

THE EXISTENCE OF *JEMAAH AHMADIYAH* (AHMADYAH CONGREGATION) AFTER KETAPANG TRAGEDY IN WEST LOMBOK WEST NUSATENGGERA

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation which is entitled 'The Existence of the *Jemaah Ahmadiyah* (Ahmadiyah Congregation) after Ketapang Tragedy in West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara' has been actually inspired by the latently continued sectarian conflict issue resulting from the strong resistance put up by people to its existence. The pressure it has faced has been horizontal, vertical and structural. Based on the background and problem described above, three basic questions are discussed in this study and are formulated as follows: 1) how the existence of *Jemaah Ahmadiyah* (Ahmadiyah Congregation) after the *Ketapang* Tragedy in West Lombok is; 2) what strategies are developed to maintain its existence after the *Ketapang* tragedy; and 3) what are the meanings of its existence after the *Ketapang* tragedy? The approach of cultural studies, which includes the theory of social segregation, the theory of subaltern and the theory of practice, is used as the theoretical orientation. Qualitative descriptive and interpretative analysis is used as the research method in this study. The data needed were collected by in-depth interview, observation, library research and documentation.

Based on the analysis of the results of the study, it is identified that the latent Ahmadiyah conflict occurring in Lombok has been the representation of the history forming the continued religious (Islam) discursive struggle. The claim of truth resulting from the epistemological difference in religious interpretation has been the source of the basic problem. As the characteristics of the religious interpretation developed by what is taught in Ahmadiyah is so autocratic (innovative) in nature that diametrically it extremely contrasts with the people who adhere to authoritarianism; it tends to be theopratical and its rivals tend to be theocentric; as a consequence, it is difficult to unite it and its rivals. After the *Ketapang* tragedy, the resistance put up to the *Jemaah Ahmadiyah* is getting socially and culturally segregated and this can be observed in socio-cultural, economic and religious aspects of life. The strategies it has developed to maintain its existence after the *Ketapang* tragedy are defensive strategy, consolidation strategy, intra-religious dialogue strategy and welfare improving strategy. The polemic of its existence, which used to pertain to theology and philosophy, is now expanding into sociological, cultural and political domains. Theologically, the continued discourse of Ahmadiyah conflict could mean the representation of the struggle of religious views with the epistemological difference as the source. Sociologically and culturally, the continued discourse of Ahmadiyah conflict is the representation of the fact that the local centrism politics is getting stronger. Politically, it might be stated to represent the confusing positions of the State and religions in Indonesia. Furthermore, it might indicate that the civilization war (*gasw al-fikr*): Islam versus the Western countries (which are identical with Christianity) would occur again.

Keywords: existence, Ahmadiyah, after tragedy

INTRODUCTION

The main problematic issue on which the problems formulated in this study are based is that the unlawful exercise of physical force to the Ahmadiyah congregation in Indonesia turns out to be initially done in East Lombok in 2001, although, geographically, it is relatively far from West Java, the center where the Indonesian Ahmadiyah Congregation (*Jemaah Ahmadiyah* Indonesia, abbreviated to JAI) is managed and developed. Such an unlawful exercise of physical force was getting accelerated and expanded to various regions including West Lombok which took place in 2006 and is referred to as the Ketapang Tragedy. In the web-site released by Gatra (Gatra.com/2006-10-13), it was reported that since 1980 when MUI officially stated that the Ahmadiyah Congregation (*Jemaah Ahmadiyah*, abbreviated to JA) was a deviating belief and could lead one the wrong path, such a physical force put up to the Ahmadiyah followers living in Lombok has been occurring at least eight times. Officially, it was reported that it has cost no lives; however, materially, it has been responsible for a huge loss. Various forms of the property belonging to the Ahmadiyah followers such as houses, holy places and valuable items were damaged. Apart from this, relatively great exoduses also took place. The Ketapang tragey, which took place in 2006), is over; however, the Ahmadiyah followers, who were the victims, have been living as refugees up to now.

Although living as refugees and being able to exist, horizontal and vertical resistances are still put up to them. However, the meaningfulness of the Ahmadiyah conflict discourse in Lombok has been getting more complex and has been made less sterilized by non theological interests and elements. It is their marginalization which is worth investigating urgently from the perspective of cultural studies. The investigation is formulated in three basic questions. *First*, how the existence of the Jemaah Ahmadiyah is; *second*, what strategies are developed to maintain its existence; *third*, what is the meanings of its existence after the Ketapang tragedy?

METHOD

The field data, which were collected by in-depth interview, direct observation and library research, were qualitatively and interpretatively analyzed using the multiple hermeneutic techniques (ethic and emic). The research setting was more basically focused in West Lombok, where the branch secretariat office of the Jemaah Ahmadiyah is located and from which the sub branches spreading all over West Nusa Tenggara and East Nusa Tenggara are supervised and managed. The other reason is that it is in West Nusa Tenggara the unlawful exercise of physical force put up to the Jamaah Ahmadiyah has culminated.

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

The claim proposed by Muslims to the central government that the Jemahaah Islamiyah be dispersed has not been realized yet. This means that constitutionally the Jemahaah Islamiyah, as a religious organization, is permanently legally strong (based on the Decree issued by the Minister of Justice No. JA 5/23/13 dated 13th March 1953 and the Letter issued by the Directorate of Political Institutional Relation No. 75/D.1/VI/2003). With reference to them, attempts are made to continue its activities in spite of facing various resistances. Most of the victims of the Ketapang tragedy in West Lombok, who have lived as refugees and stayed at Mataram Transito Building (there were 108 people and 29 families) and at what used to be the Praya General Hospital (there were 50 people/13 families), still do their religious activities with all limitations. As a consequence, every access to the Jemaah Islamiyah has been continuously eliminated through various instruments of oppression; from being carefully watched out to being not allowed to do religious activities. Their activities were restricted and they were not allowed to use Islam symbols and attribute either.

The inaccessibility to the rights to live (inaccessibility to residence, economy,

religious service, the right to gather and to many other things) undergone by the Jemaah Ahmadiyah followers in Lombok is the form of denomination motivated by the intention to create what is termed as “sterilized culture” in community. This is related to the strong struggle to formalize the application of *syari'at* in Lombok especially by the followers of Islam *Fiqih* which is also referred to as the Islam *Waktu Lima* or fundamentalist Islam. In addition, this is also related to the strong intention to preserve the Sasaknese cultural values which are being strongly penetrated by the modern values developing in community. The Jemaah Islamiyah followers are one of the victims of such religious purification and cultural preservation; they are not justified to perform Islam through who they are and their own cultural products. The Islam *Fiqih* followers, whose belief is considered to have religious authority, to be the highest decision and to have sacred canopy, do not intend to share things, cooperate and to enter into an alliance with the Ahmadiyah Islamiyah followers as what they adhere to has been considered to be a deviating belief and to lead one up the wrong path. Being considered to have religious authority, to be the highest position and to have sacred canopy, institutional decisions are considered to have legality over everything including the legal decisions issued by the government and the principles of human rights. Such imaginations have led the group of people who disagree with Ahmadiyah to having immunity to execute those who adhere to the belief which is considered to be a deviating one and to lead one the wrong path. When such a take-over of authority takes place the State procedural laws become impotent as they become powerless to carry out what is constitutionally prescribed.

Such a local culture-based supremacy of power reflects the hegemony in which the dominating group with its leaders, being ambitious to win consciousness, dominates the subordinate one. To make the dominated loyal to the dominating, directing the former to have and internalize the norms and values prescribed by the latter is not enough. The dominated should also provide agreement for being the subordinate. Internally and

ideologically, the culture referred to as “essentialism ideology”, the cultural view which tends to give priority to the principles of absolutism identity, is formed. Identity is considered to be a given, sacred and unchangeable certainty; hence, no other identity elements can contaminate it. Furthermore, such a cultural view may develop exclusiveness which tends to disagree with pluralism. As far as the context of heterogeneity is concerned, such social segregation practices tend to select, categorize and separate social entities based on cultural identity (religious tradition). Furthermore, such cultural segregation practices have gone in a certain direction referred to as “cultural estrangement”, that is, a mental process which used to consider particular groups “the us” but now they are considered to be “the xenos”. This particularly takes place when the members of a particular group in community see themselves living in a close “container”. To maintain the unity and stability within the container, whatever outside the container should be denied.

As far as the Ahmadiyah conflict discourse in Lombok is concerned, it has been developing not only into the Islam internal matter but also into the political domain within national and international scales. Nationally, the conflict is frequently related to the State policy in protecting Islam as the religion adhered to by most Indonesians. Such a policy tends to give priority to the majority group and to discriminate the minority one. Ahmadiyah is the victim of such a hyper-protecting political policy. Internationally, the conflict is related to the arrival of the American delegate sometime in November 2008, who was sent by the United Nations Organization to investigate the slow settlement of the Ahmadiyah conflict in Lombok. His arrival might have made the past bad historical memory of the ideological fight between civilizations (*gash al-fiqr*) appear again; and at the same time it might have made the relation between the Islamic countries and the western countries (which are identical with Christian countries) get worse. His arrival in the fighting discursive arena in Lombok was then interpreted as the political representation of the western countries to

continue the “Islam westernization project” infiltrated through Ahmadiyah channel. It was also interpreted to morally state the western superiority, which, in its history, always wishes to “orientalize orient politics” in which Islam is always used as the object to study and to watch out. In such interpretations, Ahmadiyah is suspected to be the agent of the western countries as its teachings are potentially infiltrated by the western way of thinking (the virus of liberalism ideology) which is more well-known as “westernization of Islam”. The reproduction of the explanation of passages of Koran by supplying additional information in Ahmadiyah teachings which tend to be auto critic in nature has strengthened such a suspicion. That cannot be separated from the hermeneutic influence on which the explanation of passages of Koran by supplying additional information which dominates the Ahmadiyah teachings is based. Such explanation is usually easily infiltrated by the liberal Islam consciousness which has been long questioned by those who adhere to the textual perspective views in general and those who adhere to fundamentalism in particular. As far as such a religious reasoning is concerned, those who adhere to fundamentalism usually tend to start from an exclusive belief in monolithic truth and from an absolute orthodox belief which extremely contrasts with the Ahmadiyah teachings which are auto critic in nature. Therefore, the claim for dispersing the Jemaah Ahmadiyah is generally strongly requested by those who adhere to fundamentalism.

As far as the western mainstream is concerned, the deadlocked Ahmadiyah conflict in Lombok was then interpreted as a serious human disaster (dehumanization). That is related to the internationally spreading issue stating that the physical force done to intimidate the Ahmadiyah followers in Lombok was suspected to be left “unattended to” and therefore, it could be classified as a human right deviation. Such being unattended to resulted from the State absence from settling it so that those who disagreed with their existence considered that they had the immunity right to criminalize them as, according to them, it would never be touched by law. Such an issue was strengthened by a number of

the Ahmadiyah followers to request for political asylum through the international delegate mentioned above, having felt being discriminated in their home region. The international intervention was strategically meaningful to the Ahmadiyah followers as it was used as the politics of opinion to obtain moral support and legal recognition for the status of their belief in Indonesia which has been continuously questioned, although adhering to whatever religious belief and to doing what is taught has been part of human rights constitutionally warranted. Being good at playing such politics of opinion has made the Jemaah Ahmadiyah followers, as the subaltern intellectuals, able to talk in the middle of the grand narration power of knowledge; in addition, their different existence can still be strategically maintained and they can continue writing their history.

CONCLUSIONS

The Jemaah Ahmadiyah followers, after the Ketapang tragedy in Lombok, are still suffering from both vertical and horizontal pressures; as a consequence, they are getting marginalized. Furthermore, the politics of marginalization has been directed in such a way that it has led to social, economic and cultural segregations. The politics of supervision or what is termed as surveillance does not request that the Ahmadiyah followers should be physically separated but should also be mentally separated (mental distancing). Such a phenomenon is developing resulting from the prejudicial attitude of the dogmatic fundamentalist religious followers toward the Ahmadiyah teachings which tend to be autocritic. Such a model of religious explanation is suspected to be infiltrated by the liberal Islam consciousness which has been long questioned. Consequently, the existence of the Jemaah Islamiyah is getting more suspected as the western agent, as it might be used as a means of infiltrating the western way of thinking (the virus of liberalism ideology) which is more well known as the “westernization of Islam”. However, to the Ahmadiyah followers, the interference of the United Nations Organization in the Lombok conflict could mean an

indication of the success of the politics of opinion developed to strengthen the legality of the religious belief they adhere to which is warranted based on the international principles of human rights.

SUGGESTIONS

All the parties related to the Ahmadiyah conflict in Lombok should continuously make attempts to search out the ways in which the conflict can be settled by highly paying attention to the local genius they have. Forced settlement will never substantively settle the problem; apart from that, it tends to be contra-productive; except it is intended to satisfy temporary emotion, grudge and hatred. The inclusive dialogue among the parties involved in the conflict should be continuously encouraged and space should be opened for the Ahmadiyah followers to clarify the religious teachings they adhere to so that misunderstanding can be minimized. The community leaders (*Ulama, Tuan Guru* and so forth) are also hoped to create conducive situation in the community by delivering more religious sermons which can lead to a comfort. It is through this type of leadership religious sermons may be meaningful to guide those who are in the wrong path. The local apparatus are expected to be wise and strongly maintain the constitutional principles when attempting to settle conflicts.

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