The Socio-Legal Construction of Ahmadiyah as a Religious Minority by Local and National Government Policy: Restrictions before the Law, a Challenge for Religious Freedom in NTB, Indonesia

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Abstract

Within modern nations, unresolved violence toward minority groups without equality before domestic law is a significant issue often without local resolution. While an international problem of human rights that causes millions of people into forced migration every year, the events leading to displacement are widely varied in their local socio-legal circumstances. This paper is driven by original qualitative ethnographic research with Ahmadiyah members in NTB Provence Indonesia: a minority Muslim group with religious rulings (fatwas) against them in many Muslim nations. This paper considers the systematic socio-legal construction of Ahmadiyah as a deviant Muslim sect by hard line Sunni majority Muslim groups and the challenge for pluralism and religious freedom in the secular and democratic nation of Indonesia. In the socio-legal context of national and local laws against Ahmadiyah, the paper examines ten cases of public violence without due process between 1998 and 2011 where more than 700 Ahmadi were expelled from their homes and villages and others were forced to convert to the majority religion of Sunni Islam.

Keywords: Ahmadiyah, NTB Provence Indonesia, minority Muslim groups

Introduction

“I just want to be able to live in a house with my family. I do not want to get married and raise my children here.” asked a 19 year old Ahmadiyah woman who has lived since 2001 in transit accommodation. This paper will consider the issue of unresolved violence experienced by Ahmadiyah, an Islamic minority group, who have lived displaced in long-term in temporary accommodation in Lombok, Indonesia. Currently there are 30 to 33 ‘Heads of Family’ living in transit refuge at the ‘Asrama Transito’, Mataram, NTB, Indonesia. They originated from various different

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1 The Asrama Transito: A temporary transit accommodation where many people build their homes from hessian sacks and sheets of plastic. Some areas have cement floors with plywood walls and corrugated iron sheet roofs around central demountable buildings.

2 Personal communication, upon request names of participants are kept anonymous.

3 In Indonesian documents, people are counted in relation to the ‘Kepela Keluarga’ or head of family (male) rather than as ‘men, women, children’. When I asked Ahmadiyah participants how many people are living in the transit refuge, they answered with the number of ‘heads of family’. I have retained this representation to accurately present the numbers of people and at the same time to problematise patriarchal representation of family in Indonesia.
places such as the city of Selong, which is the mother city of East Lombok, and the village Ketapang, West Lombok. They experienced intimidation and violence resulting in burned homes and mosques, injuries and deaths, without equality before the law, aimed at Ahmadiyah denouncing their faith or being expelled from their village by force, never to return.

This article will focus on two phenomena. Firstly, what are the local social and political factors that create the local circumstances in which displaced people cannot or do not wish to return home? Secondly, why Ahmadiyah, who have had their human rights breached, remain without protection by their government which sustains conflict? It is often considered that Indonesia is a pluralist country. There is protection within the Pancasila and under Indonesian law for the principles of pluralism. But, there are many cases of religious minorities who do not gain protection. Their human rights are not guaranteed. How is it that the problem, such as that experienced by members of Ahmadiyah who became displaced in NTB, is without resolution since 2001?

The main research problem can be stated as follows: why are there religious minorities displaced within their own country, without due process in Indonesia? This leads to the formation of the research questions as follows:

1. How did Ahmadiyah become displaced?
2. For how long do people remain displaced due to unresolved conflict?
3. What is the response to communities who are not resettled for a long period of time?
4. What is the way forward to solve the problem of legal protection for Ahmadiyah?

The significance of 1998 as the starting point of both intra-group and inter-group violence experienced by minority religious groups in Lombok should not be underestimated. This was the year that Suharto’s 32 year reign collapsed. In the transition to decentralisation and regional democratic governance, local elites vied for position as the power structures were reformulated. Local elites benefit from regional governance. With the Islamisation of Indonesia, religion is often used as a tool in securing power relations.

Indeed, innovative ethnographic research by Hamdi and Smith (2012) gives an in depth analysis of the intra-group Muslim conflict that emerged in Lombok within the socio-religious Islamic organisation Nahdlatul Wathan (NW). They argue the conflict is driven by local power struggles. The conflict is situated in the shifting national context of the newly emerging democracy and divergent and competing discourses of Islam and their influence on the legal system. Their analysis includes the cultural complexities of conflict when ‘Islam’ is used as a

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4 Pancasila is a foundational document used to guide the formation and future development of the modern nation state of Indonesia.
weapon for gaining power by elites. Lombok has a multi-ethnic population; however, Sasak are the original peoples and remain the dominant population at over 93%, the majority of whom are Sunni Muslim. NW is the largest Islamic socio-religious organisation in NTB with perhaps 70-80% of Lombok’s population identifying with one of the factions within it (Hadi, 2010; Hamdi, 2011). NW tuan guru (religious leaders/teachers) hold significant local influence and power within the Muslim communities throughout Lombok and in East Lombok in particular, where the largest cases of violence occurred between factions within NW and also against Ahmadiyah.

Minority groups include Balinese Hindus, Javanese, Chinese Buddhists, Christians, Arabs and Bugis and most social research in Lombok tends to focus on inter-group conflict: conflict such as that between Muslim and Christian groups in Mataram (Avonius 2004), while Kari Telle (2010) researched the formation of Hindu security groups and John MacDougall (2007) studied Muslim faith-based militia groups that were formed as collective responses to the absence of political, legal and social stability in Lombok after the fall of Suharto. As far as this study can find, Ahmadiyah have not formed militia or security groups, and have not retaliated or acted with violence. Indeed, this case of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia, and Lombok specifically, is a startling example of inter-group conflict which Chamber Warren and Troy argue internationally remains understudied.

The Ahmadiyah in NTB are Indonesian and mostly Sasak people but include members who relocated from other provinces such as Flores or Java, for career or marriage. The respondents in this study report intimidation and violence from NW members mostly orchestrated by NW tuan gurus in Lombok. This is in the context of Hamdi and Smith, Hamdi, and Hadi, whose rigorous and rich ethnographic social research, report that NW militia groups formed to deal with internal instability and conflict within the organisation’s double leadership and resulting factions contextualised in the cultural complexities of orthodox Islam in East Lombok in particular. While their scholarship does not focus on Ahmadiyah, the violence experienced by Ahmadiyah, as a minority Muslim group, is influenced by the socio-legal and political context unfolding in Lombok, which includes the political contestations within NW as the largest socio-religious organisation and its orthodox

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8 Ibid: 29-43.
practices of Islam and its influence on the legal system. There is research that provides detailed analysis of the mainstream Sunni beliefs and Ahmadiyah beliefs, including the construction of the Ahmadiyah as deviating from Islam and fundamentalist Sunni calls for Ahmadiyah to be banned in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{11}

This article is drawn from qualitative and ethnographic data to examine the socio-legal impact of anti-Ahmadiyah legislation in Indonesia which drives the core themes and analysis. Thus, the data will be first presented, and then placed within the emerging scholarship on Ahmadiyah in Indonesia. The discussion will include a Foucauldian analysis of the play of power at work that produces systemic relations. The analysis will ask what forms of power are at work in the socio-legal situation of Ahmadiyah that sustains displacement and violence in their own country.

The Study

To achieve the research aim, the researcher gathered information from qualitative sources about the unfolding socio-legal issues experienced by Ahmadiyah in Lombok including ethnographic data such as discussions and field observations with Ahmadiyah refugees, literature review, grey literature and critical opinion essays in the media such as Compass, Jakarta Post, BBC Indonesia and Al Jezeera.

As a small consultative study, the researcher met with a total of eight Ahmadiyah members including the current Ahmadiyah community leader (male). The researcher held guided discussions at the Asrama Transito with one young woman and one family consisting of a husband and wife, the husband’s sister and the wife’s father and two young women who were their adult children. The researcher was introduced to the current community leader through her contacts at the former Language Centre at the University of Mataram (UNRAM), Lombok, where she completed a Diploma of Language in Indonesian. Because the researcher has recently acquired Indonesian, a recorder was used with permission of the respondents to help gain quality field notes. The data was analysed for themes. Finally, the grey literature included a document supplied by Dr Widodo (Faculty of Law, UNRAM) consisting of an 8000 word report by the former Ahmadiyah community leader in NTB, Mr Usman Anas. This documented ten events of violence towards Ahmadiyah in NTB from 1998 until 2011. The discussion will analyse these events in their socio-legal context, in particular the development of anti-Ahmadiyah legislation in Indonesia.

The data reported in this section is drawn from three main qualitative sources. Sources from grey literature, such as the interview from a report by the former Ahmadiyah community leader, Mr Usman Anas, titled “Ahmadiyah tragedies in NTB from 1998-2011”. The second source is from discussions with a young woman, an Ahmadiyah refugee, and a family as outlined in the methods section. There is more than sufficient information within the interview with Mr Usman Anas, which was consistent with the information given by the

\textsuperscript{11} Budiwanti, E. (2009). Ibid.
current Ahmadiyah community leader Dr Udin and the other respondents, so the author will summarise the forced evacuation and violence that Ahmadiyah members experienced in NTB between 1998-2011. This data brings together the main themes of the events that occurred at that time.

The second half of this section will focus on four themes identified in the data. First, the localised politics and socio-legal background and anti-Ahmadiyah actions that occurred at the different sites. Second, the people involved with anti-Ahmadiyah sentiments, including religious leaders (Tuan Guru), anti-Ahmadiyah groups and officials including village heads, staff and police, as well as the people who perpetrated violence towards Ahmadiyah members. Third, the types of intimidation and violence, including destruction and burning of homes, injury and death, experienced by Ahmadiyah members in various villages throughout NTB. Fourth, the forced expulsion of Ahmadiyah community members driven out of their homes and villages to eventually live in refugee transit accommodation in Mataram, the capital city of Lombok, where they remain at the time of writing.

It has been reported from Ahmadiyah members from Keruak, East Lombok, that a religious teacher (tuan guru) began anti-Ahmadiyah lectures at the mosque and in the village from 14 August 1996. At the time, the religious teacher at Jerowaru, spoke against Maulid Nabi,12 Gubuk Sikur, in the village Selebung, Ketangga, Keruak. The respondents report that the teacher said Ahmadiyah are heathen, perverted, have strayed from the path and have ruined Islam. Then, on 1 October 1998, a group of 50 people, newly returned from prayer, burned and demolished Ahmadiyah houses and their mosque. After that, on the 4th of October with the same leader, a group of 60 people burned and destroyed four Ahmadiyah houses and one mushala (prayer room). One Ahmadiyah person died as a result of the violence. After that, six Heads of Family and 24 people were evicted from their village and fled to the place of other Ahmadiyah members in Pancor.

Similar to the evictions of Ahmadiyah community members from Keruak, there was a background of anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment and actions before the evictions in the village of Sambielen. There are Ahmadiyah community members who experienced repeated evictions in the years 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 in Sambielen, Bayan, West Lombok. These events not only occurred in Sambielen, but were experienced again by the same Ahmadiyah members who fled from Sambielen, West Lombok to the village of Empang in Sumbawa (Sumbawa is a neighbouring island of Lombok, both in the NTB region). In Empang, the same Ahmadiyah community members were evicted from their village in 2003, 2006 and 2011 (described below): meaning that cases of violence are systematically perpetrated against Ahmadiyah community members. On Friday 22 June 2001, there were meetings with anti-

12 The prophet that Ahmadiyah members believe came after Muhammad, to reinforce Muhammad’s teaching, but not to introduce new teachings. Ahmadiyah still believe in and follow the Quran and the teachings of Muhammad. They see themselves as one of the many branches of Islam. General Islam believes that Muhammad is the final prophet and there can be no other. This difference is the site of contention between Islam generally and Ahmadiyah members.
Ahmadiyah lectures that warned a large group will come to burn the houses of Ahmadiyah community members. An Ahmadiyah community member informed others that there are a number of people having discussions in a meeting about Ahmadiyah in a private house in Sambielen (names withheld to maintain anonymity). After the meeting, a mass group of about 100 people ruined and burned 14 houses, one prayer room and one mosque belonging to the Ahmadiyah community. Next this group forced the eviction of nine heads of family and 39 Ahmadiyah community members from their village. They fled to Mataram, the capital city of Lombok and of NTB and to the neighbouring island of Sumbawa.

The people from Sambielen (Lombok) who, forced to leave their village, fled to Empang, Sumbawa, experienced a similar reaction there. In 2003, the village head and village office staff from the Empang community did not want Ahmadiyah community members to live there. Ahmadiyah members tried to negotiate, but village people attacked an Ahmadiyah member’s house. The village head and Empang community demanded the Ahmadiyah members leave or they would evict them from the village by force. The local government did not want to receive Ahmadiyah in Sumbawa. The Ahmadiyah community members wanted to return home to Sambielen in Lombok, but could not because the situation there remained dangerous. In 2011, Ahmadiyah members continued to experience intimidation in Empang. Two police, with a number of other village people, intimidated Ahmadiyah members by telling them “we cannot guarantee your safety”. Violence towards Ahmadiyah continued. One example is that a group of people entered the house of Ahmadiyah members while shouting “God is Great! Ahmadiyah dogs!.” The intimidation continued for three days. This event was reported but the police did not process the case. The result of these attacks was that one head of family and four people were forced to evacuate to Mataram, the capital city of Lombok.

The largest mass violence to drive Ahmadiyah members from their village occurred in Pancor, East Lombok. It was reported that there were routine anti-Ahmadiyah recitations held by Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) members. The elder and teacher of NW influenced the community to exclude Ahmadiyah members. Examples include on 18 August 2002 when a person entered the Ahmadiyah mosque shouting anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment. Next, on 22 August, a person entered the same mosque to persecute and injure an elderly person. Again, on 5 September, there was a story in a local newspaper by a prominent community member attacking Ahmadiyah with the headline “Drive out Ahmadiyah!” and included in the discussion that “people of Pancor unite, what will be our action? Come on my brothers!” Also, on 10 September a person again entered the mosque shouting “You are not Muslim.” There was disturbance and the police came to look after the mosque. On 11 September a mass group numbering 1000 people burned and destroyed every house, mosque and prayer room belonging to Ahmadiyah community members, chanting “Ahmadiyah heathen, kill Ahmadiyah!”. The police were unable to look after Ahmadiyah community members because the group numbers were too large to manage. But reinforcements did not attend the incident.
The violence towards the Ahmadiyah community members continued for one week. The mass group forced the eviction of 383 Ahmadiyah community members from the village to the Asrama Transito in Mataram.

The event in Pancor was large enough that it influenced evictions in the villages of Medas and Sembalun that had previously maintained peaceful relations between Ahmadiyah and other Muslim groups. On 11 September 2002, one day after the mass evictions of Ahmadiyah members from Pancor, Ahmadiyah community members in Medas heard the news about the destruction and burning of the mosque and houses of Ahmadiyah members in Pancor. There was an indication that Ahmadiyah members in Medas will also be targeted by the same anti-Ahmadiyah mass group. Five heads of family were forced to leave their village. Meanwhile, the situation for Ahmadiyah community members in Sembalun, who had not previously experienced discrimination, became increasingly heated because, the respondents believe, the provocation and assaults in the other areas triggered anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment towards Ahmadiyah members. In Sembalun, four Ahmadiyah houses were ruined and the members evicted. Finally, 70 people were forced to deny their Ahmadiyah faith and convert to Islam (even though according to Ahmadiyah themselves they are already Muslim) or if not, they will be expelled from Sembalun not to return.

In West Lombok, there were forced evictions from Ketapang in 2005, 2006 and 2010. At the beginning there were anti-Ahmadiyah lectures throughout Ramadhan in 2005 at the mosque in the village of Gegerung one km from a majority Ahmadiyah housing area. In a speech, Muhammad Issi, a religious teacher from Praya, said that the people from Bumi Asri are not brave; he will return with people from Praya to drive the Ahmadiyah members out of the village, and he will not return to teach again. The village head of Gegerung joined Muhammad Issi. After that, on 19 October 2005, 3 houses were destroyed. A pregnant woman was forced to run for safety from her house carrying her four year old child, after which, she miscarried. The intimidation lasted for three months. On 21 October 2005, the Ahmadiyah members were driven from the village by force.

In Central Lombok, on 4 February 2006, a mass group with an amplifier called for the Ahmadiyah to be forced out of the village. Respondents report that the action was aimed at destroying and burning 24 Ahmadiyah houses. 137 people from 31 heads of family were evicted by force. A group called “People’s Alliance Anti-Ahmadiyah” (AMANAH) organised an anti-Ahmadiyah lecture and violence in the village of Praya. In 2006, a mass group of people in Praya destroyed and burned houses resulting in the forced eviction of 16 heads of family and 56 Ahmadiyah members. The lecture was by the religious teacher at Jerowaru, Selebung, Ketangga and Keruak from Praya.

After that, 17 Ahmadiyah families with 67 people lived in an abandoned pavilion at the former Public Hospital in Praya, the capital city of Central Lombok. Living conditions were terrible, with no sanitation or running water. The people quickly became ill from dysentry. Nothing was done to relocate the people and the local government has been reluctant to
maintain the pavilion as temporary accommodation. None of the people have been compensated for their losses. Conditions are no better than the Asrama Transito in Mataram. On 26 November 2010, a group of people burned three more houses. The Ahmadiyah members heard the group saying they want to attack Ahamdiyah members. Members of Ahmadiyah reported this information to the police but the police did not process the report. The group then destroyed the fence and gate of the house.

Four main themes can be noticed in the data above. First, there is a social background of action against Ahmadiyah in each place mentioned. Second, there are prominent local elites with anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment in each place that the forced evictions occurred. However, it is not clear from the data on Medas and Sembalun if there was a particular person instigating the intimidation or if the Ahmadiyah community members were afraid enough from the news of forced evictions in Samielen. However, 70 of the Ahmadiyah members were forced to denounce their Ahmadiyah religion and to convert to Sunni Islam. Third, the forms of violence perpetrated devastated homes and burned houses, mosques and prayer rooms, intimidation, threats and assaults resulted in injury and death, resulted in the fourth element of Ahmadiyah members forced out of their homes and villages to remain in transit accommodation unable to permanently return at the time of writing, in 2017.

Discussion and data analysis

In this discussion, the authors will utilise the above data for the research aim to gain an understanding of the socio-legal context of contemporary Indonesian pluralism as a framework for promoting peaceful relations. The key themes emerging from the data will be identified and discussed. A Foucauldian analysis of power will proceed with two stages. First, to identify the powers at work and second to evaluate the results of the play of these powers by making judgments about whether the cumulative effects give rise to domination or subjugation. This analysis of power is useful to understand the development of sustained violence towards Ahmadiyah who have been socio-legally constructed by power elites as external to Islam and therefore outside the protection of Islamic law and in fact seen as against Islam. Thus, according to Ahmadiyah, their situation is one of intra-group conflict due to diverse practices of Islam. According to hard line Sunni groups, Ahmadiyah are external and therefore it is inter-group conflict, which the authors argue has been exacerbated by anti-Ahmadiyah policy and legislation. In addition to the ethnographic data, news media and expert opinion essays from online newspapers will help to clarify the current situation for Ahmadiyah in NTB, Indonesia. Violence towards Ahmadiya in Indonesia and in NTB (the islands of Lombok and Sumbawa) emerged from 1998 until the time of writing.


structures and local elites in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto’s regime in 1998. Four themes can be identified from the data presented above and are used to organise and guide the following discussion.

1. Socio-legal, political and historical context of the Anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment in NTB and Indonesia 1998 to present

The respondents in this report understand Ahmadiyah identify as Muslim. For them, the conflict is intra-group in addition to being within their own nation, while groups such as NW and even the Minister for Religious Affairs, Suryadharma Ali in Indonesia, repeatedly cast Ahmadiyah practices as blasphemous against Islam and therefore external to it. In this case study, the ethnic membership of most Ahmadiyah in Lombok is reflective of the dominant population, with the majority being Sasak with some intermarrying with external ethnic groups. There is an emerging Sasak scholarship on intra-group violence within and between divergent discourses of Islam focus on the conflicting internal power relations among elites and hierarchical contestations in Lombok. This scholarship is extended by Hamdi and Hamdi & Smith to reveal the cultural complexities and the reproduction of conflict across a range of villages in East Lombok that occurred in the same period as the violence towards Ahmadiyah. None of this scholarship considers violence towards Ahmadiyah, because its focus is on the local power elites in the dominant group of NW itself. From the data in this study, it can be said that there is a socio-legal background of anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment and action that is connected with particular persons or groups that are actively anti-Ahmadiyah.

The social background of anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment and action mentioned above is present in each of the villages that forced the evictions of Ahmadiyah members between the years of 1998 to 2011 and which continue in the present. While it is correct to say that the story of Ahmadiyah is an international one, with Fatwas in many Muslim states, the socio-legal, historical and political context is grounded in local particularities that are specific to Indonesia, and then specific to each province within Indonesia but of relevance in a global context. The respondents in this study are from NTB comprising of two large islands, Lombok and Sumbawa. Additionally, socio-legal literature on conflict management examines the often tumultuous landscape of Indonesia’s transformation of democracy since the fall of Suharto in 1998 and the process of decentralisation transferring significant power to provincial and local levels. In the context of Indonesia, and of Lombok, this has played out in the political and legal

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empowerment of and intensified rivalry between local elites often leading to civil conflict and violence.¹⁹

There has been research on Ahmadiyah in Indonesia in the literature on pluralism.²⁰ This literature places the violence directed towards Ahmadiyah in the structural context of intra-group Muslim conflict. In particular, arguing for multiple readings of Islam within Indonesia within varied socio-cultural contexts. The Indonesian socio-legal context includes fundamentalist activist groups such as the Institute for Islamic Research and Study (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam- LPPI) and FPI who have actively campaigned against Ahmadiyah with the Indonesian Government and also within the Indonesia Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI). The MUI council is comprised of all Muslim groups including Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. It was founded in 1975 under the Suharto regime to make religious rulings (fatwas) and to advise the Muslim community on contemporary issues. It also acts as an interface between the government, which is meant to be secular, and the Islamic majority community. It is an independent body but funded by the government, which often seeks for the MUI to endorse government policies which can lead to tension.

Historically, the MUI represented the moderate practice of Islam in Indonesia. Ahmadiyah lived and interacted peacefully with mainstream Muslim groups since its arrival in Indonesia in the 1920s.²¹ But sustained lobbying, vilification, and propagation of misleading information about Ahmadiyah beliefs successfully shifted the acceptance of Ahmadiyah as a minority Muslim community with a variant practice of Islam. Conversely, Ahmadiyah were presented as heretics with deviant practices that are harmful to Islam and being denied status as an Islamic organisation, without representation within the MUI and without official status as a religion. One example is that the leader of LPPI is reported to have spread incorrect information about Ahmadiyah’s book of writings Tadkirah by the second Khalifah, the son of MGA. MGA is claimed by Ahmadiyah to have attained prophethood and his son documented the insights shared by MGA so that Ahmadiyah followers can learn from MGA’s wisdom. The LPPI leader incorrectly claimed the Ahmadiyah propagate the Tadkirah a holy book.²²

Thus, Ahmadiyah have been deliberately constructed as outside Islam and a deviant sect, and therefore as heretics. This assumption was endorsed by religious bodies such as in the MUI Fatwa 1980 reissued in 2005. It was then further legitimated by the state through the Joint Decree on Ahmadiyah 2008 and reissued in 2013 at both national and then regional levels to prevent Ahmadiyah from propagating their beliefs. This has created a socio-legal context constructed by radical sections of Sunnite Muslims who wanted Ahmadiyah to be banned. Ahmadiyah are not protected from fundamentalist Sunnite Muslim sects’ violent

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responses to groups accused of ‘heresy’. Radical groups within Islam believe that Islam must be protected from incorrect interpretations, and that jihad requires violent punishment (by the sword) for heresy, compared with the moderate Islamist interpretation of jihad through theological and philosophical debates. The Ahmadiyah too share the moderate view of jihad, to be conducted through scholarship and not violence. Consequently, the radical Islamist sects interpret the fatwa as synonymous with *syariah* - or Muslim law, that the group accused of heresy has been ‘outlawed’, resulting in their violent responses of some fundamentalist sects, as seen in NTB.

2. *Tuan gurus and the use of Islam to galvanise systemic power relations*

Tuan Gurus are religious teachers who hold social positions of high esteem with significant social and political influence at regional levels. Previous Sasak scholarship examines the role of *tuan gurus* and NW charismatic leadership, to show the cultural complexity of Islam in East Lombok, which they argue is “synonymous with ‘traditional’ NW orthodoxy in the villages” of their research. Moreover, the position of tuan gurus are also powerful enough to prevent violence as reported by Kingsley in his analysis of the 2008 provincial elections in Lombok, which had been identified as an area of high concern for potential religious-based conflict as local elites vied for power. Potential violence was avoided through the local networks of elites including tuan gurus. For the purpose of this research, this is an intriguing example of the significant power and influence held by tuan gurus in addition to the nuanced local power relations in Lombok.

The local strategies found in this study include ongoing anti-Ahmadiyah lectures such as those by the religious teacher (tuan guru) at Jerowaru in Lombok on 14 August 1996 that continued until the forced eviction of Ahmadiyah members in 1998 in the tumultuous year of Suharto’s fall. The anti-Ahmadiyah lectures continue to the present. There were anti-Ahmadiyah meetings in the village of Sambielen and also in Pancor where the tuan gurus actively incited locals to drive Ahmadiyah ‘heathens’ from their village resulting in the mass violence of 1000 people rioting in Pancor for an entire week until every Ahmadiyah dwelling, including homes and all possessions within it, schools, businesses, farming land, transport (mainly motorbikes) and orphanages were completely burned and destroyed and Ahmadiyah people driven out of the village. Further, there is a group called “Aliansi Masyarakat anti-Ahmadiyah” (People’s anti-Ahmadiyah Alliance) who are reported to have organised the violence in Praya in 2006. The religious teacher Muhammad Issi, who originates from Praya, is reported to have given lectures that called for action towards Ahmadiyah members, which

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resulted in the forced evictions of 137 people out of the village to Mataram (the capital city of NTB, in Lombok).

The ethnographic data in this study support the argument that the MUI Fatwa in 1980 has been used by anti-Ahmadiyah religious leaders to support their opinions. The religious edict concerning Ahmadiyah was issued on two occasions: June 1980 and July 2005. The first was issued under the Suharto regime when public discussion on ethnicity, race, religions and inter-group relations (called SARA) was strictly forbidden, thus preventing violent responses from radical Sunnite sects. The second time was strongly backed by Indonesian President SBY (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono). With more than 60% of the vote but whose party only secured 7% of the votes in parliamentary elections, SBY depended on support from the Islamic parties. Thus, his restrictions and efforts to end Ahmadiyah activities are argued to be in order to secure support from Sunnite Muslim voters who are the majority in Indonesia. They brand Ahmadiyah members as heretics and who damage Islam. At the regional level, over time, after sustained indoctrination by the tuan gurus, violent responses by village people were instigated by the radical sects of Sunnite Islam in NTB. The radical sects believe they must apply jihad to Ahmadiyah for their breaches of Islamic religious laws concerning heresy, now seen to be endorsed by the MUI Fatwa 1980 and the Indonesian Government laws restricting Ahmadiyah activities. The National Commission for Human Rights in Indonesia reports that there is indication of systematic efforts to propagate anti-Ahmadiyah sentiments. Additionally, the report states that religion, including the fatwa, is used as justification to excuse the persecution of Ahmadiyah members. The ethnographic data in this study supports the claim.

3. The production of violence to secure systemic power relations

This phenomenon can be seen in the third theme identified in the cases examined in this article. Specifically, production of violence to forcefully evict Ahmadiyah members from their homes, land and villages. For example, recent incidents nationally include the murder of three Ahmadiyah members in a village in Java. This event was condemned by the Government and human rights organisations. However, experts are critical of the SKB Ahmadiyah 2008 (Surat Kebutusuan Bersama, Joint Letter of Restriction) by the Indonesian national government to prevent the propagation of Ahmadiyah, which they claim incites the violence. The SKB has since been reissued in 2013. It is a joint declaration by the former Ministers including the Minister for Coordinating People’s Welfare, Menko Kesra Agung Laksono; Minster for

27 Ibid: 12.
28 Komnas HAM is the National Commission on Human Rights, Indonesia.
Defense, Purnomo Yusgiantoro, Minister for Religious Affairs Suryadharma Ali and the Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Djoko Suyanto. This letter was sent to the provincial governments, 40 of which have endorsed the policy.\textsuperscript{31} The forced evictions of Ahmadiyah appear to be a local response to the policy and the sentiment within the response by Mr Suryadharma, The Minister for Religion. After the Ahmadiyah houses and a mosque were attacked in the village of Tasikmalaya, West Java, Suryadharma said that Ahmadiyah must follow the law. He was referring to the SKB 2008\textsuperscript{32} that bans the spreading of Ahmadiyah beliefs, but not the practice of Ahmadiyah. Radical sects of Sunnite Muslims advocate for Ahmadiyah to be disbanded as an organisation. Suryadharma also argues that the best solution to end the persecution is for Ahmadiyah members to exit Ahmadiyah and enter Islam.\textsuperscript{33}

In terms of population, Indonesia is the largest Islamic democratic state in the world. It is of concern that mainstream Islamic organisations such as the MUI and the Indonesian Government policies breach their own national constitution as well as the UN Declaration of Human Rights to uphold the right of all peoples to practice the religion of their choice. The Indonesian government and anti-Ahmadiyah groups or individuals have breached the human rights of religious minorities. After the foundation of discriminatory laws beneath the former SBY Government, there are a number of barriers to successfully achieving pluralism or peace for religious minorities. It is reasonable to say that it is not Islam itself that is discriminating against Ahmadiyah members, but fundamentalist sects within Islam, who use a specific reading and practice of Islam to gain and retain power. These elites advocate for and use policy such as the Joint Ministerial Decree on Ahmadiyah SKB 2005 and 2013 by the Ministry of Religion, and the MUI Fatwa 1980 and 2005, to persecute religious minorities. For example, the religious teacher, Issi, has clarified that he uses these policies to incite the forced expulsion of Ahmadiyah members from their homes and villages. But even though this led to the burning of Ahmadiyah houses and mosques and violence that resulted in injuries and deaths, there is yet to be any legal process pertaining to the perpetrators or the religious leaders who incited them.

4. Ahmadiyah in NTB: refugees in their country.

The fourth theme mentioned resulted in the extreme difficulty for Ahmadiyah to live in a location that is majority Sunni Islam due to the lack of protection before the law. On 28 July 2005, the MUI reaffirmed their fatwa of 1980. Only a few weeks after that, the religious teacher Muhammad Issi lectured against Ahmadiyah in Sambielen and in Praya, approving the MUI fatwa, that members must leave Ahmadiyah or be forced out of the village by the villagers. He claimed that Ahmadiyah do not belong in Indonesia.

\textsuperscript{31} Crouch, M. (2012). Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Reinforced again in 2013.
The Ahmadiyah members in this study experienced repeated forced evictions in each place that they lived. For example, there are Ahmadiyah members who experienced five evictions in 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 in Sambielen, East Lombok that resulted in their expulsion to Sumbawa due to systemic persecution. Then, in the village of Empang, the Village Head and people demanded that the Ahmadiyah members denounce their religion and convert to Sunni Islam or they will be forced to leave their homes and village. Even though there is no legal ban on Ahmadiyah from practicing their religion, the situation remained too dangerous for them to return home to Sambielen in Lombok. It remains too dangerous for the Ahmadiyah members mentioned in this report to live in a house outside of the Asrama Transita. Their experience is of repeated violence and forced expulsion from their homes if they do not exit Ahmadiyah and join Islam. It is accurate to say that Ahmadiyah members are allowed to visit grandparents and family who are mainstream Muslim and not Ahmadiyah members, who still live in Selong, East Lombok. But if family members who are Ahmadiyah permanently live there, then they are forced to leave again.

On the other hand, according to Sunnite Imam Subki Sasaki from Central Lombok, it is possible to prevent violence towards Ahmadiyah if Imam refrain from hate speeches and discussions. He thinks that Islamic groups can live together in the same place, but warns that people are susceptible to indoctrination and that religious leaders’ speeches about the MUI Fatwa 1980 and anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment incites people to attack Ahmadiyah members. This view understands Ahmadiyah as an expression of Islam and reflects a pluralist approach to Indonesian Islam, one that has been eroded by fundamental groups as they gain political power to influence law at regional and national levels in Indonesia.

Indeed, according to Harsono, a human rights expert from Human Rights Watch, beneath the leadership of former President Yudhoyono (SBY) the Indonesian Government has laid the foundation and legal infrastructure of discrimination against religious minorities. The existence of restrictive laws such as the Joint Ministerial Decree on Ahmadiyah, and accompanying statements by Government Ministers and officials, along with the MUI Fatwa, are used by tuan gurus to benefit power struggles in their localised contexts in NTB. The interwoven combination of factors including the MUI Fatwa 1980 and 2005, as well as the Joint Ministerial Decree on Ahmadiyah 2008 and 2013, reinforced at regional levels, the recognition of only six official religions on the national identity card, are all used by tuan gurus in local contexts to legitimate violence causing injury and death as well as loss of livelihood, farming lands, homes, schools, orphanages all of which lead to long term displacement in

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34 The ban is on the propogation of Ahmadiyah beliefs.  
35 Transit accommodation in Mataram, Lombok, NTB Indonesia.  
36 Muslim teachers and leaders.  
transit accommodation. Moreover, Ahmadiyah have not received compensation for their loss. Ahmadiyah have been denied their human rights under the Indonesian constitution as well as under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to follow and practice the religion of their choice. As such, this study has found Ahmadiyah remain internally displaced persons, as refugees in their own country without guarantee of protection from their government: “The search for Islam in the modern state should be located in ascertaining the ethical and moral principles that uphold the dignity and freedom of all persons”.40 At an international level, the challenge for Muslim majority states is how to manage religious minorities. Indonesia has been founded as a secular state with a Sunnite Muslim majority.

Conclusion

This research examined how, in the contest of Indonesian national and provincial power struggles, the socio-legal construction of Ahmadiyah members has cast them as heretics and outside of Islam. Perhaps more than 700 Ahmadiyah members have been evicted by force from their homes and villages in NTB alone, without due process or protection under Indonesian law. The authors outlined the connection between public declarations and policy restrictions on Ahmadiyah such as the MUI Fatwa 1980 and 2005 and the Ahmadiyah Decree by the Ministry of Religion Indonesia 2008 and 2013, all of which have then been used as tools for the persecution of Ahmadiyah members. Ahmadiyah members in this study have experienced repeated forced evictions from their homes. They have relocated, for example, from Katatang, Lombok to Emban, in the neighbouring island of Sumbawa only to experience expulsion again, from their new residence, without protection before the law. Until now, Ahmadiyah members remain displaced persons as refugees but with limitations by the regional and national governments and no protection before the law. The situation remains without solution in local and national socio-legal contexts.

This research found connections between anti-Ahmadiyah lectures and speeches and the incitement of violence towards Ahmadiyah members in NTB and Indonesia more generally. In addition, the analysis of policy limitations and bans on Ahmadiyah from propagating their beliefs such as the MUI Fatwa 1980 and 2005 and the Joint Ministerial SKB, 2008 and 2013 encourage radical Muslim sects to use religion as a weapon to obtain power and justify the violent actions by those individuals and groups against religious minorities. It appears that the first steps towards the protection of the human rights such as religious freedom for all people who live in Indonesia requires policy and legislative change by the present Widodo Indonesian government, through removing the Blasphemy Laws, and a withdrawal of the Joint Ministerial Decree on Ahmadiyah as well as the withdrawal of the MUI Fatwa on Ahmadiyah. This action will at least remove state sanction of one interpretation of

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Islam used to justify the persecution of Ahmadiyah and other minority religions in NTB and Indonesia and uphold the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

This study analysed the interplay of complex relations of power in intra-group conflict that play out to actively maintain the position of Ahmadiyah as displaced in their own country. To end the intragroup conflict, this paper argues that the government must take responsibility to actively protect the religious freedoms as outlined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights given the recent constitutional court ruling to uphold the Blasphemy Laws that the court found to be consistent with the Indonesian constitution. A sophisticated and nuanced understanding of intra-group conflict through religious violence and of maintaining peace and security for all who live in Indonesia includes the context of structural frameworks within the government, within collective religious bodies such as the MUI, the increasing power gained by radical Muslim sects and their success in influencing government policy and MUI policy, and, finally, of localised power struggles within provincial governments, including tuan gurus.

Reference


