning to the Quran and Sunnah. This is done by fully imitating (*ittibā'*) the Prophet and *al-salaf al-sālih*.

Da'wa is the main vehicle by which the Salafis make their best effort to bring non-Salafi Muslims to the Salafi group. The Salafis employ two main strategies in order to be able to attain the goal of da'wa: *tasfiya* (purification) and *tarbiya* (education). The former means placing priority on the understanding and implementation of the concept of *tauhīd* over all matters of life and as a result, the Salafis are also well-known as *ahl tauhīd* (people who believe in the Oneness of God)¹⁰⁵. Confirming their emphasis, it can be seen that *tauhīd* and Sunnah have become the marker of Salafi identity, manifested in the names of their mosques and schools. The latter means that the best way to cultivate the spirit of *tauhīd* is through education, leading them to establish various schools ranging from kindergarten to senior high school. In these contexts, these schools serve as the breeding ground in which the Salafis send their children to learn Salafism. The two strategies above are not the invention of Pekanbaru Salafism, but rather an imitation of the opinions of the Saudi Salafi ulemas which are acquired during study in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

As a reform movement, the spread of Salafism in Pekanbaru is inseparable from the global phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism. The Salafi group is one among various

¹⁰⁵ In fact, all Muslims believe in the Oneness of God, but the Salafis place it in their da'wa in the way that makes it recognizable as the brand of the Salafi da'wa.

Islamic movements, including Tabligh Jamaa, Hizb al Tahrir and the Muslim Brotherhood. In the context of global Islamic Revivalism, I have shown in Chapter 4 the close link between Pekanbaru Salafism and the center of global Salafism: Saudi Arabia. This relationship is constructed through the scholarship provided by the Saudi Arabian government for Indonesian students to study at the IUM. Moreover, the experience of living in Saudi Arabia has also created an opportunity for those students to interact and build a network with individual Saudi Salafis. Thus, there are two key elements which play a role in shaping the Salafi group in Pekanbaru: the Saudi government and the individual Saudi figures. The nature of the relationship with the former is the result of receiving a government scholarship to study at the government's university. This relationship ends once those students complete their study and return to Pekanbaru, while the latter relationship continues as illustrated by funds donated by individual Saudi Salafis to the Salafis in Pekanbaru to support their da'wa. This includes the construction of mosques and school facilities. Despite these external influences, the Salafis in Pekanbaru still maintain identifiably distinctive local characteristics, such as adopting the Indonesian government school curricula for their schools, and maintaining an apolitical position plus "blind obedience" towards the state. Further, they maintain a distance from other Islamic organisations, including Nahdlatul Ulama, PERTI and the MUI, which leads to local tensions.

Studies of Salafism in various contexts demonstrate that it is not a static and united group, but rather a dynamics and diverse one. There are different social actors, preachers and socio-cultural background involved in its development. However, those Salafis are united by the same spirit: returning to the Quran and Sunnah according to the interpretations of *al-salaf al-sālih*. My research in Pekanbaru shows that Salafis are divided into two groups: al Furqan Salafi Group (FSG) and an independent group, with the majority members constituting the former. Salafism discussed in this study mainly refers to this group.

Below is a concluding comparative explanation of the Salafis of Pekanbaru, represented by the FSG, with the Salafis in Java. This comparison is important in placing the former within the wider context of Salafism in Indonesia.

8.1. Salafism in Pekanbaru and Java: Some Comparisons

The emphasis this study places on the role of Salafism in solving the problem of existential deprivation among non-religious middle aged Muslims is its main differentiating factor from other studies on Indonesian Salafism. To highlight the unique contribution this thesis makes, here I compare aspects of Salafi group in Pekanbaru with other Salafi cases in other parts of Indonesia, particularly in Java. In doing so, I refer to three studies about Javanese Salafism conducted by Hasan (2006), Wahid (2014) and Jahroni (2015).

Hasan (2006) researches the emergence of the Laskar Jihad, a hardliner Salafi group in Yogyakarta who sent paramilitary activists to Ambon upon the break of ethnic and religious riots. According to Hasan, the emergence of Laskar Jihad is influenced by both internal and external dynamics. The Middle-Eastern influence and conducive political situation of Indonesia, where commitment to a more democratic life increased following the downfall of President Soeharto in 1998, allows various religious groups to exist including the hardliner Salafi group, Laskar Jihad. Confirming the external influence on the emergence of Indonesian Salafism, Hasan states that there was a contestation among those Salafis concerning financial support provided by the Middle-Eastern organisations. This led to a divide among them. In addition to its political aspects, the main agency of Laskar Jihad is relevant to take into account. Jaafar Umar Thalib, the leader, is of Arab descent and studied in Yemen before travelling to Afghanistan to join the Afghan fighters against Soviet troops. When he returned to Indonesia, memory of the Afghan war was still present in his mind, which lead him to create *Laskar Jihad*. Generally, Hasan focuses on the political aspect of the emergence of Laskar Jihad in Java, emphasising the role of the “Afghanistan alumni” who had returned to Indonesia. Laskar Jihad is the obvious example of the politico-jihadi Salafi, and for those alumni it serves as a new arena in which they may show their existence.

In the Pekanbaru case, similar to Salafism in Java, the role of Saudi Arabia was obvious. However, I have demonstrated throughout the thesis that internal conditions

and local resources play a significant role and are the driving force of the emergence of Salafism in the region. The atmosphere in which the Salafis in Pekanbaru grow is not related to political aspects, but rather to socio-religious aspects; non-religious Muslims feel deprived in various ways and wish to extricate themselves from this condition. This phenomenon is, therefore, not a political show of force but a one of spiritual satisfaction. The strong emphasis on da'wa and their total rejection of the use of violent acts make them deserving of the title of being purist Salafi who focus on da'wa, or the da'wa Salafi. Moreover, unlike in Java, none of the Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru are of Arab descent; all of them are natives of Riau (Malay) and therefore they deeply understand the local culture in which they conduct the da'wa to spread Salafism. My ethnography shows that this has contributed to the successful spread of Salafism in Pekanbaru. Agencies contribute significantly in shaping the natures and features of the group.

Unlike Hasan, Wahid (2014) focuses on the educational aspect of the Salafi group in Java, which is mostly located in rural areas. He found that Salafi pesantren in this locality is the breeding ground of Salafi cadres. Those pesantrens are supported by internal as well as international funds, mainly from Saudi Arabia. This is also the case of Salafi in Pekanbaru where pesantrens play a pivotal role in spreading and reproducing the Salafi knowledge, funded from the internal Salafi funds as well as Saudi Arabian individual donations. However, the Salafi group in Pekanbaru is distinctive in two aspects: strategy and stakeholder's background. First, the strategy of Pekanbaru Salafis to spread Salafism is not only limited to the use of pesantrens, but the scope of their da'wa is expanded via the establishment of the Raudlatul Jannah, a huge and publicly open Salafi mosque in the center of Pekanbaru city which allows local inhabitants to pray and attending various regular religious programs provided by the mosque. The limited capacity and access to Salafi mosques, which are located in the pesantren, have been resolved by the establishment of the RJ. This has significantly contributed to the fast growth of Salafism in Pekanbaru. Secondly, these developments are the result of collaboration between middle-class Muslims, who are mostly middle aged. This is the main distinctive feature of Salafis in Pekanbaru; stakeholders are middle aged and are

economically secured which allows them to collect and consolidate their material and human resources, and establish mosques and Islamic schools with a combined curriculum: the government and their own. This collaboration brings about advantages for the Salafis, as it creates a positive public image which leads more middle-class families to send their children to study in the Salafi schools. The Salafi mosque, the RJ, was constructed beautifully with a high standard of cleanliness and facilities and holds regular religious sessions in the morning and afternoon, instructed by authoritative preachers. These elements have led many Muslims who are thirsty for religious knowledge to come to pray in it and listen to its sermon. In this way, the Salafis gain a positive reputation among Muslims in Pekanbaru.

Jahroni (2013) conducts further research about the reproduction of Salafi knowledge. Unlike Wahid who focuses on the role of Salafi pesantren, Jahroni focuses on the role of LIPIA as the breeding ground of Salafi cadres. His study shows that the spread of Salafism in Indonesia is highly influenced by the political strategy of Saudi Arabia to maintain its religious influence over Indonesia. This is achieved by establishing LIPIA in Jakarta and providing scholarships for students to study there. In line with Jahroni's findings about the central role of LIPIA Jakarta, I have found that all Salafi preachers in Pekanbaru were the awardees of the Saudi scholarship and studied at LIPIA Jakarta, with some of them continuing their study at the IUM. Upon completion of their studies, they returned to their home village of Pekanbaru and started the Salafi da'wa.

This research provides nuance and a more diversified understanding of Salafism in the Indonesian context.

8.2. The Salafi of Pekanbaru and the Global Contexts

In a general sense, the emergence of Salafism in Java and Pekanbaru is inseparable from the role of Saudi Arabia. Considering the global context, the similar case of Salafism in Bosnia reflects the significant role of external elements in disseminating Salafism (Karcic 2010), which established there following the break of the Balkan War. However, there is a nuance in terms of strategy, agencies and the socio-cultural

backgrounds in which Salafism spreads and grows. Unlike the Bosnian case where agents were Arab fighters or in Java where the agents are Indonesian but Arab descents, agents in Pekanbaru are native Malay. Moreover, unlike in Java where the political circumstance (Hasan 2006) was more considerable, socio-religious aspects are more central in the case of Pekanbaru due to the spread of *bid'a* and the perceived negative impact of modernity.

Underlying the role of Saudi Arabia in the spread of global Salafism, Ostebo (2011) explains that in spite of the multiple factors involved in the initial emergence of Salafism in Bale, Ethiopia, the role of Saudi Arabia where the local Salafi preachers learned about Salafism at its universities is significant. However, Ostebo argues that further development of Salafism tends to be disconnected from the Saudi role as it gradually moulds into the local politics and ethnicity of Bale. Therefore, Ostebo (2011) further argues that local factors, such as the spread of *bid'a* and sufi order, and the involvement of local Salafi actors have given more nuance to the understanding of the development of Salafism, Ostebo concludes that Salafism in Bale has been localised.

Emphasising the importance of socio-cultural factors, my research shows that the initial development of Salafism in Pekanbaru is similar to the Ethiopian situation where *bid'a* widely spreads among Muslims. However, the Pekanbaru case is more complicated due to its close relationship with the negative impacts of modernity, which lead many Muslims to feel a sense of various deprivations. The return of non-religious Muslims to Islam in Pekanbaru is a result of these deprivations, the most important of which is existential deprivation. The expression of deprivation can be seen in various symptoms, such as a sense of meaningless in life and seeking religious arguments for beliefs and practices they hold. The data generated from the informants suggest that such a feeling is closely related to the impact of cultural modernity. On the basis of relative deprivation theory, the return of non-religious Muslims to Islam is driven by the perception that religion serves as the compensator for the deprived Muslims and is capable of relieving their sense of relative deprivation by providing a theological explanation for the problems they face. The

main role of this deprivation factor in triggering people to join the Salafi group is similar to that of the Netherlands. Koning (2013) and Buijs (2009) explain that joining Salafism is mainly caused by social deprivation, such as discrimination, threat and exclusion, which leads people to seek refuge in the local Salafi group to secure themselves. However, unlike in the Netherlands, existential deprivation tends to be a more dominant cause of Muslims reverting to Salafism in Pekanbaru.

Regarding the process of returning to Islam, there are generally four steps of the reversion narrative found among new reverts to Salafism. These can be described respectively as *jahilia*, *hidaya*, *hijra* and *muallaf*. First is a situation where an individual is deprived of religious experience; second is receiving guidance from God; third is the process of moving from being unguided to guided; and fourth is being a new revert to Salafism. In these processes, Salafi preachers play a significant role as a referent group guiding people to revert to Salafism. The narrative of Salafi reversion is equivalent to a process of conversion/reversion, described on the basis of relative deprivation theory; namely, this involves the sense of being deprived, assessment acts, a turning point and new born. Relative deprivation theory, in this case, is appropriate as a means to elucidate the socio-religious causes of the reversion to Islam.

8.3. Salafis, Reversion and Community of Memory

The reversion of those deprived Malay Muslims to Islam is largely related to the cultural position of Islam as an “official” religion of Malay people, which in many ways still plays a significant role as a keyorientating value. The fusion of Islam to Malay culture is best reflected in the traditional Malay principal: ‘*adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah* (Malay customs is based on Islamic Sharia, and Sharia is based on al Quran) (Hamidy 2015). The expression of Islamic values within Malay culture can be found in daily language as well as traditional manuscripts, indicating that Islam is deeply rooted in Malay culture. In this sense, it can also be said that Islam has been the main constitutive element of Malay identity, and therefore has become part of their collective memory. In other words, Islam is already embodied within Malay culture, and therefore it has a structural connection to

Malay memory. The return to Islam in this sense can be considered as the return to the main constitutive element of Malay culture which has deeply influenced it, reflected clearly in Malay's values and system. As the inherent element of Malay culture, the return of deprived Malay to Islam can be considered as the reversion rather than conversion.

The underlying reason behind the choice of Salafism instead of other Islamic groups is driven mainly by the perceived capability of Salafism to meet the religious need of those new reverts. This is related to the perception that Salafism is pure, simple and more legitimate compared to other Islamic currents and organisations. In addition, the Salafi preachers develop within the Salafi group a religious atmosphere in which all adherents may understand arguments of their beliefs and practices. This kind of critical relationship to the Islamic teachings meets the needs of some groups of people who critically but independently seek the truth with simple but solid arguments. The perceived purity of Salafism is in fact not only typical of the Pekanbaru case. In South Africa, the Salafis encourage Muslims to independently approach the Quran and Sunnah instead of *taqlīd* (imitating) the existing Islamic schools of law, so that Muslims can grasp the purity of Islamic teachings directly from its main sources. This has become a major attraction for certain individuals to join Salafism (Dumbe & Tayob 2011).

In addition to the religious factor, Salafism is also perceived as being able to meet the cognitive need of those new reverts as they are in a quest for a way to exit from the prolonged contradiction between other Islamic organisations. Salafism, perceived as being neutral, offers people an "exit" from these contradictions. Moreover, the culture of giving, strong solidarity, equality and humble atmosphere developed within the Salafi group have satisfied some groups of people, leading them to revert to Salafism. These religious and social qualities have made Salafism authoritative, and therefore attractive among followers. Once new reverts join the Salafi group, they begin to share and uphold new values which distinguish them from their previous conditions.

The Salafī group can be considered as a community of memory in which all Salafī members maintain their connection to the past (*al-salaf al-sālih*), guided by Salafī preachers who serve as the main referents. Within this community of memory, the followers share the same beliefs and practices and the community thus functions as the social framework that gives individual members the means to recollect the past. To consolidate the unity of the members, preachers use the concept of purity vis-à-vis *bid'a*. The first involves “us” and the second involves “others.” *Bid'a* then serves not only as a religious category but also a social boundary, distinguishing Salafī members from others. As an “other,” *bid'a* should be abandoned and replaced with the “purity of Salafism” taught by the preachers. By forgetting the *bid'a*, new room for memory is made, allowing the new interpretations of Salafism to be stored through the process of recollection. Reversion to Salafism, therefore, has undermined peoples’ past religious knowledge which has been perceived as lacking purity. In this sense, the new revert call themselves *muallaf*.

There are two main arenas of recollection: rituals and events, which are solely based on the al Quran and Hadith. With regard to da’wa activities, Salafis are more specifically inspired by the Hadith. The reason for this can be traced from the concept of *ittibā’* (imitating) they uphold in da’wa. *Ittibā’* is a revealing concept. It represents the “mode of believing” of the Salafis, which can be described as follows: (i) the Prophet is the best exemplary figure of the implementation of the al Quran in Islamic history; (ii) most aspects of the Prophet’s life were observable and well-documented in Sunnah/Hadith; (iii) Islam has been perfect, and none of its teachings are unclear; (iv) therefore, no new interpretation is needed; and (v) imitating the role model, namely the Prophet, represented by Sunnah or Hadith, is accordingly the only available choice. Instead of interpretation, recollection is the best way to retain to the memory of the past. Finally, to be a Muslim in the view of the Salafis is not related to the capability of interpreting the Sunnah or Hadith, but rather the obedience of imitating the exemplary model.

Imitation leaves no room for the emergence of any variety of new models, as it would be considered a foreign element. In this sense, the spread of Salafism may

lead to the homogenisation of modes of believing among Muslims by which the unity of Islam is perceived to be retained. One of the common goals of Islamic Revivalism, under which various Islamic movements are found, is the global unity of *umma* (Muslim community). Despite its locality, the Pekanbaru Salafism contributes to the attainment of this goal. The unity of *umma* is, in fact, a result of the accumulative effect of many individual commitment and exercises to uphold “pristine” Islam as interpreted by the *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*. This purity finds its ground to grow in the conditions where corrupted teachings are proliferating and external negative values of modernity are threatening, leading people to feel multiple types of relative deprivation.

This thesis makes its contribution to the sociological understanding of Islamic revivalism through its engagement with the two theories employed, relative deprivation and social memory. From the first perspective, relative deprivation, my findings are in line with numerous scholars who underlie multiple crises factors as the key contributing causes of the appearance of Islamic revivalism. Dekmejian (1980), for example, highlights economic and political crises. Mousally (1999), Nasr (2003) and Niazi (2005) add the intellectual crisis factor. These crises are caused by various internal as well as external factors, such as the long period of European colonialism in Muslim countries (Esposito 1983), the negative impact of modernity (Voll 1991) and the penetration of Western culture (Haddad 1991).

The common thread of crisis perspectives is that crisis conditions cause Muslims to feel a sense of deprivation, which then leads them to return to Islam. In the sociology of religion, many scholars such as Glock (1964), Wimberley (1984) and Bainbridge (1997) emphasise economic and social deprivation as the main factor moving people to join to a religious movement. However, this study, using the case of Salafi Islam, demonstrates that existential deprivation is the triggering factor for the return of non-religious middle aged Muslims to Islam and then Salafism. As such, this study has particularly raised important issues relating to middle-class and middle aged Muslims with salient religious relationships.

It must be stressed however that deprivation factors alone are not sufficient in providing a comprehensive explanation of Muslims joining Salafism. Collective memory theory has demonstrated a mutual relevance between the two theories employed. The latter theory helps to reveal how the past has become contested and is important not only among Muslims in general but specifically among the Salafis. The use of this theory highlights how returning to the past, according to the Salafis, is a return to perfection and hence no additional interpretations are needed. Although Arkoun, as cited by Waardenburg (2002), claims that that perfection is not more than a “mythological vision” of original and classical Islam, the way the Salafis believe and practice shows that this has become a legitimate “myth” among them.

Moreover, focus on the social memory of the Salafis shows that their strong emphasis on upholding purified beliefs and rituals is aimed at enlivening, linking and controlling their religious experience in order to be able to perpetuate the consciousness of the past to the present. In this sense, the Salafi movement revives and restores the perfect past for the purpose of constructing a legitimate present. In Eliade’s (1987) words, the Salafis can be categorised as an “anti progress” group.

Finally, remembering can affect people’s collective identity. For example, recognition of the significance of Arab tradition and strong attribution to it among Indonesian Salafis has already changed their religious characters, including their appearance. In a similar way, forgetting helps people to constitute a new identity. The reversion to Salafism is an obvious case as reverts turn to new sources and narratives which they perceived to be purer and more authoritative. Notably, as stated by Bollmer (2011, p. 451), the use of social memory theory is unable to ensure that “people remember the same thing, as any return to psychic memory necessarily implies some level of individual interpretations.” This research on the social memory of the Salafis contributes to the study of the “contested past” of Islamic groups particularly in Indonesian contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. List of informants

The following is a list of informants interviewed during the fieldwork from July 2015 until April 2016 in Pekanbaru, totalling 48, classified on the basis of their role. The first group is the Salafi preachers—totally 13 informants were interviewed; the second is those who run the administration of the Salafi foundation—totally 7 informants; the third is the Salafi laymen—totally 8 informants; the fourth is the non-Salafi preachers—7 informants; and the fifth is the non-Salafi laymen—12 informants. Below is brief information of those informants.

1.1. Salafi Preachers

Bukhari, 42 years old, holder of PhD degree from the IUM, Saudi Arabia, is the advisor of various Salafi foundations, including the Nadwa Islamic Foundation and the Ubudiyya Foundation. He also teaches in various Salafi schools and pesantrens, and give sermon in numerous Salafi mosques. He is the most referred Salafi preacher due to perception of his wise character and broad knowledge in Islam. In addition, he is among the initial students of Buya Jufri, the founder of Pekanbaru Salafism. The researcher talked with him various times, and gave him written research questions. He then recorded the reply in digital mode and sent it to the researcher in different time.

Abu Zaid, 40 years old, a graduate of the IUM and fully memorized 30 chapters of al Quran. He is among the initial students of Buya Jufri. Abu Zaid played an important role during the first period of the establishment of the Salafi foundation, al Bayyinah. Later, he abandons it and establishes a new Salafi foundation, Ibn Kathier in Rumbai, Pekanbaru. He is also the founder of the Salafi Radio station, Hidayah, located in the al Bayyinah complex, Pekanbaru. In addition to the teaching in his pesantren, he also gives sermon in various places, including in the RJ Mosque and a series of religious assembly organized by the Riau Police Department. He is specifically famous among the Muslim youth due to his ‘gaul’ (friendly) personality. He was interviewed on 1 December 2015.

Husein, 41 years old, a graduate of the IUM and among the initial student of Buya Jufri in Pesantren al Furqan. He was the former principal of SD IT Imam Shafii, located on Jalan Delima. After resigning from that position, he established a Salafi pesantren for girls, Ummu Sulaym, located on Jalan Melur, Pekanbaru and becomes its principal until now. He also has another position in al Nadwa Islamic Foundation, and regularly gives his sermon in the RJ Mosque once a week. He was interviewed on 26 August 2015.

Bahri, 35 years old, a graduate of LIPIA Jakarta. He teaches in various Salafi schools, including Pesantren Umar bin al Khattab and Pesantren Ibn Kathier. He also actively visits various places within Riau Province, including Tembilahan, to spread Salafism. He also gives regular sermon in the RJ Mosque. He was interviewed on 20 August 2015.

Fuad, 35 years old, a graduate of the IUM, Saudi Arabia. He is the principal of SD IT Imam al Shafii, which belong to the Ubudiyya Foundation. He was interviewed on 29 November 2015.

Fajri, mid 30s, a graduate of the IUM, Saudi Arabia and obtained a master degree in Islamic studies from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Currently, he is the principal of SMP IT al Bayyinah, Pekanbaru. He also gives regular sermon in the RJ Mosque, once a week. He was interviewed on 27 November 2015.

Daud, 30, a graduate of LIPIA Jakarta and former student of Buya Jufri. He is a teacher at Pesantren Ibn Kathier Rumbai, and supervisor for the subject of Quranic memorization at the pesantren, as he fully memorized al Quran (30 Chapters). He was interviewed on 30 November 2015.

Syukur, late 40s, a graduate of LIPIA Jakarta and among the initial students of Buya Jufri. Before becoming Jufri's disciple, he had studied at the Faculty of Chemistry, Riau University, and then decided to leave the university due to his choice to deepen religious knowledge. Currently, he is a teacher at the Pesantren Ummu Sulaym. He

also gives regular sermon at the RJ Mosque once a week. He was interviewed on 2 December 2015.

Jafar, late 40s, a graduate of LIPIA Jakarta and among the initial students of Buya Jufri. Before becoming Jufri's student, he had studied Chemistry at the Faculty of chemistry, Riau University, and then left it before he completed the degree. Currently, he is a teacher at Pesantren Ummu Sulaym. He also gives regular sermon at the RJ Mosque. He was interviewed on 2 December 2015.

Tarmizi, 45 years old, a graduate of the IUM and among the initial students of Buya Jufri. He is the founder of a Salafi Foundation, al Iman, in Padang, which provides kindergarten, elementary and junior high school level. In some occasion, he visited Pekanbaru and gives sermon at the RJ Mosque. He was interviewed on February 20, 2015.

Yamin, late 20s, a graduate of LIPIA and Pesantren al Furqan, Pekanbaru. He is a teacher at the Pesantren Ummu Sulaym. He was interviewed on 2 December 2015.

Amin, mid 40s, a graduate of the IUM and among the initial students of Buya Jufri. He was a former acting principal of Pesantren al Furqan after the death of Buya Jufri before being dismissed by Jufri's wife due to his involvement in Laskar Jihad, founded by Jaafar umar Thalib. During the fragmentation period, he splitted with his Salafi fellows and left al Furqan. He established a new Salafi pesantren, Ta'zhim al Sunnah. He was interviewed on 26 February 2016.

Awang, mid 40s, is a teacher at Pesantren Ta'zhim al Sunnah, and a trusted fellow of Amin. He was interviewed on 26 February 2016.

1.2. Administrators of Salafi Foundation

Joko, learly 50s, a graduate of Forestry Faculty Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, is a professional, working at Sinar Mas Group Company, Riau. He is the acting director of al Nadwa Islamic Foundation, centred at the RJ Mosque. He has

dedicated himself for da'wa in Salafism for a decade. He was interviewed on 27 November 2015.

Dedi, early 50s, a graduate of Forestry Faculty Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, is a professional in Sinar Mas Group Company. Having established in economy led him to find something other than material end. This was led him to join the Salafi group for more a decade. He is one of the core staff of the al Nadwa Islamic Foundation. He was interviewed on 27 November 2017.

Isrul, early 50s, a graduate of Forestry Faculty, Bogor Agricultural University, is a successful businessman with various business activities. After seeking the truth for several years by joining various Islamic groups, he finally decided to join Salafism and has become its activist for several years. He is one of the main staff of the al Nadwa Islamic Foundation. He was interviewed on 2 December 2015.

Musa, late 50s, professor of chemistry at Riau University, is among the initial student of Buya Jufri. His long involvement in Salafism led him to be chosen as the chief of Ubudiyya Foundation. He was interviewed on 2 December 2015.

Anwar, late 40s, a graduate of Economic Faculty, Brawijaya University, Malang, East Java, was a civil servant at the Forestry Department but resigned from his position several years ago due to his commitment to spread the Salafi da'wa. Along with some of his Salafi fellows, he established al Bayyinah Foundation and has been serving as its acting director for a couple of years. He was interviewed on 2 December 2015.

Hasan, a holder of master degree from State Islamic University, Imam Bonjol Padang, majoring in Hadith and Aqida. He was former member of NII (Islamic State of Indonesia, a clandestine movement) and has been joining Salafism after a series of debate with a leading Salafi preacher, Tarmizi, and then becomes one of Tarmizi's trusted fellow in administering al Iman, the Salafi foundation. He was interviewed on 15 February 2016.

1.3. Salafi Laymen

Fauzi, mid 30s, is a civil servant at the Pekanbaru Mayor Office. He has joined the Salafi group for a couple of years as a result of a long journey seeking for the truth. He actively participates in daily prayer at the RJ Mosque. He was interviewed on 11 November 2015.

Edi, mid 40s, an ice cream seller, is a Salafi activist for more a decade. He joined the Salafi group after abandoning the Tabligh Jamaa, a group which, according to him, is not based on valid interpretation of Islam. He was interview on 11 November 2015.

Eka, mid 30s, is a multi-task person, including a TV journalist, garment seller and former drug dealer. He joined the Salafi group after getting a "hidaya" which led him to abandon his "dark past." After becoming a Salafi, he never misses any single prayer and always keep his strong commitment to conduct the rituals. He was interviewed on 30 November 2011.

Doni, late 30s, is a worker at the Perusahaan Listrik Negara (State Electricity Company). He regularly visits the RJ Mosque and listens to the Salafi sermons, which, according to him, has enlightened him. He was interviewed on 12 November 2015.

Toni, early 30s, is a security guard at the RJ Mosque for a couple of years. His relationship with Salafism is not only due to professional reason, but also psychological factors as he has been attracted to Salafism. He was interviewed on 2 December 2015.

Said, late 30s, is a civil servant, which has been joining the Salafi group for a couple of years, and regularly participates in various Salafi daura and tabligh due to his curiosity to Salafism. He was interviewed on 13 October 2015.

Bilal, mid 40s, is a Salafi activist who regularly participates in various Salafi daura and tabligh akbar. He was interviewed on 26 August 2015.

Saleh, mid 30s, is the RJ Mosque canteen staff. He is very attracted to Salafism which led him to work as casual worker at the canteen. He was interviewed on 30 November, 2015.

1.4. Non-Salafi Preachers

Abdurrahman, mid 40s, is the grand Imam of al Nur Grand Mosque and Chief of Fatwa Commission at the MUI. He completed undergraduate degree at the al Azhar University in Cairo, majoring in Tafsir, and PhD degree at the Universiti KebangUdin Malaysia (UKM) in the same major, Tafsir. He was interviewed on 13 November 2015.

Abu Rahmat, mid 40s, a holder of PhD degree from the IUM Saudi Arabia, is one of the chairman of the MUI and lecturer at the State Islamic University Sultan Syarif Kasim, Pekanbaru. He is one of the sternest critics of Pekanbaru Salafism. He was interviewed on 20 August 2015.

Yunus, early 40s, is member of the MUI Fatwa Commission and a lecturer at the State Islamic University Sultan Syarif Kasim, Pekanbaru. He completed undergraduate degree at the al Azhar University in Cairo majoring in Hadith, and master degree at Dar al Hadith, Morocco. He is a very popular preacher among non-Salafi Muslims and has regular sermon in various mosques in Pekanbaru. Currently, his popularity is not only among Pekanbaru Muslims, but also among Muslims throughout Indonesia. He was interviewed on 15 October 2015.

Arifin, early 40s, is member of the MUI and a lecturer at the State Islamic University Sultan Syarif Kasim, Pekanbaru. He completed undergraduate degree at the al Azhar University in Cairo majoring in Hadith, and master degree in Hadith at a university in Amman, Jordan. He was interviewed on 10 January 2016.

Saiful, 50 years old, is chief of Ikatan Muballighin Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Muballigh [Islamic callers]), branch of Pekanbaru. He is the graduate of

al Azhar University in Cairo. In addition to giving sermons in various mosques, he is also regularly invited to become a jury in Quranic recitation competition held by local government. He was interviewed on 25 February 2016.

1.5. Non-Salafi Laymen

UU Hamidy, early 70s, is a retired anthropologist at the University of Riau. His main work is focusing on the relationship between Malay and Islam, and has resulted more than 30 books on this topic. He was interviewed on November 15, 2015.

Zulfadly, mid 30s, is currently a civil servant and former person-in charge of the Pesantren Development Project at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Pekanbaru. He is the graduate of the al Azhar University in Cairo, majoring in Sharia. He was interviewed on 26 August 2015.

Encik Amri, mid 60s, is a retired government worker and a creative artist of Malay crafting and batik painting. He was interviewed on 18 December 2015.

Hidayat, early 40s, is a graduate of Brawijaya University at the Faculty of Planology. He is currently a lecturer at the Islamic University of Riau. He was interviewed on 10 October 2015.

Malik, mid 40s, is a graduate of the IUM and International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan. Currently, he is a lecturer at the State Islamic University Imam Bonjol, Padang. He was interviewed on 3 March 2016.

Karim, mid 40s, is a graduate of al Azhar University in Cairo, majoring in Sharia. He is a teacher at an elementary school belong to Chevron Company in Minas, Riau. He was interviewed on 10 December 2015.

Udin, mid 50s, is a graduate of al Azhar University in Cairo. He was former member of local parliament representing Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS). Currently, he is still active in da'wa activities and becomes one of the Salafi rivals due to his

perception that the Salafi has failed to contextualize Islamic teachings to Malay culture. He was interviewed on 21 April 2016.

Ari, mid 30s, is a civil servant at the local government of Riau. At the time of interview, he was still in the searching process of which Islamic group should be followed. In Pekanbaru, there are two mosques which provides leading da'wa programs: the RJ Mosque which belongs to Salafi, and al Falah Mosque which belong to non-Salafi. Ari has not decided yet his affiliation as he still attends the sermons in both mosques. He was interviewed on 29 November 2015.

Desi, mid 30s, is staff of one of a leading travel agency in Pekanbaru. Being financially established, but religiously deprived leads her to learn deeper about Islam. She was interviewed on 20 November 2015.

Yesi, mid 30s, is a graduate of Political Department at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. She is still unsatisfied with her current understanding of Islam and her curiosity of religious knowledge leads her to go in-depth by regularly attending religious teachings at al Falah Mosque. She was interviewed on 29 November 2015.

Ida, mid 30s, is a worker at a private company. She was not a practicing Muslim at the time of interview, but at the first step to 'return' to Islam, manifested in her strong commitment to attend religious teachings at various mosques. She was interviewed on 20 November 2015.

Ucok, late 30s, is a holder of university degree in economics, working at a state's owned bank.. He was interviewed on August 18, 2015.

Bagindo, early 40s, is a teacher who graduated from the State's Islamic University Sultan Syarif Kasim Pekanbaru. He was interviewed on August 25, 2015.

Appendix 2. Glossaries

Ahl al Hadith: the followers of traditions (hadith), which came into being at the beginning of the second century of Islam. This school is in opposition to the Ashab al Ra'y, the school which use extensively human reasoning and personal opinion

Al Maturidiyya: a theological school, named after its founder Abu Manshur al Maturidy (d. 944 A.D.). It is one of the recognized orthodox Sunni kalam schools, along with Ahl al Athr/Ahl al Hadith (Hanbalis) and al Ash'Ariyya

Ash'ariyya, or Asha'ira: a theological school, the followers of Abu al Hasan al Asha'ry (d. 935 A.D.)

Aurat: part of body which must be kept covered for non-mahram under Islamic law

Bid'a: religious innovation

Da'I: Islamic caller

Da'wa: calling for people, both Muslims or non-Muslims to Islam

Gamis: known also as jubah, means robe

Hidayah: guidance from God

Hijra: migration, initially refers to Muslim's migration from Mecca o Medina

Jahiliyya: period before the coming of Islam brought by the prophet Muhammad

Kecamatan: sub-district headed by a camat

Kelurahan: an administrative level under kecamatan

Kopiah: also known as songkok. It is a cap worn by male Malay Muslims in formal occasions, such as religious festival as well as in daily life

Mahram: a person by whom the marriage with him or her is religiously unlawful permanently because of blood relationship, breastfeeding and marriage ties

Manhaj: path or ways

Muallaf: newly converted to Islam

Murjia: Murji'a means the "upholder of irdja." It was initially a "politico-religious movement in the early Islam," and later on, the use widened to denote those who separated belief and practice

Niqab : a veil worn by female Muslims to cover whole of her face excluding eyes.

Pengajian: religious learning

Pesantren: Islamic boarding school

Ruqya: medical and spiritual treatment by asking God's protection through recitation of the Quranic verses

Selamatan: the communal feast for both cultural or religious purposes

Sarong: traditional cloth in Southeast Asia wrapped around the waist or body

Al-salaf al-sālih: Pious predecessors, refers to the first three generations of Muslims

Tahlil: reciting "lā ilāha illa Allāh"

Taqlid: blind obedience

Taubat: repentance

Tabligh akbar: general religious assembly

Wirid: reciting dzikr