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## Power Relations in the Doctrine of Loving *Ahlulbait*: A Foucauldian Analysis of the Martajasah Community in Madura

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### Abstract

This study discusses how the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait in Martajasah society, Madura, shapes power relations through the perspective of Michel Foucault. The main issue examined is how this teaching is not only a spiritual expression but also a social instrument that gives rise to discourses of power, domination, and distribution of benefits. This study uses a qualitative approach through observation and in-depth interviews with four main informants: Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq, and Ahmad Zainul Kubro. The results show that the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait plays a role in establishing social norms and religious legitimacy, while also strengthening the economic stability of certain groups through ritual practices and patronage networks. In addition to providing spiritual influence for individuals, this doctrine also creates a dynamic power relationship in the form of social control, resistance, and ongoing negotiations within the community. These findings confirm that local religious doctrines are not only theological in nature, but also have implications for the formation of social and economic structures within society.

*Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana doktrin cinta kepada ahlulbait dalam masyarakat Martajasah, Madura, membentuk relasi kuasa melalui perspektif Michel Foucault. Permasalahan utama yang dikaji adalah bagaimana ajaran tersebut tidak hanya menjadi ekspresi spiritual, tetapi juga instrumen sosial yang melahirkan wacana kekuasaan, dominasi, dan distribusi keuntungan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui observasi dan wawancara mendalam dengan empat informan utama: Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq, dan Ahmad Zainul Kubro. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa doktrin cinta kepada ahlulbait berperan dalam membangun norma sosial dan legitimasi keagamaan, sekaligus memperkuat stabilitas ekonomi kelompok tertentu melalui praktik ritual dan jaringan patronase. Selain memberikan pengaruh spiritual bagi individu, ajaran ini juga menciptakan*

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*dinamika relasi kuasa berupa kontrol sosial, resistensi, dan negosiasi yang terus berlangsung dalam komunitas. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa doktrin keagamaan lokal tidak hanya berdimensi teologis, tetapi juga berimplikasi pada pembentukan struktur sosial dan ekonomi Masyarakat.*

**Keywords:** Doctrine of Love; Ahlulbait; Michel Foucault; Power Relations

## Introduction

The doctrine of love for the ahlulbait has a profound meaning in the spiritual life of Muslim communities in Indonesia, especially in the cultural context of the Martajasah community in Madura. The teaching of love for the ahlulbait, or the family of the Prophet Muhammad, in Martajasah is not only a symbol of respect but also reflects a strong social tradition. The Martajasah community expresses their respect through acts of ta'dzim or deep reverence towards the ahlulbait as an expression of their love for the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>1</sup> However, this teaching has undergone a shift in meaning due to differences in understanding between the Shia and Ahlusunah Waljamaah. For the Shia, the ahlulbait refers to the Prophet Muhammad, Ali bin Abi Thalib, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husain,<sup>2</sup> while the Ahlusunah Waljamaah interpret the ahlulbait more broadly, including the Prophet's wives and the family of the Bani Hasyim and Bani Mutallib clans.<sup>3</sup>

In Martajasah, the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait has formed social relationships that create a social class between the Prophet's descendants, known as *habib*, and the local community.<sup>4</sup> This often creates social disparities, where the *habib*'s position gains certain advantages in economic, political, and social status.<sup>5</sup> On one hand, this doctrine functions as a symbol of religious legitimacy, strengthening the authority of the *habib* within religious and social structures. However, on the other hand, this doctrine can lead to power imbalances, where the community is directed to follow certain authorities based on the teachings of love for the ahlulbait, sometimes resulting in actions that

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<sup>1</sup> Husein Jafar Al-Hadar, *Tuhan Ada di Hatimu* (Noura Books, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Dwi Asta Asyam Aufa, "Ahlu al-Bait menurut Syi'ah (Telaah atas Penafsiran at-Thabarsi dalam Kitab Majma' al-Bayan Fi tafsir AL-Qur'an)" (IAINU Kebumen, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Ali Musri Semjan Putra, "Kemuliaan Ahlul Bait Perspektif Ahlussunnah," *Al-Majaalis* 3, no. 1 (November 2015): 1, <https://doi.org/10.37397/almajaalis.v3i1.36>.

<sup>4</sup> A. Khudori Soleh, "Mencermati Sejarah Perkembangan Filsafat Islam," *Tsaqafah* 10, no. 1 (2014): 63–84.

<sup>5</sup> Robby Darwis Nasution, "Kyai Sebagai Agen Perubahan Sosial Dan Perdamaian Dalam Masyarakat Tradisional," *Sosiohumaniora (Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora)* 19, no. 2 (July 2017): 2.

contradict Islamic values, such as excessive fanaticism and intolerance towards other groups.<sup>6</sup>

In the context of power and authority, the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait has the potential to be misused by certain authorities to strengthen their dominance and influence. When this doctrine is interpreted unilaterally by the dominant group, it becomes a tool for creating polarisation in society, where the social position and religious legitimacy of that group become unquestionable.<sup>7</sup> This raises important questions about how power is exercised and consolidated in society through the manipulation of religious values. In certain situations, recognition of the ahlulbait can serve as a means of justification for authorities to maintain their power, which may result in actions that obscure the true essence of the teachings of love for the ahlulbait.<sup>8</sup>

Previous studies have explored the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait from various perspectives. Syaiful examined the interpretation of the ahlulbait in the Nusantara tafsir tradition, which considers the ahlulbait to be the honourable descendants of the Prophet who are not entitled to receive zakat. This study shows that the teachings of love for the ahlulbait serve to establish a privileged social status for the descendants of the Prophet.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, research by Safira Malia Hayati and Adib Sofia highlights that interpretations of the ahlulbait are often subjective, influenced by one's life experiences, background, and social environment. They argue that interpretations of the ahlulbait, especially in Shi'a teachings, need to be re-examined due to their significant impact on social life,<sup>10</sup> such as the differences between Sunni and Shia interpretations in understanding the ahlulbait, which have an impact on the

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<sup>6</sup> Masdar Hilmy et al., *Wacana Dan Praktik Pluralisme Keagamaan Di Indonesia*, vol. 256 (Jakarta: Daulat Press, 2017), <http://repository.uinsa.ac.id/id/eprint/919/>.

<sup>7</sup> Sukidin and Pudjo Suharso, *Pemikiran Sosiologi Kontemporer* (2016), <https://repository.unej.ac.id/xmlui/handle/123456789/74460>.

<sup>8</sup> Ainur Rofiq Al Amin and Fikri Mahzumi, "The Identity Dilemma of Arab Descendants in Indonesia," *KEMANUSLAAN: The Asian Journal of Humanities* 29, no. 2 (2022), [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fikri-Mahzumi/publication/365041815\\_The\\_Identity\\_Dilemma\\_of\\_Arab\\_Descendants\\_in\\_Indonesia/links/640b0b8366f8522c38945634/The-Identity-Dilemma-of-Arab-Descendants-in-Indonesia.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fikri-Mahzumi/publication/365041815_The_Identity_Dilemma_of_Arab_Descendants_in_Indonesia/links/640b0b8366f8522c38945634/The-Identity-Dilemma-of-Arab-Descendants-in-Indonesia.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Suib, "Makna Ahlul Bait Dalam Al-Qur'an Menurut Ulama Tafsir Nusantara | ANWARUL," 2023, <https://ejournal.yasin-alsys.org/anwarul/article/view/2215>.

<sup>10</sup> Safira Malia Hayati, Adib Sofia, Arfad Zikri, Taufiqul Siddiq, "The Interpretation of Ahlul Bait on Tafsir Al-Misbah: The Julia Kristeva Intertextuality Perspectives," *Mashdar* 4, no. 2 (December 2022): 259–74, <https://doi.org/10.15548/mashdar.v4i2.3638>.

construction of religious authority,<sup>11</sup> as well as the expansion of the shalawat assembly in the Hadrami diaspora community in Indonesia, which shows how love for the ahlulbait is reproduced through ritual practices and the strengthening of transnational social networks.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, Musa Kazhim Alhabisy's view in his book states that the term 'habib' refers to the Alawiyyin Hadrami group, who are believed to be direct descendants of Alwi bin Ubaidillah bin Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir to Imam Ali al-Uraidhi bin Ja'far al-Shadiq.<sup>13</sup> This understanding reinforces the social and religious role of habib in communities that recognise the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad as a strong social identity. This is in line with Fikri Mahzumi's study, which shows that Alawiyyin practices, such as ratib, haul, and rawhah in Gresik, are not merely spiritual rituals but also strengthen social solidarity and the religious authority of the habib.<sup>14</sup> This phenomenon is in line with the conditions of Martajasah society, which uses the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait as a means of forming identity and power structures in social life. This understanding is also in line with cross-national studies showing that Hadrami and Alawiyyin identities in Southeast Asia were formed through a process of cultural mixing and social organisational patterns.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the spread of Hadrami religious practices, such as mawlid and manāqib, often faces reformist movements, giving rise to new debates and dynamics in religious life.<sup>16</sup> This study will complement previous studies by analysing the impact of the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait on Martajasah society, especially in the context of power relations.

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<sup>11</sup> Jesper Petersen, "Observing the Sunni-Shi'a Divide in Fieldwork in: Journal of Muslims in Europe Volume 12 Issue 1 (2023)," accessed September 18, 2025, [https://brill.com/view/journals/jome/12/1/article-p58\\_4.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/jome/12/1/article-p58_4.xml).

<sup>12</sup> Arif Zamhari, *Defending Islamic Tradition Theological Responses of the Hadrami Majlis Taklim Groups toward the Salafi-Wahabi Preaching Movement in Contemporary Indonesia*, Postgraduate Program (PPs) and the Institute for the Study of Religion and ..., 2022, [https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/70175/5/Dokumen%20TK\\_AN\\_U.pdf](https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/70175/5/Dokumen%20TK_AN_U.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Musa Kazhim Alhabisy, *Identitas Arab Itu Ilusi Saya Habib, Saya Indonesia!* (MIZAN, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> Fikri Mahzumi, *Telaah Sosio-Antropologis Praktik Tarekat 'Alawiyyah Di Kalangan 'Alawiyyin Kabupaten Gresik*, 2023, Gresik.

<sup>15</sup> Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, "The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia – Identity Maintenance or Assimilation? | Brill," accessed September 16, 2025, <https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/15216?language=en>.

<sup>16</sup> Tom Olali, "Alawiyya Sufism and the Sufi: Diffusion and Counter-Diffusion of Swahili Islamic Mysticism in the Lamu Archipelago, Kenya," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2014, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/%22-Alawiyya-Sufism-and-the-Sufi%3A-Diffusion-and-of-in-Olali/32e67751e2701ac5d788251c80f1a5a6babbf258>.

This study offers a new perspective on the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait, using Michel Foucault's theory of power relations to analyse the dynamics of power embedded within it. The study emphasises how the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait is used as an instrument of power by dominant groups to shape social structures while controlling societal norms and behaviour. Through this approach, this study not only examines the theological aspects but also highlights the sociological and political dimensions of the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait. This perspective brings novelty to the study of religion and power, particularly within the local cultural context of Martajasah in Madura.

This research adopts Michel Foucault's theory of power relations to understand the dynamics of power embedded in the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait. According to Foucault, power does not merely function as a tool of oppression but also as a mechanism that regulates behaviour, values, and beliefs through social institutions and cultural norms.<sup>17</sup> In this study, the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait is analysed as a mechanism of social control, whereby religious authorities can utilise this doctrine to strengthen their dominance and influence the actions of the community. This theory is relevant for identifying how power structures work subtly to shape collective perceptions and behaviour through religious symbols.

## Method

This research method uses a qualitative approach with a critical ethnographic design because the focus of the study is an in-depth understanding of the meaning, practices, and experiences of the Martajasah community in internalising the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait. The research subjects consist of three main categories, namely the habib as a religious authority, community leaders as mediators of socio-religious values, and congregations or muhibbin as recipients and practitioners of the teachings. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews to explore subjective experiences and narratives regarding the practice of love for the ahlulbait, as well as participatory observation in religious study groups, haul, and religious rituals to record symbols, language, and social gestures. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction,<sup>18</sup> data presentation, and conclusion drawing, but was enriched with Michel Foucault's conceptual framework.<sup>19</sup> The operationalisation was carried out in four stages, namely

<sup>17</sup> M. Chairul Basrun Umanailo, *Pemikiran Michel Foucault* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/h59t3>.

<sup>18</sup> Zuchri Abdussamad M.Si S. I. K., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (CV. Syakir Media Press, 2021).

<sup>19</sup> Michel Foucault, "Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings," 1977 1972.

discourse analysis to identify keywords and symbolic narratives that reproduce the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait as the dominant discourse, power/knowledge analysis to examine how the habib's authority uses religious knowledge to build social legitimacy, Disciplinary analysis to understand social practices such as ta'dzim and congregational obedience as mechanisms for regulating collective behaviour, as well as resistance analysis to uncover critical narratives or community practices that demonstrate rejection, negotiation, or reinterpretation of the dominant discourse. To maintain data validity, source triangulation (habib, figures, congregations), technique triangulation (interviews, observation, documentation), and member checking with key informants were used. Thus, this methodology not only describes social practices but also reveals how the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait functions as an instrument of power that works through discourse, symbols, and social practices while opening up space for community resistance.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Power Relations in the Doctrine of Ahlulbait Love in Martajasah**

The tradition of love for the ahlulbait in Martajasah is an important element in the religious and social life of the community. This tradition not only fosters solidarity and unity, but also shapes the mechanisms of power that regulate social relations. From Michel Foucault's perspective, power is not understood as belonging to a single individual or institution, but rather is present in a network of social relations through discourse, practice, and institutions.<sup>20</sup> This is evident in the practices of shalawatan, sowan, and ratiban, which are not merely spiritual rituals, but rather means of reproducing the discourse of love for the ahlulbait that governs the life of the Martajasah community.<sup>21</sup>

As discourse, love for the ahlulbait produces knowledge that gives rise to social norms and shapes a reality that is considered true and sacred. Umar bin Abdullah al-Hamid emphasises that 'love for the ahlulbait is a necessity for Muslims because they are the heirs of the Prophet Muhammad'.<sup>22</sup> This narrative reflects Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, namely that the religious knowledge possessed by the habib is also a source of legitimised power, enabling him to direct the behaviour of the congregation. Thus, the

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<sup>20</sup> Younes Poorghorban, "On Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge, Discourse, and Subjectivity," SciSpace - Paper, November 29, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ojs.v17i2.9749>.

<sup>21</sup> Arif Syafiuddin, "Pengaruh Kekuasaan Atas Pengetahuan (Memahami Teori Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault)," *Refleksi Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam* 18, no. 2 (July 2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.v18i2.1863>.

<sup>22</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

authority of the habib functions not only as a spiritual leader but also as an agent who produces social reality.

Similarly, Foucault's concept of discipline is evident in the practice of ratiban. The congregation is instructed to sit neatly, follow the recitation as directed, and maintain respectful behaviour towards the habib. Ustaz Yassir said: 'In ratiban, we must be obedient, sit quietly, and follow the recitation; that is our form of respect'.<sup>23</sup> This practice shows how bodily and behavioural discipline is subtly formed, in line with T.R. Young's explanation that social discourse regulates individual actions by creating symbolic rules that are accepted as collective truths.<sup>24</sup> In line with Ahmad Saepudin's research on the ratiban tradition in Cileunyi, rituals such as this not only serve a religious function, but also as instruments of social control and strengthening of community bonds.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, power relations in the love of the ahlulbait are also productive. The Martajasah community builds a collective identity as muhibbin (lovers of the ahlulbait). Syarif Hidayatullah states, 'respecting the habaib is like a command from Allah; as long as they do not deviate, we must obey'.<sup>26</sup> This confirms the productivity of power as stated by Foucault: discourse not only restricts, but also produces obedient subjects who internalise values as social identities.<sup>27</sup>

Ultimately, the tradition of love for the Ahl al-Bayt in Martajasah shows that power works through religious discourse, ritual discipline, and spiritual symbols to shape social norms and collective identity. This analysis confirms that the doctrine of love for the Ahl al-Bayt is not only a theological teaching but also an instrument of power that tangibly shapes the social life of the community, as well as a space for contesting meaning amid changing times.

### **Social Construction in the Implementation of Ahlulbait Values**

Instilling love for ahlulbait in Martajasah is an important part of building community identity. Using Michel Foucault's theory of power relations, this

<sup>23</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> T. R. Young, "The Archeology of Social Knowledge And The Drama of Human Understanding," *Michigan Sociological Review*, no. 5 (1991): 41–65.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad Saepudin, "Agama dan tradisi pada masyarakat Suburban: Studi tentang perilaku keagamaan para pengamal tradisi Ratiban Al-Haddad di Kecamatan Cileunyi Kabupaten Bandung" (doctoral, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2020), [https://doi.org/10.10\\_0252520bab%2525207.pdf](https://doi.org/10.10_0252520bab%2525207.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/ Knowledge* (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 1997).

process can be understood as a mechanism of social control that works through tradition, religious teachings, and daily practices. Within this framework, power is not seen as belonging solely to certain individuals or institutions, but is spread through discourse and social behaviour that is continuously reproduced.<sup>28</sup> In Martajasah, the value of love for the ahlulbait is instilled from an early age through family, religious leaders, and local traditions. Children are taught to respect the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, as conveyed by Syarif Hidayatullah: 'Since childhood, we have been taught to respect the habaib, because they are the heirs of the Prophet'.<sup>29</sup> This makes the value of love not just a moral teaching, but part of their identity as members of the community.

Traditions such as sowan (visiting) the homes of habaib on certain occasions serve to strengthen social relations while reinforcing the hierarchy between the community and their religious leaders. From Foucault's perspective, this tradition is a form of power that works by disciplining the bodies and behaviour of individuals to submit to prevailing social norms.<sup>30</sup> An informant, Mohammad Yassir, said: 'When visiting, we must be polite, sit low, kiss the habib's hand, that is part of the manners that have been taught for generations'.<sup>31</sup> This statement shows how discipline is formed through symbolic practices that are considered sacred, while internalising the social hierarchy into everyday life.

In addition, religious rituals such as the recitation of ratib al-Haddad or shalawatan become moments where the community feels connected to spiritual values as well as a larger community. This practice not only serves a religious function, but also strengthens solidarity and constructs their collective identity as lovers of the ahlulbait. This is in line with Foucault's view that power is productive, because through these rituals, subjects are formed who are not merely obedient, but also internalise values as social identities.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Donna Ladkin and Joana Probert, "From Sovereign to Subject: Applying Foucault's Conceptualization of Power to Leading and Studying Power within Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly*, Leader Power: Rigorous Insights on its Causes and Consequences, vol. 32, no. 4 (August 2021): 101310, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lequa.2019.101310>.

<sup>29</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> M. Chairul Basrun Umanailo, *Pemikiran Michel Foucault*.

<sup>31</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>32</sup> Syafiuddin, "Pengaruh Kekuasaan Atas Pengetahuan (Memahami Teori Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault)."

The use of analogies such as ‘ahlulbait is like gold’ shows how this value is taught in language that is easily understood by the community. This analogy instils an awareness of the hierarchy that places the Prophet's descendants in a position of honour. Umar bin Abdullah al-Hamid emphasises: ‘The descendants of the Prophet are gold; even if they fall into the mud, they remain gold, and the ummah must respect them’.<sup>33</sup> This statement shows that figurative language is not merely rhetoric, but an instrument of power that reinforces social structures. Within the framework of Foucault's theory, religious figures function not only as teachers but also as producers of discourse that influences the way society thinks and acts.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the social construction of the value of love for the ahlulbait in Martajasah cannot be separated from the complex interaction between tradition, religious teachings, and power relations. Community identity is formed not only through spiritual heritage, but also through subtle and productive practices of power. Love for the ahlulbait, in this case, is not merely a religious teaching, but also a socio-political foundation that determines how the community understands their position within the community.

### **Habib as an Agent of Authority in Martajasah Society**

In Martajasah, habibs play an important role as connectors between religious values and everyday life. In Michel Foucault's view, power is not only held by one party or institution, but is dispersed through discourse, social practices, and relationships between individuals.<sup>35</sup> Habibs are part of this network of power, where they act as bearers of religious teachings as well as shapers of social norms. With their ability to convey spiritual and cultural values, they are not only respected but also become leaders who influence the behaviour of society. As Umar bin Abdullah al-Hamid said: ‘When the habib speaks, the community usually obeys, because we believe that he is the heir to the Prophet’.<sup>36</sup> This quote shows how power/knowledge operates: the authority of the habib arises

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<sup>33</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, “Interview,” Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>34</sup> René Kreichauf, “Michel Foucault,” in *Handbuch Stadtsoziologie* (Springer VS, Wiesbaden, 2025), 1–21, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-42419-0\\_50-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-42419-0_50-1).

<sup>35</sup> Bohdana Kurylo, “Pornography and Power in Michel Foucault's Thought,” *Journal of Political Power* 10, no. 1 (January 2017): 71–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2017.1284157>.

<sup>36</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, “Interview,” Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

not only from their lineage, but also from the discourse they produce and disseminate.<sup>37</sup>

As authorised agents, the habibs in Martajasah serve as guardians of local religious and cultural traditions. They bridge the gap between Islamic values and local community traditions. This role enables them to guide the community to remain in line with Islamic teachings, while preserving local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation. In their lectures, the habibs often use simple analogies or stories from the life of the Prophet Muhammad. This strengthens the community's respect for them, while also serving as a mechanism of discipline in the Foucauldian sense: the community unconsciously adjusts its behaviour to the values that are continuously reproduced in the religious social sphere.<sup>38</sup> Syarif Hidayatullah said: 'When the habib tells stories about the Prophet, we feel we must follow, because he is a direct role model'.<sup>39</sup>

Habib also has a specific strategy for building close relationships with his congregation, such as through visits, giving personal advice, and the use of honorary titles. This strategy creates a social network that strengthens their position in the community. From Foucault's perspective, this power is productive: it not only restricts, but also produces new identities and patterns of behaviour that are internalised by society.<sup>40</sup> In this case, the value of love for the ahlulbait conveyed by the Habib becomes an important instrument in shaping the community's perspective, while maintaining the reproduction of discourse that reinforces the social hierarchy.

Thus, the habib in Martajasah not only acts as a conveyor of religious teachings, but also as an agent of power who shapes social norms, preserves traditions, and directs collective behaviour. Through Foucault's perspective on power relations, this role reflects how power works subtly through religious discourse to create harmonious social order, while strengthening the symbolic authority of the habib in society.

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<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Isrofil, "Peran Sosial Habib dalam Komunitas Sosial (Studi Kasus di Majelis Ilmu & Dzikir Ar-raudhah Surakarta)," *Sosialitas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Sosiologi-Antropologi* 5, no. 2 (2015): 164848.

<sup>38</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*.

<sup>39</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>40</sup> Hermawan Septian Abadi, "Kekuasaan Seksualitas Dalam Novel: Perspektif Analisis Wacana Kritis Michel Foucault," *Belajar Bahasa: Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (October 2017): 2, <https://doi.org/10.32528/bb.v2i2.828>.

## The Manifestation of Power in Love for the *Ahlulbait*

Rituals and traditions in Martajasah, such as the celebration of Maulid Nabi, the recitation of shalawat, and pilgrimages to the graves of the habibs, are not only religious practices, but also effective instruments of power in shaping the way people think and act. From Michel Foucault's perspective, power is not held absolutely by individuals or institutions, but is dispersed through social practices and discourses that are continuously reproduced.<sup>41</sup> Through these rituals, the value of love for the ahlulbait is preserved and strengthened, thereby creating social norms that are internalised by the community. As stated by Mohammad Yassir: 'If there is a ratiban or maulid, everyone attends. Not coming is considered disrespectful to the habib'.<sup>42</sup> This quote shows how power works without direct coercion, but rather through collective pressure.

Foucault explains that power works through disciplinary mechanisms, whereby individuals are directed to follow social rules without having to be physically supervised.<sup>43</sup> In the context of Martajasah, participation in rituals such as ratib al-Haddad or pilgrimage to the tomb of the habib is not only a spiritual expression, but also a mechanism of social control. Those who participate reinforce their position as part of the community, while those who are absent face social pressure. This reflects Foucault's concept of the panopticon, namely the internalisation of surveillance that creates obedience.<sup>44</sup> Syarif Hidayatullah said: 'If we participate in ratib, it is a sign that we are part of the habib community. If not, the community may judge us as less obedient'.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to being a tool of discipline, rituals also reinforce social hierarchy. In many events, the habib is placed in the highest position of authority, both symbolically and practically. The narratives conveyed in religious lectures or hauls legitimise them as spiritual and social leaders. Foucault emphasises that power is productive: it not only suppresses, but also creates knowledge and identity.<sup>46</sup> In Martajasah, habibs are positioned not only

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<sup>41</sup> Elías J. Palti, "Deleuze's Foucault: On the Possibility of an Outside of Knowledge/Power," *History and Theory* 60, no. 4 (2021): 20–35, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.12234>.

<sup>42</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>43</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*.

<sup>44</sup> Anne Nesbet, "Discipline Made Visible: Abram Room's The Ghost That Never Returns and the Fantastic Origins of Foucault's Panopticon," *The Russian Review* 82, no. 1 (2023): 113–30, <https://doi.org/10.1111/russ.12397>.

<sup>45</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>46</sup> Nesbet, "Discipline Made Visible."

as religious symbols, but also as moral role models, thereby strengthening hierarchical relations within the community.

This tradition also reflects that power generates new knowledge that helps communities understand their reality. Rituals not only preserve the value of love for the ahlulbait, but also adapt traditions to remain relevant to contemporary needs. For example, the use of social media to broadcast maulid or haul shows how the discourse of love for the ahlulbait is reproduced in the digital space. Thus, the tradition in Martajasah does not merely maintain the old power structure, but also adapts to the modern context, demonstrating the productivity of power as described by Foucault.<sup>47</sup>

### **Resistance and Power Negotiation in Love for Ahlulbait**

In Martajasah, the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait is not merely a spiritual teaching, but also an instrument of power that shapes social norms and collective identity. However, as Michel Foucault emphasised, where there is power, there is always resistance.<sup>48</sup> This resistance arises mainly from the younger generation, who are more exposed to global values and modern technology.

They do not completely reject it, but question the relevance of certain traditions in contemporary life. For example, some young people feel that regular attendance at ratiban is no longer the main measure of Islam. One respondent, Umar al-Faruq, said: 'Young people now more often participate in studies via YouTube than attend ratiban. It's not that they are disrespectful, but their way of learning is different'.<sup>49</sup> This quote shows that resistance is expressed not in the form of confrontation, but through different choices of religious practice.

Resistance is also evident in critical attitudes towards the practice of sowan. Some young people question the social obligation to always pay respects to habib, as it is considered to emphasise social hierarchy over the substance of Islamic teachings. Mohammad Yassir said: 'If you always have to pay respects, it can be difficult for young people, especially if they are busy working. They

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<sup>47</sup> Abd Hannan and Kudrat Abdillah, "Hegemoni Religio-Kekuasaan Dan Transformasi Sosial Mobilisasi Jaringan Kekuasaan Dan Keagamaan Kyai Dalam Dinamika Sosio-Kultural Masyarakat," *Sosial Budaya* 16, no. 1 (July 2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.24014/sb.v16i1.7037>.

<sup>48</sup> Gerd Christensen, "Three Concepts of Power: Foucault, Bourdieu, and Habermas - Gerd Christensen, 2024," accessed September 15, 2025, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/17577438231187129>.

<sup>49</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

feel they can show respect in other ways'.<sup>50</sup> This kind of resistance shows how the discourse of habib power is challenged subtly, without directly rejecting their authority.

Although resistance arises, this actually opens up space for power negotiations. Habibs in Martajasah often respond by adjusting their methods of preaching. For example, some habibs now use social media to convey shalawat or lectures, making them more relevant to the younger generation.<sup>51</sup> Foucault describes power as productive: resistance does not destroy power structures, but rather triggers the emergence of new forms of discourse and practices that are more adaptive. In this context, religious authorities utilise resistance as an opportunity to renew the way they maintain legitimacy.

The power relations in Martajasah thus reveal a dynamic that is not static. The doctrine of love for the ahlulbait remains at the core of the social structure, but the way it is conveyed evolves according to the needs of the times. The resistance of the younger generation affirms that power is never absolute, while the negotiations by religious leaders demonstrate flexibility in maintaining discourse.<sup>52</sup> As Foucault emphasised, effective power is power that is able to adapt to social change. Thus, resistance and negotiation in love for the ahlulbait are not signs of the weakening of the doctrine, but proof that this value remains alive, dynamic, and relevant.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Ahlulbait Doctrine as a Mechanism of Social Control**

In Martajasah, the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait functions not only as a religious teaching, but also as a social control mechanism that regulates community behaviour. Within Michel Foucault's framework, this doctrine can be understood as part of a power relationship that disciplines individuals while producing collective identities.<sup>54</sup> Umar bin Abdullah al-Hamid emphasises that love for the ahlulbait is 'a necessity, an obligation... if we love the Prophet, then

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<sup>50</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>51</sup> Hannan and Abdillah, "Hegemoni Religio-Kekuasaan Dan Transformasi Sosial Mobilisasi Jaringan Kekuasaan Dan Keagamaan Kyai Dalam Dinamika Sosio-Kultural Masyarakat."

<sup>52</sup> Michele Bigoni, Laura Maran, and Zeila Occhipinti, "Of Power, Knowledge and Method: The Influence of Michel Foucault in Accounting History," accessed September 15, 2025, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/10323732241243088>.

<sup>53</sup> Alfathri Adlin, "Michel Foucault: Kuasa/Pengetahuan, (Rezim) Kebenaran, Parrhesia," 2023, <https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/jaqfi/article/view/1694>.

<sup>54</sup> Aprillia Eka Kusnawati, "Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault Terhadap Dialog Antara Kostumer Dengan Mitra Ojek Pada Aplikasi Ojek Online," 2021, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/56847>.

we must love his children and grandchildren, his descendants'.<sup>55</sup> This statement shows how the discourse of power works: love for the ahlulbait is positioned as an absolute condition for perfect faith. Subtly, society is directed to accept and obey this norm, so that obedience occurs without external coercion, in line with Foucault's concept of discipline.

In addition, the mechanisms of power are also produced through symbolic language. Mohammad Yassir presents an analogy: 'Let's say we are money, they are gold... gold will remain gold even if it is placed in a gutter'<sup>56</sup> This analogy shows how religious narratives instil the understanding that the ahlulbait have an unquestionable status, regardless of the circumstances. Foucault noted that productive power creates subjects that conform to established norms, and this is reflected in how this doctrine influences societal behaviour.<sup>57</sup> Within Foucault's framework of power/knowledge, language such as this is not merely a statement, but a discourse that shapes the way society thinks while reinforcing the legitimacy of the ahlulbait's power.

Love for the ahlulbait is also manifested in complete obedience. Syarif Hidayatullah emphasises that this love is expressed through *sam'inā wa aṭa'nā* (obedience and compliance) to the ahlulbait, except in cases of sin.<sup>58</sup> This statement demonstrates the internalisation of social control: society obeys norms without direct coercion, similar to the panopticon mechanism described by Foucault, in which individuals monitor themselves to comply with the rules.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait is not only oppressive, but also productive. Ahmad Zainul Kubro gave an example of how this love has an impact on economic activity: 'There is Magbaro Syaikhona Kholil, where the community's economy is very well established... because of our love for one of the ahlulbait'.<sup>60</sup> This reinforces Foucault's concept of the productivity of power: power gives birth to new socio-economic practices that bind society within a religious structure while strengthening collective solidarity.

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<sup>55</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>56</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>57</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*.

<sup>58</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>59</sup> Nesbet, "Discipline Made Visible."

<sup>60</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

This makes the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait in Martajasah understandable as a mechanism of power that works in a disciplinary, symbolic, and productive manner. It instils norms through religious discourse, disciplines behaviour through rituals such as ratiban and sowan, and produces socio-economic bonds that maintain the sustainability of the community.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Spiritual and Economic Implications of the Teachings of Love for Ahlulbait**

In Martajasah, the doctrine of love for the ahlulbait is not only understood as a spiritual guideline, but also has a real impact on the social and economic order of society. From Michel Foucault's perspective, this doctrine can be interpreted as a form of productive power, namely how a belief does not merely restrain, but actually gives rise to new behaviours, values, and social structures that support community life.<sup>62</sup>

Spiritually, blessings (barakah) are seen as the fruit of love for the ahlulbait.<sup>63</sup> Umar bin Abdullah al-Hamid emphasises: 'It is a necessity, an obligation... if we love the Prophet, then we must love his children and grandchildren, his descendants'.<sup>64</sup> This statement shows that the discourse of blessing is placed as an absolute requirement, so that the community is directed to obey the teachings with full awareness. In Foucault's framework,<sup>65</sup> blessing functions as a disciplinary mechanism that makes individuals submit to norms without feeling forced, because obedience is experienced as a path to spiritual salvation.

The economic implications of blessings are also evident. Ahmad Zainul Kubro stated: 'There is Magbaro Syaikhoba Kholil, where the community's economy is very well established... because of our love for one of the ahlulbait'.<sup>66</sup> From this, it can be seen that the doctrine of love not only creates spiritual bonds but also drives the local economy. Rituals such as haul, maulid, or pilgrimage create meeting spaces that involve economic activities ranging from food vendors, religious equipment traders, to transportation services. This

<sup>61</sup> Abd A'la and Ahwan Mukarrom, "Power-Knowledge Relations of The Elder and The Younger Madurese Muslim Scholars in Propagating Islamism in Madura: A Counter-Narrative," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 1 (June 2020): 1, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2020.10.1.81-109>.

<sup>62</sup> Alfathri Adlin, "Michel Foucault: Kuasa/Pengetahuan, (Rezim) Kebenaran, Parrhesia."

<sup>63</sup> Paulo G. Pinto, "Uncertain Futures: Memory, Performance and Temporality among Syrian Sufis," *History and Anthropology* 0, no. 0 (n.d.): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2024.2346905>.

<sup>64</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>65</sup> Alfathri Adlin, "Michel Foucault: Kuasa/Pengetahuan, (Rezim) Kebenaran, Parrhesia."

<sup>66</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

phenomenon illustrates what Foucault refers to as the economy of power<sup>67</sup>: power that works through spiritual beliefs but produces material impacts that support social welfare.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, the discourse of blessing is produced through symbols and language that reinforce the legitimacy of the ahlulbait. Mohammad Yassir, for example, offers the following analogy: 'Let's say we are money, and they are gold... gold will remain gold even if it is placed in a gutter'.<sup>69</sup> This analogy reinforces the view that the ahlulbait have an intrinsic value that cannot be questioned, so that blessings can only be obtained through connection with them. Within Foucault's framework of power/knowledge,<sup>70</sup> this kind of narrative creates a horizon of thinking for society, in which the authority of the ahlulbait is accepted as a valid and sacred truth.

Clearly, the spiritual and economic implications of the doctrine of love for the Ahl al-Bayt in Martajasah demonstrate how power operates productively. It not only creates religious obedience, but also gives rise to social solidarity and fosters economic activity that supports the sustainability of the community. Blessings, in this context, are no longer understood merely as metaphysical gifts, but also as part of a real and functional mechanism of power in maintaining the balance of life in the Martajasah community.

## Conclusion

The doctrine of love for ahlulbait in Martajasah society illustrates how religious teachings can be used as instruments for shaping the discourse of power. Religious practices such as shalawatan, sowan, and ratiban function not only as spiritual expressions but also as disciplinary mechanisms that ensure order within the community. Beyond its spiritual dimension, this doctrine also carries significant socio-economic implications: it not only shapes social norms but also creates concrete economic benefits for the Martajasah community. However, this study also found that the doctrine of ahlulbait love has the potential to be exploited by dominant groups to unilaterally strengthen their legitimacy. It is at this point that Foucault's perspective becomes relevant,

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<sup>67</sup> Nicolas Vallois, "Michel Foucault and the History of Economic Thought," accessed September 15, 2025, <https://journals.openedition.org/oeconomia/2181>.

<sup>68</sup> Danielle Guizzo, "Reassessing Foucault: Power in the History of Political Economy," *International Journal of Political Economy* 50, no. 1 (February 2021): 60–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08911916.2021.1894828>.

<sup>69</sup> Umar bin Abdullah Al-Hamid, Syarif Hidayatullah, Mohammad Yassir, Umar Al-Faruq and Ahmad Zainul Kubro, "Interview," Bangkalan, October 28, 2024.

<sup>70</sup> Aprillia Eka Kusnawati, "Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault Terhadap Dialog Antara Kostumer Dengan Mitra Ojek Pada Aplikasi Ojek Online."

namely that power always operates within a dialectic of domination, resistance, and negotiation, thereby creating a dynamic social reality.

The academic contribution of this study that love for the ahlulbait not only maintains spiritual continuity but also shapes collective identity, reinforces social structures, and influences the economic dynamics of society. Thus, this study enriches the discourse of the sociology of religion in Indonesia, particularly in terms of how religious doctrine functions as a complex mechanism of power that regulates, produces, and directs social life.

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