

THE CONTESTATION OF RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND LOCAL *FIQH*: AS'ADIYAH'S REJECTION OF USTADZ FIRANDA IN WAJO

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the contestation of religious authority between As'adiyah, representing local traditional ulama, and Ustadz Firanda, representing the transnational Salafi da'wah movement, focusing on the case of Firanda's rejection in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi. The central argument of this research is that strong religious authority is not solely derived from online popularity but is instead grounded in social legitimacy, contextual wisdom, and an established scholarly reputation for maintaining harmony within a culturally diverse Muslim society. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, this research draws upon a formal statement issued by the As'adiyah community. The findings reveal that the rejection of Firanda's da'wah was motivated not only by theological differences but also by efforts to preserve the continuity of local jurisprudence and the socio-cultural harmony of the Bugis community. Local religious authority, rooted in the legacy of the Shafi'i school and Bugis cultural values, demonstrates significant resilience against the expansion of purification-oriented transnational da'wah movements. This study underscores the importance of reactualizing local jurisprudence based on maqāṣid al-sharī'ah to address the challenges posed by transnational da'wah, particularly in promoting the common good (maṣlaḥah) of the ummah and safeguarding local culture.

Keywords: *As'adiyah Wajo, Reactualization of Local Fiqh, Religious Authority, Salafi-Ustadz Firanda, Social Media.*

INTRODUCTION

The rejection by the As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School community (hereafter: As'adiyah) of Ustadz Firanda's invitation to deliver a sermon at a *tabligh akbar* event in Wajo, South Sulawesi, reflects the complex dynamics of *da'wah* and religious authority in an increasingly fragmented media landscape. On the one hand, the digital era facilitates the expansion of *da'wah* through online platforms, reinforcing forms of authority that are shaped by popularity and social media algorithms (Burhani, 2020; Nisa, 2018; Feener, 2014).

On the other hand, Muslim communities in Indonesia, such as those in Wajo, South Sulawesi, where the majority are affiliated with As'adiyah, continue to rely heavily on traditional authority grounded in *sanad* (chains of scholarly transmission), cultural proximity, and the moral reputation of local *ulama* (Halim, 2015 and 2022). This tension reveals that when purist digital *da'wah* movements such as Salafism enter local context without regard for cultural foundations and established religious authorities, resistance often emerges as a form of protection for the continuity of a locally rooted Islamic identity.

Within this framework, As'adiyah provides an important case for examining the dynamics of religious authority and local *fiqh* in the media age, especially as a stronghold of the *Islam Nusantara* tradition amid the rise of transnational *da'wah*. In this study, local *fiqh* refers to the practice and interpretation of Islamic law that interact dynamically with specific social and cultural settings.

As'adiyah has cultivated a deeply embedded religious ethos among the Bugis community, one that is firmly based on the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence (Halim, 2015; HS et al., 2021 and 2023). Examining As'adiyah, therefore, offers

valuable insight into how local *fiqh* adapts and maintains its relevance while responding to new ideological challenges, particularly those posed by text-centered purification movements such as Salafism, which tend to overlook social context and local religious traditions.

Literature Review

Studies on the contestation of religious authority in the digital era indicate a significant shift in how authority is constructed, maintained, and contested. Saputra and Fadhli (2023) show that in Aceh, the emergence of Salafi preachers on social media has fragmented authority even within single traditional communities. This fragmentation occurs because digital media not only accelerates the dissemination of religious ideas but also provides a new arena in which virtually anyone can project themselves as a religious authority. A similar pattern can be observed in Wajo, where Ustadz Firanda's presence through digital platforms introduced an approach to *da'wah* that differs significantly from the As'adiyah tradition, which derives its authority from *sanad*, *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) networks, and deep cultural legitimacy.

Salafi *da'wah* in the digital realm is not merely a matter of content but also of strategy. Pramana (2024), Sunarwoto (2021), and Chozin (2013) observe that Salafi preachers' engagement with platforms such as Instagram and YouTube is closely linked to algorithmic mechanisms that amplify their visibility. Salafi message tends to be concise, literalist, and framed around purification narratives such as #musikharam or #antibid'ah. This communication style allows their content to circulate widely and appeal to audiences seeking quick and definitive religious guidance. However, when such narratives are introduced into social contexts rich in local wisdom such as Wajo, epistemological tensions arise. The

contextual and inclusive *fiqh* tradition upheld by As'adiyah presents a challenge to rigid and ahistorical interpretations of Islam.

The transformation of authority in the digital age further complicates this situation. While traditional legitimacy is rooted in scholarly *sanad* and social recognition, digital legitimacy is often constructed through virality and follower count. Suaedy et al. (2022) highlight this phenomenon as the rise of the “celebrity *ulama*,” whose authority derives not from institutions such as the MUI or *pesantren* but from social media presence. This development results in what they call a “de-bureaucratization of fatwas.” In Firanda’s case, although he gained national prominence through online platforms, his disregard for local religious institutions led to strong resistance at the community level. This divergence between digital and social legitimacy explains why a form of *da’wah* that succeeds digitally may fail within local social contexts.

Rejection of Salafi *da’wah* in several regions, including Wajo, must also be understood as part of broader resistance to cultural purification. Sambodo and Maksum (2024) emphasize that the Salafi movement often dismisses local expressions of religiosity that have become integral to Indonesian Islam, such as communal *dhikr*, *maulid* celebrations, and reverence for scholars. Similarly, Aflah Misbah (2023) observes that online campaigns such as “music is haram” often provoke negative responses due to their neglect of social context. These practices, although cultural in form, have been religiously legitimized through the Shafi’i tradition and Sufi spirituality. Consequently, As’adiyah’s rejection of Firanda’s *da’wah* should not be dismissed as mere conservatism but rather understood as an effort to defend local religious authority and social cohesion rooted in the

long-standing Islamic traditions of the Bugis.

In this regard, re-examining the relationship between transnational *da’wah* and local religious distinctiveness within the framework of contemporary Islamic law becomes crucial. The case of Ustadz Firanda’s rejection demonstrates that successful *da’wah* requires more than scriptural accuracy or digital popularity. It also demands sensitivity to local socio-religious structures. The growing discourse on digital religious literacy must be accompanied by a framework rooted in *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah*, ensuring that religious messages contribute to the realization of *maslahah* (the common good) while fostering harmony between Islam and its adherents within diverse cultural settings. The significance of this study lies in its potential to promote coexistence between digital modernity and the local character of *Islam Nusantara*.

Conceptual Framework

This research is grounded in the assumption that religious authority is neither singular nor static but is continually negotiated through social, cultural, and technological interactions. Within Indonesian Muslim society, religious authority can generally be categorized into two major poles. The first is traditional authority, which derives its legitimacy from *pesantren* networks, *sanad*, and socio-cultural recognition (Alatas, 2020, 2024; Zulkifli, 2013). The second is emerging authority, cultivated through digital media and exemplified by figures such as Ustadz Firanda, who represents the Salafi *da’wah* movement (Suaedy, 2023; Akmaliah, 2020). This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in contemporary Islamic legal theory to explore how these two forms of authority interact and compete, particularly in shaping public discourse and religious practices in the era of social media.

Social media has become the primary arena for this contestation, producing the fragmentation of religious authority (Krismono, 2017). On one hand, digital platforms allow preachers such as Firanda to disseminate their *da'wah* messages widely and independently of traditional religious institutions. On the other hand, institutions such as As'adiyah, rooted in cultural heritage and traditional scholarship, continue to play a vital role in maintaining social cohesion and preserving the continuity of contextual *fiqh* understandings. Within this framework, social media functions not merely as a medium of communication but as a contested space of religious legitimacy (Saputra & Fadhli, 2020), where tensions arise between purification-oriented transnational *da'wah* and the moderate, adaptive expressions of local Islam.

From the perspective of Islamic law, this framework considers the reactualization of local *fiqh* as a normative response to the disruptions caused by transnational *da'wah* movements. This reactualization is grounded in the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, all of which aim to promote the well-being of the *ummah* while upholding the dignity of local culture (Baharuddin, 2017; Syafei, 2017; Auda, 2008). The rejection of Firanda's *da'wah* should therefore not be perceived as an emotional or anti-modern reaction but rather as an expression of collective wisdom aimed at preserving religious practices that have endured across time and social transformation. Accordingly, this study does not merely highlight conflict but also seeks to articulate the potential for developing Islamic legal thought that is responsive to the complexities of the contemporary era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to critically examine the dynamics of contestation over religious authority between traditional religious institutions and Salafi preachers within Indonesia's evolving *da'wah* landscape shaped by social media. The rejection of Ustadz Firanda by the As'adiyah community in Wajo serves as a crucial entry point for understanding how local religious authority negotiates with transnational *da'wah* narratives disseminated through digital platforms. Employing a qualitative approach, this study highlights the need to reactualize local *fiqh* as a response to new forms of authority that are not rooted in scholarly tradition but rather in digital virality. The central argument of this research is that sustainable religious authority cannot rely solely on online popularity. It must also rest on social legitimacy, contextual wisdom, and a credible scholarly lineage that fosters harmony within a culturally diverse Muslim society.

This study comprises three key areas of analysis. First, it explores As'adiyah's religious authority and its socio-religious role within Bugis society, including its tradition of local *fiqh* and its extensive pesantren network. Second, it analyzes the figure and *da'wah* approach of Ustadz Firanda as a representative of the Salafi movement and a manifestation of media-based religious authority. Third, it examines the response and rejection from the Wajo community, particularly the As'adiyah network, with attention to the role of social media in shaping and amplifying public opinion. By focusing on Wajo, this study contributes to the contemporary Islamic legal discourse by illuminating how religious authority operated and adapts within the media age. It also offers a fresh perspective on the significance of reactualizing local *fiqh* to maintain social and religious equilibrium amid ongoing transformations in the modes of religious communication and authority.

DISCUSSION

As'adiyah and Its Religious Authority in South Sulawesi

Pondok Pesantren As'adiyah is an Islamic educational institution with deep roots in the classical Islamic scholarly network in South Sulawesi, particularly among the Bugis community (Al-Rasyid and Ilyas, 2022; Sila, 2017). Founded by Anregurutta Haji Muhammad As'ad Al-Bugisy in 1930, As'adiyah adheres to *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, following the Shafi'i school in jurisprudence and the Ash'ari tradition of theology, both integrated with Bugis cultural values emphasizing reverence for *ulama*, adherence to customary practices (*adat*), and respect for social-religious hierarchy (Ilham, 2017; HS, 2023; Halim, 2015; Husain and Dwi, 2021). Through this intellectual lineage, As'adiyah serves as a guardian of *Islam Nusantara* orthodoxy in South Sulawesi. Its *ulama* derive authority not only from *sanad* and certifications (*ijāzah*), but also through their strategic role in maintaining the community's socio-religious order (Gaffar & Takbir, 2018; Tahir & Tahir, 2022). Consequently, they are honored with the title *Anregurutta*, a mark of scholarly prestige deeply embedded in Bugis cultural traditions (HS, 2021).

In terms of *fiqh*, As'adiyah promotes a jurisprudence emphasizing social harmony and respect for scholarly tradition within local culture. Its approach is contextual, responsive to societal dynamics without compromising the fundamental principles of Islamic law (Tim Buku Fikih As'adiyah, 2022). Rather than portraying Islam as rigid or textualist, As'adiyah's *fiqh* is characterized by an accommodating stance toward local realities. Consequently, its *fiqh* operates not merely as a normative system but as a living, dynamic form of

religious authority embedded in the daily life of the Bugis community.

As'adiyah's moral authority is sustained through profound spiritual and social connections between scholars and the public. The *Anregurutta* are revered not only for their formal knowledge but also for their moral integrity, personal piety, and ability to harmonize religious principles with local wisdom (Halim, 2015). This authority develops organically, not imposed by the state but cultivated through long-standing social legitimacy, service, and exemplary conduct. Therefore, when external ideologies such as Salafism emerge with alternative interpretations of Islam, As'adiyah's moral authority functions as a protective bulwark, preserving the Bugis Islamic identity that is moderate, inclusive, and culturally grounded.

Within the social-religious structure of Bugis society, As'adiyah's role extends beyond that of a formal educational institution. Its scholars serve as key authorities in various domains, particularly in jurisprudential issues concerning worship (*'ibādah*) and social transactions (*mu'āmalah*) (HS, 2021). This position positions As'adiyah to act as a bridge between Islamic legal principles and Bugis customary law. Moreover, it fosters an inclusive Bugis Islamic identity through culturally grounded *da'wah*, regular study circles, and public religious lectures delivered with educational and persuasive methods (Husain, 2021). This approach has earned As'adiyah widespread acceptance across different age groups and backgrounds (Halim, 2018). It is within this context of established religious authority that challenges from transnational *da'wah* movements, such as Salafism, emerge, most notably through the presence of Ustadz Firanda in Wajo, discussed in the following section.

The Presence of Ustadz Firanda within the Local Islamic Order

Ustadz Firanda Andirja (born October 28, 1979) is widely recognized as a prominent figure of the Salafi movement (BekallIslam.com, 2025). A graduate of the Islamic University of Madinah, he actively disseminates Islamic teachings through public sermons and digital platforms, including YouTube (@FirandaAndirjaOfficial) and his official website (<https://firanda.com/>). His preaching emphasizes returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah as understood by the earliest generations of Muslims (*salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), which constitutes the core foundation of the Salafi movement (Amin et al., 2020). His preaching style is systematic and argumentative, relying heavily on literal interpretations of religious texts while rejecting religious practices considered to lack legitimate *shar'i* foundations. His *da'wah* focuses primarily on purifying *'aqidah* (creed) and correcting acts of worship from *bid'ah*. This preaching style has attracted urban audiences and younger Muslims seeking clear, definitive religious rulings (Khotimah et al., 2024; Ananta, 2023; Made, 2020).

However, the Salafi approach promoted by Firanda diverges fundamentally from that of traditional Indonesian scholars, particularly those affiliated with *pesantren* or Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and As'adiyah. The Salafi movement generally rejects interpretive methodologies such as *ta'wīl*, *qiyās*, and contextual *ijtihād*, as well as adherence to a particular *madhhab*, including the Shafi'i school predominant in Indonesia (Hasan, 2020), including Wajo. In contrast, traditional scholars uphold *madhhab*-based authority as an established methodology for maintaining consistency and coherence in Islamic jurisprudence (Harnadi, 2021). The Salafi literalist stance, being rigid and text-centered, often

struggles to accommodate local culture complexities, thereby generating social and religious tensions (Hasan, 2020). Meanwhile, traditional scholars adopt a more flexible, context-sensitive approach, prioritizing public welfare (*maṣlaḥah 'āmmah*) and local conditions in interpreting religious texts (Harnadi, 2021). These methodological contrasts underpin much of the tension between Salafi groups and traditional religious authorities (Afriansyah, 2021).

This dynamic reveals a broader tension between the purifying agenda of Salafism and localized forms of Islam deeply intertwined with the socio-historical development of South Sulawesi. The Salafi reformist impulse seeks to eliminate religious practices perceived as compromising *tawḥīd* (pure monotheism), including rituals that have become integral to the collective identity of the Muslim community, such as *maulid* celebrations, *tawassul*, and communal *dhikr* (Kholis et al., 2023; Jamil, 2019). Conversely, localized Islam represents a long-standing synthesis of Islamic principles with local cultural norms, producing religious expressions that are both contextual and socially embedded (Faris, 2016; Junaid, 2013). When confronted by Salafism's puritanical and confrontational approach, what becomes contested is not merely ritual practice but the community's value system and religious identity.

This tension is not confined to theology but extends into social and political domains. Traditional scholars and local communities often perceive Salafi movement as a threat to social cohesion and the continuity of established traditions (Zikriadi, 2022), whereas Salafi adherents consider local religious traditions as deviations from Islamic purity (Muliono et al., 2019). This polarization is further intensified by social media, which accelerates the spread of puritan ideas and dissolves the geographical boundaries that

traditionally defined local religious authority (Yakin, 2018). In regions such as South Sulawesi, this has led to widespread rejection of Salafi preachers, particularly when their messages are perceived as undermining the authority of local *ulama* such as those of As'adiyah, who have long upheld social harmony and sustaining *Islam Nusantara*.

The Rejection of Ustadz Firanda: Chronology and Social Reactions

Ustadz Firanda Andirja's *da'wah* agenda in Wajo Regency was initially part of an official program by the Regent of Wajo to strengthen Islamic values within the community. Ustadz Firanda was scheduled to deliver a sermon during a *Tabligh Akbar* series commemorating the 623rd anniversary of Wajo on March 28, 2022 (Wajokab.go.id, 2022). His invitation reflected an initiative by certain local government actors to feature a nationally recognized preacher with significant influence, particularly on social media. However, this decision was made without adequate consideration of the local socio-religious context that has long been nurtured by traditional scholarly networks, most notably, the As'adiyah institution.

Figure 1 shows the official statement from As'adiyah rejecting the presence of Ustadz Firanda in Wajo. The letter states the following points:

1. Dr. Firanda Andirja, Lc., M.A., a preacher active across various media platforms, frequently makes statements and adopts positions that generate controversy and unrest among Muslims.
2. To maintain and preserve harmonious religious life in Wajo Regency, free from tension among Muslims, the Central Board of *Pesantren* As'adiyah in Sengkang hereby declares and recommends to the Regent of Wajo:
 - a) To cancel the invitation of Dr. Firanda Andirja, Lc., M.A., as a

speaker for the *Tabligh Akbar* commemorating Wajo's 623rd Anniversary in Sengkang.

- b. To express disagreement with and rejection of Dr. Firanda Andirja's visit to Wajo.

Figure 1. As'adiyah's Official Statement



Source: <https://www.m.kumparan.com>

This rejection was not confined to As'adiyah alone. Widespread and organized opposition emerged from various sectors of Wajo society and circulated rapidly through social media. Flyers opposing Ustadz Firanda's appearance were issued by organizations such as GP Ansor, Muslimat NU, and PMII. The wave of online rejection subsequently escalated into a public protest at the Wajo Regent's office, led by the Aliansi Santri Nusantara Wajo and involving GP Ansor, the PMII Wajo Branch, and students from the Islamic Institute (IAI) As'adiyah Sengkang, as shown in Figure 2 (TimDetikCom, 2022). They argued that Ustadz Firanda's preaching style, often critical of traditional practices such as *maulid* celebrations, communal *dhikr*, and reverence toward *ulama*, posed a potential threat to the established religious order (TimDetikCom, 2022). The growing public opposition eventually compelled local authorities to

cancel his *da'wah* event to intra-community conflict.

Figure 2. Demonstration Organized by the Aliansi Santri Nusantara Wajo



Source: <https://www.kontenislam.com>

As'adiyah's response was firm yet grounded in moral and theological reasoning. As stated in the official statement, their rejection of Ustadz Firanda was not motivated by personal animosity but by a concern for preserving socio-religious harmony. This sentiment was articulated by *Anregurutta* Dr. KH. Muhyiddin Tahir, M.Th.I., Deputy Chairman of the Central Board of As'adiyah, who remarked:

"The person in question often sparks controversy. He frequently makes statements and adopts positions that can cause unrest among Muslims," and *"To maintain and preserve religious life in Wajo in a conducive state, we hope the Regent will cancel the arrival of Dr. Firanda."* (Kumparan.com, 2022)

This rejection reflects As'adiyah's enduring role as a guardian of social balance. It underscores the institution's conviction that *da'wah* must respect local authority structures and avoid narratives that risk dividing the *ummah*. In this sense, As'adiyah functions not only as a protector of Shafi'i legal tradition but also as a social actor actively engaged in conflict prevention arising from competing religious interpretation. More broadly, it shows that traditional authority in Wajo is not a relic of the past but a living, adaptive force in safeguarding communal harmony

amid an increasingly plural and competitive *da'wah* landscape.

The rejection of Firanda was also grounded in theological and jurisprudential considerations. As'adiyah adherents base their stance on the legitimacy of traditional practices rooted in the Shafi'i *madhhab* and the *pesantren*-based religious heritage of the region. For them, practices such as *maulid* celebrations and communal *dhikr* are not merely cultural traditions but integral components of Islam, contextualized through the wisdom of local *ulama* (HS, 2021). Consequently, criticism of these practices is perceived as an affront to the authority of traditional scholars who have long guided the faithful in Wajo. In this context, the rejection of Ustadz Firanda's *da'wah* represents an act of theological resistance aimed at safeguarding a moderate, community-oriented Islamic tradition deeply embedded in local culture.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural reactions of the Wajo community are inseparable from Bugis values that emphasize respect for social hierarchy, *ulama*, and *adat* (custom). Confrontational *da'wah* styles are regarded as incompatible with these core values and therefore viewed as threats to the established social order. In Bugis tradition, religiosity is inseparable from social ethics. Religious practices are deemed legitimate only when they reinforce community solidarity and harmony. The collective rejection of Ustadz Firanda, therefore, reflects a communal affirmation of a moral and religious order that upholds balance, cohesion, and inclusivity within a localized framework of Islamic practice.

Social Media and the Fragmentation of Religious Authority

The rejection of Ustadz Firanda in Wajo cannot be separated from the central role of social media in shaping and mobilizing public religious opinion. Unlike

in previous eras, when a scholar's influence was determined by physical proximity and institutional affiliation, the digital age enables religious ideas to circulate rapidly, extensively, and across geographical boundaries (Saputra & Fadhli, 2020; Eickelman & Anderson, 2003). In this case, social media became the primary medium for disseminating statements rejecting Ustadz Firanda's *da'wah*, through video uploads, digital posters, and official institutional declarations. This dissemination effectively generated social pressure, demonstrating that contemporary religious discourse is shaped not only from traditional pulpits but also through the "digital pulpit," which holds extensive reach and powerful mobilizing capacity.

However, this successful mobilization also raises important questions about the shifting dynamics of religious authority in the digital era. On one hand, Ustadz Firanda embodies significant digital authority, supported by thousands of followers, a popular YouTube channel, and widely distributed online *da'wah* content (Amin et al., 2020). On the other hand, As'adiyah's scholars represent traditional authority, grounded in *sanad*, institutional legitimacy, and strong social trust within the local community (Halim, 2015). When these two forms of authority intersect in the same public space, as occurred in Wajo, a confrontation emerges between legitimacy derived from virtual networks and that rooted in cultural intimacy. Therefore, the issue is not merely a matter of normative correctness, but of which form of authority commands greater trust within specific social and cultural context.

Digital authority, as exemplified by Ustadz Firanda, tends to be shaped by algorithms and online engagement metrics that often disregard local sensitivities. Online popularity does not necessarily translate into social acceptance in communities where religious legitimacy has been built through long-standing

interpersonal relationships and collective memory (Saparudin, 2017; Chaplin, 2018). In this regard, As'adiyah demonstrates that digital influence cannot substitute for the deep reservoir of trust cultivated through direct interaction between scholars and their communities. As observed in Wajo, people respond more readily to living authority, figures who speak their language, understand their customs, and share their communal concerns. This suggests that while digital authority is increasingly prominent, it remains in competition with and must negotiate alongside contextually grounded forms of legitimacy.

At the same time, the viral nature of social media has profoundly reshaped public religious perception (Sorgenfrei, 2021; Nisa, 2018). The rapid spread of opposition to Ustadz Firanda across platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp demonstrates how religious controversies can gain traction within hours. In this digital environment, the legitimacy of *da'wah* is no longer determined solely by scholarly depth but also by narratives that effectively capture public sentiment and emotional resonance. Traditional institutions have shown adaptability to this new dynamic of virality while maintaining their moral authority, counterbalancing digital *da'wah* with socially and historically grounded legitimacy (Suaedy et al., 2023).

More broadly, the fragmentation of religious authority driven by social media has generated new layers of leadership within the Muslim community. While religious authority was once vertical and centralized, in the hands of *kiai*, *tuan guru*, or local *ulama*, it now spreads horizontally, allowing anyone with access to technology and persuasive communication skills to become a source of reference (Akmaliah, 2020). This development creates an epistemological dilemma: public trust in religious authority is increasingly based on

digital visibility and follower counts rather than on scholarly credentials and institutional lineage (Akmaliah, 2020; Sunarwoto, 2021). As a result, communities often oscillate between established local authorities and new digital figures whose legitimacy stems from online popularity. Within this landscape, traditional religious institutions face the dual challenge of maintaining their relevance while adapting to digital dynamics.

Nonetheless, the case of the As'adiyah community in Wajo demonstrates that traditional authority has not been entirely displaced by digital forms of legitimacy. When issues arise that directly engage local values and identity, communities tend to rely on figures and institutions with whom they have tangible, enduring relationships. As'adiyah exemplifies how cultural, social, and spiritual capital remain vital resources in resisting the penetration of transnational religious ideologies. By reaffirming their rootedness in local wisdom, As'adiyah scholars have managed not only to preserve their authority but also to assert their relevance within an increasingly digital religious sphere. This case highlights that effective *da'wah* is not solely a matter of technological sophistication or audience reach, but of emotional resonance and cultural connection between the preacher, the message, and the community.

Implications for Local *Fiqh* Discourse: Efforts Toward Reactualization

The preceding discussions on the rejection of Ustadz Firanda's *da'wah*, particularly within the As'adiyah community in Wajo, South Sulawesi, indicate the urgent need to reactualize local *fiqh* in response to the expanding influence of transnational *da'wah* movements. Local *fiqh* should not be understood merely as a compilation of *fatwas*, but as a dynamic synthesis of normative Shafi'i

jurisprudence and the cultural values of the Bugis community. In this regard, reactualization does not entail closing off from global religious developments but rather enhancing responsiveness to contemporary social issues while remaining grounded in the objectiveness of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and local wisdom. Thus, responses to transnational religious currents such as Salafism must be rooted in a jurisprudential approach that is not only textual but also contextual, adaptive, and functional. The As'adiyah experience demonstrates that local *fiqh* can serve as a reliable interpretive framework for communities confronting the disruptions caused by transnational and ahistorical religious ideology.

In such situations, the relationship between the state, society, and religious authorities becomes a critical focal point. The Wajo government's decision to invite Ustadz Firanda without consulting local religious authorities reveals a lack of synergy between the state and the traditional religious establishment. The state, as a custodian of social harmony, cannot remain culturally neutral. It must recognize that the success of *da'wah* programs largely depends on social legitimacy and community acceptance (Krismono, 2017). Traditional scholars, such as those affiliated with As'adiyah, are not merely religious figures (Sila, 2017) but also custodians of social stability and public morality (Qosim, 2002). Therefore, collaboration between local governments and traditional *ulama* must be strengthened in shaping religious policies, ensuring that *da'wah* activities foster social cohesion and inclusive Islamic values rather than perpetuating division.

This incident also highlights the pressing need to cultivate a socially and epistemologically responsible ethic of digital *da'wah*. In the social media era, preachers must go beyond disseminating doctrinal correctness to demonstrate

sensitivity toward sociocultural diversity (Akmaliah, 2020). The ethics of *da'wah* can no longer rely solely on the spirit of puritanism but must be grounded in the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*: the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Purification-oriented *da'wah* that disregards public welfare (*maṣlahah*) risks generating division and polarization (Akmaliah, 2020; Burhani, 2020). Within plural societies, *da'wah* approaches rooted in compassion, wisdom, and respect for local knowledge are more likely to gain acceptance and produce constructive social outcomes than rigid textualist methods.

The reactualization of local *fiqh* also provides an opportunity to reinforce culturally grounded narratives of moderate Islam. Contextual *fiqh* offers normative guidance that responds to community needs while remaining consistent with the framework of *sharī'ah*. In the Wajo context, local values such as reverence for *ulama* and adherence to *adat* constitute an integral component of the community's Islamic ethics. When local *fiqh* can accommodate these values, it becomes not merely a body of legal norms, but a social ethos deeply internalized by the community. Conversely, transnational *da'wah* movements such as Salafism, often fail to establish enduring trust because their theological purism overlooks the sociocultural dimensions essential for the indigenization of Islamic teachings.

Ultimately, this case highlights the importance of collaborative engagement among local scholars, communities, and policymakers in constructing *da'wah* strategies that are both relevant and constructive. The Wajo experience demonstrates that communities prefer religious authorities who can address their spiritual concerns while preserving social harmony. In an increasingly digitized world, traditional authority continues to hold relevance, provided it can embrace

technological tools and new communicative methods without compromising its core values. Thus, the future of *da'wah* in Wajo, and in Indonesia more broadly, lies not in the dominance of a single religious current, but in a synergy between classical scholarship, technological literacy, and local wisdom. Through this integrative approach, Islamic *da'wah* becomes not merely a medium for religious dissemination but a cultural force for nurturing humanity and strengthening national cohesion.

CLOSING

Based on the analyses presented, it can be concluded that the contestation of religious authority between Salafi figures such as Ustadz Firanda and traditional institutions such as As'adiyah extends beyond theological disagreement. It reflects a deeper interplay between local *fiqh* discourse, digital transformation, and structures of religious authority. This study demonstrates that local religious authority, rooted in the Shafi'i school and the cultural values of the Bugis people, possesses significant resilience in the face of transnational *da'wah* movements promoting religious purification. The findings contribute to contemporary Islamic legal discourse by emphasizing the need to integrate traditional *fiqh* frameworks with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach, particularly the public welfare (*maṣlahah*) and local culture, as a foundation for addressing modern religious challenges.

The rejection of Ustadz Firanda by As'adiyah also illustrates that local religious authority does not rely solely on historical legacy but also on the adaptive capacity to engage with technology and reinforce social relationships. Therefore, local *ulama* and traditional religious institutions must not only maintain symbolic authority but also actively

construct contextual, dialogical, and ethically grounded religious narratives, particularly within the digital sphere. Future research should further explore comparative public responses to diverse models of digital and local *da'wah* across different Indonesian regions to better understand the evolving configurations of Islamic authority in the digital era.

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