‘Defending Religious Rights’:
The Critical Analysis of Religious Minority Discourse in Indonesia

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Abstract

Freedom of religion, as the main part of human rights, has been one of the main discourses in traditional and modern Indonesia. However, its current development reveals that such a freedom is still far from its final agreement, especially in guaranteeing the religious right of minority. By using the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), this article investigates the religious freedom discourse as defended and disseminated by one of the NGOs in Indonesia, namely the Setara Institute, to identify how the Indonesia Ahmadiyya sect is discursively discriminated against. The study is carried out by analysing multiple texts in various genres produced and disseminated by this NGO when defending the Ahmadiyya minority sect. The sect has been the target of religious discrimination and violent attacks perpetrated by Islamic majority groups in the country. The data used in this study are annual reports, books, interviews, and public debates. The analysis reveals that freedom of religion is still not properly established and Ahhamdiyya followers are not treated equally both in religious or political matters. This can be seen in four discourse constructions, namely discourses of democracy, unrestricted freedom of religion, impartiality and the weakness of leadership.

Keywords: Religious Freedom, Human Rights, Critical Discourse Analysis, Indonesian Ahmadiyya, the Setara Institute

1. Introduction

The issue of religious freedom is one of the most contentious issues faced by many countries around the world. According to Evans (2010), freedom of religion has been the oldest and most controversial issue within human rights in the world. Such a freedom has been included as one of the basic human rights that must be protected by every individual and may not be restricted. As in the western sense, religious freedom is the private matter in which the state may not regulate or control its people on how people implement religious practices. In other countries, however, the religious freedom must be restricted as the unrestricted freedom can violate the freedom of others and this can lead to social conflict. Indonesia, as the most populous Muslim country in the world, belongs to the second grouping that believes that religious freedom must be restricted to establish a peaceful situation and avoid the country from horizontal conflict.

The regulation of religious freedom in Indonesia can be traced back to 18 August 1945, one day after proclaiming its independence, when the country adopted its first constitution called the 1945 Constitution. Some legal proclamations that follow this constitution confirming the importance of religious freedom and the need to restrict it, are, such as law number 39 concerning human rights to provide a constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, the second amendment of the constitution in 2000, and law number 12/2005 about the ratification of ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights). Indonesia also recognises the law of blasphemy that is stipulated in law PNPS number 1/19657. The law PNPS regulates and controls the issue of blasphemy, including the issue of Ahmadiyya (Colbran, 2010).

7 Law PNPS (Penetapan Presiden) was issued in 1965 by the first President of Indonesia, Soekarno, to protect the country from the issue of blasphemy and religious defamation.
Referring to the law PNPS to control the ‘blasphemous action’ conducted by the Ahmadiyya followers, the Indonesian government issued a joint ministerial decree signed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General. The decree is popularly known as SKB 3 Menteri. Up to the present, the decree remains a matter of controversy, especially in the studies conducted by several civil society organisations that concern themselves with the issues of human rights and freedom of religion. Some people say that the decree violates the basic rights of religious freedom as stipulated in Indonesian laws and in the constitution (Kraince, 2009; Colbran, 2010).

Actually, this study is not the first research on the Ahmadiyya issue. Previously, the study of Ahmadiyya in Indonesia was carried out by other some researchers, for example Fredman and Tiburzi (2012), Muktiono (2012), Khanif (2009), Burhani (2013), Abel (2013), Nastiti (2014) and Irawan (2017 2021). These studies mostly concentrate on the establishment of human rights, the implementation of democracy, laws and constitution, the contribution of Ahmadiyya to the development of religious discourse, minority status of Ahmadiyya, and discriminatory discourses against the sect perpetrated by Islamic majority group. A study that tries to investigate the issue from the perspective of resistance discourses to defend Ahmadiyya sect receives less attention, thus our understanding on how the Islamic belief of the sect is advocated is not comprehensibly identified. This CDA study is very important to identify the development of the discourses of religious freedom and how Muslim minorities in Indonesia officially regulate religious matters. Another importance is Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world in which it is around 90% (more than 200 million) of its people are Muslims.

Literature Review

2.1. Ahmadiyya and the Issue of Religious Minority

Ahmadiyya was founded in India in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Ahmad was born in Qadian, in the province of Punjab, India, on 18 February 1835, and he died in Lahore on 26 May 1908. The word ‘Mirza’ in his name is due to his descent from the Mughal Dynasty, which was an Islamic empire that ruled the Indian subcontinent (India and Pakistan) from 1526 to 1857. Since 1914, Ahmadiyya has been divided into two groups, namely Qadiani (Ahmadiyah Qadian) and Lahore (Ahmadiyah Lahore).

Both groups believe that its founder, Ghulam Ahmad, is the promised Messiah and the Imam Mahdi. The Messiah and Mahdi are the symbols of the revivalism of Islam, and Muslims believe that they will come at the end of the world to save human beings. This revivalism will be started after Islam has experienced the worst conditions for centuries. The Ahmadiyya believe that these two figures have come to this world to bring Islamic glory back. The birth of Ghulam Ahmad in 1835 signalled their coming and, since then, the greater glory of Islam was believed to have started.

8 The joint ministerial decree is about the Admonition and Instruction to the Disciples, Followers, and/or the Adherents of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Congregation (Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia abbreviated as JAI) as well as to the members of the public.
However, the most controversial issue that divides them into two groups is the recognition of Ghulam Ahmad, by some of Ahmadiyya followers, as the prophet of Islam after Muhammad. This ‘prophethood’ of Ahmad led to the separation of its followers into two groups, the Qadiani and the Lahore Ahmadiyya. The Qadiani believes that Ghulam Ahmad is the new prophet after Prophet Muhammad while the Lahore one only believes that the founder of the sect is only a reformer of Islam, not a prophet. The acknowledgment of Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet of Islam is in sharp contrast to the Islamic belief held by the majority of Muslims around the world. The Prophet Muhammad is considered to be the seal of prophethood; there is no other prophet after him.

The Qadiani group has existed in Indonesia since 1925 and established Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (henceforth the JAI) and the Lahore followers found Gerakan Ahmadiyah Indonesia (called the GAI) in 1928. These groups, especially the JAI that acknowledges the prophethood of Ghulam Ahmad, has been the object of legal proclamation, such as the joint decree as mentioned earlier and the religious decree (fatwa) issued by the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI). The religious decrees have decided that Ahmadiyya are not the part of Islam and its followers are non-believers. They have also been the target of physical attacks, unequal treatment, and religious discrimination perpetrated by some members of public (Kraince, 2009; Mietzner, 2012; Irawan, 2017). In 2011, three JAI followers were violently killed and five others were severely injured in Cikeusik, District of Banten, the western end of Java Island (Kompas Daily Newspaper, 2011; Mietzner, 2012).

Due to the alleged unfair treatment and discrimination experienced by the Ahmadiyya followers, many civil society organisations have tried to defend the minority sect, namely the Human Tight Watch, the Wahid Institute, KONTRAS (Komisi Nasional untuk Orang hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan), and the Setara Institute. These organisations defend the Ahmadiyya issue from different perspectives such as human rights, freedom of religion, and violation against the law. Among these organisations that fight for the establishment of religious freedom, the Setara Institute has shown its concerns by creating various texts or discourse presentations, e.g. annual reports, books, and research report to defend the existence of the Ahmadiyya sect in Indonesia.

2.2. The Setara Institute: Institute for Democracy and Peace

The Setara Institute (henceforth Setara) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that was founded on 14 October 2005. It focuses on disseminating and pursuing equality for all people from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds. The name ‘SETARA’ itself is taken from the Indonesian language, and means ‘equal’. Its founders emphasise the role of this institution in promoting democracy and peace by having the slogan of ‘Institute for Democracy and Peace’.

The goals of establishing this organisation are to promote pluralism, humanitarianism, democracy, and human rights; study and advocate pluralism, human-centred public policy,

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[9] The Indonesian Council of Ulama issued two religious decrees in 1980 and 2005. Both of the decrees consider the Ahmadiyya sect as the blasphemer of Islam and its followers are not allowed to perform their religious belief.
democracy and human rights; engage in dialogues concerning conflict resolution; and undertake public education activities.

In pursuit of its goals, this organisation actively promotes religious freedom and encourages the state to fulfil the people’s rights of freedom of religion in Indonesia continuously (Hasani, 2009). By having this campaign, Setara Institute is against all forms of discrimination and violent acts that undermine human rights, which can be observed, at least, from its attempts to defend the existence of religious minorities and discriminated groups, such as Ahmadiyya.

This NGO was founded by some prominent figures that are committed to the issues of democracy, pluralism, freedom, and human rights in Indonesia. They are human rights activists, politicians, lawyers, academicians, and religious personalities. One of them is the former Indonesian president, Abdurrahman Wahid. Since its establishment, its founders have emphasised their concern for human rights protection, especially the issue of removing any discrimination against religious freedom.

Two members as well as researchers of the Setara (henceforth mentioned as SI 1 and SI 2) (personal communication, September 25, 2013) explained that this organisation has a number of concerns in the pursuit of their vision for equality.\textsuperscript{10}

Monitoring the implementation of particular human rights policies, criticising policies contradicting human rights, and conducting studies relating to the issue of freedom and democracy are the manifestation of the three concerns stated above. Setara has also been supporting victims of violations or those who are being discriminated against by both the state and the non-state actors. This advocacy is expected to increase the awareness of the victims, so that they can fight for their own rights and freedom in the future.

In response to the issue of attacks against religious freedom, Setara has produced a number of written documents in various discourse genres, such as books, reports, news, and policy papers. The texts are deliberately published to reveal their defence for the establishment of human rights and freedom of religion. Setara has produced policy papers and book.\textsuperscript{11} From 2007 to 2012, Setara has also launched annual reports concerning freedom of religion/belief. These reports are based on monitoring the extent of religious freedom in several areas/provinces of Indonesia.\textsuperscript{12} These annual reports are necessary to highlight and use as the data of the study because they do not only present the number of violations against religious minority groups, but they also record the development of freedom of religion and blasphemy within the years being reported.

\textsuperscript{10} The concerns can be divided into three main points: (i) the issue of religious freedom and violation of it, (ii) the issue of violation of other sorts of human rights, and (iii) the issue of the development of Indonesian constitutional democracy.


\textsuperscript{12} The annual reports document acts against Ahmadiyya that are monitored in some provinces. The highest number of violent acts against the sect was in 2008 that reached 238 acts.
3. Method And Analysis

Data of this study are texts that have been produced and disseminated by the Setara Institute in various text genres, namely annual reports (2007-2012), books, interview, and public debate. Especially for public debate, it was taken from television and the spoken data has been transcribed into written form of text. The data are then analysed using CDA that concerns on resistance discourses to discursively defend the Ahmadiyya sect.

According to Foucault (as cited in Medina, 2011), resistance is something inherent in the exercise of (political) power, that is, ‘resistance is never in position of exteriority in relation to power’. The relationship between power or power abuse and resistance could be seen as ‘two sides of a coin’, where the existence of one side is determined by the existence of the other side. Because power or power abuse creates inequality by providing a privilege to certain individuals or groups while denying others, the resistance should be seen as an attempt to regain equality.

Resistance here is further seen as the ways attempted by certain individuals or groups to struggle over signs and meaning in order to change the way people think about the social world (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). The attempt to argue against the dominant discourse is seen as a struggle created by the dominated parties and their sympathisers to defend their ideas or beliefs and to challenge the existing dominant discourse. According to Toft, ‘the discursive constructions of resistance play in a field of the provision of new interpretation and description of particular issues and social events’ (Toft, 2014). Discursive resistance by dominated groups is an attempt to redefine the established understanding or definition that may have undermined them.

In addition, in their argument about the relationship between discourse and racism, discourse can serve to criticise, delegitimise, and argue against racist opinions and practices (Wodak & Reisigl, 1999). It means that in a discourse analysis study, any discriminatory discourses can be argued against. Based on this concept, dominant discourses that are considered to be discriminatory against certain individuals or groups can be challenged. Those who are discriminated against may use particular discursive strategies in their texts to resist discourse attacks.

Tilbury proposes a number of linguistic conventions that could be used to present resistance discourses such as rhetorical questions, using credentials to present oneself as an expert speaker, speaking with a majority voice, naming tactics, presenting one’s view as the reasonable middle ground, providing examples to support one’s view, and claiming personal experience to support one’s view (Tilbury, 2000). Some other discourse strategies namely metaphor, discourse strategy of comparison, victimisation, ironic expression and contradiction strategies, and avoidance could also be used to create resistance discourses in texts. The analysis below reveals how the Setara Institute defends the Ahmadiyya sect by using various discourse strategies.

4. Results And Discussion

In advocating for minority groups (including Ahmadiyya), Setara Institute has vehemently opposed the Indonesian Government’s implementation of laws concerning freedom of religion. It criticises the inability of the Indonesian Government to fully uphold freedom of religion and protect minority religious groups from any forms of violent attack. The following are the
analysis of religious freedom that are divided into four main topics, namely discourses of democracy, unrestricted freedom of religion, impartiality and weakness of leadership.

4.1. Discourse of Democracy

The failure of the Indonesian Government to implement freedom of religion can be interpreted as a failure to implement real democracy. Setara argues that the implementation of democracy in Indonesia, especially in the reformation era, still focuses on procedural democracy, not on the substantive. Such a democracy that does not fully concern about guaranteeing freedom of religion and establishing law has triggered the escalation of religious-based conflicts in Indonesia. Procedural democracy is defined as the implementation of democracy that still concentrates on administrative and institutional issues, such as establishment of political parties/institutions and election. Its implementation has not provided full protection of human rights (as one of the substances of democracy) for all citizens, especially the right to religious freedom.

Ada beberapa pemicu tingginya ekskalasi konflik berbasis agama ini; yang pertama adalah terkait praktek demokrasi yang masih menyentuh wilayah-wilayah demokrasi prosedural, belum masuk pada demokrasi substansial....

(There are some issues that trigger the high escalation of the religious-based conflict; the first is it has to do with the practice of democracy, which still focuses on procedural democracy, and not yet enter into substantive democracy...)¹³

In this transcribed-interview text, there are two separate social events, namely the ‘escalation of religious-based conflict’ and ‘democracy’. In his textual analysis, Fairclough (2003) argues that, in particular texts, a speaker or writer may “incorporate or re-contextualise one social event into another social event”. In the sentence above, the religious-based conflict is re-contextualised into the social event of democracy. The escalation of social conflict, which is one caused by religious-based conflict, is interpreted as a failure of the state to implement real democracy. The implementation of democracy has not provided a guarantee for all Indonesian citizens to have and practise their religion/belief and to protect them from any violent acts.

Further, in the extract above, any reference to the Indonesian Government being the actor that failed to implement democracy is totally omitted. There is no definite description showing the human agent who should be responsible for this failure. In this nominalisation process, Fairclough argues that “agency is shifted to abstract processes and entities” (2003). Although the agent is not explicitly stated, the readers might infer or presuppose in the meaning of the sentence that there should be a human agent who leads the failure (Van Dijk, 2003).

With regard to the matter of inference, readers may infer that the agents/actors would be individuals or institutions who have official authority and who have been given the

¹³ This excerpt is taken from the interview between the author and the two members of the Setara Institute. They have undertaken much research investigating the issue of minority protection and the Indonesian constitution that deal with the freedom of religion and the issue of blasphemy. The interview was conducted in Setara office’s in Jakarta in 2013
responsibility for establishing democracy in a country. When talking about the political system in a state, of course, government is the state official authority responsible for the establishment of democracy (both procedural and substantive). The expression may also infer or presuppose that the Indonesian Government has failed to implement substantive democracy.

It has been popularly understood that democracy is an established system of politics and economy, and one that is implemented by many developed and developing countries around the world. Democracy is one of the many systems of governance based on the concepts of freedom and human rights. The concept of democracy presented by Setara is one that has been implemented by many democratic countries, and is one where public affairs are separated from religious affairs.

This clear separation is in contrast to the implementation of a democracy that provides authority to the government to interfere in religious affairs and to restrict religious freedom. The discourse may be phrased as follows: *Dalam Negara demokratis yang menghargai hak azasi sesungguhnya, pada dasarnya tidak diperlukan adanya regulasi yang mengatur kehidupan keagamaan* (In a democratic country that recognises human rights, basically, regulations or policies to administer religious life are not required) (Hasani & Naipospos, 2011).

Semantically, the linguistic expression ‘regulating and policing religious matters’ above may infer or presuppose the inference that, for example, ‘Indonesia is a non-democratic country’, or ‘the country still maintains an authoritarian regime (or, at least, semi-authoritarian) by interfering in the personal matter of religious belief’, and ‘the Indonesian Government, with its policies in administering religion, does not recognise freedom of religion completely as a part of human rights’. These inferences may be effective strategies for influencing or controlling the minds of the readers, as they may create a negative image of the Indonesian Government and of the democracy it implements.

4.2. Discourse of Unrestricted Religious Freedom

Unrestricted freedom is in deliberate contrast to restricted freedom. ‘Unrestricted’ means that the freedom of people to adhere to a religion, and to practise it, is totally free. The government argues that unrestricted freedom of religion may violate human rights (Balitbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2013; Mudzhar, 2011). Therefore, the government should regulate this issue in order to prevent social conflicts in the public arena. On the other hand, Setara argues that “free is free”. The state may not make any limitation that can interfere with the right of certain individuals to interpret and practise their religion/belief.

The restriction may become problematic and debatable because it is a personal thing (Hasani, 2010). When restricted, the state tends to violate basic human rights, especially the right of individuals to have a religious interpretation that may be different from the mainstream. Further, the 1945 Constitution (in article 28J) and other laws 14 regulating the restriction of freedom of religion may provide legitimacy to the state or its apparatus to intervene in someone’s belief. The argument can be seen as follows (Hasani, 2010):

The politics of restricting human rights adopted by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Article 28 Paragraph 2) causes the guarantee of freedom of

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14 Law Number 12/2005, article 18; Law Number 39/1999, articles 70 and 73; and Law PNPS Number 1/1965
religion/belief and the guarantee of other citizens’ constitutional rights to be ignored and not enforced seriously.

A similar strategy of nominalisation is also seen in the sentence above by the foregrounding of the action/event (i.e., the politics of restricting human rights as a non-human agent) rather than the human agent who acts upon the restriction (i.e., the Indonesian Government). The actor of the action (i.e., the Indonesian Government) is elided, and the action of ‘restricting’ is used as the subject of the sentence to show causal effect between the restriction of human rights and the ignorance of freedom of religion implementation. The process of elision of the human agent is created by presenting the clause ‘the politics of restricting human rights …’ as the agent of the verb ‘causes’. Another important meaning-making process in the sentence is embodied in the form of a causal relationship. The use of the verb ‘causes’ delivers the meaning that the action (restricting human rights) may have a political effect or consequence for particular minority groups (e.g. Ahmadiyya). The discourse presentation is (Hasani & Naipospos, 2011):

Kebebasan beragama atau berkeyakinan adalah prakondisi bagi terwujudnya toleransi dan kerukunan beragama/berkeyakinan. Tidak mungkin membangun kerukunan beragama tanpa sebelumnya ada jaminan kebebasan beragama/berkeyakinan bagi warga Negara.

(Freedom of religion/belief is the pre-condition for the establishment of religious harmony and tolerance. It is impossible to establish religious tolerance without guaranteeing freedom of religion/belief for citizens).

In this extract, religious harmony/tolerance and freedom of religion are discursively incorporated. Religious freedom is clearly considered to be the prerequisite or the absolute prior condition for the establishment of harmony or tolerance. It also tries to provide legitimacy for all the violent acts against religious minority groups and religious-based social conflicts by claiming they are caused by the restriction of religious freedom. The word ‘impossible’ emphasise strongly that religious harmony and tolerance would exist if freedom of religion is already present. These two concepts (religious harmony and religious freedom) co-exist to tell the audience that they should be implemented simultaneously; the absence of one of them will negate the other.

4.3. Discourse of Impartiality

Another important discourse presentation produced by Setara is the discourse of impartiality. Discrimination and violent acts against religious minority groups are interpreted as the effect of partiality actions created by the Indonesian Government.

In constructing this discourse, Setara claims that the state has failed to establish an impartial attitude toward its citizens when dealing with religious issues. Such a discourse presentation relies upon the concept of equality and neutrality, where all citizens have the right to be treated equally, regardless of their religions and beliefs. Setara presumes that discriminatory practices or violent acts against Ahmadiyya are caused by the inability of the government to treat its citizens fairly or impartially.

Apapun agamanya, apapun kepercayaan mereka, kita harus perlakukan sama. Mereka adalah warga Negara Indonesia yang harus mendapatkan kesempatan yang sama sebagai warga Negara dan mendapatkan perlindungan konstitusional.
(Regardless of their [citizens] religion and belief, we have to treat them equally. They are Indonesian citizens who have to get the same opportunity and constitutional protection).

The discourse of impartiality is associated with the discourse of citizenship. Who deserves to be in this category as citizens? Every individual needs to be recognised as a citizen, regardless of his or her religion/belief. Although the minority groups have different religious interpretations to the mainstream, their rights need to be recognised and protected. They should be given the same opportunity to practise their belief as is given to the majority.

Further, it is commonly found that in many discourses analysis studies, the personal pronouns ‘we’ and ‘they’ are used to constitute ‘social demarcation’, ‘othering’, and ‘social distancing’. However, the use of these two pronouns in the extract above reveals a different direction. In the extract, ‘we’ does not refer to individuals of the ‘in-group’; likewise, the pronoun ‘they’ does not refer to members of the ‘out-group’. Their referents are indefinite.

The use of the pronoun ‘we’ is used to refer to many discourse referents. The pronoun in the sentence ‘[we] have to treat them equally’ could refer to individuals, groups (e.g. social, religious), and institutions (e.g. state and non-state). The pronoun refers to those who should be responsible for protecting religious minority groups. In a particular social context, religious minority groups are commonly presented as ‘the others’ (othering). Those who belong to ‘them’ are socially and politically excluded.

However, the pronoun ‘they’ in the sentence ‘[they] are Indonesian citizens’ is deliberately used to oppose the group exclusion. By associating and including ‘they’ with Indonesian citizens, it means that the religious minority groups (the ‘they’) have an equal social position to other Indonesian people. The categories of ‘we’ and ‘they’ are melted, and individuals belonging to these social categories have a similar status to other Indonesian citizens, so ‘his’ or ‘her’ rights (e.g. political and religious) should be equally protected. Instead of referring directly to particular individuals or institutions, the Setara Institute tries to constitute the meaning that all individuals and parties in Indonesia that have considerable concerns with the religious minority issue should implement this impartiality.

The association of the concepts of citizenship with impartiality can be identified in the sentences below. It emphasises the need for recognising equality for all citizens, regardless of their social and religious backgrounds. Bonar Tigai Naipospos, the Deputy Chairman of the Setara Institute, argues that [Kontroversi Nasib Ahmadiyah Part 3] (Deanova, 2013):


(Our constitution emphasises that every citizen has the right to choose, adhere, and even to change, his or her religious belief. That is our constitution. Second, the state may not

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15 Interview with the members as well as researchers of Setara Institute in Jakarta in 2013
judge someone’s belief. The state should be neutral and it is the duty of the state to guarantee its people to be able to practise the principles and teachings of the people’s religion. The state should be a mediator and look for the best solution to administer the differences in order to create harmony. Why? Because differences in theological interpretation are not the domain of the state…).

Other important arguments concerning this impartiality can be identified in the following statement (Hasani, 2007):

The state should perform neutrally to any single social and religious group. Nevertheless, during 2007, the attitude of the state has revealed a paradox; the state was not neutral and it justifies every prosecution carried out by social groups against other religious groups and beliefs, which are considered to be deviant.

In this statement, the linguistic strategy of contrasting is employed, namely contrasting a paradoxic situation between ‘what should be’ as the ideal condition and ‘what is actually happening’ as the real condition. In an ideal condition, the state should perform impartially by ‘being neutral’ and ‘not giving privilege to any single social religious group’. However, what was actually happening during 2007 reveals a different direction. This contrasting strategy reveals that the state is inconsistent when dealing with the issue of religious minority groups.

‘The state’ as the subject of the sentence is deliberately presented to be the non-human agent/actor that replaces the human agent/actor. The mentioning of ‘the state’ does not provide specific information about the human agents that perform the partiality. Setara tends to generalise (the state is a general subject) rather than particularise (clearly mentioning the actor or the institution, e.g. president or particular ministry).

Some people may interpret the statement to mean that the subject refers to the Indonesian Government as the representation of the state, but in the expression above, it is not directly stated. The use of the generality of the non-human agent allows readers or the audience to make their own interpretation and conclusion to identify definite actors who perpetrate the discriminatory actions. The elision of the human agent as a subject into the non-human agent (the state) is also found in the following sentences (Hasani, 2011):

Oleh karena Negara tidak mendasarkan diri pada suatu agama resmi, maka jelas bahwa Negara mesti secara tegas mempraktekkan suatu pandangan atau prinsip keadilan yang berbasis pada sikap ‘equal treatment’ atau perlakuan yang sama dihadapan hukum terhadap semua warga dan semua umat beragama di bawah hukum dan konstitusi yang berlaku.

(Due to the state does not only acknowledge one single official religion, it is clear that the state must practise firmly a view or principle of justice that is based on equal treatment before the law to all citizens and all religious adherents under the recognised laws and constitution).

A similar indefinite human agent of the discriminatory actions is also identified in the following sentence when talking about any intervention against the issue of freedom of religion.
Negara tidak boleh mengintervensi atau melakukan pengaturan-pengaturan. Ketika mereka mengatakan sudah masuk pada forum eksternum, maka ketika mereka masuk pada wilayah itu, maka mereka sebetulnya telah membatasi forum internum.

(The state may not intervene or regulate (the freedom of religion). When they say that they have entered into the forum externum, they have actually restricted the forum internum)

Intervention against religious minority groups is justified by or relies upon the division between forum internum and forum externum. The former is associated with a personal thing, like religion/belief, while the latter is associated with a social thing, that is, religion may be part of a social issue when it triggers social conflict. The forum externum provides a conceptual frame to justify the state’s actions to intervene in religious issues.

Van Dijk argues that ‘discourse may be seen as a semantic iceberg, of which only a few meanings are expressed (on the surface) of text and talk, whereas others’ remain (underlying/implicit) knowledge stored in mental models’ (Van Dijk, 1993b). With knowledge, the readers or general audiences are able to infer the implicit meaning from the explicit meaning that has been actually expressed.

Following the description of the ‘surface’ and ‘underlying’ structure, the sentence “the state may not intervene or regulate the freedom of religion” (surface structure) presupposes that the intervention and regulation may have been performed before (underlying structure/implicit meaning). In other words, there has previously been a situation or action that becomes the social background underlying the sentence. This is the case of the underlying structure, which may not have been explicitly and precisely stated in the surface structure.

In this spoken text, the word ‘state’ is again used as the non-human agent that is deemed to be the subject of the sentence. The reference to the state in the statement is the pronoun ‘they’ [the state = they], which is stated in the following sentence. The ‘they’ could mean plurality; for example, policy makers, politicians, and state officials, as well as official institutions administering religious issues that make such division (forum internum and externum).

In other texts, the state’s behaviour that is not impartial toward its citizens is also connected to the issue of political identity. According to SI 1 (interview 2013), the transition to democracy in the reformation era has established political identity. He compares the condition of the establishment of this political identity in Indonesia with the condition that had previously occurred in some countries after the 1945 cold war. One of the salient issues regarding this identity is the construction of ‘majority’ versus ‘minority’ as follows:

Politisi dan pengambil kebijakan mengikuti ritme mayoritas daripada minoritas karena mereka itu telah mempraktekkan dan mengedepankan politik identitas yang sama persis pasca perang dingin.

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16 The excerpt is taken from the interview with the member as well researcher of Setara Institute in Jakarta in 2013.
Politicians and policy makers follow the rhythm of the majority rather than the minority because they have practised and prioritised political identity, which is exactly the same as situation after the cold war.17

More specifically, the sentence above has provided information about the actors in the action of establishing political identity; they are politicians and policy makers. However, there is no definite description about who the ‘politicians’ are and who the ‘policy makers’ are. To what political parties are they affiliated? SI 1 argues that politicians and policy makers have preferred to support the majority rather than the minority. Such an argument is used to reinforce the wrong attitude of government that carries out partial behaviour in administering religious issues.

4.4. Weakness of Leadership

The establishment of strong government, especially in protecting freedom of religion, is closely connected to the presence of a strong leader or president. The general election in the Indonesian reformation era, in which all citizens can participate in selecting their president, should result in the selection of a strong leader. However, what Setara presents regarding leadership reveals a different fact. Soesilo Bambang Yudoyono and Jusuf Kalla were elected as Indonesian president and vice president in 2004, and Yudoyono was then elected again as president five years later in 2009 (2009 to 2014) with Boediono as his vice president. During his ten years of government (2004 to 2014), the Ahmadiyya sect was a target of violent acts performed by several members of the public. Further, this government also failed to bring legal proceedings against the perpetrators of the violence.

According to Colbran, massive attacks against Ahmadiyya have been occurring since 2005, after the issuing of the religious decree by the MUI that declares Ahmadiyya to be a deviant sect (Colbran, 2010). In 2008, Ahmadiyya faced a serious situation after the issuing of the joint ministerial decree. In 2011, three Ahmadiyya followers in Cikeusik, Banten, were killed (Mietzner, 2012).

In the 2007 report, President Yudoyono is presented as a weak president who did not firmly establish freedom of religion during his time of office. He is also considered to have supported majorities for several political reasons (e.g. votes from mainstream Muslims in the election) and to have allowed the minorities to be the victims of discrimination. The discourse of ‘weak leadership’ is created using the strategy of derogated personification by derogating the intellectual traits of Yudoyono. It can be observed in the following sentences (Hasani, 2007):

Yudoyono’s leadership, which, in October 2009, has entered its second term, still shows an ambiguous attitude towards the guarantee of freedom of religion/belief. The ambiguity emerged as a result of the president’s personal political weakness, which has failed to utilise the opportunity under his regime to take political actions that show serious and consistent support for the constitutional guarantee of the citizen’s rights.

In the linguistic expression above, the President is presented as a person who failed to utilise his political opportunities to solve a problem. He is presented as a President who did not sensibly use his political opportunity to establish his legal and political obligations to guarantee

17 The excerpt is taken from the interview with the member as well researcher of Setara Institute in Jakarta in 2013
freedom of religion. The inability is considered to be the effect of his ambiguous attitude. The ambiguity delivers a meaning that Yudoyono was not assertive and did not have a firm policy to protect religious minority groups.

Another expression that reveals the weakness of government in establishing rule of law is presented below. Although it does not directly depict the personality of President Yudoyono, the sentence provides a clear message about the weakness of his leadership in protecting human rights. The sentence is as follows: Secara formal kita menganut prinsip Negara hukum, tetapi dalam praktiknya, Negara seolah-olah membiarkan berlakunya hukum rimba; siapa kuat, dia menang (Formally, we adhere to the principle of rule of law (legal state), but in its practice, the state seems to allow the establishment of lawlessness; who is strong, wins) (Hasani & Naipospos, 2011).

Besides presenting the weakness of the intellectual traits of Yudoyono, Setara raises the discourse topic of lawlessness (Hukum Rimba). The topic is used to depict Indonesia as a country without law enforcement. Although Indonesia has a set of laws and a constitution regulating freedom of religion, there are still many violations against them, especially when dealing with freedom of religion.

The topic of lawlessness or the weakness in law enforcement may be associated with the weakness of the President in enforcing laws. Hukum Rimba is a metaphorical expression that refers to the ‘metaphor of jungle’, and it is used to reveal the lawless situation in Indonesia. It portrays a jungle situation where the king of the jungle (i.e. the lion/tiger) has absolute power to control other powerless or less powerful animals.

In Hukum Rimba, the strongest or the most powerful would be the winner. The powerful individuals or groups have absolute authority and control over the powerless/minority. The majority is presented as a powerful group, while the minority is depicted as powerless. Such a metaphorical expression implies that the president is not able to protect the rights of the minorities. It is clear that such a statement indicates the weakness of the Indonesian Government to provide protection to the minorities (i.e. religious minority groups).

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of various texts disseminated by the Setara Institute, the NGO has revealed its concern about the protection of religious freedom and human rights. The issuing of some legal proclamations by the Indonesian Government, such as a joint ministerial decree, is considered to be a violation against religious freedom and human rights. Discrimination against Ahmadiyya, according to Setara, reveals that the Indonesian Government has not acted impartially and has not implemented a real democracy. The physical and discourse discrimination also reflects the weakness of government in establishing religious freedom and human rights.

In the discourses presented by the Setara Institute, the Ahmadiyya sect is treated unequally. The sect has been discriminated seen from the government’s treatments and this government is incapable to provide full protection for the Ahmadiyya followers from any other physical attacks. The unequal treatment is due to partial or unfair treatment.

Democracy should guarantee religious freedom for all citizens regardless their religious background and understanding. The Setara Institute argues that religious affairs should be separated from the public affairs and the government should not regulate religious freedoms.
Religious belief should be treated as a personal matter that may not be intervened in by individuals or state institution.

The CDA on Setara Institute’s texts sheds a new light on the Ahmadiyya issue, especially in identifying the resistance discourse that tries to defend religious minority groups. The employment of various linguistic strategies to create resistance discourses has enriched the investigation of the Ahmadiyya issue by providing a new approach of analysis of social issue using a linguistic approach. This has never been developed in previous studies of Ahmadiyya. Such study also reveals that, in Indonesian political and religious contexts, some civil societies argue against the government’s action that is considered unfair in protecting religious minority groups. These can be identified in the use of the strategies of metaphor, narrating events, recontextualization, contrastive argument, and nominalization.

References


