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NEGOTIATING SALAFISM: Local Muslim Identity and Religious Adaptation in Banten

Refki Rusyadi
UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia
E-mail: refki.rusyadi@uinsatu.ac.id

Agwin Degaf
UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia
E-mail: agwindegaf@uin-malang.ac.id

Muhammad Sulthon Aziz
UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia
E-mail: m.sulthonaziz@uinsatu.ac.id

Mochamad Chobir Sirad
UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia
E-mail: siradj29@uinsatu.ac.id

Corresponding Author: Agwin Degaf

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Abstract: The expansion of Salafism has generated enduring tensions within the syncretic Islamic identity of Banten, where local traditions are deeply embedded in religious belief and practice. This study examines how Bantenese Muslims negotiate encounters between transnational Salafi doctrines and inherited forms of religiosity. Based on qualitative fieldwork, it finds that younger, urban Muslims are more exposed to Salafi interpretations through education and social networks, while rural communities largely preserve established traditions. These uneven encounters produce a fragmented yet adaptive religious landscape. Drawing on Berger and Luckmann's theory of the social construction of reality, the article explains how processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization shape patterns of religious negotiation. It advances the concept of selective adaptation to show how global Islamic movements intersect with, rather than replace, local religious identities. The findings demonstrate that Bantenese Muslims selectively adopt, reinterpret, or contest Salafi teachings, underscoring that religious change is context-dependent and shaped by resilient local traditions.

Keywords: Salafism; local Islamic identity; religious change; syncretic Islam; Bantenese Islam; transnational Islamic movement.

Introduction

The Islamization of Banten by the Wali Sanga in the 16th and 17th centuries forged a syncretic Islamic identity by combining Islamic scripture with indigenous practices such as Sufi orders (*tarekat*) and the traditional Bantenese martial arts performance involving invulnerability rituals (*debus*).[1] The issue of syncretic Islamic culture and identity is a relevant issue today, considering the presence of reform movements like Salafism and the rapid globalization of culture.

Those propagating Salafism, which is a transnational Islamic movement, can be classified into purists, politicos, and jihadists,[2] and their ideology has been disseminated globally through Saudi soft power, including funding, scholarships, and curricula exported via institutions such as the University of Madinah.[3] In Banten, the movement's reception is shaped by the Sultanate's legacy, which institutionalized syncretic practices like Sufism and traditional martial arts.[4] Despite its doctrinal rigidity, Salafism sometimes adopts moderate strategies to engage local communities. For example, in Ethiopia's Bale region, the movement integrated local customs to align with socio-cultural contexts.[5] However, in Banten, tensions with mass organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which uphold

[1] Hafid Setiadi, "Worldview, Religion, and Urban Growth: A Geopolitical Perspective on Geography of Power and Conception of Space during Islamization in Java, Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 1 (2021): 81–113, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i1.81-113.

[2] Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (2006): 207–39, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500497004.

[3] Shadee Elmasry, "The Salafis in America: The Rise, Decline and Prospects for a Sunni Muslim Movement among African-Americans," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30, no. 2 (2010): 217–36, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2010.494072.

[4] Rismawidiawati et al., "'Gawe Kuta Baluwarti Bata Kalawan Kawis'; Contribution of Local Knowledge to the Expansion of the Banten Sultanate on the Nusantara Spice Route," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 24, no. 3 (2023), https://doi.org/10.17510/wacana.v24i3.1654.

[5] Terje Østebø, "Local Reformers and the Search for Change: The Emergence of Salafism in Bale, Ethiopia," *Africa* 81, no. 4 (2011): 628–48, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972011000660.

different religious practices, complicate broader acceptance.[6] These tensions raise questions about how Salafi teachings interact with deeply rooted traditions and values, especially amid socio-religious shifts driven by urbanization.

Urbanization and the rise of an educated middle class of professionals have further reshaped religious practices on the ground. An exploratory survey conducted among respondents from Cikande Subdistrict (n=98) in early February 2024 revealed that only 82 percent of respondents could identify at least one local Islamic traditional practice, while 13 percent were unaware of any such practice. The informants for the survey were selected from a diverse range of social and religious backgrounds, including individuals with Salafi leanings, both village and urban residents, and recently married young adults who had just settled in Serang. The study conforms to research methodologies suggested by Syafrudin et al. and Murni et al.[7] The limited awareness of local Islamic practices exhibited by the participants of this study underscores the erosion of cultural connections, a trend reinforced by Salafi educational institutions that prioritize exclusive curricula focused on Salafi doctrines, thus sidelining local traditions and contributing to polarization.[8] The influence of Saudi-funded initiatives and transnational networks amplifies these effects, raising concerns about their long-term impact on Banten's cultural and religious identity.[9]

This study addresses the gap in understanding localized Muslim responses to Salafism, focusing on how Bantenese Muslims perceive and engage with Salafi teachings within their sociocultural and religious contexts. Specifically, it asks how Bantenese Muslims reconcile Salafi teachings with their traditional Islamic heritage, and

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[6] Saparudin and Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 18, no. 1 (2023): 231–44, https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol18no1.19.

[7] Syafrudin, Sudadio, and Sholeh Hidayat, "The Effect of Managerial Competence on Entrepreneurship Leadership of Elementary School Principles: A Case Study in Serang City, Indonesia," *International Journal of Advanced and Applied Sciences* 10, no. 6 (2023): 63–70, https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2023.06.008.

[8] Jamhari Makruf and Saifudin Asrori, "In the Making of Salafi-Based Islamic Schools in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, no. 1 (2022): 227–64, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2022.601.227-264.

[9] Jamal Malik, "Salafizing Hanafiyya? Madrasa Teachers in Afghanistan, State Actors, and Salafis," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 21, no. 3 (2023): 69–85, https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2023.2235825.

what factors explain selective acceptance or rejection of Salafi teachings in urban and rural settings. The research employed a qualitative case study approach, incorporating interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to capture perspectives across communities. Comparative insights from South Sulawesi and Lombok were used to illustrate how Salafism is received differently depending on local contexts.[10]

The significance of this study lies in its theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions. Theoretically, it utilizes Berger and Luckmann's[11] social theory of reality to conceptualize the idea of selective adaptation and to demonstrate how externalized Salafi teaching and local tradition are negotiated in daily life. Empirically, the findings of this study are of value to Islamic studies in Indonesia, as it documents how Bantenese Islam is renegotiated under Salafi influence. Practically, it informs policies of teaching and cultural preservation and advocates intergenerational dialogue and culture-sensitive curricula to maintain Banten's local Islamic traditions.

Salafism in Transnational and Local Contexts

Research on Salafism encompasses a wide range of themes, including socio-economic impact, role in education, and doctrinal dimensions. The Salafi propagation (*da'wa*) movement is characterized by its puritanical approach, emphasizing a return to the practices of the first three generations of Muslims (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), strict adherence to the Qur'an and Hadith, and rejection of innovations (*bid'a*) in religious practices. This purist stance forms the ideological foundation and strategies of the movement, aiming to establish what is perceived as the "authentic" form of Islam.[12] Sinani explored the relationship between Saudi Salafism and Wahhabism, highlighting their shared

[10] Saparudin and Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia."

[11] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Repr. in Penguin Books, Penguin Social Sciences (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

[12] Muhammad Fuad Fathul Majid et al., "Relasi Islam Dan Politik Dalam Sejarah Nasional Indonesia," *Mutiara: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2023): 63–73, https://doi.org/10.61404/jimi.v1i1.9; Syahbudi Syahbudi et al., "Hijrah and Rectification of Muslim Identity: The Case of Campus Da'wah Activists in Pontianak City," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 2 (December 2024): 262–81, https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i2.1174.

goal of preserving "Islamic purity" while rejecting other traditional Islamic practices such as Sufism and local cultural adaptations.[13] Similarly, Basmisirli examined the role of Salafi institutions in Europe, supported by global networks, in promoting exclusivist interpretations of Islam.[14] These institutions have been linked to youth radicalization and present ongoing challenges for policymakers.

Arguing from these points, Wiktorowicz's foundational typology categorized Salafis as purists/quietists, politicos, and jihadis.[15] It has become the principal reference point to frame Salafism's internal diversities. Similarly, Meijer situated Salafism as an international religious movement with many local disguises, highlighting its double-edged "modernity" that rejects Western values yet simultaneously draws on Gulf petro-dollar funding and leverages media and digital technologies for global dissemination, including its long-standing geopolitical alignment with the United States.[16] Hegghammer subsequently zeroes in on the Saudi internal and foreign policy context, showing how political developments such as the 1979 Meccan revolt, a violent seizure of the Grand Mosque by a millenarian group claiming the arrival of the Mahdi, and the Sahwa movement, an Islamic awakening in Saudi Arabia influenced by Muslim Brotherhood thought, contributed to the division between quietist and jihadi Salafism, a split that later spread transnationally.[17]

The Salafi movement exhibits internal diversity, with different currents adopting distinct approaches to politics and societal

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[13] Besnik Sinani, "Normative Spirituality in Wahhābī Prophetology: Saʿīd b. Wahf al-Qaḥṭānī's (d. 2018) Raḥmatan Li-l-ʿĀlamīn as Reparatory Theology," *Religions* 15, no. 5 (2024): 543, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15050543.

[14] Hasan Basmisirli, "The Contribution of Salafi Doctrine for the Radicalisation of Muslims in Europe: An Ideological Approach to Radicalisation through Content Analysis and the Effect of Salafi Institutionalization in Europe", Unpublished, 2017, https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.20166.06726.

[15] Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,"; Mirwais Balkhi, "The Revival of an Old Narrative to Counter Terrorism: The 'Balkh School Approach' to Neutralizing the Neo-Kharijite Narrative in the Islamic World," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 12, no. 1 (June 2022): 98–111, https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2022.12.1.97-124."

[16] Roel Meijer, *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[17] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security* 35, no. 3 (2010): 53–94, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00023.

engagement. For instance, the Da'wa Salafīya in Alexandria, Egypt, alternates between religious and political roles to adapt to shifting political environments and ensure its survival[18]. This strategic repositioning allows the movement to remain active across varied regional, social, and political contexts. The transnational reach of Salafism enables it to uphold core ideological principles while integrating with local cultures, as demonstrated in Azerbaijan, where the movement assimilated local norms.[19] This example complicates the commonly assumed puritanical image of Salafism and raises questions about the socio-political conditions that make such accommodation possible.

A significant strategy of the Salafi movement entails establishing and assuming control of local mosques, which serve as hubs for mobilizing followers and disseminating ideology. In Lombok, Indonesia, the construction of the Salafi Mosque was strongly opposed by local Islamic organizations, but in response, it solidified the movement's vigor through conflict mobilization, thus reinforcing Salafi networks and resources.[20] The above trend reveals that local conflict can destabilize transnational movements but also strengthen their resolve and fortify them. Political pragmatism constitutes another Salafi key tactic. In Egypt, groups like Ḥizb al-Nūr have collaborated with ruling regimes to preserve their influence while adhering to their religious doctrines.[21]

Social engagement plays a central role in the movement's strategy. Salafism often appeals to marginalized groups by providing a sense of identity and community. In Tunisia, the movement successfully attracted youth by addressing socio-economic grievances

[18] Laurence Deschamps-Laporte, "Exploring the Fluidity of Egyptian Salafism: From Quietism to Politics and Co-Optation," *Contemporary Islam* 17, no. 2 (2023): 223–41, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-023-00518-9.

[19] Fuad Aliyev, "Situating Salafī Islam in Azerbaijan," *Die Welt Des Islams* 60, nos. 2–3 (2020): 267–92, https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-06023P05.

[20] Saparudin and Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia."

[21] Stéphane Lacroix, "Sectarianism and Political Pragmatism: The Paradox of Egypt's al-Nour Salafis," in *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, ed. Frederic Wehrey, Oxford Scholarship Online Political Science (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190876050.001.0001.

and fostering belonging among socially excluded populations.[22] This aligns with social movement theory, where grievances and collective identity formation become central drivers of mobilization. Additionally, religious education remains a cornerstone of Salafi efforts, particularly in teaching Hadith and Islamic law. Educational programs have significantly contributed to its growth, particularly in the West, most prominently in the United States, where Salafi influence has been reinforced by graduates of institutions such as the University of Madina.[23]

Hasan[24] showed that in Indonesia, Salafism went through Saudi-financed networks such as DDII, LIPIA, and scholarship networks to gain followers, feeding quietist, then political, and even jihadi currents such as Laskar Jihad and Jemaah Islamiyah. Din Wahid described Salafi boarding schools (*pesantren*) as exclusionary enclaves that combine liberal curricula with strict Salafi pedagogy,[25] constituting identity by circumscribing broader social interaction. These works point out that Salafism in Indonesia is far from being an alien ideology that has been transplanted from elsewhere; rather, it interacts with democratization, identity politics, and resistance from local religious cultures.

Despite its strategic successes, the Salafi *da'wa* movement faces considerable challenges. Internal disputes among its factions and resistance to efforts promoting moderation and interreligious harmony persist as significant obstacles.[26] In South Sulawesi, the movement gained acceptance through responsive social strategies, although challenges in fostering tolerance and moderation remain.[27] In the specific context of Banten, these studies suggest that the worldwide multiplicity of Salafism, ranging from quietist *da'wa* to

[22] Lacroix, "Sectarianism and Political Pragmatism: The Paradox of Egypt's al-Nour Salafis."
[23] Elmasry, "The Salafis in America."
[24] Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Failure of the Wahhabi Campaign: Transnational Islam and the Salafi *Madrasa* in Post-9/11 Indonesia," *South East Asia Research* 18, no. 4 (2010): 675–705, https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2010.0015.
[25] Din Wahid, "Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia," *Wacana* 15, no. 2 (2014): 367, https://doi.org/10.17510/wacana.v15i2.413.
[26] Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement."
[27] Andi Aderus et al., "Religious Moderation and Transnational Islamic Ideology: Phenomena and Implications in Indonesia," *Ulumuna* 28, no. 1 (2024): 485–509, https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i1.969.

politicized activism, interlocks with local syncretic Islam cultures to instigate tensions and enable local variation. It is by virtue of this theoretical variation between transnational Salafism and local reception that Bantenese Muslims broker their religious identity under the pressure of globalization.

Local Muslim Conservatism and Its Response to Salafi *Da'wa*

The interaction between local Muslim conservatism and transnational reformist Islam is complex and context-dependent. Pribadi and Ghufron[28] analyzed how urban middle-class Muslims in Banten redefine Islamic identity by strictly adhering to Salafi principles. Their findings highlight the commodification of Islam, where religious values and symbols have been transformed into commodities, altering traditional expressions shaped by the Sultanate of Banten. This commodification reflects broader socio-economic changes and the influence of transnational Islamic movements like Salafism. This pattern illustrates how Salafism functions not only as a doctrinal project but also as part of identity politics, consistent with Meijer's[29] framing of Salafism as a global yet locally embedded religious movement.

In regions with entrenched Islamic traditions, such as Banten and West Sumatra, the Salafi movement often encounters resistance due to its exclusivist, puritan stance. Zulfadli et al.[30] observed that local Islamic conservatism in West Sumatra has been shaped by political opportunities post-New Order, enabling local organizations to consolidate influence and protect traditional practices. Similarly, Salim[31] noted that interactions between local and transnational Islamic movements in Indonesia are not new, highlighting how historical, political, and religious landscapes have evolved through these

[28] Yanwar Pribadi and Zaki Ghufron, "Komodifikasi Islam Dalam Ekonomi Pasar: Studi Tentang Muslim Perkotaan Di Banten," *Afkaruna* 15, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.18196/AIIJIS.2019.0096.82-112.

[29] Meijer, *Global Salafism*.

[30] Zulfadli et al., "From Islamic Modernism to Islamic Conservatism: The Case of West Sumatra Provinces, Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2024): 2406297, https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2406297.

[31] Delmus Puneri Salim, *The Transnational and the Local in the Politics of Islam: The Case of West Sumatra, Indonesia* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-15413-8.

engagements.[32] In Maluku, the Salafi movement has found greater acceptance by leveraging education, social engagement, and politics to gain legitimacy among local Muslims.[33] These cases reveal that local conservatism is not uniformly opposed. Local conservatism may be restraining; however, it allows for Salafi expansion by taking advantage of institutional or political opportunities. This strategy is in line with religious market theory, suggesting that competition and opportunity structures constitute religious authority.

Responses to Salafi *da'wa* have varied in different regions. In South Sulawesi, the movement effectively gained societal acceptance through responsive social strategies but struggled to internalize religious moderation and adapt to local cultural norms.[34] Similarly, in Lombok, tensions with mainstream Islamic organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Nahdlatul Wathan arose over the Salafi Mosque construction. These rivalries ended up consolidating Salafi power, a pattern that can be accounted for under conflict mobilization theory, where outside opposition enhances cohesion and legitimacy of the group.[35]

Intra-Muslim relations also play a significant role in responses to Salafism. In Indonesia, traditional Islamic authorities, such as the *ḥabā'ib* (a hereditary elite of Muslim scholars and community leaders of Hadrami descent who trace their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad and hold significant spiritual and social authority), have actively defended traditionalism against Salafi-Wahhabi influences, leveraging these contests to build religious authority and appeal to younger urban Muslims.[36] Such polemics mirror Wiktorowicz's[37]

[32] Fawaizul Umam and Khoirul Faizin, "The Institutional Responses of State Islamic Universities to Islamism: Lessons Learned from Three Campuses," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 2 (December 2020): 252–82, https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2020.10.2.253-283.

[33] Hasbollah Toisuta, Saidin Ernas, and Abidin Wakano, "Salafi Movement Post-Conflict Ambon: A Search for Identity in Maluku," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 18, no. 2 (2023): 133–51, https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol18no2.10.

[34] Aderus et al., "Religious Moderation and Transnational Islamic Ideology."

[35] Saparudin and Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia."

[36] Egi Tanadi Taufik, "Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers, by Syamsul Rijal," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 180, no. 1 (April 2024): 118–21, https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-18001006.

[37] Taufik, "Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia."

typology, where purist Salafis confront Sufi or traditionalist actors, creating symbolic boundaries that reinforce both Salafi exclusivism and local religious authority among the Muslim public. Similar debates occur in the UK, where Sufi–Salafi polemics over "authentic Islam" highlight the broader struggle for legitimacy within Muslim publics.

In Malaysia, a dual response to Salafi-Wahhabi expansion can be observed. While societal resilience is undermined by grievances and transnational Islamist networks, the state maintains strong resistance due to its long-standing control over religious affairs and experiences with terror threats.[38] This shows the role of the state as an arbiter in religious markets, limiting Salafi penetration while allowing partial entry through informal networks. In Indonesia, Islamic conservatism seems to be on the rise, as reflected in Sharia-inspired local regulations, which is proof of perceived religious identity safeguarding from symbolic threats. It is motivated by individual social identifications and experiences of those perceived threats.[39] Trends demonstrate how local cultural and political environments meet Salafist inclinations.[40]

In such instances, cross-regional evidence reveals that the reception of Salafism is brokered by conflict opportunities, cultural accommodation, and political control. Less studied is how such processes function in Banten, itself an area of vibrant syncretic Islamic tradition but abrupt urbanization and sponsored Salafi-oriented learning. Salafism in Lombok, South Sulawesi, and West Sumatra has been analyzed by Hasan[41] and Wahid,[42] while little is known of how rural and urban Bantenese Muslims selectively accommodate Salafi teaching while maintaining old-established, traditional practices. It is to that gap that the research at hand addresses itself by exploring localized reactions, thus extending

[38] Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Navigating Against Salafi-Wahabi Expansion in Malaysia: The Role of State and Society," *Studia Islamika* 29, no. 1 (2022): 1–29, https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v29i1.25213.

[39] Muhammad Pandu Saksono Prasetyo and Rizka Halida, "The Correlation Between Perceptual Threats to Religious Identity with Conservatism for Indonesian Muslims," in *Promoting Well-Being in a Multicultural Society*, ed. Lathifah Hanum, Psychology Research Progress Ser (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Incorporated, 2020), 239–51.

[40] Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement."

[41] Hasan, "The Failure of the Wahhabi Campaign."

[42] Wahid, "Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia."

religious adaptation and conflict mobilization theories to the specific case of Banten.

Capturing Local Religious Life: Methodological Reflections on Banten

This study was designed as a qualitative inquiry grounded in a case study approach, focusing on how traditional Islamic practices interact with the presence of the Salafi *da'wa* movement in Cikande Subdistrict, Serang Regency, Banten. Rather than isolating religious dynamics from their broader social context, this approach sought to understand how local communities respond to the growing influence of Salafism within the lived realities of their cultural and religious life. Initial insights were informed by a preliminary survey involving 98 respondents, which revealed that 82 percent of participants were familiar with only one traditional Islamic practice, 13 percent were unaware of any, 3 percent recognized two, and only 2 percent identified three or more. It was a survey conducted during February 2024 with participants from different sections of society, like Salafi adherents, rural residents, and newly settled couples in urban Serang. It was not only background contextual information but also a methodological point of entry for deeper qualitative research.

To capture the complexity of these interactions, the study relied on various sources of information, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The interviews conducted with religious teachers, community elders, young adults, and educators revealed that traditional practices such as *tarekat* and *debus* are no longer taken for granted. In many cases, these practices are being reviewed and questioned, especially in urban environments where rapid development and shifts in educational orientation influence religious life. Observations at Qur'anic education centers and private Islamic schools offered additional insights that complemented these narratives. Within these educational spaces, elements of Salafi ideology such as strict emphasis on monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and literal interpretations of scripture have begun to shape the learning environment. The observations also underscored clear differences in religious orientation across locations. In rural areas, communities continue to uphold inherited traditions with a sense of reverence and responsibility, whereas in urban settings, many young

people express an affinity for the clear and structured teachings associated with Salafi interpretations of Islam.

In addition to field interactions, document analysis offered another layer of insight, examining the curricula, teaching materials, and institutional programs used in *pesantren* and local Islamic schools. These materials highlighted how Salafi principles are selectively integrated, and in some cases, contested or adapted, especially in Cidahu, where classical Islamic scholarship is blended with modern vocational instruction to maintain both religious and social relevance. These findings support previous research on cultural adaptation and religious negotiation in changing environments.[43]

Methodologically, the four members of the research team with backgrounds in Islamic studies, anthropology, and sociology were alert to the fact that positionality shapes field interactions. Access to the *pesantren* and mosque was supported by their educational connections and shared Muslim identity, but it also created expectations that they would represent certain views. To minimize potential bias, data triangulation was employed through the combination of interviews, observations, and documents, with reflexive field notes commenting on instances where the informants' perceptions of the field workers might have influenced their responses. The use of triangulation helped enhance the credibility and validity of the findings by allowing cross-verification between sources and methods.[44] Ethical considerations were of paramount importance. Verbal and written informed consent was requested, pseudonyms were used throughout, and sensitive points such as critique of local religious leaders were not included in the publication to protect the participants, in accordance with accepted principles of respect, beneficence, and justice in research ethics.[45] In addition, the research team acknowledged that the data consisted of negotiated accounts

[43] Solihah Titin Sumanti, Nunzairina, and Salminawati, "The Evolution of Islamic Educational Institutions in North Sumatra Indonesia," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2024): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i1.4419.

[44] Cem Harun Meydan and Handan Akkaş, "The Role of Triangulation in Qualitative Research: Converging Perspectives," in *Principles of Conducting Qualitative Research in Multicultural Settings*, ed. Ali Elhami, Anita Roshan, and Harish Chandan (IGI Global, 2024), 101–32, https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-3306-8.ch006.

[45] María Guadalupe Miranda-Novales and Miguel Ángel Villasís-Keever, "El Protocolo de Investigación VIII. La Ética de La Investigación En Seres Humanos," *Revista Alergia México* 66, no. 1 (2019): 115–22, https://doi.org/10.29262/ram.v66i1.594.

shaped through interaction, rather than neutral or unmediated representations of reality, which aligns with prevailing epistemological understandings in qualitative inquiry.

The analysis process followed an iterative path, with coding, theme development, and interpretation conducted alongside data collection. This allowed key patterns to emerge gradually and with grounding in the everyday experiences of the Bantenese Muslim community. Themes such as the selective appropriation of Salafi teachings, the persistence of local religious forms, and the shifting role of education were identified and developed through continuous engagement with field data. By drawing on multiple methods and maintaining a close connection to the lived context, the study presents a layered understanding of how global Islamic movements intersect with local heritage. In doing so, it identifies the forces opposing customary practice, yet also innovative products through which populations retain significance and identity, something marked by local agency as much as by the broader interaction between transnational Islam and locally rooted religious existence.

Evolution of Islamization and Cultural Identity in Banten

This study explores the historical and socio-cultural aspects of Islamization in Banten, focusing on the community's awareness of Islamic traditions and the relationship between religion, governance, and culture. An initial survey of 98 respondents from Cikande and Serang revealed significant gaps in cultural knowledge: 82 percent of participants were familiar with only one Islamic traditional practice, 13 percent were entirely unaware of such practices, three percent knew two traditions, and two percent recognized three or more. These findings highlight a limited understanding of Banten's Islamic heritage, particularly among the urban Muslim youth, emphasizing the need for targeted educational and cultural programs.

To deepen these insights, interviews with local community members provided detailed perspectives on the fading awareness of traditional practices and the impact of urbanization. A religious teacher from Cikande remarked, "Traditions such as *debus* and *tarekat* are beginning to be forgotten, especially by the younger generation. Many consider these traditions irrelevant, even though they are an important part of Banten's Islamic heritage." Similarly, a 28-year-old entrepreneur from Serang admitted, "I know about Maulid Nabi, but

I don't know much about other traditions. Perhaps in the city, access to information about these traditions is limited." These observations align with findings from Tang and Jiang,[46] who noted that urbanization disrupts the cultural fabric of communities, leading to diminished connections with traditional practices. Scholars such as McDaniel and Alley[47] further highlighted that urban residents often possess lower environmental and cultural knowledge than their rural counterparts, signifying a broader loss of traditional understanding. Bilgin[48] also discussed cultural alienation, where urbanization promotes modern practices at the expense of traditional values. However, Tekin[49] emphasized the potential of holistic urban conservation approaches, which integrate tangible and intangible heritage to mitigate the erosion of cultural connections caused by urbanization. These findings underscore the urgency of preserving and revitalizing Banten's Islamic traditions amidst the sociocultural shifts driven by urban growth.

The historical process of Islamization in Banten reveals a transformative journey from Hindu-Buddhist dominion to an Islamic sultanate, marked by centralized royal authority and distinctive practices such as *tarekat* and *debus*. As noted by van Bruinessen,[50] these practices were institutionalized under the palace's control, distinguishing Banten from other regions in Java, where community-based Islamic institutions like *pesantren* held greater influence. The two reveal a broader conceptual divergence between state-centric Islamization, as is the case for Banten's sultanate, and community-based Islamization more prevalent in Central Java or Madura. State-centric Islamization associated religion firmly with government, which

[46] Xuelan Tang and Zhe Jiang, "Urban Spatial Expansion and Its Influence Factors Based on RS/GIS: A Case Study in Changsha," *Economic Geography*, no. 3 (2017): 81–85.

[47] Tang and Jiang, "Urban Spatial Expansion and Its Influence Factors Based on RS/GIS: A Case Study in Changsha."

[48] Oğuzhan BIlgin, "Change of Practices of Naming Children in Turkey in the Context of Cultural Alienation and the Popular Culture Figures," *Milli Folklor* 16, no. 125 (2020): 177–87.

[49] Gözde Tekin, "Cultural Dimension of Revitalization in Historical City Centers Tarihî Kent Merkezlerinde Yeniden Canlandirmanin Kültürel Boyutu," *Milli Folklor* 17, no. 130 (2021): 84–95.

[50] Martin Van Bruinessen, "In the Tradition or Outside? Reflections on Teachers and Influences," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 53, no. 1 (2015): 53–103, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2015.531.53-103.

helped to preserve certain royal traditions yet limited religious plurality at the communal level.[51] Compared to community-based Islamization, which develops strength through accommodation at the local grassroots level, it allowed *pesantren* traditions to counter external forces.[52] The divergence matters to the identification of the sustainability of syncretic Islamic traditions within the era of globalization.

A local historian elaborated, "The royal system in Banten greatly influenced how Islam was disseminated. The palace functioned not only as a center of governance but also as a center of religious education. This is what gives Banten's Islam its formal characteristics." Similarly, a community elder reflected, "We still see the influence of the palace in how these traditions are practiced, although they are now more independently managed." These insights highlight the unique historical integration in Banten, where Islamization was closely tied to governance and cultural preservation.[53]

Trade and marriage alliances also played a significant role in disseminating Islamic teachings and fostering a syncretic cultural identity. The Merak port served as a crucial hub, connecting residents with Muslim traders from Gujarat and the Middle East, who introduced Islamic values through commerce and familial ties. A fisherman from Merak noted, "In the past, the port was a meeting place for Muslim traders and residents. Through trade, many people began to learn about Islam and its values." These interactions not only facilitated economic exchanges but also promoted cultural and religious integration, blending pre-Islamic traditions with Islamic principles.[54]

Marriage alliances further strengthened these integrative efforts, forging political alliances and consolidating power within the region. These unions eased political tensions and facilitated the blending of diverse cultural elements, reinforcing Banten's syncretic Islamic identity.[55] This coexistence is vividly reflected in architectural

[51] Sadok Belaid, "Role of Religious Institutions in Support of the State," in *Beyond Coercion*, 1st ed., ed. Adeed Dawisha and I. William Zartman (Routledge, 2015), 147–63, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315684819-7.
[52] Belaid, "Role of Religious Institutions in Support of the State."
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

landmarks like the Avalokitesvara monastery and the Great Mosque of Banten, which symbolize a history of religious tolerance and adaptation. A local historian emphasized, "The presence of the mosque near this monastery demonstrates how Islam entered, without erasing local identities but instead adapting and integrating with them."

Educational institutions like *pesantren* have historically been central to preserving and promoting Banten's Islamic traditions. Pesantren Cidahu, established in the early 19th century, exemplifies this legacy by combining classical Islamic education with contemporary skills development. Its caretaker, Kiai Hamdan, stated, "The students here still study classical Islamic texts, but we have also started to teach modern skills such as [information] technology. This is important to ensure they remain relevant in today's world." This adaptability reflects the broader resilience of *pesantren*, which integrate local cultural values with Islamic teachings to maintain relevance in a changing socio-religious landscape.[56]

Efforts to preserve and revive traditions like *debus* have gained momentum through cultural festivals that reconnect younger generations with their heritage. Ustaz Rifqi, a *debus* performer, emphasized, "We are trying to preserve this tradition as part of Banten's Islamic identity. Young people need to understand that this is not just a performance but contains spiritual values." These festivals not only foster community cohesion but also promote economic development through tourism.[57]

From a theoretical perspective, these outcomes are evidencing what Robertson[58] and Beyer[59] theorized as "glocalization," meaning that religious globalizations always take local form, yet local identifications at the very same moment redefine the meaning of the

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[56] Suwendi et al., "Roles and Challenges of Pesantren Intellectual Networks," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 24, no. 2 (2024): 453–70, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v24i2.23134.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1995), 25–44, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446250563.n2.

[59] Raf Vanderstraeten, "Religions in Global Society – By P. Beyer," *The British Journal of Sociology* 58, no. 2 (2007): 320–21, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00153_3.x.

global. In Banten, state-initiated Islamization created a context wherein syncretic traditions such as *debus* and *tarekat* could endure even as transnational Salafism presented fresh challenges to religious authority. This should not be understood as an attempt to idealize or preserve local traditions for their own sake; rather, it shows the ongoing interaction between global Islamic tendencies and local identifications. In Aceh, religious authority has been fortified by state-enforced Sharīʿa, yet has also summoned arguments over pluralism. In Lombok, the new Salafi mosque stoked conflict with NW,[60] like Banten's conflict with NU. In Pattani, Thailand, and in Southern Malaysia, Saudi-supported networks similarly test local Sufi identifications, revealing common regional stresses and new local pathways.[61]

Considering these developments, Banten is significant to the global discourse, as it illustrates how state-initiated Islamization creates a divergent model of durability to community-initiated Islamization: royal patronage institutionalizes rites that persist as cultural custom, while *pesantren*-based templates rely on communal interpretation. Thus, Banten presents an exceptional case in global discussions on Islamization. It demonstrates that syncretic traditions are not a relic of the past but fluid assets for negotiating world religious authority,[62] transnational Salafi connections, and local identity in the era of globalization.

Expansion and Influence of Salafist *Da'wa* in Banten

This analysis explores the Salafist *da'wa* movement in Banten, tracing its emergence, strategies, and sociocultural implications. Introduced through globalization and human mobility, the movement emphasizes the "purification" of Islamic teachings and alignment with original religious principles. Imported primarily from Middle Eastern Islamic organizations under Saudi auspices, Salafism aims to counter Western cultural influences, re-articulating Islam to reflect its perceived early glory.

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[60] Saparudin and Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia."

[61] Srawut Aree and Christopher M. Joll, "The Religious Geography of Thailand's Malay Southern Provinces: Revisiting the Impact of South Asian and Middle Eastern Transnational Islamic Movements," *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 35, no. 2 (2020): 343–63, https://doi.org/10.1355/sj35-2f.

[62] Salim, *The Transnational and the Local in the Politics of Islam*.

Salafism, with its strict emphasis on *tawḥīd* and rejection of pluralistic interpretations, presents a puritanical approach to Islamic practice that often attracts accusations of radicalism and intolerance.[63] A local Islamic scholar commented, "The Salafi focus on textual interpretations often alienates local Muslims accustomed to more inclusive practices." Despite such criticisms, Salafi proponents argue for a return to authentic Islamic principles, emphasizing moral and spiritual renewal as essential for contemporary Muslim communities.[64] This ideological stance has sparked significant debates within Banten's Muslim communities, where tensions arise between preserving traditional practices and embracing Salafi teachings, reflecting broader questions about societal changes and the role of religious authority in shaping modern Islamic identities.[65]

While its strict foundations might suggest rigidity, the Salafi movement in Banten has adapted to local contexts, adopting more moderate strategies to engage communities effectively. A community elder observed, "The Salafi *da'wa* here has changed to become more inclusive, allowing it to gain acceptance among diverse groups." These adaptations mirror similar developments in other regions, such as Maluku and Sambas, where Salafism engages with education and social media to influence religious narratives.[66] The use of digital platforms has been particularly effective in reaching younger audiences, as a study participant noted, "Through online platforms, we can connect with scholars and learn without geographical limitations." This digital strategy blends Islamic teachings with contemporary cultural elements, appealing to urban, tech-savvy populations.[67]

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[63] Mohamed-Ali Adraoui, "Western Salafism: Socialization, Politicization and Globalization," in *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, 2nd ed, ed. Roberto Tottoli, Routledge Handbooks (London New York (N. Y.): Routledge, Taylor & Francis group, 2022).

[64] Martijn De Koning, "The Moral Maze: Dutch Salafis and the Construction of a Moral Community of the Faithful," *Contemporary Islam* 7, no. 1 (2013): 71–83, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-013-0247-x.

[65] Østebø, "Local Reformers and the Search for Change: The Emergence of Salafism in Bale, Ethiopia."

[66] Toisuta, Ernas, and Wakano, "Salafi Movement Post-Conflict Ambon: A Search for Identity in Maluku."

[67] Abdulhakim Nsobya, "'To Vote or Not to Vote' Facebook as Platform for Salafi Discourses on Voting in Uganda," in *Digital Technologies, Elections and Campaigns in*

Urban migration has also played a critical role in shaping the Salafi movement's presence in Banten. The influx of middle-class Muslims from larger cities has introduced demands for modern interpretations of Islam. A young professional from Serang remarked, "Urban Muslims often seek simplified, practical religious guidance, which the Salafi movement effectively provides." This shift has allowed Salafism to establish strongholds in urban areas, leveraging education and social media for outreach. The rise of urban Salafism across Indonesia, characterized by its appeal to skeptical youth disenchanted with mainstream Islamic organizations, reflects this trend.[68]

Educational institutions remain at the heart of the Salafi movement in Banten, with *pesantren* and *madrasas* providing structured environments for disseminating its ideology. These schools often integrate classical Islamic teachings with modern curricula to appeal to broader audiences. A *pesantren* leader, Kiai Ahmad, explained, "Our students not only learn classical Islamic texts but also modern skills, ensuring they are prepared for contemporary challenges." Such institutions emphasize adherence to the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the practices of early pious generations, fostering discipline and strong religious convictions.[69]

Transnational influences from the Middle East, brought into the region by returning Indonesian students, have further shaped the Salafi educational framework, aligning it with global Salafi currents.[70] However, these institutions have faced criticism for promoting exclusivist interpretations of Islam, which sometimes conflict with mainstream Islamic practices. Critics argue that this fosters social tensions, while Salafi educators defend their approach as one that

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Africa, 1st ed., ed. Duncan Omanga, Admire Mare, and Pamela Mainye (London: Routledge, 2023), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003429081.

[68] Majed Karoui, "Social Exclusion and the Growing Involvement of Tunisian Youth in the Salafi Movement: A Field Study," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 11, nos. 1–2 (2018): 127–37, https://doi.org/10.1525/caa.2018.000008.

[69] Fitri Meliani, Hasan Basri, and Andewi Suhartini, "Learning System in Salafi Manhaj Boarding School," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (2023): 175–86, https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v4i2.300.

[70] Amal Fathullah Zarkasyi, "Ta'thīr al-Ḥarakah al-Salafīyah Bi Miṣr 'alà al-Mujaddidīn Bi Indūnīsiyā fī Taṭwīr al-Tarbīyah al-Islāmīyah," *Studia Islamika* 20, no. 2 (2013): 275–324, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v20i2.389.

instills discipline and moral integrity, preparing students for both spiritual and social responsibilities.[71]

Through globalization, Salafism in Banten has emerged as a transnational movement, connecting local communities with international networks. This influence is evident in the establishment of educational institutions funded by Middle Eastern organizations, emphasizing *tawḥīd* and foundational Salafi doctrines.[72] While this financial and ideological support amplifies Salafi influence, it also challenges local socio-religious norms. A *pesantren* teacher noted, "The financial assistance helps sustain our institutions, but we must ensure it aligns with our local values and traditions."

The Salafi movement's adaptability illustrates its resilience, yet it continues to face challenges in balancing its strict interpretations with the diverse needs of a modern society. Local communities remain divided over its long-term impact, reflecting the complexities of religious transformation in Banten. These tensions underscore the broader struggles of integrating global religious ideologies with local traditions, emphasizing the need for dialogue and community engagement to navigate these evolving challenges.

Reflections on Socio-Religious Change in Banten

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the interaction between traditional Islamic practices and Salafism in Banten, particularly in Cikande Subdistrict, Serang Regency. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research examined the socio-religious characteristics of the local community through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The exploratory survey conducted in February 2024 drew respondents from Salafi communities, urban migrants, and young married couples in Serang. It revealed that 82 percent of respondents were familiar with only one Islamic traditional practice in Banten, while 13 percent were unaware of any such practice. Due to the restricted sample size and non-random selection, findings should be interpreted as illustrative rather than representative. Even so, they contextualize the qualitative findings by underscoring the limited awareness of Islamic traditions, particularly among younger urban Muslims.

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[71] Saparudin and Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia."
[72] Hasan, "The Failure of the Wahhabi Campaign."

This study builds upon previous research on religious transformation in urban areas by focusing on rural communities. The findings reveal selective engagement with Salafi teachings, where acceptance and resistance coexist. Mechanisms of this selectivity include the authority of local *'ulamā'* and *ḥabā'ib*, the ritual functions of practices such as *tarekat* and *debus*, and socio-economic factors such as access to Salafi-funded schools. Salafi principles appeal to certain groups, particularly urban migrants and younger generations, while traditional practices remain an essential part of rural Muslim identity. This reflects what Feener et al.[73] terms the "vernacularization" of Islam, where universal Islamic teachings are reinterpreted within local cultural frameworks, producing unique forms of Bantenese Islam.

Participant observation at TPA (community-based Qur'anic education centers) and private Islamic schools revealed that the Salafi influence extends into educational practices**.** These organizations emphasize rigid adherence to *tawḥīd* and fundamental Salafi teachings, a pattern in harmony with the broader emergence of Salafi foundation Islamic schools in Indonesia that promote a "purification of Islam" under hybrid Islamic and *pesantren* models of learning.[74] However, responses to these teachings vary. Youth and migrants to cities seem to readily adopt Salafi-oriented interpretations and norms, whereas rural citizens exhibit greater resistance and continue to adhere to traditional practices, a pattern repeated elsewhere in Indonesia.[75] This division betrays as many modernities as theorized by Eisenstadt[76] to account for how processes of modernization deliver divergent religious routes: Salafi purism for some, vernacular persistence for others.

Document analysis provided additional insights into the incorporation of Salafi ideology into formal and informal educational environments. For instance, the application of Salafi principles to Islamic school curricula is illustrative of religious identity change among younger generations. Nevertheless, questions arise whether curricula change is merely documentary and not reflected at the

[73] R. Michael Feener et al., "Islamisation and the Formation of Vernacular Muslim Material Culture in 15th-Century Northern Sumatra," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 49, no. 143 (2021): 1–41, https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2021.1873564.
[74] Makruf and Asrori, "In the Making of Salafi-Based Islamic Schools in Indonesia."
[75] Hasan, "The Failure of the Wahhabi Campaign."
[76] Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315124872.

classroom pedagogy level. Labeling education as an ideological state apparatus[77] clarifies educational functioning as a religious socialization space. Parallel to broader research, for instance,[78] is the fact that educational functioning is central to promoting Salafi doctrine. In contrast, local conservatism in West Sumatra actively resists Salafi influence.[79]

The historical context of the Sultanate of Banten offers more background to these findings. Through the interlinking of religious dissemination with economic and political measures, the Sultanate of Banten has built a syncretic cultural identity.[80] It has established the selective embracing of Bantenese Muslims towards Salafi ideology, allowing for assimilation of new beliefs while preserving cultural identity. By contrast, Aceh and Lombok show different tendencies: Aceh's strong Sharīʿa institutions resist Salafi influence more successfully, yet Lombok shows how conflict with NU and NW have indeed consolidated Salafi networks.[81] In Southeast Asia, Pattani and southern Malaysia exhibit a similar conflict between state-controlled Islam and transnational Salafi activity; however, the Sultanate of Banten's background created unique grounds for syncretic strength.

This study also applied Berger and Luckmann's theory of social reality to interpret these interactions.[82] The coexistence of traditional practices and Salafi ideologies reflects processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, resulting in a negotiated religious identity. When paired with Feener's vernacularization framework and Eisenstadt's multiple modernities, these findings move beyond a descriptive account to show how local Muslim communities adapt, resist, and reconfigure transnational religious pressures in creative ways. Bantenese Muslims pragmatically balance preserving traditional practices with aspirations for religious reform. These findings parallel

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[77] L. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *New Critical Writings in Political Sociology: Volume Two: Conventional and Contentious Politics*, 1st ed., by Alan Scott, ed. Kate Nash (London: Routledge, 2024), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003572923.

[78] Majid et al., "Relasi Islam dan Politik dalam Sejarah Nasional Indonesia."

[79] Zulfadli et al., "From Islamic Modernism to Islamic Conservatism."

[80] Rismawidiawati et al., "'Gawe Kuta Baluwarti Bata Kalawan Kawis'; Contribution of Local Knowledge to the Expansion of the Banten Sultanate on the Nusantara Spice Route."

[81] Saparudin and Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia."

[82] Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

Abdullah's study in Malaysia, which explored societal responses to Salafism in managing transnational influences.[83]

While focused upon Cikande and Serang, its findings signify broader implications, showing mechanisms of local–global religious negotiation with broader relevance to additional Indonesian and Southeast Asian cases. Transferability is to be identified in vernacular strength, adaptive selectivity, and institutional role of education as sites of contest. In the Indonesian context, those mechanisms find resonance in Aceh, where powerful state-led Sharīʿa institutions exert customary strength over Salafi influence, and Lombok, where conflict with NU and NW have paradoxically entrenched Salafi networks. More broadly, analogies to southern Malaysia and Pattani in Thailand point to how state regulation and exclusion from politics shape analogous tensions. Positioning of Banten within that comparative matrix allows the research to contribute to world discourses upon glocalization[84] and vernacularization in showing that Islamic modernities of Southeast Asia are not monolithic yet rather negotiated through various interactions of transnational reformist currents with deeply ingrained local stock.[85]

This study underscores the importance of fostering dialogue and community engagement to navigate the intersection of traditional Islamic practices and transnational religious movements. Rather than prescriptive advice, it may be grounded on empirical locations such as neighborhood *majlis ta'lim* (private Islamic reading groups organized in residential or community spaces) and *mushāwara* (deliberative councils for decision making through consensus) at the village level, which have successfully mediated tensions between Salafi and conservative forces. Future research could further examine how globalization and social media shape these interactions, particularly among younger, tech-savvy Muslims who are actively redefining religious identities in contemporary contexts.

Concluding Remarks

The encounter between Salafism and Bantenese Islamic heritage does not represent a simple opposition between competing

[83] Abdullah, "Navigating Against Salafi-Wahabi Expansion in Malaysia."
[84] Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity."
[85] Feener et al., "Islamisation and the Formation of Vernacular Muslim Material Culture in 15th-Century Northern Sumatra."

religious currents but rather a deeper negotiation of meaning and identity within a changing social and religious environment. Instead of eliminating traditional expressions, the presence of Salafism encourages selective engagement, being accepted in some communities while prompting resistance in others. This pattern reveals the enduring strength of local Islamic traditions that continue to shape religious life in Banten despite external influences.

The developments in Banten reflect a layered interaction shaped by urban growth, generational differences, and religious education. Younger Muslims in urban settings often turn to Salafism for its perceived clarity and consistency, while rural communities continue to practice long-established rituals as meaningful forms of spiritual expression. These contrasting responses point to the varied ways communities adapt their religious practices while remaining connected to their cultural and historical roots.

Rather than framing Salafism as a disruptive force, this study suggests that its influence invites careful reflection. In some cases, it leads to accommodation, while in others, it strengthens commitment to what is considered spiritually and culturally significant. Religious transformation in Banten is, therefore, part of a broader process, where Indonesian Islam evolves through careful engagement with new ideas while preserving what is valued.

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