

THE CONTESTATION OF IDEAS BETWEEN KH. SHINWANI ADRA'I AND LOCAL ASWAJA ULAMA IN MADURA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Religious conflict between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and Aswaja ulama in Madura reflects tensions between a text-based orientation toward ritual purification and socio-religious practices that have long been embedded in local culture, particularly devotional traditions such as tahlil and maulid. This study aims to uncover the roots of these tensions and to explain how discourses of difference can be transformed into narratives of peace. The research employs a qualitative approach using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model. Data were collected through a literature-based study of YouTube sermons, responses from local kiai, and relevant academic references, then analyzed across three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The findings indicate that the conflict arises not only from theological differences but also from competition over the legitimacy of religious authority in digital spaces, which amplifies the conflict's resonance. However, scholarly clarification and pesantren-based mediation are able to reconstruct the meaning of "difference" as a potential resource for social learning. This study contributes to scholarship on local religious authority and proposes a discourse-based framework for reconciliation.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis; contestation of ideas; KH. Shinwani Adra'i Aswaja Ulama

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of KH. Shinwani Adra'i in Bangkalan, Madura, in 2012 marked the beginning of a conflict dynamic and sharp divergences of perspective among local Islamic scholars (Riadi, 2022a). KH. Shinwani who is described as having an Arab-Chinese family background and being deeply rooted in the pesantren tradition Tamphu (2024) is known for his firm commitment to the purification of Islamic teachings and his opposition to traditions deemed to lack a basis in the Qur'an and Hadith. Throughout his educational trajectory and religious service, he has also been recognized for a forthright and uncompromising manner of expressing his views.

This conflict gained wider public attention on social media after the YouTube account Hisada Official uploaded KH. Shinwani Adra'i's sermons, whose religious positions were frequently at odds with those of moderate Madurese kiai in their approach to local traditions and community religious practices, particularly in Madura (Jannah, 2019). One prominent manifestation of this tension was an open debate with KH. Zubair

Muntashor regarding the meaning and practice of *bid'ah* (religious innovation) (Azizah, 2020). KH. Shinwani tended to interpret *bid'ah* in a strict and textual manner, whereas KH. Zubair emphasized compromise between normative scriptural texts (*nash*) and local culture in the interest of social harmony. Other Madurese preachers and scholars, such as Ustadz Dzulkarnain, KH. Cholid Makhrus, KH. Marzuqi Mu'tamar, and others, expressed similar disagreements. Resistance and contestation emerged among alumni networks, santri communities, and the broader public, in part because KH. Shinwani's preaching style was perceived as firm and, at times, confrontational toward established religious consensus. Some community members and ulama even attached labels such as "Wahhabi" or "Salafi" to him; yet, in practice, the pesantren under his leadership reportedly continued to observe religious traditions such as *tahlilan* and other Aswaja activities (Imam et al., 2025).

The discursive conflict between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and Aswaja ulama in Madura conducted through face-to-face sermons as well as YouTube content indicates that religious differences do not emerge solely as debates over evidentiary proofs but also as struggles over meaning produced, disseminated, and contested within a digital public sphere. This dynamic demonstrates that sermons, video excerpts, counter-responses, and netizen comments operate as a chain of discursive production that shapes public opinion and affects power relations among religious authorities (Noor, 2012). For this reason, the phenomenon cannot be adequately explained through fiqh-based or sociology-of-religion approaches alone. It requires a framework capable of examining texts, the processes of discursive production, and the surrounding social structures. In this context, Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) becomes relevant because it conceptualizes language as a social practice that can reveal how religious conflict in Madura operates through sermon texts, patterns of circulation in digital media, and the ideologies and power relations that animate them (Kempe & Reed, 2014).

Fairclough's CDA is grounded in the premise that language is inseparable from power relations and ideology; therefore, utterances not only convey meaning but also shape social positions, legitimacy, and the boundaries of truth within a community. Fairclough argues that ideology often works most powerfully through what is not explicitly stated via presuppositions, interactional conventions, and speech patterns considered "normal" within a group (Fairclough, 2013). Within this framework, discourse is understood as an arena of meaning-making in which competing ideological formations struggle for dominance through lexical choices, quotation practices, preaching styles, and assertions of religious authority.

This approach is particularly pertinent for interpreting the tension between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and local Madurese ulama, because their differences are not confined to questions of fiqh or ritual tradition but also involve attempts by each side to establish the discursive order they regard as legitimate. KH. Shinwani's firm rejection of certain practices, his emphasis on returning to revelatory texts, and his confrontational rhetorical style encounter the discourse of local ulama, who prioritize social harmony and cultural integration. Through Fairclough's CDA, the conflict can be understood as a clash between two regimes of meaning: one seeking to restructure an older discursive order, and the other seeking to preserve cultural authority that has long been institutionalized in Madurese society (Ervania et al., 2022). Accordingly, the analysis attends not only to what the kiai say but also to how discursive structures, implicit assumptions, and communicative practices construct, negotiate, or resist established religious power.

Prior studies have examined KH. Shinwani Adra'i's position on *bid'ah*. These works converge in highlighting conceptual differences between KH. Shinwani's purification-oriented approach and local ulama's accommodation of Madurese traditions. First, Nur Azizah (Azizah, 2020) analyzes a comparison of each kiai's theological perspectives and their implications for community religious practice. Second, research by Nur Azizah, Angga Andar Saputra, and Ryan Purnomo (Azizah, Saputra, & Purnomo, 2024) emphasizes the dynamics of argumentation as representing two different religious currents, yet remains largely confined to doctrinal debates and responses to *bid'ah*. Third, Riadi (2022) provides a biographical account of KH. Shinwani, emphasizing his educational trajectory, his firm preaching style, and the social reception of the changes he promoted, but does not analytically connect these elements to broader dynamics of discursive conflict.

Although the tension between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and Aswaja ulama in Madura appears to be rooted in disagreements over scriptural proofs, the conflict is more accurately understood as emerging from two distinct orientations of religious praxis. KH. Shinwani positions worship as a ritual domain that must fully submit to textual authority, while local Aswaja ulama interpret practices such as *tahlil*, *maulid*, and sending *al-Fatihah* as socio-religious practices intertwined with culture, social cohesion, and communal solidarity in Madurese society (Pribadi, 2013). However, prior research has not sufficiently explored how this tension is constructed, negotiated, and contested through discourse particularly within KH. Shinwani's sermons and the responses of Madurese ulama in digital spaces (el-Nawawy & Khamis, 2009). By employing Norman Fairclough's CDA, this study argues that inter-kiai conflict is not merely a matter of doctrinal difference but an arena of symbolic and ideological negotiation expressed through language, rhetoric, and the interactional structure of preaching. Furthermore, this analysis suggests that discourse itself may function as a vehicle for reconstructing the meaning of difference, enabling debates that are initially confrontational to be redirected toward renewed understanding and a more civil form of social peace in Madura.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

This study employs Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary theoretical framework to examine the dynamics of religious conflict emerging in the sermons of KH. Shinwani Adra'i and the responses of Aswaja (Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah) scholars in Madura. Fairclough conceptualizes discourse as a social practice that is inseparable from power relations, ideology, and processes of domination enacted through language (Maskhue et al., 2022). Accordingly, religious sermons should not be understood merely as the transmission of messages (Munfarida, 2014), but also as efforts to shape boundaries of truth, authority, and social positioning within particular communities (Anshori, 2014). Discourse thus transforms into a battleground, wherein religious participants establish legitimacy through lexical selections, rhetorical techniques, and organizational speech patterns (Anshori, 2014).

Fairclough's Three Dimensions of Analysis Text Analysis

This stage examines the linguistic features of KH. Shinwani Adra'i's sermons, including word choice, semantic emphasis, rhetorical strategies, and experiential values that reflect particular ideological orientations. For example, Shinwani's view of the Prophet (Rasulullah) as a "catalogue" or absolute standard of Islamic teaching is used to judge

whether certain devotional practices are valid. Textual analysis enables the researcher to identify how a discourse of purification is constructed through firm and confrontational linguistic structures (HDTV Official, 2020).

Discursive Practice

This dimension addresses how discourse is produced, circulated, and interpreted. Shinwani's sermons and the responses of other Madurese kiai disseminated through YouTube (e.g., HISADA Official) and other channels indicate that digital media has become a new arena for the legitimation of, and resistance to, religious authority. This circulation of digital discourse demonstrates that differences in perspective do not remain confined to pesantren spaces but extend into the public sphere, shaping communal opinion. It also illustrates how discourse production processes (for example, Shinwani's provocative "nyolet mercon" preaching style) generate resistance and negotiation of authority (Rahman, 2017).

Social Practice

At this level, discourse is situated within the socio-cultural context of Madurese society, which is characterized by strong religious traditions, pesantren-based structures of ulama authority, and a Nahdliyin identity closely associated with ritual practices such as tahlilan and maulid. The divergent orientations between text-based purification (Shinwani) and socio-religious tradition (Aswaja scholars) produce tensions because they touch upon questions of identity and social cohesion in Madura (Riadi, 2022).

Religious Discourse Conflict in Madura

The conflict between KH. Shinwani and the Aswaja ulama of Madura essentially represents a clash between two orientations of religious praxis (Pribadi, 2013). (1) a text-based ritual purification stance emphasizing that worship must have explicit legitimation from the Prophet, and (2) a socio-religious traditional stance viewing rituals such as tahlil, maulid, and "sending" al-Fātiḥah as religious expressions integrated with local culture and functioning to sustain social cohesion in Madurese society. This divergence generates tension not due to doctrinal opposition in creed, but due to different understandings of religion's function, one prioritizing textual purity and the other foregrounding socio-religious values that maintain communal bonds (Syamsi, 2014).

The Relevance of CDA for Studying Religious Conflict in Madura

Fairclough's CDA offers an appropriate analytical toolkit for understanding this conflict because it (1) reads discourse as a site of power, enabling analysis of how sermons construct or challenge religious authority; (2) reveals how discourse circulates in digital spaces, highlighting transformations of ulama legitimacy in the era of new media; (3) examines social impacts, particularly how discourse shapes religious identity, social solidarity, and patterns of inter-kiai relations; and (4) clarifies how discourse can be transformed, such that methodological differences may be reconstructed into dialogue and reconciliation rather than protracted conflict (Rahmawati & Muhid, 2019). Within this framework, the study demonstrates that the Shinwani–Aswaja conflict is not merely a matter of fiqh differences but a struggle over meaning and authority within discourse one that may shift toward peace through dialogue, clarification, and the reproduction of meaning in digital public spaces.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach and applies Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main framework for examining the dynamics of religious conflict between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and Aswaja scholars in Madura. The data comprise two types. Primary data are drawn from YouTube videos featuring Shinwani's sermons and the responses of Madurese kiai. The main source is the HISADA Official channel, which consistently hosts Shinwani's sermons, as well as a video from Lorong Faradisa titled "ElfaTalk 8 Kyai Shinwani Adra'i Sholeh (Pakong, Madura)" (October 1, 2022; 33:47). To enrich the discursive context, the study also examines seven response videos: (Ngaji Sunnah 1926), "This Young Man Effortlessly Refutes KH Sinwani Adra'i's Arguments"; Mafahim Bangkalan, "Clarifying and Responding to the Alleged Dangers of KH Sinwani Adra'i's Thought," by KH Imam Makhsus; Arfan Juha, "Unable to Evade: This Madura-Born Wahhabi Is Thoroughly Taken Apart"; Zulkarnain Elmadury Channel, "A Heavy Blow... Kiai Sinwani Adheres to a Salafi Manhaj"; U FAR TV, "Responding to KH Sinwani's Accusations, by KH Marzuqi Mustamar"; and Mafahim Bangkalan, "KH Sinwani Asks, KH Cholid Makhrus Answers (Part 1)." These materials were selected because they directly represent discursive exchange, clarification, critique, and the religious positions of the parties involved in the conflict. Secondary data consist of books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and recent studies on Madurese religious traditions and Salafi Aswaja discursive relations in digital media (Efendi & Mubayyinah, 2023).

Data collection was conducted through repeated, intensive viewing of all videos, followed by verbatim transcription to capture utterance details, intonation, argumentative structure, and lexical choices that shape meaning. Each transcript was then coded and grouped according to emergent discourse themes. Analysis followed Fairclough's three-step CDA procedure in an operational form. In the text analysis stage, the researcher examined the diction used by Shinwani and Madurese kiai, sentence structures, ways of asserting claims, and rhetorical devices evident in sermon delivery (Noermanzah, 2018). The discursive practice stage traced how the videos were produced, uploaded, disseminated, and interpreted by audiences, including comment patterns and the emergence of counter-discourses across channels (Uldam & Askanius, 2013). The social practice analysis connected the findings from digital discourse to Madura's socio-cultural structures, particularly pesantren-based ulama authority and the role of local traditions such as tahlil and maulid in sustaining social cohesion (Haryono, 2018). To ensure data trustworthiness, the study employed source triangulation by comparing multiple videos and theoretical triangulation through dialogue between Fairclough's model and the literature on religious conflict in Madura (Delahoya, 2024). Through this approach, the study seeks not only to unpack the discourse structures used by the kiai but also to understand how this struggle over meaning operates within a broader social arena.

DISCUSSION

Initial findings indicate that the divergence between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and Aswaja scholars in Madura arises not only at the level of sermonic substance, but also in how each party frames religious authority and negotiates its position within the digital public sphere (Miftah et al., 2020). KH. Shinwani's sermons, which emphasize doctrinal purification, are often perceived as critiques of the community's socio-religious traditions. In response, local kiai construct counter-narratives that reaffirm the continuity of tradition as integral to Madurese identity and social cohesion (Mafahim Bangkalan,

vt., 2022). This multilayered discursive interaction suggests that the conflict is not merely an exchange of scriptural proofs; rather, it is a process of meaning production mediated through linguistic choices, modes of delivery, and the circulation and reception of texts by audiences (Gowler, 2010). Accordingly, the following discussion is presented using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework.

Textual Analysis

At the textual level, the analysis focuses on the linguistic features of KH. Shinwani Adra'i's sermons, as reflected in diction, sentence structure, rhetorical emphasis, and the construction of oppositional meanings in religious discourse. One prominent feature is his use of theological metaphors, as illustrated below.

Data 1

This Prophet is a catalogue, a place where we match all acts of worship. If it is not in the Prophet's catalogue, then it is not worship.

The term "*catalogue*" conveys an experiential value in language, namely his understanding of the Sunnah as the sole authoritative reference for determining the validity of religious practice (Jubba et al., 2022). This metaphor simultaneously maps his ideological position: teachings without textual grounding are treated as illegitimate. KH. Shinwani also employs contrastive sentence structures that establish a binary opposition between valid worship and rituals he deems unfounded, as shown in the following excerpt.

Data 2

If the Prophet never exemplified it, and then we make it ourselves, that is not called worship. It is merely a habit wrapped in religion

Such declarative structures reinforce the theological boundaries he constructs and demonstrate a corrective rhetorical style that rejects local religious traditions such as *tahlil* and *maulid* (Al-Dawoody, 2017). His language is firm, direct, and tends to minimize room for compromise, for instance in the statements below.

Data 3

The *maulid* as it is today, full of praise and ceremonial elements, is not from the Prophet. He only taught fasting on the day of his birth, not a grand celebration.

Data 4

Hold firmly to the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs this is his saying. If it is not from them, do not dare to create a new act of worship.

These excerpts demonstrate how he builds discursive authority through scriptural argumentation while asserting that traditions not derived from the Prophet or the Rightly Guided Caliphs fall into the category of *bid'ah*. Lexical choices such as "do not dare," "create new worship," and "not from the Prophet" produce a confrontational tone that constructs his position as a guardian of doctrinal purity. His rhetorical technique is also marked by a distinctive style he describes as "*nyolet mercon*" a mode of speaking that is blunt, spontaneous, and intended to disrupt audience silence. However, this strategy is

not merely humorous; it functions to intensify particular points through rhetorical shock. An example is shown below.

Data 5

If you perform *tahlilan* but do not know its evidence, it is like someone buying medicine without reading the instructions. You might recover, or you might die.

In Data 5, the use of a striking analogy serves to elicit an emotional response while reducing the abstraction of theological concepts into everyday messages that are readily understood by congregants. Through metaphorical choices, confrontational diction, repetition of textual proofs, and the *nyolet mercon* style, the textual analysis shows how KH. Shinwani constructs a purification discourse that positions him as a corrective religious figure. Thus, his utterances function not only as doctrinal explanations, but also as tools to establish theological legitimacy and renegotiate the boundaries of religious tradition within Madurese society.

In several sermons, KH. Shinwani Adra'i emphasizes that his shift in preaching style stems from a personal awareness of the substantial moral responsibility borne by a kiai or religious leader. In his view, a preacher should not merely inherit the religious traditions that circulate within society, but must ensure that such practices align with the teachings of the Prophet as the primary model for religious enactment (HDTV Official, vt., 2020). This emphasis on "the purity of the sharia" reflects a preaching orientation associated with the concept of *manhaj salaf*, namely returning to an understanding of religion rooted in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the practices of the early generations of Islam (Jubba et al., 2022).

He then uses this discourse to criticize a number of religious traditions in Madura, such as *maulid*, *tahlilan*, the recitation of prayers at graves, and other rituals that, in his view, lack legitimation from the Prophet. In his sermons, he frames the *maulid* celebration as a ritual resembling ecclesiastical traditions namely commemorating birth through praises and ceremonial forms thus deeming it inconsistent with the principle of *tawhid*, which centers praise exclusively upon God (Ichwan, 2011). He also argues that the Prophet never instructed a ritualized celebration of birth, but instead recommended fasting on the day of his birth; consequently, *maulid* practices particularly those conducted in elaborate forms are viewed as having shifted away from normative reference points (Nurhikmah, 2024).

KH. Shinwani's critical stance toward local religious practices illustrates a discursive construction that seeks to purify doctrine, yet simultaneously generates tension with Madurese traditions that have long understood rituals such as *maulid* and *tahlil* as part of their religious identity (Fathurahman, 2022). Through plain lexical choices, sustained emphasis on textual evidence, and confrontational diction toward tradition, Shinwani presents a preaching style oriented toward correction and religious reform.

Discursive Analysis

After identifying the linguistic features in KH. Shinwani Adra'i's sermon such as corrective diction, a tiered argumentative structure, and the framing of the Prophet (Rasulullah) as a "catalog" of Islamic teachings the next analytical layer examines how the discourse is produced, circulated, and consumed within the digital public sphere. At this stage, the sermon excerpts are treated not merely as text, but as meaning-making

practices that both shape and are shaped by the social context and the media through which they are disseminated. This is reflected in the following data.

Data 6

...smoking is *haram*. If you disagree, please find another *kiai*.

Data 7

People in the market won't even turn around unless there's a loud sound like a firecracker. Sermons are the same

From Fairclough's perspective, the utterance in Data 6 illustrates the production of a confrontational discourse process that signals the "*nyolet mercon*" style—an idiom denoting a harsh communicative mode that breaks with the moderate speech pattern commonly associated with Madurese *ulama*. This excerpt is not simply a legal statement; it functions as a positioning strategy that differentiates Shinwani from traditional *kiai*. Through firm and exclusive lexical choices, he constructs a discursive identity that rejects compromise what, in Fairclough's framework, can be read as a reformulation of discursive authority through language. Data 7 further indicates that the "*nyolet mercon*" style is not mere spontaneity, but a deliberate discursive strategy. Within Fairclough's framework, the "firecracker" analogy suggests that the discourse is intentionally produced to create a rupture a "crack" in the prevailing mindset of audiences accustomed to traditions such as *tahlil* or *maulid*. When this sermon is then distributed through HISADA Official and other channels, this speaking style gains digital amplification, expanding both its resonance and the resistance it provokes. The same pattern is evident in the following excerpt.

Data 8

What is *haram* remains *haram*, even if you dislike it. Law does not follow feelings.

In Fairclough's view, the statement in Data 8 demonstrates a mechanism of legitimizing discourse through claims to absolute truth grounded in textual authority. When such discourse is disseminated via digital platforms, it can generate new power relations: authority no longer resides exclusively within pesantren-based structures, but also in a digital figure who mobilizes textual proofs (*dalil*) in public circulation. Therefore, at the discursive layer, Shinwani's discourse reveals how digital media becomes an arena for the reproduction and transformation of religious authority. His analogy of the marketplace where people will not look up without a loud sound like a firecracker indicates that his preaching style is intentionally oriented toward producing discursive shock so that audiences will listen. In discursive terms, this pattern reflects an effort to build rupture or "cracks" in the cognitive habits of Madurese society, which is widely recognized for strongly maintaining tradition (Fathurahman, 2022). Through direct rhetoric, Shinwani positions himself as a corrective figure willing to address matters deemed sensitive for instance, asserting that what is *haram* remains *haram* despite the risk of triggering resistance. His discursive authority is reinforced through digital channels such as the HISADA Official YouTube platform, which provides space to broaden his preaching reach while simultaneously reconstructing his public image as a *kiai* who dares to challenge dominant currents (Fathurahman, 2022).

Notably, although Shinwani considers certain rituals such as *maulid* or *tahlil* to lack normative foundations, he still attends such events. This presence is not a form of compromise but a communicative strategy: he believes that traditional communities can only be reached from within the very spaces of their established habits. This stance aligns with findings from recent studies on preaching in coastal communities of Java and Madura, which suggest that discursive change tends to be more effective when preachers enter through social practices already familiar to local audiences (Muntoha et al., 2023). In Shinwani's reasoning, Madurese society is highly deferential to the figure of the *kiai*; what a *kiai* says is often accepted with limited contestation. Accordingly, he builds credibility through arguments presented as logical and text-based, making his "ammunition" appear stronger than that of the traditional *kiai* he criticizes. In the face of resistance from certain groups, Shinwani even connects his experience to the Prophet Muhammad's preaching, where accusations of "magic" or "occult influence" were frequently directed at those who introduced change into religious tradition. He interprets claims that his sermons constitute "hypnosis" as a repetition of a historical pattern of rejecting religious reform. This perspective shows that Shinwani is not only constructing a theological discourse, but also producing a self-legitimizing narrative: his preaching method is framed as a continuation of the prophetic tradition one that is consistently tested by social resistance.

Social Analysis

Within the dimension of social practice, KH. Shinwani Adra'i's discourse can be understood as part of a socio-religious structure that shapes everyday life patterns in Madurese society. In Fairclough's framework, this stage positions Shinwani's utterances not merely as linguistic expressions or rhetorical performances, but as interventions into values, traditions, and authorities that are deeply rooted in community life. This can be observed in the following data.

Data 9

smoking is haram, and anyone who disagrees should look for another *kiai*.

Data 10

Oreng ta' oning mun ta' ade' merconna... A person will not turn around unless there is a loud sound like a firecracker.

From a social-practice perspective, Data 9 reveals a shift in religious authority. Shinwani's statement asserts that a *kiai*'s authority no longer depends on pesantren tradition, but rather on the textual argumentation he presents. In Madura, a *kiai* is not simply a religious teacher, but also a social figure who functions as a key reference point for communal identity. When Shinwani delivers a statement of this kind, he is effectively delegitimizing traditional *kiai* and challenging the social structure that has long sustained communal cohesion. The strong reaction from local *ulama* emerges because the statement disrupts an established relationship of social obedience. Meanwhile, regarding Data 10, this analogy can be read as a rhetorical strategy; however, in terms of social practice, it also exposes how Shinwani constructs social rupture. He does not merely seek attention, but attempts to produce a "crack" in the religious patterns that have long proceeded routinely. In a society that strongly upholds tradition, this "setting off a firecracker" style signals Shinwani's determination to dismantle social comfort and challenge religious

routines that he regards as lacking textual basis. Consequently, the social reaction is not solely about the substance of rulings on smoking, *maulid*, or *tahlil*, but about the disturbance of relational stability grounded in tradition. Within the dimension of social practice, the following quotations carry even greater “explosive” force. Rituals such as *tahlil*, sending *al-Fatihah* (*kirim Fatihah*), and *maulid* are not merely acts of worship, but social binders, means of honoring ancestors, and symbols of loyalty to pesantren networks. This is evident in the data below.

Data 11

If the Prophet did not teach it, then do not practice it even if it has become your habit.

Data 12

Truth does not follow feelings; if you disagree, that is your right.

Data 13

In the past, the Prophet was also accused of being a sorcerer because he brought change.

Based on Data 11, the community may perceive this as a critique of Madura’s collective identity. This aligns with what Fairclough describes as ideological contestation a struggle over meaning regarding what is considered true, legitimate, and appropriate in social space. The strong response from traditional *kiai* is therefore not merely theological defense, but also defense of a social structure anchored in tradition. In Data 12, the statement functions as a marker that Shinwani is constructing a new authority based on textual evidence rather than social relations and tradition, as is typical among Madurese *ulama*. It asserts a separation between “normative truth” and “local culture,” which within Madura’s social structure cannot be easily disentangled. As a result, the statement is viewed as threatening the foundations of traditional *kiai* authority, which is strongly supported by emotional closeness with congregants. Data 13 further shows that Shinwani is developing a religious legitimizing narrative that positions himself within a historical chain of religious reform. In Fairclough’s perspective, such a strategy represents recontextualization, namely the reworking of historical experience to strengthen an actor’s social position. This statement also sharpens the perception that those who reject tradition are “reformers,” while those who defend tradition are merely “guardians of old habits.” Such a narrative has the potential to heighten social tension because it transforms methodological differences into differences of moral identity.

The tension between KH. Shinwani Adra’i’s sermons and the responses of Madurese *ulama* emerges because these differences in religious approach do not stand alone; they touch the socio-religious identity of Madurese society, which for decades has been shaped by pesantren traditions and Nahdliyin religious practices. Practices such as *tahlil*, sending *al-Fatihah*, *maulid*, and grave pilgrimage (*ziarah kubur*) are not only spiritual rituals, but also components of social structure: they bind communities, express respect for ancestors, and symbolize loyalty to pesantren networks. Shinwani’s rejection of these traditions is perceived as a threat to local cultural heritage rather than merely a matter of jurisprudential disagreement. Research indicates that the expansion of Salafi preaching in highly traditional communities often triggers sensitivity because it is seen as disrupting the stability of tradition-based social relations (Kholis et al., 2023). This

phenomenon becomes more complex because Salafi preaching including sermon styles such as Shinwani's typically utilizes digital media such as YouTube and TikTok as new spaces of legitimacy. The digitalization of preaching has intensified friction between Salafi groups emphasizing "textual purity" and traditionalist groups prioritizing scholarly lineage (*sanad*) and local practice. As noted by [Sunaryanto \(2023\)](#), digital media has become an arena for contesting religious authority, generating ideological frictions at the grassroots. Therefore, methodological differences between Shinwani and traditional *ulama* unfold not only in intellectual arenas, but also in digital public space, which amplifies reach, emotions, and polarization ([Makhrus et al., 2022](#)).

In Madura, discursive conflict in religious matters is particularly sensitive because the community is widely known for its strong adherence to the authority structure of pesantren *ulama*. When a figure emerges who promotes Salafi *manhaj* and bypasses local *ulama* authority, it is interpreted as a threat to established scholarly hierarchies and social order. Studies on the transnationalization of Salafi movements in Indonesia show that Salafi preaching often generates tension with traditional communities because it introduces a new epistemology that does not rely on local authority ([Al-Farabi et al., 2023](#)). In Madura, where the *kiai-santri* relationship has cultural and emotional dimensions, Shinwani's confrontational delivery toward local traditions reinforces the impression that Salafi teachings "erode" the cultural roots of Madurese society. Furthermore, strong responses from Ust. Arfan ([Arfan Juha, 2020](#)), KH. Cholid Makhrus KH. Imam Mahrus, and Ust. Zaki ([Ridha Ds et al., 2024](#)), indicate a collective effort to maintain traditional authority so that it is not replaced by a new model of authority based on textualism and media visibility. Contemporary research also records that some pesantren communities feel threatened by Salafi preaching because it is perceived as shifting religious authority from local *ulama* to digital figures who lack the depth of scholarly lineage. In Madura, this becomes even more sensitive because the community's religious identity is inseparable from Madurese cultural identity as a whole. When Salafi *manhaj* arrives with a "purification" narrative, some community members interpret it as a critique of their own selfhood ([Ridha Ds et al., 2024](#)). Ultimately, the conflict between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and local Madurese *ulama* developed into a broader public issue because the commentaries within response videos do not merely address jurisprudential differences, but also engage layers of Madurese social identity that are highly sensitive. In Ust. Arfan's video, for instance, criticism of Shinwani's rejection of *tahlil*, sending *al-Fatihah*, and NU traditions is framed as a threat to ancestral religious practices that have long sustained cultural and religious cohesion in Madura ([Arfan Juha, 2020](#)). Meanwhile, KH. Cholid Makhrus's clarification highlights that the selective cutting of Shinwani's sermons led to misunderstanding, showing that the debate is not only about evidence (*dalil*), but also about communal anxiety over the distortion of traditional *kiai* authority in digital space ([Tamphu, 2024](#)).

KH. Imam Mahrus points to another dimension of the conflict, namely concerns that Shinwani's overly textual approach may erode public trust in *sanad* and pesantren tradition an issue of serious consequence given that religious authority in Madura strongly depends on such scholarly chains ([Tamphu, 2024](#)). In contrast, Ust. Zaki's response illustrates how terms such as "authentic and inauthentic Islam" can directly provoke emotional reactions because they are perceived as diminishing the religious dignity of local communities ([Nurhikmah, 2024](#)). The combination of these reactions means that the conflict between KH. Shinwani and Madurese *ulama* is no longer understood as an academic debate, but as a struggle for legitimacy between purification and tradition,

carried into the public sphere through YouTube. Recent studies also show that digital authority now plays a major role in shaping the religious perceptions of young *santri* in Madura (Hidayat & Khadavi, 2024). Accordingly, when Shinwani's sermons and the subsequent response videos circulated on social media, these methodological differences quickly transformed into a viral issue and contributed to heightened social tensions.

Discourse of Change and Reconciliation

The debate that emerged between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and local Madurese ulama does not merely illustrate a clash of religious methodologies; it also reveals how society responds to shifting discourses in the digital era. Although the critical videos directed at Shinwani appear controversial, the response pattern among scholars such as Ust. Arfan, KH. Cholil Makhruh, KH. Imam Mahrus, and Ust. Zaki indicates a tendency toward discursive reconciliation rather than conflict escalation. Instead of replying with personal attacks, they corrected interpretive approaches to hadith, the misapplication of Qur'anic verses, and misunderstandings of tradition, while maintaining the ethics of scholarly dialogue. This pattern aligns with Abdillah's findings (Abdillah, 2024) that, when confronting Salafi ideological challenges in new media, NU typically adopts an argumentation-based conflict-resolution approach rather than emotional confrontation. At the same time, the conflict in Madura is also connected to the contestation of religious authority in digital spaces. Rasyid Alhafizh's study (Alhafizh et al., 2024) shows that NU and Salafi groups now both utilize online platforms to disseminate their religious understandings, enabling methodological differences to become public issues more rapidly. This dynamic is clearly visible in Shinwani's case: it triggered responses from various ulama and subsequently developed into a broader discourse. In a wider framework, this situation can be understood as a contest over digital da'wah space, as described by Sunaryanto (Sunaryanto, 2023), who argues that Salafi da'wah globally leverages media technology to build ideological legitimacy, while traditionalist groups respond through different discursive strategies.

However, rather than culminating in prolonged confrontation, this dynamic opens possibilities for dialogue. When Madurese ulama delivered extended responses in the form of scholarly clarifications, the public gained a renewed understanding that differences between local religious traditions (NU) and Salafi approaches do not primarily concern creed ('aqidah), but rather *ijtihad* and methodological orientation. This view is consistent with Malik et al., who argue that ideological differences between Salafi groups and Sunni traditions need not produce conflict, provided that the narrative constructed is argumentative rather than judgmental or condemning (Nurfadillah et al., 2024). Accordingly, discourses of difference can be directed toward public education rather than becoming sources of social fragmentation. Situated within the Madurese context, this discursive reconciliation is facilitated by the community's strong respect for ulama authority. When ulama choose a dialogical path, society tends to follow. Therefore, although the Shinwani controversy briefly became a heated issue, the wave of clarifications offered by multiple figures helped reduce tensions and reorganize public understanding of methodological differences in religious practice. From this perspective, "from difference toward peace" is not merely a normative ideal but a tangible social process: differences are articulated, critiqued, considered, and then oriented toward mutual understanding. With support from digital literacy and mature scholarly authority, Madurese society can engage methodological diversity without descending into horizontal conflict.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the tension between KH. Shinwani Adra'i and Maduraese ulama is rooted in a clash between two religious perspectives: the text-based purification approach advanced by Shinwani and the tradition-and-isnād-based approach maintained by local scholars. Textual analysis indicates that Shinwani frames religious authenticity through the rhetoric of purifying the sharī'a, whereas Maduraese ulama assert the legitimacy of tradition through chains of transmission (isnād), hadith-based argumentation, and historically layered religious practices. Analysis of discursive practice shows that digital media such as YouTube creates a new arena for negotiating religious authority, allowing disagreements to circulate more quickly and to be debated more openly. Social analysis further demonstrates that the conflict becomes sensitive because it touches collective religious identity, in which rituals such as tahlīl, mawlid, and sending al-Fātiḥah are not only acts of worship but also function as social bonds and cultural symbols of Madura.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that such differences can be oriented toward reconciliation. The responses of local ulama through hadith clarification and argumentative explanation suggest that scholarly dialogue can reduce polarization and open space for the maturation of public religious understanding. Methodological differences in religious practice do not inherently result in social conflict, as long as they are navigated through scholarly ethics (adab), transparent chains of transmission, and an openness to recognizing diversity in ijtihād. This study has several limitations. First, the primary data relied solely on YouTube video content and therefore did not capture discursive dynamics at the community level directly. Second, the analysis focused on particular figures and thus did not encompass the wider variation of public responses across Madura. Future research should incorporate field interviews with santri, pesantren administrators, and the general public, as well as expand the scope to other digital platforms to examine how religious discourse is negotiated across both online and offline spaces. With a more comprehensive approach, the relationship between purification and tradition in Maduraese society can be understood more fully.

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