
LANGUAGE, AUTHORITY, AND IDENTITY:
Shia-Salafi Debates on Imamate and Nationalism in
Indonesia's Online Sphere

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Abstract: This study stems from a gap in research on how the concepts of Imamate and nationalism are contested within Shia-Salafi dynamics in Indonesia's digital space. Most previous studies have emphasized aspects of social conflict, whereas the linguistic mechanisms that shape religious-political authority remain underexplored. This study argues that the contestation of religious legitimacy should be examined through patterns of discourse production that link doctrinal teachings, group identities, and the constructions of nationalism they articulate. The research analysis on 50 articles from Safinah.id and Annasindonesia.com to identify how each site constructs its ideological position through the linguistic practices it deploys. The study employs Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, which encompasses the dimensions of text, discursive practice, and social practice in an integrated manner. The findings show that identity, claims of authority, and symbolic boundaries are constructed through linguistic strategies that systematically produce oppositions and assert hierarchies of truth. This research contributes theoretically by

linking its findings on the construction of Shia-Salafi authority in the digital space with Campbell and Bunt's conceptual framework on the formation of identity, authority, and religious practices in the online ecosystem. The implications of this research open pathways for further studies on the dynamics of religious power operating through linguistic practices in Indonesia's digital media landscape.

Keywords: Imamate; Nationalism; Religious authority; Digital discourse; Shia-Salafi contestation.

Introduction

The ideological rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has long served as a central axis in the formation of modern Islamic religious politics. As noted in Al-Jazeera reports, the two countries compete in economic and security spheres to shape Islamic orthodoxy through the production of religious discourse.¹ Wahhabism under Saudi patronage and *Imamiyyah*, as developed by Iran, have evolved into instruments of ideological diplomacy and power legitimization.² The relationship between the two countries exhibits key features of modern Islamic politics: on the one hand, invoking theological truth, and on the other, articulating the political interests of the nation-state. Therefore, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry cannot be understood merely as a Sunni-Shia conflict, but rather as a process of producing meaning about who holds the authority to speak for global Islam.³

¹ Mustafa Menshawy Mabon Simon, "Saudi Arabia and Iran Have Not Always Been Foes," Al Jazeera, accessed November 6, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/3/13/sectarianism-and-saudi-iranian-relations>; "Saudi-Led Coalition Is Not Driven by Sectarianism | Opinions | Al Jazeera," accessed November 6, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/4/20/saudi-led-coalition-is-not-driven-by-sectarianism>.

² Philipp Holtmann, "A Primer to the Sunni-Shia Conflict," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 1 (2014): 142–45; Wahabuddin Ra'ees and Abdol Moghst Bani Kamal, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's Networking Diplomacy: The Role of Ahl-Ul-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA)," *Intellectual Discourse* 25 (2017): 589–614; Oliver Scharbrodt, "The Dynamics of Sunni–Shia Relationships: Doctrine, Transnationalism, Intellectuals and the Media," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 25, no. 4 (October 2014): 549–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2014.946760>. Abdessamad Belhaj, "Political Loyalty in Contemporary Islamic Ethics: Sunni and Shii Perspectives," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 14, no. 1 (June 2024): 52–72, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2024.14.1.52-72>.

³ Vali Nasr, "The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future," *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 3 (2011): 433–36,

The echoes of this rivalry extend far beyond the Middle East and find resonance in Indonesia—a country with the world's largest Muslim population and a long history of Islamic politics marked by compromise, resistance, and hybridization. Since the Reform Era of 1998, media liberalization and the decentralization of power have opened space for various global Islamic ideologies to compete in the national public sphere. At this point, Safinah.id⁴ (representing Indonesian Shia) and Annasindonesia.com⁵ (representing the anti-Shia Salafi movement) have emerged as digital platforms that reproduce this global contestation in a local context. On the one hand, the Shia community seeks to present itself as a legitimate part of Indonesian Islam—patriotic, rational, and moderate.⁶ Through the concept of Imamate, Shia Islam affirms divine leadership, which it claims aligns with the moral values of Pancasila and social justice.⁷ On the other hand, Salafi networks, many of which are influenced by Wahhabi ideology, reject this claim and position themselves as guardians of the purity of tawhid. In the discourse of some Salafi groups, Shia Islam is

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2011.556405>; Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, "Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East," *Review of Faith and International Affairs* 15, no. 3 (2017): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2017.1354462>; Toby Matthiesen, *The Other Saudis: Shiism, Dissent, and Sectarianism* (England: Cambridge University Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337732>.

⁴ "Safinah Online," Safinah Online, accessed September 9, 2025, <https://safinah.id>.

⁵ "Annas Indonesia," ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 6, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/>.

⁶ Chiara Formichi, "From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia's Shi'i Communities," *Al-Jami'ah* 52, no. 1 (2014): 101–26, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2014.521.101-126>; Chiara Formichi, "Shaping Shia Identities in Contemporary Indonesia Between Local Tradition and Foreign Orthodoxy," *Welt Des Islams* 54, no. 2 (2014): 212–36, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-00542p04>; Zulkifli Zulkifli, "What Drives Anti-Shia Framing in Indonesia?," *Studia Islamika* 31, no. 1 (2024): 1–29; Hilman Latief, "The Identity of Shi'a Sympathizers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 2, no. 2 (2008): 300–335, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jiis.2008.2.2.300-335>.

⁷ M. Khusna Amal, "Anti-Shia Mass Mobilization in Indonesia's Democracy: Godly Alliance, Militant Groups and the Politics of Exclusion," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10, no. 1 (2020): 25–48, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v10i1.25-48>.

portrayed as an ideological threat originating from Iran and as being incompatible with Sunni Islam and Indonesian nationalism.⁸

This tension shows that religious discourse in Indonesia is no longer domestic in nature but is increasingly connected to transnational geopolitics. As noted by Van Bruinessen, the tide of Islamic globalization has created new competition for religious authority, blurring the boundaries between the local and the global.⁹ Indonesia's historical context shows that its connection with Iran is not a new phenomenon. Yudi Latif notes that the success of the 1979 Iranian Revolution provided significant inspiration for some Indonesian Islamic activists, especially those involved in the intellectual mosque movement. The publication of the works of Ali Shariati (1933-1977), Murtadha Muthahhari (1919-1979), and Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini (1900-1989) in the 1980s and 1990s strengthened the process of "translating" Shi'ite ideas into the Indonesian Islamic sphere, although it did not lead to mass conversion.¹⁰ This influence shows that the relationship between Indonesia and Iran is intellectual-ideological, not merely theological, and has helped shape the landscape of Islamic discourse to this day.

Safinah.id and Annasindonesia.com, on the one hand, function as media for preaching and ideological production that shape religious

⁸ See Said Agil Siradj, "The Sunnī-Shī'ah Conflict and the Search for Peace in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, no. 1 (2013): 145–64, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.1.145-164>; Selain itu, banyak riset yang menjelaskan bagaimana struktur paradigmatis antara Salafi dan Wahabi memiliki irisan epistemik, sehingga, sebagai konsekuensi, kedua kelompok ini memiliki kesamaan dalam membangun relasi dengan kelompok Syiah. See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (2006): 207–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500497004>; Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)

⁹ Luthfi Assyaukanie, "Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the 'Conservative Turn,'" *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 49, no. 3 (December 2013): 394–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918.2013.850644>.

¹⁰ Some of the works translated include: Ali Shariati, *The Task of the Muslim Intellectual*; Murtadha Muthahhari, *Divine Justice*; and Ruhollah Khomeini, *The Islamic System of Government*. See Yudi Latif, *Inteligensia Muslim Dan Kuasa: Genealogi Inteligensia Muslim Indonesia Abad Ke-20*, 1st ed. (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2006): 597. Mhd. Syahnan, Abd. Mukhsin, and Ja'far, "From Iran and Saudi Arabia to Indonesia: The Translation of Shi'ite and Wahhabi Literature in Contemporary Indonesia," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 13, no. 2 (2023): 261–80, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2023.13.2.261-280>.

boundaries within the context of Indonesian politics. Through articulations of Imamate, purity of faith, and claims of nationalism, these two websites construct categories of legitimate Islam while defining who is considered deviant. This pattern aligns with findings that Shi'ism is often positioned as an "internal Other" in the construction of the majority religious identity,¹¹ while Salafi networks strengthen their authority through the reproduction of purification discourse that circulates widely within the national digital ecosystem.¹² The marking of identity through terms such as *manhaj* or *bid'ah* functions as a symbolic boundary mechanism in urban communities,¹³ and public perceptions of Shi'ites and Salafis are strongly influenced by how digital media constructs issues of legitimacy and ideological threat within cross-border religious politics.¹⁴ Thus, the discursive contestation on both sites reflects the struggle for representational authority over Islam and nationalism in Indonesia's digital arena.

This phenomenon reveals a fundamental shift in how religious authorities operate in Indonesia. Whereas authority was previously derived from formal religious institutions and traditional ulama structures, it is now mediated by the logic of technology and the attention of the economy. In this context, theology becomes performative, and truth becomes content curated by algorithms. Studies on the cyber-Islamic environment¹⁵ and digital piety¹⁶ show

¹¹ Susanne Olsson, "Shia as Internal Others: A Salafi Rejection of the 'Rejecters,'" *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 28, no. 4 (October 2017): 409–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2017.1318545>.

¹² Salafi religious media with the most visitors: Muslim.or.id, Rumasho.com, Almanhaj.or.id, Muslimah.or.id. See Mahmud Hibatul Wafia, Mega Hidayatia, and Sunyoto Usmana, "The Reproduction of Salafism in The Online Ecosystem: Strengthening of Indonesian Salafi Groups," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 8, no. 2 (2026): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2026128>.

¹³ Fachri Aidulsyah, "The Rise of Urban Salafism in Indonesia: The Social-Media and Pop Culture of New Indonesian Islamic Youth," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 51, no. 4 (December 2023): 252–59, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajss.2023.07.003>.

¹⁴ Ali Muhtarom, "The Study of Indonesian Moslem Responses on Salafy-Shia Transnational Islamic Education Institution," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 17, no. 1 (August 2017): 73–95, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v17i1.1645>.

¹⁵ Gary R. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto Books, 2003).

¹⁶ Fatimah Husein and Martin Slama, "Online Piety and Its Discontent: Revisiting Islamic Anxieties on Indonesian Social Media," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 80–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1415056>; Besnik

that the internet expands access to religious teachings and creates a new hierarchy of authority in which anyone can claim the position of a bearer of truth. At this point, mediatization operates as a political force that produces and distributes religious legitimacy, replacing traditional mechanisms of authority based on *sanad* and institutional structures.¹⁷ Fazlul Rahman argues that digital space shapes religious identity through representational practices that demand authenticity and performativity, making legitimacy increasingly dependent on narrative competition within cyberspace.¹⁸

Using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework,¹⁹ this study positions religious language as a social practice that shapes, negotiates, and maintains power relations. This approach enables a three-layered analysis—text, discursive practice, and social practice—to examine how digital discourse reflects religious teachings and articulates ideological positions within broader sociopolitical structures. Through this framework, *Safinah.id* and *Annasindonesia.com* are understood as ideological reproductions: one articulates Shia Islam as a rational, moderate, and nationalist school of thought, while the other constructs Salafi Islam as the guardian of tawhid and the bastion of the Indonesian state against transnational ideological infiltration.

Within the framework of digital religion, Heidi Campbell describes digital space as “the technological and cultural space that is evoked when online and offline religious spheres blend.” This space becomes a meeting point where religious practices, identities, communities, and authorities are negotiated.²⁰ Meanwhile, Gary R. Bunt conceptualizes the Islamic virtual world as Cyber Islamic

Sinani, “Post-Salafism: Religious Revisionism in Contemporary Saudi Arabia,” *Religions* 13, no. 4 (April 2022): 340, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13040340>.

¹⁷ Jon W. Anderson, “New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere,” *ISIM Newsletter* 5, no. 1 (2000): 39–39; Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203155363>.

¹⁸ Fazlul Rahman, “Islam, Digital Media, and Identity,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Religion*, by Heidi A. Campbell, ed. Pauline Hope Cheong (England: Oxford University Press, 2022), 272–88, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197549803.013.32>.

¹⁹ Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2010).

²⁰ Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media Worlds* (London: Routledge, 2021): 5.

Environments, a space where truth is produced, displayed, and contested.²¹ By integrating Campbell's and Bunt's perspectives into Fairclough's critical framework, this study seeks to uncover the power dynamics operating behind digital religious narratives in Indonesia.

Thus, the contest between Imamate and *Salafiyah* in Indonesia's digital space reflects a major transformation in the ecology of Islamic authority. When faith becomes performance and truth becomes algorithmic, theological debates shift into a symbolic struggle over who has the right to speak on behalf of Islam and the nation. Amid an unstoppable flow of information, religion no longer appears as an autonomous sacred space, but as an ideological battlefield where doctrine becomes a strategy for identity, nationalism becomes a religious narrative, and digital discourse becomes a new political weapon in the long struggle to define the meaning of Indonesian Islam.

This study is organized into three complementary sections. The first section describes the characteristics of the two websites that serve as data sources, including their ideological orientations, publication patterns, and the social contexts that shape the reasons for their existence as arenas for religious debate. The second part applies Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis to examine how texts, practices of text production and consumption, and the social conditions surrounding the two sites shape specific patterns of representation regarding Shia and Salafi groups. The third part connects these findings with Campbell and Bunt's framework to explain how authority, identity, and ideology are reconfigured in Indonesia's digital space. Through this structure, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of how religious discourse operates and is shaped in the Shia-Salafi contestation in the online realm.

The Digital Space as an Arena for Religious Politics: Profiles of Safinah.id and Annasindonesia.com

The contestation of Shia-Salafi discourse in Indonesia did not arise suddenly but was shaped by distinct historical and ideological developments within each tradition. Various studies show that the Shia community has built its space of recognition through organizations, educational institutions, and the production of

²¹ Gary R. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto Books, 2003).

literature that serves to strengthen its identity.²² Meanwhile, research on Salafism in Indonesia confirms a diversity of orientations, ranging from apolitical puritans to groups involved in national discourse and public activism.²³ In a broader context, anti-Shia discourse has also been used by Salafi groups for political and religious legitimacy, as demonstrated in Joas Wagemakers' research on how sectarian issues function as a tool to reinforce religious positions and authority.²⁴ This configuration provides the context for the presence of Safinah.id and Annasindonesia.com as two websites engaged in opposing discourses that produce claims of identity and religious legitimacy.

Safinah.id is the official website of the Guidance and *Da'wah* Commission under the auspices of the *Ahlulbait* Indonesia (ABI) Shura Council and serves as a medium for education and religious services for the *Ahlulbait* community in Indonesia. Through an explicit statement on its homepage, the website affirms its mandate to provide enlightening guidance on aspects of faith, jurisprudence, practice, ethics, and the introduction of key figures in the *Ahlulbait* tradition. The features provided—ranging from bulletins, e-books, galleries, to various Q&A channels involving credible religious teachers—demonstrate its internal orientation as a space for consultation and clarification on various issues faced by the congregation, including accusations or misunderstandings often directed at this school of thought.²⁵ Although interaction through the

²² Dede Syarif, "Contrasting Trajectories of Shi'a Emergence in Post-New Order Indonesia," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2018): 99–116, <https://doi.org/10.1353/isl.2018.0007>; Zulkifli, "Education, Identity, and Recognition: E Shi'i Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 21, no. 1 (2014): 77–108, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v21i1.879>.

²³ Krismono Krismono, "Salafisme Di Indonesia: Ideologi, Politik Negara, Dan Fragmentasi," *Millah* 16, no. 2 (January 2017): 173–202, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol16.iss2.art2>; Chris Chaplin, "Salafi Islamic Piety as Civic Activism: Wahdah Islamiyah and Differentiated Citizenship in Indonesia," *Citizenship Studies* 22, no. 2 (2018): 208–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2018.1445488>.

²⁴ Joas Wagemakers, "Making Sense of Sectarianism without Sects: Quietist Salafi Anti-Shia Discourse in Jordan," *Mediterranean Politics* 26, no. 4 (2021): 518–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2020.1718354>; Joas Wagemakers, "Sectarianism in the Service of Salafism: Shiites as a Political Tool for Jordanian Salafis," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 2 (2022): 341–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2020.1805298>.

²⁵ "Safinah Online," Safinah Online, accessed November 6, 2025, <https://safinah.id>.

comment section is not very active, the variety of post tags and the site's connectivity to several social media platforms, such as Facebook,²⁶ Pinterest,²⁷ and YouTube²⁸ show Safinah.id's efforts to maintain its informational reach and strengthen a broader digital *da'wah* ecosystem.



Figure 1. *Safinah.id website page*

The content published by Safinah.id shows a consistent orientation toward strengthening the teachings of the *Ahlulbait* through conceptual explanations, historical reconstructions, and theological clarifications. Articles on tauhid,²⁹ Imamate,³⁰ *Uli al-Amr*,³¹ the events of *Ghadir Khum*,³² and the hadith of *Thaqalayn*³³ form the

²⁶ “Komisi Bimbingan dan Dakwah Dewan Syura ABI,” accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/SafinahOnline>.

²⁷ “Safinah Online- Profil,” Pinterest, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://id.pinterest.com/safinahonline/>.

²⁸ “Safinah TV,” YouTube, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUcJ5ooV3mTeuYdfWIBFzHA>.

²⁹ Zainuddin Ginting, “Teologi Kemerdekaan,” Opini, *Safinah Online*, August 17, 2022, <https://safinah.id/teologi-kemerdekaan-2/>.

³⁰ Zainuddin Ginting, “Imamah Menurut Mazhab Syiah Dan Ahlusunah Bag.1,” Opini, *Safinah Online*, July 3, 2023, <https://safinah.id/imamah-menurut-mazhab-syiah-dan-ahlusunah-bag-1/>; Zainuddin Ginting, “Imamah Menurut Mazhab Syiah Dan Ahlusunah Bag.2,” Opini, *Safinah Online*, July 4, 2023, <https://safinah.id/imamah-menurut-mazhab-syiah-dan-ahlusunah-bag-2/>.

³¹ Zainuddin Ginting, “Tafsir Surat An-Nisa Ayat 59: Ketaatan Kepada Ulil Amr (Bagian 1),” Tafsir, *Safinah Online*, May 20, 2023, <https://safinah.id/tafsir-surat-an-nisa-ayat-59-ketaatan-kepada-ulil-amr-bagian-1/>; Zainuddin Ginting, “Tafsir Surat An-Nisa Ayat 59: Ketaatan Kepada Ulil Amr (Bagian 2),” Tafsir, *Safinah Online*, May 21, 2023, <https://safinah.id/tafsir-surat-an-nisa-ayat-59-ketaatan-kepada-ulil-amr-bagian-2/>.

³² Admin Penulis, “Imam Khamenei: Ghadir Adalah Penyatu, Bukan Pemecah!,” Wacana, *Safinah Online*, June 9, 2025, <https://safinah.id/imam-khamenei-ghadir-adalah-penyatu-bukan-pemecah/>; Zainuddin Ginting, “Kitab Al-Ghadir Dan Upaya Persatuan Islam,” 14 Maksu, *Safinah Online*, July 15, 2023, <https://safinah.id/kitab-al-ghadir-dan-upaya-persatuan-islam/>.

dominant themes that affirm the position of Shia *Imāmiyyah* in understanding religious authority. Through a series of articles on Imamate—from the perspectives of the Qur’an,³⁴ history,³⁵ and the spiritual-political functions of the Imams³⁶—this website constructs a narrative that portrays divine leadership as the foundation of the continuity of the message and the guardian of the purity of Islamic teachings against various distortions of power.

In addition to its theological focus, Safinah.id also covers socio-national themes that reflect efforts to articulate Shia identity within the Indonesian context. Articles on Islamic unity,³⁷ love for the homeland,³⁸ the official stance of ABI on national political dynamics,³⁹ and criticism of structural discrimination against the Shia community portray the *Ahlulbait* community as part of Indonesian society that upholds moderation, rationality, and commitment to the constitution.⁴⁰ Thus, most of the site’s content reflects two main currents: affirmation of *Ahlulbait* theology and the construction of the

³³ Zainuddin Ginting, “Imamah Para Imam Ahlulbait Dan Hadits Tsaqalain,” 14 Maksum, *Safinah Online*, July 6, 2023, <https://safinah.id/imamah-para-imamah-ahlulbait-dan-hadits-tsaqalain/>.

³⁴ Admin Penulis, “Konsep Imamah Dalam Al-Qur’an,” Aqidah, *Safinah Online*, June 23, 2024, <https://safinah.id/konsep-imamah-dalam-al-quran/>.

³⁵ Zainuddin Ginting, “Keniscayaan Imamah,” Imamah, *Safinah Online*, July 11, 2023, <https://safinah.id/keniscayaan-imamah/>.

³⁶ Zainuddin Ginting, “Keniscayaan Imamah Dan Fungsinya Sebagai Pemelihara Agama,” 14 Maksum, *Safinah Online*, July 21, 2022, <https://safinah.id/keniscayaan-imamah-dan-fungsinya-sebagai-pemelihara-agama/>.

³⁷ Zainuddin Ginting, “Imam Husein Simbol Perdamaian Dan Anti Kekerasan,” Riwayat Hidup, *Safinah Online*, September 10, 2018, <https://safinah.id/imam-husein-simbol-perdamaian-dan-anti-kekerasan/>.

³⁸ Admin Penulis, “Cinta Tanah Air Dalam Perspektif Ahlul Bait As,” Wacana, *Safinah Online*, August 17, 2025, <https://safinah.id/cinta-tanah-air-dalam-perspektif-ahlul-bait-as/>; Zainuddin Ginting, “Cinta Indonesia,” Buletin, *Safinah Online*, August 16, 2017, <https://safinah.id/cinta-indonesia/>.

³⁹ Zainuddin Ginting, “Pernyataan Sikap Ormas Islam Ahlulbait Indonesia (ABI) Terkait Dinamika Sosial-Politik Terkini Di Tanah Air,” Suara, *Safinah Online*, November 17, 2020, <https://safinah.id/pernyataan-sikap-ormas-islam-ahlulbait-indonesia-abi-terkait-dinamika-sosial-politik-terkini-di-tanah-air/>.

⁴⁰ Zainuddin Ginting, “Diskriminasi Sosial Dan Struktural Terhadap Syiah,” Opini, *Safinah Online*, September 12, 2022, <https://safinah.id/diskriminasi-sosial-dan-struktural-terhadap-syiah/>. Moh Arif Rakman Hakim and Ubaidillah Ubaidillah, “The Reactualization of Nationalism as a State Defense Strategy in the Perspective of the Nusantara Interpretation of Al-Qur’an,” *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 45, no. 2 (January 2022): 165–88, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v45i2.862>.

socio-political image of Indonesian Shia as a religious group that actively participates in maintaining unity, dialogue, and nationalism.

Meanwhile, *Annasindonesia.com* is the official website of the National Anti-Shia Alliance (ANNAS), a movement that emerged from a series of consultations among religious scholars and forums that have highlighted the development of Shia Islam in Indonesia since 2012. Its main page highlights rhetoric on identity and vigilance, while the “Profile” section presents the history of ANNAS’s establishment, which is rooted in the Indonesian Ulema Forum (FUUI)’s decision to formulate fatwas and strategies to address what it interprets as heresy. The site displays its declaration, vision and mission, and organizational structure, all of which position ANNAS as a forum for the consolidating Islamic scholars and organizations to enhance information dissemination, vigilance, and policy advocacy related to Shia Islam. Reader interaction on the site tends to be limited, and the linked social media accounts—Facebook and X (Twitter)—show minimal content updates; thus, the site functions primarily as an archive of the movement’s identity and official statements.⁴¹



Figure 2. *Annasindonesia.com* website page

The content published on *annasindonesia.com* shows a very firm and intense pattern of discourse in its discussions of Shia Islam,⁴² particularly through repeated emphasis on the issues of Imamate,⁴³

⁴¹ “Annas Indonesia,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 6, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/>.

⁴² Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Syiah Anti Pancasila,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/2193-syiah-anti-pancasila>; Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Syiah Ancaman Nyata NKRI,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3270-syiah-ancaman-nyata-nkri>.

⁴³ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Imamah Jauh Lebih Bahaya Dari Khilafah,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/2211-imamah-jauh-lebih-bahaya-dari>

religious loyalty,⁴⁴ and the potential socio-political implications of these teachings.⁴⁵ Most of the articles present cautionary narratives—from the perspectives of creed, law, and national religious frameworks—by positioning doctrines such as the infallibility of faith, the concept of *Wilayat al-Faqih*,⁴⁶ certain ritual practices,⁴⁷ and historical differences of opinion as crucial issues that need to be addressed by both society and the state.⁴⁸ Through this approach, the site frames the issue as a strategic matter with broad implications.

khilafah; Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “AHA, Menyebarkan Ideologi Imamah Bakal Dihukum,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3617-aha-menyebarkan-ideologi-imamah-bakal-dihukum>; Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Konsep Imamah: Sumber Petaka Takfiri Syiah,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/279-konsep-imamah-sumber-petaka-takfiri-syiah>.

⁴⁴ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Syiah Iran Ancaman Nyata NKRI,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/1350-syiah-iran-ancaman-nyata-nkri>.

⁴⁵ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Syiah Mengancam Keutuhan NKRI,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/2219-syiah-mengancam-keutuhan-nkri>; Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Antisipasi Negara Terhadap Ancaman Syi’ah Bagi Keamanan Nasional dan NKRI #1,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/278-antisipasi-negara-terhadap-ancaman-syiah-bagi-keamanan-nasional-dan-nkri-1>.

⁴⁶ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Syiah Antara Gerakan Politik dan Aliran Agama,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/1365-syiah-antara-gerakan-politik-dan-aliran-agama>.

⁴⁷ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Syi’ah Ajaran Radikal,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/2279-syiah-ajaran-radikal>; Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Syiah dan Komunis,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/1807-syiah-dan-komunis>.

⁴⁸ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Peristiwa Ghadir Khum dan Kebatilan Hujjah,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/1623-peristiwa-ghadir-khum-dan-kebatilan-hujjah>; Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, “Gerakan Sesat Syi’ah dalam Perspektif Politik dan Hukum,” ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/1-gerakan-sesat-syiah-dalam-perspektif-politik-dan-hukum>.

In addition, many articles link the development of Shia Islam with transnational issues, geopolitical relations,⁴⁹ and state regulations,⁵⁰ so that the discourse of vigilance presented becomes multidimensional—covering theological, social, political, and legal aspects at once.⁵¹ The articles often use references to court rulings, statements by prominent figures, or religious studies to reinforce the argument that the dynamics related to Shia Islam need to be taken seriously. With its consistent presentation, annasindonesia.com serves as a space that builds a responsive and critical narrative on the development of this group, based on the theological perspective that forms the basis of the authors' analysis.

Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis of the Safinah.id and Annasindonesia.com Websites

The link between religious discourse production and the dynamics of authority is evident when Islamic texts circulate in a digitally polarized ideological space.⁵² The competition between Salafi purification and moderate Islam shapes the way the public assesses religious truth.⁵³ In this situation, Shiites, as a minority, are in a vulnerable position due to the severing of local cultural ties and the strengthening push for doctrinal purification.⁵⁴ At the same time, Salafism comes in various forms that shift according to the social and

⁴⁹ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, "Syiah Biang-Kerok Gerakan Makar dan Terorisme," ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3298-syiah-biang-kerok-gerakan-makar-dan-terorisme>.

⁵⁰ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, "Menghukum Penyebar Syi'ah," ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3582-menghukum-penyebar-syiah>.

⁵¹ Redaksi ANNAS Indonesia, "Studi Hukum Kritis (Critical Legal Studies) Terhadap Syi'ah Iran dan Ketahanan Nasional," ANNAS Indonesia, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/67-studi-hukum-kritis-critical-legal-studies-terhadap-syiah-iran-dan-ketahanan-nasional>.

⁵² Sahar Khamis, "The Paradoxes of Modern Islamic Discourses and Socio-Religious Transformation in the Digital Age," *Religions* 15, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15020207>.

⁵³ Denny Febriansyah and Dawoud Sudqi El-Alami, "Moderate Islam Vis-a-Vis Salafism in Indonesia: An Ideological Competition," *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 29, no. 1 (May 2021): 55–78, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.29.1.7212>.

⁵⁴ Seyyed Abolhasan Navvab, "The Shi'I Minority in Indonesia: A Consideration of Its Historical and Cultural Links and Gaps with the Sunni Majority," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2018): 201–21, <https://doi.org/10.1353/isl.2018.0010>.

political context, so that claims to authority within it are never truly singular.⁵⁵ In the digital space, religious authority is now more fluid because interpretations and fatwas are produced through *ijtihad* practices that adaptively combine text and context.⁵⁶ This overall landscape provides a basis for understanding how Shiite and Salafi discourses in Indonesia are not merely competing arguments, but also a contest for ideological legitimacy in the digital space that determines the religious orientation of the public.

Understanding digital religious discourse requires more than just reading the text itself. Language works through its form, its production and reception, and its relationship to the social structures that shape power relations. Fairclough's framework allows these three layers to be analysed simultaneously, enabling the analysis to focus not only on what is written, but also on how and in what context the discourse is constructed.⁵⁷ This approach forms the basis for a more comprehensive examination of Sefinah.id and Annasindonesia.com.

1. *Text analysis*

The researchers selected 25 articles from each site using relevant keywords to capture stable patterns of representation and variations in the issues they addressed. This number was deemed sufficient to present a broad range of themes without reducing the analytical sharpness. All articles were then grouped into broad themes so that the relationships between issues could be read as a coherent discourse structure. At this stage, text analysis was conducted using Fairclough's framework, which emphasizes vocabulary, semantic choices, sentence structure, and how a series of sentences form a coherent argument.⁵⁸ This approach helps reveal how the two websites construct identity, power relations, and claims to truth through the linguistic strategies they use. This framework forms the basis for interpreting the findings in the following text analysis table.

⁵⁵ Mohamed Ali, "Understanding Salafis, Salafism and Modern Salafism," *Islamiyyat: International Journal of Islamic Studies* 41, no. 1 (2019): 125–36, <https://doi.org/10.17576/islamiyyat-2019-4001-15>.

⁵⁶ R. Rusli, "Progressive Salafism in Online Fatwa," *Al-Jami'ab: Journal of Islamic Studies* 52, no. 1 (2014): 205–29.

⁵⁷ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 1st ed. (United States of Amerika: Polity Press-Cambridge, 1992): 62.

⁵⁸ Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana: Pengantar Analisis Teks Media*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: LKiS Yogyakarta, 2001): 286.

Table 1. *Classification of Discourse Themes and Text Analysis in Safinah.id Articles*

Article Theme Grouping and Text Analysis on the Safinah.id Website		
Discourse Theme	Diction	Findings
Discourse on Imamate, Divine Authority, and <i>Ahlulbait</i> Leadership ⁵⁹	The Concept of Divine Authority: “Imamate, infallibility, revelation, divine power, authority, divine proof.”	This theme places Imamate as a divine authority that is a direct continuation of prophethood, so that the leadership of <i>Ahlulbait</i> is considered absolutely obligatory to obey. The Imams are described as the guardians of religion, the authentic interpreters of the Qur’an, and moral-spiritual figures who saved Islam from political deviation. This discourse emphasizes that the belief in Imamate is not a source of division, but rather a foundation for unity and dialogue among Muslims.
	Representation of the Imam: “Ahlulbait, infallible imam, ulil amr, spiritual leader, guardian of religion, interpreter of the Qur’an.”	
	Text Legitimacy: “QS al-Tawbah: 119, QS al-Baqarah: 124, H{ad{ith <i>Thaqalayn, Ghadir Khum.</i> ”	
	Discourse Reinforcement Phrases: “absolute obedience,” “imam of every age,” “successor to the Messenger,” “leader appointed by Allah.”	
Discourse on Islamic Unity, Moderation, and Anti-Extremism ⁶⁰	Unity and Brotherhood: “Islamic unity,” “Islamic brotherhood,” “wahdah,” “commonality of teachings.”	This theme emphasizes that Islamic unity is a Qur’anic teaching and the ethical foundation of the ummah, so that differences in madhhab

⁵⁹ Penulis, “Konsep Imamah Dalam Al-Qur’an”; Ginting, “Keniscayaan Imamah”; Ginting, “Imamah Menurut Mazhab Syiah Dan Ahlusunah Bag.1”; Ginting, “Imamah Menurut Mazhab Syiah Dan Ahlusunah Bag.2”; Ginting, “Imamah Para Imam Ahlulbait Dan Hadits Tsaqalain”; Ginting, “Keniscayaan Imamah Dan Fungsinya Sebagai Pemelihara Agama”; Penulis, “Imam Khamenei”; Ginting, “Kitab Al-Ghadir Dan Upaya Persatuan Islam”; Ginting, “Tafsir Surat An-Nisa Ayat 59,” May 20, 2023; Ginting, “Tafsir Surat An-Nisa Ayat 59,” May 21, 2023.

⁶⁰ Ginting, “Imam Husein Simbol Perdamaian Dan Anti Kekerasan”; Zainuddin Ginting, “Yang Salafi Jangan Cela Yang Sufi,” Aqidah, *Safinah Online*, January 11, 2018, <https://safinah.id/yang-salafi-jangan-cela-yang-sufi/>; Zainuddin Ginting, “Ekstremisme Dalam Syiah,” Opini, *Safinah Online*, June 18, 2022, <https://safinah.id/ekstremisme-dalam-syiah/>; Zainuddin Ginting, “Wawancara: Persatuan Islam Perspektif Mazhab Ahlulbait,” Buletin, *Safinah Online*, October 10,

	<p>Moderation and Anti-Extremism: “moderation,” “anti-violence,” “tolerance,” “ghuluw,” “fanaticism.”</p> <p>Actors & Community Identities: “Ahlulbait,” “ABI,” “takfiri groups,” “extremists (Wahhabi, Shia).”</p> <p>Qur’anic-Hadith legitimation: “one nation,” “brothers,” “prohibition of division,” “prohibition of <i>ghulum</i>.”</p>	<p>should not be a source of hostility. Moderation, anti-violence, and mutual respect are positioned as the original characteristics of Islam, while extremism is seen as the result of fanaticism, ignorance, and misinterpretation. This discourse presents the ABI community as agents of dialogue, tolerance, and guardians of Islamic brotherhood. Divisions are understood as historical and political constructs, often embraced by takfiri groups. Thus, cross-sectarian cooperation and mutual understanding from authentic sources are considered a solid path toward harmony among the ummah.</p>
<p>Discourse on Nationalism, Nationalism, and Political Ethics⁶¹</p>	<p>Nationality and Nationalism: “Homeland,” “nationality,” “nationalism,” “national unity,” “constitution,” “Pancasila.”</p>	<p>This theme presents nationalism and patriotism as part of the faith and teachings of <i>Ahlulbait</i>. The state is viewed as a divine mandate that must be upheld through justice, political ethics, and</p>

2016, <https://safinah.id/wawancara-persatuan-islam-perspektif-mazhab-ahlulbait/>; Sulton, “Perpecahan Di Tengah Umat Islam; Sebuah Telaah,” *Wacana, Safinah Online*, October 8, 2018, <https://safinah.id/perpecahan-di-tengah-umat-islam-sebuah-telaah/>.

⁶¹ Ginting, “Teologi Kemerdekaan”; Zainuddin Ginting, “Arahan Dewan Syura Ahlulbait Indonesia Terkait Pemilu Dan Pileg,” *Info Bulan Ini, Safinah Online*, January 9, 2024, <https://safinah.id/arahan-dewan-syura-ahlul-bait-indonesiaterkait-pemilu-dan-pileg/>; Ginting, “Pernyataan Sikap Ormas Islam Ahlulbait Indonesia (ABI) Terkait Dinamika Sosial-Politik Terkini Di Tanah Air”; Ginting, “Cinta Indonesia”; Penulis, “Cinta Tanah Air Dalam Perspektif Ahlul Bait As”; Zainuddin Ginting, “Mengikuti Dan Tak Mengikuti Hasil Itsbat Pemerintah,” *Opini, Safinah Online*, March 22, 2023, <https://safinah.id/mengikuti-dan-tak-mengikuti-hasil-itsbat-pemerintah/>; Sulton, “Imbauan Dewan Syura: Asyura Dan Politik Bersih,” *Buletin, Safinah Online*, September 8, 2018, <https://safinah.id/imbau-dewan-syura-asyura-dan-politik-bersih/>.

	<p>Political ethics and citizen participation: “clean politics,” “non-participation,” “neutrality,” “polarization,” “authority rights.”</p>	<p>adherence to the Constitution. ABI is framed as a non-partisan mass organization that rejects polarization, affirms clean politics, and encourages responsible citizen participation. Love for the homeland is positioned as a religious value, while extremism and fanaticism are seen as threats to national unity.</p>
	<p>Religious and public moral values: “trustworthiness,” “sharia,” “brotherhood,” “unity.”</p>	
	<p>Religious authority of the Ahl al-Bayt: “Ahl al-Bayt,” “Imam Ali,” “trust of Allah.”</p>	
<p>Discourse on Social Justice and Islamic Identity in Indonesia⁶²</p>	<p>Intolerance and discrimination: “persecution,” “stigma,” “misguidance,” “social discrimination,” “structural discrimination.”</p>	<p>This theme depicts Shia as a minority group facing social intolerance and structural discrimination through stigmatization, misrepresentation, and biased policies. To counter this narrative, the text asserts that Shia Islam has a long history in Indonesia and is a legitimate part of the nation's Islamic identity. The discourse of moderation is constructed by calling for justice, recognition of identity, and an end to discriminatory practices by both society and state apparatus in order to create an inclusive religious life.</p>
	<p>Islamic identity: “Indonesian Shiites,” “historical roots,” “minority community,” “local Islamic identity.”</p>	
	<p>State and power: “authority figures,” “discriminatory policies,” “denial of rights,” “legal-constitutional.”</p>	
	<p>Hope and moderation: “tolerance,” “justice,” “inclusivity,” “a better future.”</p>	

The data collected from the text analysis table above show that Safinah.id articles focus on four main clusters, including the religious

⁶² Ginting, “Diskriminasi Sosial Dan Struktural Terhadap Syiah”; Zainuddin Ginting, “Muhammadiyah Tak Berpaham Wahabi,” Opini, *Safinah Online*, June 17, 2022, <https://safinah.id/muhammadiyah-tak-berpaham-wahabi/>; Zainuddin Ginting, “Pancasila Perlu Dipahami, Bukan Hanya Diklaim,” Opini, *Safinah Online*, June 1, 2021, <https://safinah.id/pancasila-perlu-dipahami-bukan-hanya-diklaim/>.

authority of *Ahlulbait*, intra-Islamic unity, religious nationalism, and social justice for the Shia minority group. Each theme displays consistent diction, such as “divine authority,” “Islamic unity,” “clean politics,” and “structural discrimination,” which direct readers toward specific constructions of meaning.⁶³ The representation of actors in the text also reinforces the construction of identity, with the Imams of *Ahlulbait* positioned as a source of moral-spiritual legitimacy, ABI as a moderating actor in national politics, and the Shia group as a subject demanding recognition within the context of Indonesian Islam.⁶⁴ Through value-laden word choices, the text frames sociopolitical reality in a structured manner by presenting Imamate as the basis of unity, extremism as a threat, nationalism as a religious value, and intolerance as a systemic problem.

The interpretation of this discourse pattern shows that Safinah.id seeks to negotiate the identity of Indonesian Shia through strategies of moderation, historicization, and the delegitimization of intolerant narratives. Its emphasis on Qur’anic arguments, hadiths, and classical references demonstrates the use of textual legitimacy to reinforce ideological claims, while references to the history of *NU*, *Muhammadiyah*, and national practices position Shia as an integral part of the Islamic tradition in the archipelago.⁶⁵ Argumentatively, the reproduction of this discourse of moderation and nationalism becomes a tool to respond to stereotypes, correct misunderstandings, and claim legitimate religious space within the structure of Indonesian society. Thus, it can be concluded that the overall discourse on Safinah.id constructs an image of Shia Islam as moderate and inclusive. This discourse also formulates a counter-narrative to conservative hegemony, opening up space for the recognition of identity and social justice in the context of contemporary Indonesian Islam. Meanwhile, text analysis on the Annasindonesia.com website reveals an ideological orientation that runs counter to the pattern seen on Safinah.id. This difference is clearly seen in the way the narrative is

⁶³ See Table 1. Classification of Discourse Themes and Text Analysis in Safinah.id Articles

⁶⁴ See Table 1. Classification of Discourse Themes and Text Analysis in Safinah.id Articles

⁶⁵ Ibid. Ali Ridho Syafi’i and Ghorbanali Karimzadeh Gharamaleki, “Religious Moderation in Risalah Islam Berkemajuan: A Perspective from Karl Mannheim’s Sociology of Knowledge”, *Journal of Islamic Philosophy and Contemporary Thought* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–25. DOI: 10.15642/jipct.2023.1.1.1-25.

constructed and in how the meaning is directed, as presented in the following table:

Table 2. *Classification of Discourse Themes and Text Analysis in Annasindonesia.com Articles*

Article Theme Grouping and Text Analysis on the Annasindonesia.com Website		
Discourse Theme	Diction	Findings
Imamate as a Transnational Ideological and Political Threat ⁶⁶	Ideological threat concepts: “the Shiite threat,” “the virus of faith,” “blasphemy,” “latent danger,” “conflict vulnerability,” “Imamate ideology.”	This theme frames Imamate as the core of a transnational ideological threat linked to Iranian expansion, thereby positioning Shia as both a theological group and a foreign political network that erodes the state’s ideology and sovereignty. This discourse reinforces fears of horizontal conflict, calls for state intervention, and mobilizes the legitimacy of clerics and national security to justify restrictions on the Shia community in Indonesia.
	Transnational political narratives: “Iranian expansion,” “transnational ideology,” “threat to sovereignty,” “non-military intervention,” “Iranian political hegemony.”	
	Phrases used to mobilize fear: “threatening the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia,” “triggering horizontal conflict,” “provocateur.”	
	Religious legitimacy and authority: “Islamic resistance,” “clerics rejecting Shiism,” “heretical fatwas,”	

⁶⁶ Indonesia, “Imamah Jauh Lebih Bahaya Dari Khilafah”; Indonesia, “Syiah Iran Ancaman Nyata NKRI”; Indonesia, “Syiah Anti Pancasila”; “Mengapa Syiah dianggap Membahayakan NKRI,” Agustus 2022, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3577-mengapa-syiah-dianggap-membahayakan-nkri>; Indonesia, “Konsep Imamah”; Indonesia, “Syiah Antara Gerakan Politik dan Aliran Agama”; Indonesia, “Gerakan Sesat Syiah dalam Perspektif Politik dan Hukum”; “Fahmi Salim: HTI dibubarkan, kok Syiah tidak?,” Mei 2017, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/903-fahmi-salim-hti-dibubarkan-kok-syiah-tidak->; Indonesia, “Syiah Mengancam Keutuhan NKRI”; “Ingat Idul Ghadir Sebentar Lagi...!!!,” September 4, 2016, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/486-ingat-idul-ghadir-sebentar-lagi>.

	“deviating from doctrine,” “threat to the faithful.”	
Shiism as a Source of Conflict, Violence, and Terrorism ⁶⁷	Violent and terroristic diction: “radical,” “terrorism,” “treason,” “bombing,” “violence,” “terrorist acts,” “revenge.”	This theme constructs a narrative that Shiites are inherently a source of conflict, violence, and terrorism, whether ideologically, historically, or politically. Shiite doctrine is portrayed as radical since its inception, while its adherents are positioned as subversive actors who conspire against the state. Past violent events, such as the Borobudur bombing are used to legitimize the generalization of Shia as a permanent threat to national security. This discourse emphasizes that Shia is not merely a theological difference, but a structured threat to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia that must be watched and restricted by the state.
	Stigmatization of doctrine and identity: “radical imamate,” “infidel,” “extremist teachings,” “transnational ideology,” “Iranian revolution.”	
	Framing threats to the state: “threatening the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia,” “subversive,” “mass mobilization,” “resistance movement,” “threat to sovereignty,” “root cause of conflict.”	
	Moral and social delegitimization: “treason,” “hating the Companions,” “legalizing adultery (<i>mut’ah</i>),” “self-harm,” “dangerous group.”	
Shiism as a Socio-Religious Threat and a Divisive Force Among	Ideological-Theological: “misguided,” “deviant,” “not Islamic,” “blasphemous,” “corrupted,” “morally	This theme depicts Shiites as a social and religious threat that is considered deviant from Islamic teachings and has the

⁶⁷ “Syiah Ajaran Radikal,” Oktober 2019, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/2279-syiah-ajaran-radikal>; “Benih Terorisme itu Syiah,” April 15, 2021, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3287-benih-terorisme-itu-syiah>; Indonesia, “Syiah Biang-Kerok Gerakan Makar dan Terorisme.”

<p>Muslims⁶⁸</p>	<p>corrupt,” “wilayahul faqih,” “Imamate.”</p> <p>Social threats and security: “threats,” “dangers,” “destruction,” “division,” “infiltration,” “treason,” “disunity,” “conflict.”</p> <p>Confrontational and political: “impossible to unite,” “impossible,” “opposed,” “no compromise,” “contradictory.”</p> <p>Moralistic and emotive: “stupidity,” “superficiality,” “defiling purity,” “misguided rituals,” “deviation,” “betrayal,” “fabrication.”</p>	<p>potential to disrupt the order of community life. Doctrinal differences are framed as fundamental deviations that trigger suspicion, tension, and conflict in various regions. The presence of Shia communities is represented as bringing an agenda that weakens harmony, divides religious solidarity, and causes social instability. The narrative that emerges emphasizes that Shia Islam is a source of disruption that must be watched out for to maintain the unity of the community and social order.</p>
<p>Shiites as Targets of Legal Action, Criminalization, and State Delegitimization⁶⁹</p>	<p>Threats and security: “endangering the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia,” “undermining state ideology,” “threatening unity,” “hidden political movements,” “ideological attacks.”</p> <p>Delegitimization of</p>	<p>This theme presents a discourse that frames Shiism as a multidimensional threat that must be contained through legal action, political pressure, and religious delegitimization. Through language that emphasizes the danger of</p>

⁶⁸ “Muhammadiyah Tidak Sama dengan Syiah,” Mei 2023, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3620-muhammadiyah-tidak-sama-dengan-syiah>; “Mungkinkah Sunni dan Syiah bersatu? Jawabnya Tidak Mungkin!,” July 17, 2018, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/1564-mungkinkah-sunni-dan-syiah-bersatu-jawabnya-tidak-mungkin->; Indonesia, “Antisipasi Negara Terhadap Ancaman Syi’ah Bagi Keamanan Nasional dan NKRI #1.”

⁶⁹ “Pernyataan Sikap Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah (ANNAS) Tentang Acara As Syuro Syiah di Bandung dan lainnya,” July 23, 2024, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3653-pernyataan-sikap-aliansi-nasional-anti-syiah-annas-tentang-acara-as-syuro-syiah-di-bandung-dan-lainnya>; “Pecat Menteri Agama,” Desember 2020, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/3081-pecat-menteri-agama>; “Prabowo-Sandi Agar Lebih Tegas Terhadap Gerakan Syiah,” Agustus 2018, <https://www.annasindonesia.com/read/1595-prabowo-sandi-agar-lebih-tegas-terhadap-gerakan-syiah>.

	Religion: “misguided,” “misleading,” “heretical,” “corrupting faith.”	heresy, the potential for division, and foreign involvement, these articles frame Shiism as an entity
	Criminalization and legal justification: “must be prevented and punished,” “legal danger,” “dissolution of organizations,” “crackdown,” “violation of stability.”	that is not merely a difference of opinion but a threat to the stability of the state and the purity of Islam, thus warranting prohibition, dissolution, restriction of movement, and pressure on the
	Politics and enemies of the state: “controlled by Iran,” “treasonous movement,” “dangerous political diplomacy,” “more dangerous than communists,” “weak government,” “political asylum.”	government to be more repressive. Thus, the discourse that has been formed reinforces the perception that Shia Islam is a legitimate target of criminalization to maintain public security.

Textual analysis of the annasindonesia.com website shows that the content consistently frames Shia Islam as a perceived threat that undermines religious beliefs, disrupts social stability, and weakens the state. The textual data shows the use of threatening diction such as misguidance, ideological subversion, threats to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and references to Iranian political movements, combined with framing of criminality and delegitimization.⁷⁰ The Shia group is depicted as an ideological actor portrayed a aggressive and infiltrating the religious national spheres, while ANNAS is positioned as the protector of the people and guardian of public security. This series of constructions produces the reasoning that restrictions, organizational dissolution, and legal pressure are considered reasonable and appropriate measures to maintain national order. From this pattern, it can be concluded that the site constructs moral and political legitimacy to reinforce the assumption that the Shia community is a threat to state security.

Meanwhile, text analysis on the Safinah.id website shows the opposite discourse. The data presented emphasize equality, the rejection of discrimination, and the need for a safe space for Shia

⁷⁰ See Table 2. Classification of Discourse Themes and Text Analysis in Annasindonesia.com Articles

religious expression in the context of Indonesian Muslim society. The choice of words such as tolerance, social justice, moderation, and constitutional respect suggests an interpretation that the main problem lies in structural bias and social pressure experienced by Shia groups. Through historical foundations, *fiqh* arguments, and national principles, this website argues that Shias are part of the citizenry who are entitled to legal protection and recognition of their identity. A comparison of the two websites reveals a battle of narratives regarding the position of Shia Islam in Indonesia, in which one narrative reinforces the image of a threat that warrants action, while the other emphasizes the restoration of dignity and the strengthening of social cohesion through acceptance.

2. *Discourse Practice Analysis*

The texts on the Safinah.id website reveals a pattern of discourse production shaped by religious institutions that are oriented toward education, moderation, and strengthening of Shia identity in Indonesia. The articles produced combine religious sources, Islamic history, and national values, allowing their distribution pattern to function as a space for theological explanation and identity defence. The consumption process is directed at Shia readers and the moderate Muslim public who seek legitimacy regarding the truth of the Shia community in the Indonesian context. The pattern of text connectivity shows the use of references to the Qur'an, hadith, national documents, and the discourse of tolerance, which together form a blend of discourses that position the Shia as a legitimate part of both the Muslim community and the nation.

Meanwhile, the text on the annasindonesia.com website displays a pattern of production aimed at consolidating the movement against Shia Islam through a systematic depiction of threats to religious beliefs, violations of law, and political dangers. The distribution of discourse is directed at raising public awareness and mobilizing social responses through narratives of warning, instruction, and demands for state action. The consumption pattern targets conservative Muslim groups who are ready to accept messages of delegitimization and the framing of Shia as an internal threat. Its intertextuality utilizes religious fatwas, legal articles, and geopolitical issues, resulting in an intertextual blend that links religion, criminality, and national security, thereby strengthening the position of Shia as a group whose social and political space must be restricted.

3. *Social Practice Analysis*

The discourse on Safinah.id is rooted in the social context of the Shia community, which continues to face political pressure and religious stigma. Analysis of the articles shows efforts to assert an Islamic identity that aligns with national values and constitutional principles as a strategy to build a safe space within an unequal social landscape. Explanations of Imamate, tolerance, and national ethics are used to reshape the image of the Shia community as a moderate and rational part of Indonesian Islam. This pattern gives rise to practices of resistance directed at structures of injustice through the production of inclusive discourse that highlights contributions of the Shia community to social integration. This trend leads to the conclusion that Safinah.id constructs a defensive-constructive discourse that strengthens the social legitimacy of Shia Islam through a language of unity and open diversity.

Conversely, annasindonesia.com grew out of a social context shaped by concerns about religious expressions that were seen as deviating from certain orthodox standards. Its articles contain narrative patterns that link Shia Islam with heresy, foreign infiltration, and threats to the national order, thereby presenting a social image that positions Shia Islam as a source of risk. This kind of representation works as an instrument of symbolic restriction that reinforces religious boundaries and strengthens the moral authority claims of groups that reject Shia Islam. The emphasis on danger and criminalization opens up space for the legitimization of state intervention and shapes exclusive social practices. From these tendencies, it can be concluded that annasindonesia.com produces a discourse of delegitimization that reduces the space for Shia existence within the Indonesian social structure.

Negotiating Ideology, Identity, and Islamic Political Authority in Indonesia's Digital Age

The discursive tension between Safinah.id and Annasindonesia.com shows how religious authority is negotiated in a polarized digital space. This finding is in line with Heidi A. Campbell's⁷¹ Statement that digital authority works through ideological and textual layers, so that each site builds its own hierarchy

⁷¹ See Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media Worlds* (London: Routledge, 2021): 87.

of truth. Safinah.id asserts the legitimacy of Shia Islam through doctrinal explanations and scientific references, while Annasindonesia.com reinforces its anti-Shia position with a polemical style that frames the other side as a threat. This difference shows that digital authority is not singular, but is shaped through competing strategies of representation.

In the context of identity, the results of the analysis show that both sites form “self” and “other” through different linguistic practices. Campbell⁷² explains that online religious identity is always tied to discursive infrastructure and social interactions that shape self-meaning. Safinah.id constructs Shia identity as part of the Islamic intellectual tradition, while Annasindonesia.com constructs Shia identity as a deviant entity. The way the two sites construct their narratives shows how language structures function to reinforce symbolic boundaries in the digital landscape.

This dynamic is intertwined with broader conditions in Cyber Islamic Environments. Gary R. Bunt⁷³ asserts that power relations in the digital environment are shaped by the efforts of various groups to articulate their religious values in the public sphere. CDA findings show that Safinah.id uses academic argumentative strategies to expand its space of legitimacy, while Annasindonesia.com uses a strategy of firm opposition that narrows the space for dialogue. The interconnection between discourse and political-religious positions explains why the contestation of digital authority continues without a definite point of convergence.

Meanwhile, this phenomenon is also influenced by the transformation of religious authority on social media. Bunt⁷⁴ explains that the shift in authority occurs when religious discourse blends with the fast-moving global flow of information. In the findings of this study, both sites utilize their dominance in the digital space to compete for the position of being the party most entitled to define Islamic truth. This shows that Shia-Salafi in Indonesia does not only occur at the theological level, but also through claims of authority that

⁷² Ibid, 61.

⁷³ See Gary R. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto Books, 2003): 5.

⁷⁴ See Gary R. Bunt, *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority*, 1st ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018): 34.

are produced and circulated as part of ideological competition in the digital era.

Campbell's view in *When Religion Meets New Media* enriches this reading. He shows that religious communities are never passive towards technology, but rather frame and negotiate its use through certain discourses that serve to reinforce theological goals and collective identity.⁷⁵ This analysis shows that Safinah.id develops what can be read as a *validation discourse* to present Shi'ism as a legitimate tradition within Islam, while Annasindonesia.com uses a *prescriptive discourse* that positions technology as a means to assert the boundaries of their version of orthodoxy. These differing strategies show that the struggle for authority is not only at the level of content but also through the way technology is interpreted within the framework of each party's ideological goals.

From the overall findings, it appears that both websites construct claims of truth through linguistic structures, discursive strategies, and the establishment of authority in line with their ideological orientations. However, the confrontational approach used by Annasindonesia.com shows a tendency to reduce theological complexity into narratives of threat, while Safinah.id positions itself in a more dialogical argumentative stance. The author believes that digital space should be an arena that allows for intellectual encounters, not merely a reproduction of sectarian boundaries. Thus, the main criticism of this study is directed at the way discourse is produced in a manner that closes off the possibility of dialogue and reinforces polarization, because such patterns actually diminish the richness of Islamic tradition, which is based on diversity of interpretation and religious experience.

Previous studies, including Joas Wagemakers⁷⁶ study on how anti-Shia discourse is used as a tool of political legitimation in the Jordanian context, illustrate that Salafi sectarian rhetoric can function instrumentally in the relationship between religion and power. However, this approach is still limited when applied to the Indonesian situation, as it focuses more on socio-political dynamics than on examining how language works to shape power relations within it.

⁷⁵ See Heidi Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (London: Routledge, 2010): 136-137.

⁷⁶ Wagemakers, "Making Sense of Sectarianism without Sects"; Wagemakers, "Sectarianism in the Service of Salafism."

This study fills this gap by showing that the Shia-Salafi contestation in Indonesia takes place through systematic linguistic strategies that construct identities, symbolic boundaries, and claims to authority in the digital space. Through critical discourse analysis of 50 articles from two websites representing opposing ideological positions, this study shows that the competition between the two is not solely rooted in theological differences, but takes place through linguistic practices that position one side as the authority and the other as a group that must be corrected or eliminated. These findings confirm that understanding the dynamics of Shia-Salafi relations in Indonesia requires a more critical reading of digital discourse production, because within this linguistic dialectic, the struggle for religious and political legitimacy is intense.

Concluding Remarks

This study shows that the discourse battle between *Safinah.id* and *Annasindonesia.com* moves through a process of identity and authority construction carried out with different linguistic strategies. Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis shows how vocabulary choices, argument structures, and intertextuality patterns shape the ideological positions of each site in representing Shia and Salafi. These findings are in line with Heidi A. Campbell's ideas about the negotiation of authority in digital spaces, as well as Gary R. Bunt's analysis of how Cyber Islamic Environments become locations for the production and distribution of claims to truth. From this, it can be seen that language and digital media work together to shape the direction and intensity of religious contestation in Indonesia.

The overall results of the study confirm the need for research on Shia-Salafi relations in Indonesia to move towards a more critical reading of discourse production practices. Previous studies have revealed the function of sectarianism as a political tool, but have paid little attention to the linguistic processes that guide the formation of symbolic boundaries and religious legitimacy. This research contributes by integrating textual dimensions, discursive practices, and social contexts to show how these two sites utilize digital space to strengthen their respective ideological positions. With this foundation, this research offers a new direction for contemporary Islamic studies in Indonesia through a more careful analysis of the dynamics of religious discourse in an ever-changing media environment.

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