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Managing Ambiguity: Religious Intolerance and Policy in Indonesia

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Redaksi menerima tulisan ilmiah tentang isu-isu kewarganegaraan, administrasi kependudukan dan penghapusan diskriminasi ras dan etnis serta tulisan-tulisan lain tentang hukum, demokrasi dan HAM



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Managing Ambiguity: Religious Intolerance and Policy in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This paper expands the existing knowledge on how actors construct frame ambiguity in policy formulation. This study elaborates on the discursive strategies used to manage ambiguity through arguing, framing, and blame avoidance, based on an analysis of case studies of policy formulation aimed at addressing religious intolerance in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that actors utilize discursive strategies to achieve two main objectives: preserving majority values and maintaining dynamism and heterogeneity in response to evolving demands. The paper argues that ambiguity serves as a temporary mechanism to overcome impasses and differences in values and demands among actors. The findings of the study fill the gap in the limited number of studies that examine ambiguity in religious policy, especially regarding the relationship between religion and the state. Additionally, the findings provide insights for the application of analytical tools in understanding ambiguity and its role in promoting institutional change.

Keywords: policy ambiguity, religious intolerance, policy, framing.

ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini memperluas kajian tentang bagaimana para aktor membangun ambiguitas bingkai dalam formulasi kebijakan. Studi ini menguraikan strategi diskursif yang digunakan dalam mengelola ambiguitas melalui argumen, pembingkai, dan penghindaran kesalahan, berdasarkan analisis studi kasus formulasi kebijakan dalam mengatasi intoleransi beragama di Indonesia. Temuan menunjukkan para aktor memanfaatkan strategi diskursif untuk mencapai dua tujuan utama: melestarikan nilai-nilai mayoritas dan mempertahankan dinamika serta heterogenitas sebagai cara menanggapi tuntutan yang berkembang. Tulisan

ini berpendapat bahwa ambiguitas berfungsi sebagai mekanisme sementara untuk mengatasi kebuntuan dan perbedaan nilai serta tuntutan di antara para aktor. Temuan studi ini mengisi kekosongan keterbatasan berbagai studi mengkaji ambiguitas dalam kebijakan keagamaan, terutama mengenai hubungan antara agama dan negara. Selain itu, temuan ini memberikan wawasan untuk penerapan alat analisis dalam memahami ambiguitas dan perannya dalam mendorong perubahan kelembagaan.

Kata kunci: ambiguitas kebijakan, intoleransi beragama, kebijakan, pemingkaian.

INTRODUCTION

There is a prevailing view that has become a mantra that good policy formulation should clearly and specifically reflect the desired outcomes (Andrews, 1971; Drucker, 1954). These two elements are used as measures of the effectiveness and quality of policy design and will influence the success of policy implementation (Bali et al., 2019; Dye, 2013; McConnell, 2010). Therefore, policies that reflect ambiguity are often seen as problematic (Jarzabkowski, Silince, & Shaw 2010). The more a policy is ambiguous, the greater the difficulty in understanding the field situation, decision-making, driving action, creating accountability neglect, and even resistance (Denis et al. 2011; Huxham & Vangen 2000; McCabe 2009).

However, this perspective overlooks the dynamics and complex relationships among the actors involved in both formulation and implementation. This acknowledgment leads to the hypothesis that ambiguity is “a natural consequence” of the complexities of organiz-

ing when facing various possibilities resulting from the diverse ways individuals understand the situation (Väyrynen et al., 2022). It is more appropriate, more consistent, and presents a realistic picture faced by modern business organizations built from various functions with different interests, choices, and power bases (Gioia et al., 2012).

Scholars have extensively examined the functions, purposes, and areas of policy ambiguity. Research by Ferraro et al., (2015) and Gioia, Nag, & Corley (2015) suggests that ambiguity is useful in initiating change processes amidst contentious issues. Other scholars argue that ambiguity can serve as a tool to promote collective engagement among actors without needing to establish an explicit consensus (Van Wijk et al., 2013); providing space for actors to manage policy details according to their own interests, concerns, or beliefs (Leitch & Davenport 2007); or as a result of pragmatic actions by distributed actors (Ansari, Wijan, & Gray 2013).

This paper is developed as a study that continues the conversation. It evaluates policy ambiguity as a deliberate and strategic approach to dealing with complex situations and dynamics. We argue that policymakers manage ambiguity by employing two strategies: (1) reframing through constructing vagueness and dissociation; and (2) blaming. There are two main objectives of this process: preserving majority values and maintaining dynamism and heterogeneity in response to evolving demands.

Nevertheless, in contrast to previous research, this article explores religious issues, particularly religious intolerance, as a central theme characterized by ambiguity and complexity. The ambiguity and complexity stem from a range of contributing factors of religious intolerance. There are at least five causes of religious intolerance, including economic factors (Doebler, 2014; Semyonov et al., 2006), demographic factors (Ekici & Yucel 2015; Mather & Tranby 2014), socio-political factors (Crawford & Pilanski, 2014), cultural factors (Eisenstein 2006; Haas & Cunningham 2014; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, & Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Kanas, Scheepers, & Sterkens 2015; Nussbaum 2012), and the roles of state actors and their various policies (Bielefeldt 2013; Grim & Finke 2006; Pew Research Center 2017; Taylor 2005).

Meanwhile, ambiguity in formulating policies related to religion, which

instead of legitimizing the government, can also risk diminishing legitimacy and eliciting negative impacts towards the government's position (Campbell 2020; Fox & Breslawski 2023). Furthermore, framing religious issues in policies can make it highly instrumental in order to obtain what religion can produce or provide for public policy and standardized in terms of representing religious communities and religious teachings (Dinham 2009: 8–9).

Amidst the social, political, and economic changes taking place in the West, this conversation holds great relevance. The Western world is currently grappling with the coexistence of secularization and a resurgence of religious fervour (Inglehart, 2020). Matters of identity, such as religion and immigration, have given rise to religious intolerance, Islamophobia, and acts of terrorism, thereby leaving an indelible mark on the public domain. This scenario presents a snapshot of the present world, where religious complexity prevails, encompassing the simultaneous presence of diverse and sometimes contradictory religious trends at different societal levels (Furseth 2021: 6).

The rise of anti-immigrant and anti-Islam rhetoric in Europe, for instance, has resulted in several politicians being prosecuted under national laws prohibiting hate speech or incitement based on race, ethnicity, or religion. These indi-

viduals have been taken to the European Court of Human Rights for violating Article 10 (2) of the ECHR. This particular case has presented a dilemma. While the negative impacts of anti-immigrant and anti-Islam rhetoric on immigrants are evident, the potential criminalization of such practices raises concerns about the infringement of the right to freedom of expression and the possibility of being exploited to intimidate and constrain opposition (Howard 2018: 4).

In non-Western countries, especially in countries with a majority Muslim population, the phenomenon of religious issues in the public sphere is becoming increasingly prominent. This situation is accompanied by the growing use of power and restrictions through regulations on religious groups. According to a report by the Pew Research Center (2021), in 2018, countries in Asia and the Pacific experienced the most significant increase compared to countries in other regions. Out of a total of 50 countries, 31 countries (62%) in Asia and the Pacific used violence against specific religious groups. One case highlighted from Indonesia is that of a Buddhist woman who was sentenced for blasphemy for complaining about the volume of the call to prayer.

To illustrate how ambiguity occurs in the formulation of religious policies, this paper takes Indonesia, a democratic country with a majority Muslim popu-

lation, as a case study. The increasing religious intolerance is responded to by the post-reformation government through policies to address intolerance. Unlike his predecessor, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), the Joko Widodo administration - commonly referred to as Jokowi—explicitly acknowledges that the state’s failure to manage diversity is the cause of the rampant intolerance in Indonesia (PP No 2 Tahun 2015 tentang RPJMN 2015-2019, 2014; Seknas Jokowi, 2014). This is highlighted in his vision as a presidential candidate in the 2014 elections, known as *Nawacita*, which means “nine aspirations” in Sanskrit. However, in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2015-2019, those issues become somewhat unclear.

Nawacita posits that intolerance is caused from the state’s inability to effectively manage differences and politics of enforcing uniformity. Nevertheless, this problem is overlooked by the lack of specificity in identifying the root cause, as it is often described in broad terms such as primordialism and fundamentalism without delving into further detail.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE AND AMBIGUITY: A FRAMEWORK

One of the longest-standing puzzles in this era of secularism is religion (Abdelgadir & Fouka 2020; Inglehart 2020;

Norris & Inglehart 2011). The question often asked is why religion continues to persist amidst the growing tide of secularism. Contemporary developments, especially in the West, reveal a number of paradoxes. The process of secularization, believed to reduce the role of religion in the public sphere, actually shows the opposite phenomenon. The decline in the number of Christian followers; the increase in the number of non-Christian religious adherents; and the rise of populism demonstrate the durability of religion in a society experiencing secularization (Furseth, 2021).

Religious intolerance that is spreading in many countries today is the continuation of the religious puzzle. If secularism reduces the role of religion in the public sphere, why has religious intolerance become increasingly evident in the public sphere in recent decades over the world? The events of 9/11, bombings in Madrid and London, terrorist attacks in France and Belgium, as well as various other acts of terrorism linked to Islam, have led many European countries to perceive Muslims as a threat to their secular, tolerant, and liberal societies (Howard 2018: 4).

Studies on intolerance mostly refer to the concept of political intolerance. The term is defined as the attitudes of individuals or groups who do not accept the rights of different and opposed groups (Gibson 2013; Mondak &

Sanders 2005). The aspect of opposition is an important element to test whether one is tolerant. Without reason to oppose, there is no chance for someone to be tolerant or intolerant (Sullivan & Marcus 1988; Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus 1979).

Others have built on the concept of intolerance as a lack of willingness to expand the citizenship rights of opposing groups (Harell 2010; Mather & Tranby 2014). This concept illustrates that tolerance and intolerance exist on a spectrum from one point to another. As a result, it is common for an individual to exhibit tolerance towards those of different religions, but not towards groups perceived as heretical, communist, or LGBT.

The complexity of understanding religious intolerance arises from comprehending its underlying causes. Numerous scholars have extensively studied this phenomenon, and their studies can be categorized into four approaches: economic (Doebler 2014; Semyonov, Rajman, & Gorodzeisky 2006), demographic (Ekici & Yucel 2015; Mather & Tranby 2014), socio-political (Crawford & Pilanski 2014), and cultural (Eisenstein 2006; Haas dan Cunningham 2014; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, & Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Kanas, Scheepers, dan Sterkens 2015; Nussbaum 2012).

The studies referred do not sufficiently consider the influence of state

and legal factors on intolerance, in contrast to research that takes a human rights perspective. Consequently, numerous studies have explored the impact of state actors and their policies on fostering intolerance within communities (Bielefeldt 2013; Grim & Finkle 2006; Pew Research Center 2017; Taylor 2005). Likewise, research utilizing a critical policy analysis approach, especially in the fields of education and politics, highlights how government policies can be used as tools to discriminate against and marginalize minority groups (Chase et al., 2014; Gerhart et al., 2003; McGhee, 2005; Phyllis Jones, 2000;).

Policy makers in various countries have been frequently confronted with the intricate issue of religious intolerance, which necessitates them to grapple with ambiguity when formulating policies. As defined by Goffman (Goffman 1974: 302), ambiguity refers to the uncertainty surrounding the definition of a situation. Ambiguity is associated with vagueness in meaning and the presence of multiple potential interpretations (Gioia, Nag, & Corley 2012). It occurs when there is a departure from the established framework during a lockdown process, leaving actors uncertain about the appropriate course of action. The use of incorrect connectors like language and terminology can contribute to ambiguity by aligning with different master

frameworks, enabling field actors to interpret the framework in a manner that is most familiar to them (Goffman, 1974).

Ambiguity occurs in multiple dimensions. Gray (2015: 68) highlights that ambiguity can arise in five distinct levels, specifically policy expectations, policy formulation, policy implementation, policy consequences, and policy assessment. In a similar vein, Ravishankar (2013) explores three domains that he labels as goal ambiguity, means ambiguity, and authority ambiguity. Goal ambiguity refers to the presence of vague and unclear objectives; authority ambiguity implies to the ambiguity created by the presence of multiple authority and power centres; and means ambiguity refers to unclear relationships between goals and the means to achieve them (Ravishankar 2013: 317).

Then, how does policy ambiguity occur? This study introduces a framework which highlights the occurrence of ambiguity in policies. It proposes that policy ambiguity emerges as a result of reframing. Reframing refers to the shifting of frame categories during negotiations and the role ambiguity plays in facilitating these shifts, ultimately leading to changes in the interpretation of conflicts. This process of reframing occurs when one party challenges the perspective of another party on a particular issue or when it is demonstrated that the

existing framework is ineffective (Putnam & Holmer 1992: 136).

Reframing is conducted through creating of vagueness which implies a distribution around a norm without a clear delineation (Reidenberg et al. 2016: 165) and when it is not clear whether a term correctly applies to some cases (Reidenberg et al. 2016: 6). It occurs when a statement allows for borderline cases or relative interpretations (Massey et al., 2014). For instance, when discussing human tallness, the measurement varies across different populations, like between Asians and Americans. Referring to “tallness” without specifying a specific unit, such as centimetres, serves as an example of vagueness.

In addition to ambiguity, reframing can involve the technique of *dissociation*, which involves denying the central issue and its attribution. This process takes place within the context of diagnostic framing (Feront & Bertels 2019). For instance, when it comes to investing in South Africa, most asset managers fail to acknowledge any major issues and detach themselves from any accountability. They refuse to consider making any changes in their approach, arguing that such modifications would not align with the prevailing framework, and they also challenge the importance of integrating economic, social, and governance (ESG) factors (Feront & Bertels 2019).

Blaming is another strategy in reframing. The term is developed from the concept of the blame game. The blame game is a strategy and way of finding the party that is blamed or the party that is the target of attributions from adverse experiences or cases (Hood 2011; Resodihardjo 2020; Sulitzeanu-Kenan & Hood 2005). The way the blame policy works can be done by redefining the problem to reduce controversy, looking for possibilities to let others make decisions, or distributing responsibility for decisions to as many people as possible (Hood, 2011). Therefore, to see whether the policy is blaming can be seen in two processes: perception and framing.

Actors in this game will first perceive whether a particular event is considered a crisis, a way of looking at the level of damage that will determine who is to blame and subsequently framing the problem by using rhetoric to divert or reduce the rate of error they face (Resodihardjo, 2020). Some actors of the blame game utilize policy failures by showing and exaggerating negative aspects, assuming it is caused by certain groups, and if possible, framing the whole problem in moralistic and ideological terms (Hinterleitner, 2018).

METHODS AND APPROACHES

This is a qualitative study in nature, employing two framing devices developed by Benford and Snow (2000): (1)

diagnostic framing; (2) prognosis framing. Prognosis framing pertains to the aspects of problem identification and attributions. During this phase, actors will identify what they perceive as the primary issues. Their actions to modify or address these problems are contingent upon the identification of causality, blame, and/or culpable agents. The question of whom to blame is referred to as adversarial framing, which determines the responsible party or parties for the central problem. It is associated with attributional framing, which seeks to define the boundaries between 'good' and 'evil' and the protagonists and antagonists of the movement (Benford & Snow 2000, 616). Without an adversarial element, the potential targets of collective action would likely remain as abstract as the concept of poverty (Gamson, 1995, p. 90).

We utilize various textual ambiguity tools developed by scholars such as Massey et al. (2014) on different types of ambiguity taxonomy including *lexical*, *syntactic*, *semantic*, *vagueness*, *incompleteness*, and *referential ambiguity*; as well as Feront & Bartels' work (2019) on ambiguity within framing such as *disassociating*, *normalizing*, and *moderating*.

To illustrate the complexity and dynamics of this process, we have selected three areas of ambiguity (Jarzabkowski et al., 2010; Ravishankar, 2013): (1) goal ambiguity, which refers to the presence

of vague and unclear objectives; (2) authority ambiguity, which arises from the existence of multiple authority and power centres; and (3) means ambiguity, which pertains to the unclear relationships between goals and the means to achieve them.

This study is composed of two types of data: primary and secondary. The primary data consists of the document of *Nawacita*, RPJMN 2015-2019 Book 1, and RPJMN 2015-2019 Book 2. The secondary data includes policy-related documents such as Law 25 of 2004 regarding National Development Planning, Law No. 17 of 2007 regarding the National Long-Term Development Plan for 2005-2025, and Regulation of the Minister of National Development Planning/Head of the National Development Planning Agency Number 1 of 2014 regarding Guidelines for the Preparation of the 2015-2019 National Mid-Term Development Plan. Furthermore, secondary data also encompasses media coverage and relevant research and survey findings.

The RPJMN 2015-2019 contains nine National Development Agendas, namely (1) Bringing Back the State to Protect the Entire Nation and Provide Security to All Citizens; (2) Building Clean, Effective, Democratic, and Trustworthy Governance; (3) Developing Indonesia from the Periphery by Strengthening Regions and Villages within the Framework of

National Unity; (4) Strengthening the State's Presence in Reforming the System and Enforcing a Corruption-Free, Dignified, and Trustworthy Legal System; (5) Improving the Quality of Life for Humans and Indonesian Society; (6) Increasing the Productivity of the People and Competitiveness in the International Market; (7) Achieving Economic Independence by Mobilizing Strategic Domestic Economic Sectors; (8) Leading a National Character Revolution; (9) Upholding Diversity and Strengthening Social Restoration in Indonesia. This study uses the Development Agendas 9 as a case study in this paper.

FINDINGS

Religious Intolerance in Indonesia

Indonesia is acknowledged as a religious society. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (2020), among 34 countries worldwide, Indonesia was identified as the "most religious country" based on the percentage of individuals who expressed the utmost importance of religion in their lives. An astounding 98% of Indonesian respondents resonated with this sentiment, closely followed by Nigeria at 93%, and Kenya and the Philippines, both at 92%.

The government's statistical data for 2022 (Kemenag RI, 2022) reveals that 99.96% of the Indonesian population embraces six religions in Indonesia:

Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The remaining percentage of the population follows other religions or belief, including those categorized as practitioners of indigenous belief (*penghayat kepercayaan*). Islam stands as the majority religion, with 87% of the Indonesian population, approximately 236 million people, identifying as Muslims. The majority of Muslims in Indonesia adhere to Sunni, with the two largest Islamic organizations being Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. In addition to Sunni Islam, there are also minority sects within the Muslim community, such as Shia which has around five million members and Ahmadiyya with around 200,000 to 500,000 members (US Embassy Indonesia, 2022).

Undoubtedly, the formation of religiosity is a process that takes time. It is shaped by historical, cultural, and political process (Menchik, 2014; Ropi, 2017). The strong relationship between religion and the state has been established since the inception of Indonesia. However, the Indonesian state is not based on theocracy, nor does it adopt secularism. The Indonesian Constitution, UUD 1945, establishes "Divinity" (*Ketuhanan*) as a fundamental aspect of the state. Article 29, paragraph (1) states: *The state is based on the belief in the One and Only God*. It can be understood that the state must be governed

by the principles of divinity. Article 29, paragraph (2) states: The state guarantees the freedom of every individual to practice their own religion and worship according to their beliefs.

The strong relationship between religion and the state is also evident in Article 9, paragraph (1), which states, "...the President and Vice President shall take an oath according to their religion, or make a promise..." and Article 31, paragraph (3), which states, "...to enhance faith, piety, and noble character...". The Indonesian government also has a Ministry of Religious Affairs that specifically handles religious matters such as education, pilgrimage, endowments (*wakaf*), marriage, and the development of religious organizations.

Although the relationship between religion and the state exhibits varying dynamics among regimes, yet presents a similar picture: the state values the importance of supporting and being cautious with religious sentiments. The Old Order (*Orde Lama*) led by Soekarno demonstrated a relationship that sought to maintain a distance from all religions, even being perceived as less concerned with religion due to its proximity to communist ideology (Ricklefs, 2012). The subsequent government, the New Order (*Orde Baru*), aimed to be more accommodating towards religion as long as it did not disrupt or endanger the state's position. During this period,

religion was often utilized to uphold the state's power (McCoy, 2013).

The fall of the New Order, known as the reform era, revealed a somewhat different phenomenon. After being restricted for 32 years by the New Order, the reform era marked the strengthening of religious expression in public spaces. This was characterized by the growing trend of religious-themed fashion, banking, and religious education (Fealy & White, 2008; Ricklefs, 2012). This religionization process is not exclusive to the society, but it also extends to the government. In the post-reformation era, both the national and local governments have enacted religious regulations.

Between 1998 and 2006, a total of 160 religious regulations were recorded across 26 provinces in Indonesia (Crouch M., 2009). The National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) identified 421 discriminatory policies against women in Indonesia from 2010 to 2016. Out of these, 33 national and local regulations directly targeted women's bodies (Tempo.co, 2016). Interestingly, these policies were not only driven by religious parties but also by nationalist parties such as Golkar and Demokrat (Tanuwidjaja 2010: 31).

Amidst the ongoing trend of increasing religiosity in Indonesia, the phenomenon that is considered to threaten diversity, and even social order, has

been also emerging. Cases of intolerance such as the destruction of places of worship, intimidation, and physical attacks on minority groups such as Shia and Ahmadiyya has been on the rise. For example, between 1998 and 2005, there were 520 cases of church closures and destruction (Silaen 2012: 23). Between 2009 and 2018, a total of 163 violations in the form of church closures, property vandalism, and other incidents occurred, with church buildings often being the targets (Wahid Foundation 2020: 133). These cases were also accompanied by a rise in terrorism cases.

Various studies have been conducted to identify the factors causing symptoms of intolerance. One of them is the religious ideology chosen by the state, which is based on the interpretation of the One and Only God in *Pancasila*. Some scholars refer to this phenomenon with different terms such as “godly nationalism” (Menchik, 2014), “religious nationalism” (Bourchier, 2019), and “Corporatism” (McCoy, 2013). The selection of ideology and approach is then implemented through diverse policies and bureaucratization processes.

The aforementioned ideology serves as the foundation for various discriminatory regulations, such as blasphemy laws and restrictions on places of worship for minority groups, including indigenous religions, implemented by the

Indonesian government (Crouch, 2012; Marshall, 2018; Ropi, 2017). Consequently, governmental policies and laws frequently fail to provide assistance to the victims, but rather favour the perpetrators of violence (Suryana, 2019). A crucial instance is the blasphemy law No. 1/PNPS/1965 on the Prevention of Blasphemy and Abuse of Religions. By this law, in 1998-2008, more than 200 people were reported and convicted of blasphemy (Crouch, 2012; Wahid Foundation, 2020). Adhering to this law, some members of society engage in intimidation and violence against those accused of desecrating religion.

The occurrence of intolerance cases has been deemed a blemish on Indonesia, a country often referred to as a democratic nation and the home to the world’s largest Muslim population. Within the Islamic world and among developing nations, Indonesia is frequently regarded as a model of a functioning democracy (Karim, 2023). Indonesia also tries to play a significant role in presenting an alternative image of Islam, countering the rise of extremism and terrorism (Anwar, 2018). Having the growing religious intolerance, lead some parties to doubt Indonesia’s image of tolerance (Arman, 2022; Hilmy, 2013; Rogers, 2017).

Despite acknowledging the presence and detrimental effects of intolerance cases, the post-reformation government

frequently avoids openly admitting their own involvement as one of the origins of the problem. Instead, they tend to attribute it to external factors, shifting the blame onto religious interpretations within society. Additionally, they recognize the urgency of addressing intolerance, as it not only impacts tolerance within the community but also influences Indonesia's international image.

Religious Intolerance and Policy Indonesia

The post-reformation government has made efforts to address various cases of intolerance. SBY, the first president to be democratically elected in the Reform era, has taken various steps to tackle the growing cases of intolerance through different policies. However, it has been argued that these cases have occurred due to the neglect of the state's role, particularly by the Central Government. The government led by SBY was criticized for lacking a strong determination to overcome these problems. Furthermore, cases of intolerance have also arisen as a result of discriminatory regulations at both the central and regional levels of the state (Bush, 2015; Marshall, 2018).

Jokowi took advantage of the shortcomings. During the 2014 election, Jokowi and Jusuf Kalla as president and vice president candidates made the issue of

intolerance one of their key priorities to address. They incorporated this agenda into their presidential and vice-presidential vision and mission documents for the 2014 election, known as *Nawa-cita*, which is derived from the Sanskrit language and translates to "nine aspirations." Jokowi is a member of Indonesia's largest political party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), while Jusuf Kalla, a Golkar politician, has previously served as Vice President under SBY's leadership.

In the document, Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla formulated their vision and mission to build "a nation with sovereignty, independence, and personality based on cooperation." This vision was subsequently transformed into seven missions: achieving national security to uphold regional sovereignty, ensuring economic independence by safeguarding maritime resources and reflecting Indonesia's identity as an archipelago, and fostering a developed, balanced, and democratic society founded on the principles of the rule of law (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2014; Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2014b).

The choice to prioritize the prevention of intolerance as the primary agenda was also influenced by the endorsement from minority groups who, during the SBY era, experienced victimization (Mietzner, 2014). Jokowi's background, having previously worked alongside

two Christian deputy governors (Hadi Rudyatmo in Solo and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama in Jakarta), garnered support from non-Islamic factions because he was considered more accommodative to their interests (Detik.com, 2014a). However, due to this choice, he frequently became a target of hate speech and malicious campaigns. He was unjustly accused of advocating for infidels (*ka-fir*), being associated with the PKI movement, and being a descendant of a Christian family (Qusyairi, 2018; Tempo.co, 2014; Wahid Institute, 2014).

The decision has proven to be highly promising, as it signifies a departure from the approach taken by SBY, who was unable to effectively address violations against freedom of religion and belief. Additionally, this stance sets them apart from their rival, Prabowo Subianto, who has garnered support from conservative and militant Islamic groups. Prabowo's campaign received endorsement from three conservative Islamic parties (Prosperous Justice Party, the United Development Party, and the Crescent Star Party), as well as the militant Islamic Defenders' Front (Mietzner, 2014).

The presidential election held on July 9, 2014, concluded with Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla emerging as the winners after a closely fought one-round contest. This pair managed to secure 53.15% of the votes, while Prabowo

and his partner, Hatta Rajasa received 46.85% (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2014a). The commitments outlined in *Nawacita* were integrated into a planning document called the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2015-2019 (RPJMN).

In the design of Indonesia's government development plan, the promises made by the President and Vice President-elect are translated into a development plan that serves as the basis for the formulation of government programs and budgets at both the central and regional levels. The RPJMN 2015-2019, which is a component of the National Development Planning System in Indonesia as stipulated in Law Number 25 of 2004, encompasses three books. *Book I* encompasses National Priorities, Cross Programs, and National Priority programs/activities. *Book II* encompasses Field Priorities, Cross Programs, and Field Priority programs/activities. Lastly, *Book III* outlines plans for island development and the coordination between central-regional and inter-regional development (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2014).

The RPJMN will then be elaborated into the Government Work Plan (RKP) which is a national annual development plan. RKP contains national development priorities, a draft macroeconomic framework that includes an overall picture of the economy including fiscal

policy directions, and ministry/agency programs, across ministries/agencies territory in the form of an indicative regulatory and funding framework.

Diagnostic and Prognosis Framing on Religious Intolerance

Diagnostic Framing

According to *Nawacita*, intolerance is characterized by the refusal to coexist peacefully in a diverse community, leading to the emergence of hatred, hostility, discrimination, and violent behaviours directed towards groups perceived as “different” (Seknas Jokowi, 2014, p. 2). The definition is comprehensive, encompassing a spectrum of behaviours that range from non-physical actions to acts of physical violence.

Nawacita diagnoses that the increasing intolerance observed is indicative of the state’s inability to effectively handle diversity. This failure can be attributed to two key factors. Firstly, the state’s inability to effectively manage the consequences arising from the convergence of two cultural streams - one driven by market forces and the other reinforcing primordial identities. Secondly, the improper allocation and distribution of national resources have exacerbated social inequality. This failure is a direct result of the state’s adoption of a politics of uniformity, which in turn gives rise to three distinct problems: the erosion of Indonesia’s character; the waning of

solidarity and cooperation, and the marginalization of local culture (Seknas Jokowi, 2014, p. 2).

Development Agenda 9 aims to address the issue of reinforcing primordialism and fundamentalism values, which are perceived as threats to the collective survival of Indonesia’s pluralistic society. Plurality (*kebhinekaan*) in Indonesia is defined by the harmonious interaction among various groups that exhibit mutual respect and tolerance towards one another. The threat to plurality of Indonesia arises when there is a rise in feelings of distrust, lack of respect, and intolerance. This risk is becoming evident through the increasing prevalence of religious conservatism, particularly among the youth and society, along with the escalation of violence rooted in religious beliefs (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas 2014a: 6.190).

The assessment made by Development Agenda 9 highlights the challenge posed by the religious factor in the pursuit of diversity and social cohesion. The rigid nature of religious interpretations tends to give rise to fundamentalist groups that overlook non-religious issues such as social, political, and economic challenges. Unfortunately, the Development Agenda 9 fails to incorporate crucial concepts such as primordialism, fundamentalism, and conservatism.

Prognostic framing

To tackle the aforementioned challenge, Development Agenda 9 undertakes two fundamental endeavours, namely (1) promoting diversity; and (2) strengthening social restoration. The promotion of diversity involves fostering interactions among multiple groups that demonstrate mutual respect and tolerance towards each other (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2014, pp. 6–190). Meanwhile, social restoration refers to the effort of establishing *Pancasila* as the cornerstone of the state philosophy, free from any negative connotations, and providing adequate meaningful space to effectively respond to the evolving demands of the contemporary era (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2014, pp. 6–190).

In order to effectively execute its agenda, Development Agenda 9 has formulated 11 Policy Directions and Strategies (*Arah dan Strategi Kebijakan*) that encompass a wide array of dimensions, including education, culture, sports, diplomacy, and law (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas 2014a: 6.191-6.195). With regards to education, Development Agenda 9 aims to bolster “diversity education” and facilitate platforms for dialogue among citizens. At the societal level, the agenda focuses on rebuilding social capital to strengthen the values and national identity of individuals, which involves amplifying the role of citizen social institutions.

The formulation of special incentives to introduce and promote the local culture and establish cultural institutions as the bedrock for the development of Indonesian people’s culture and character is a strategic approach that specifically targets culture and cultural institutions. Concurrently, Development Agenda 9 also formulates strategies to enhance the culture of social solidarity in the implementation of social protection measures for the citizens. These endeavours are pursued alongside other international strategies through diplomacy and cultural exchanges.

In the realm of religious matters, the approach to be adopted entails enhancing comprehension, admiration, observance, and advancement of religious principles. The objective is to ensure that religion assumes the role of a moral and ethical bedrock in the growth of individuals, thereby fostering religious harmony among the populace. These initiatives are being implemented alongside other strategies aimed at engaging the youth and promoting sports. Development Agenda 9 seeks to augment the involvement of young people in citizen development and cultivate a culture of sports and civic accomplishments. Additionally, law enforcement serves as another strategy, primarily by bolstering adherence to the law and fostering respect for law enforcement agencies among citizens.

Reframing and Blaming in Religious Intolerance Policy

Reframing: create vague and dissociate

In diagnostic framing, Development Agenda 9 employs vagueness and dissociation. The first method is achieved by making problem formulations more ambiguous and general. From the clarity of statements in *Nawacita*, Development Agenda 9 renders several issues vague and general by mentioning big concepts such as *primordialism* and *fundamentalism*.

Both of these concepts are not defined in the document. Without providing a detailed context, Development Agenda 9 neglects “non-religious aspects” such as politics - and, obviously, its connection to the role of the state - which are equally significant. Development Agenda 9, for instance, fails to emphasize the issue of improper allocation and distribution of national resources, which has further exacerbated social inequality and acted as a catalyst for the rise of fundamentalism.

The concept of fundamentalism, in academic discourse, is commonly employed to elucidate religious phenomena. It is described as a rigid and exclusive attitude in understanding religious holy texts such as the Koran or the Bible which usually oppose some modern values and life (Marranci, 2009). Some elements that are common to fundamentalism such as acceptance of inerrant

scriptural; rejection of Enlightenment, secularism, modernity, and modernism, difference; formation of and support for conservative ideologies, patriarchists, and enclaves (Marranci, 2009; McDonough, 2013).

While religion serves as the foundation for fundamentalism, it is important to note that external factors beyond religion can also play a significant role. This implies that non-religious elements like political and economic influences are intertwined with religious aspects (Orav 2015; Weinberg & Pedahzur 2004).

Just like fundamentalism, the strategy of creating ambiguity by making something more obscure has limited the diagnosis of the emergence of primordialism only to cultural and ideational issues. Primordialism refers to sentiments or feelings that contain beliefs and discourses about the perceived essential continuity of feeling like people who have ancestors of the same descent and live symbolically in a certain region or place -which may or may not be their current place of residence (Coakley, 2018).

The Development Agenda 9 views primordialism as a negative issue that affects the harmonious life of Indonesia (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2014, p. 6.192). This perspective is more inclined towards theories that perceive primordialism as a problem rather than a factor that strengthens nationalism. According

to supporters, existing ethnic bonds and cultural emotions play a crucial role in fostering nationalism and the development of the nation-state concept. Conversely, Gellner argues that primordialism is incompatible with modernism (Coakley, 2018).

The process of obfuscating the main problem to be solved, as shown in the table 1, ultimately results in a shift in framing away from the core problem

and attribution of the problem to anyone - a technique referred to as dissociation. For example, delving deeper into who and what factors are causing the growth of fundamentalism and primordialism. Other issues that take the spotlight, such as conservatism and religious-based violence, are also given less attention. Another observation is that Development Agenda 9 does not specify the actors responsible.

Table 1. Ambiguity in Development Agenda 9. Developed by the author.

FRAMING	INDONESIAN POLICY	AMBIGUITY
<i>Diagnostic framing</i>	<p><i>Identification of the problematic issue</i></p> <p>Indonesian does not live in harmony, peace, morals, and culture. It is determined by primordialism and fundamentalism, which is marked by increasing conservatism and religious-based violence</p>	<p>Reframing the source of the problem by:</p> <p>(1) creating vagueness through formulating the source of the problem with general concepts and clear definitions: primordialism and fundamentalism.</p> <p>(2) creating dissociation involves the act of denying the primary issue and its causes. This framing fails to address one of the main sources of the problem, which is the state's inability to effectively manage differences and the political implications of enforcing uniformity, as outlined in the <i>Nawacita</i> and reiterated in the RPJMN 2015-2019. Furthermore, this framing does not specify who should be held accountable.</p>

FRAMING	INDONESIAN POLICY	AMBIGUITY
	<p><i>Identification of culpable agents</i> The agents mentioned in the context primarily emerge from the community. Among the 22 target groups, merely two are associated with state institutions: the central government and local governments. Conversely, the remaining agents are drawn from diverse community sectors, encompassing religious counsellors, religious figures, religious social institutions, customary institutions, the general public, and cultural community.</p>	<p>Reframing the source of problems conducted through blaming techniques. Paradoxically, meanwhile <i>Nawacita</i> highlighted issues of state failure and the politics of uniformity, Development Agenda 9 views the state not as a target that needs to be fixed, but as a benevolent actor that improves the situation.</p>
<i>Prognostic framing</i>	<p>Reinforce diversity and strengthen Indonesia's social restoration</p>	<p>Similar to the findings in diagnostic framing, ambiguity arises at the goal level through the utilization of the broad concepts of <i>diversity</i> and <i>social restoration</i>. Both are not defined and elaborated.</p>

However, in contrast to the statement mentioned earlier, *Nawacita's* formulation posits that intolerance arises from the state's failure to effectively manage differences and the political consequences of uniformity. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that intolerance is predominantly influenced by societal factors. Moreover, the explanation of primordialism and fundamentalism does not address the issue of discrimination perpetrated by state actors and the various regulations they enforce.

In the Indonesian context, the strengthening of primordialism cannot be avoided due to the change of state-society relation: the decentraliza-

tion process in the post-New Order era. Through Law Number 22 1999 on Regional Autonomy, regions have broader power and independence than before. Besides creating positive impacts at the local level, however, decentralization also presents problems such as clientelism and state incapacity, ecological issues, corruption, and illegal logging (Barter, 1969).

Blaming the Society

The approach taken in Development Agenda 9 towards assigning blame involves attributing the problem to societal actors, thereby making them the focal point of attention. This approach differs

from the framework outlined in *Nawacita* and the RPJMN 2015-2019, which emphasizes the necessity of addressing state failure and the politics of uniformity as the primary challenges that need to be overcome. It is worth noting that intolerance is also considered a part of these challenges.

The document's contents highlight a deliberate effort to engage with 22 target groups, showcasing a comprehensive approach to stakeholder involvement (see annex). Among these groups, only two are associated with state institutions, namely the central government and local governments. The remaining targets represent various community entities such as religious counsellors, religious figures, religious social institutions, customary institutions, the general public, and cultural community. Upon further analysis, it becomes evident that these two state-related targets do not directly address the issue of reducing discriminatory behaviour by state officials or eliminating discriminatory policies.

These two targets are stated in Direction and Policy 8 which aim to enhance religious harmony (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas 2014a: 6.194). In order to achieve this objective, a set of four activities have been identified. These activities include: (1) facilitating inter-religious dialogues to foster a comprehensive understanding of different religions

from a multicultural standpoint; (2) establishing and empowering FKUBs (Forum for Religious Harmony) at both provincial and district/city levels; (3) fostering increased collaboration and partnerships among the government, local authorities, religious leaders, socio-religious institutions, and the community to prevent and resolve conflicts; and (4) reinforcing regulations pertaining to the promotion and maintenance of religious harmony.

The final two endeavours aim to address the central government, local government (state), and society at large. As exemplified in these activities, the nation's objectives are interconnected with various initiatives that foster religious harmony, including collaboration and alliance among governments, local authorities, religious figures, socio-religious institutions, and communities, all within the framework of conflict prevention and resolution (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas 2014a: 6.194). The four endeavour indeed focuses on policy matters, albeit not in relation to the eradication of discriminatory religious policies. Instead, it aims to enhance regulations pertaining to religious harmony.

This articulation deviates from *Nawacita's* diagnostic assessment, which posits that intolerance is a result of the state's adoption of a politics of uniformity. The implementation of various discriminatory policies at local

and national levels reflects the state's engagement in politics of uniformity. Instead of advocating for the elimination or revision of these policies, Development Agenda 9 takes a different route by focusing on strengthening religious harmony.

In fact, the existence of discriminatory policies at both the central and regional levels which has been substantiated by numerous studies and reports emphasized their contribution to instances of intolerance (Marshall, 2018; Suaedy, 2019). It is important to acknowledge that some of the individuals perpetrating acts of intolerance are affiliated with the state. Therefore, it is imperative to adopt a strategic approach that combines both sanctions and rewards for civil servants, as well as the central and local governments, who have successfully ensured the promotion and preservation of non-discriminatory values and the provision of unbiased public services. This comprehensive strategy holds the potential to effectively reduce various forms of discrimination among officials and state civil servants.

Policymakers may argue that initiatives targeting state and regulatory entities are integrated into various Development Agendas as outlined in the 2015-2019 RPJMN, particularly Development Agenda 4 aimed at strengthening the government's presence in

reforming the system and enforcing corruption-free, dignified, and trustworthy legal frameworks. This agenda includes a range of approaches, one of which focuses on educating law enforcement officials on human rights issues and fostering alignment in human rights legislation (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas 2014a: 6.51-6.53).

Nevertheless, that argument does not imply that policy makers fail to recognize the interconnectedness of these issues. The formulations that neglect the involvement of state actors and regulations in addressing the enhancement of tolerance may also signify the policymakers' incapacity to comprehend the issue accurately. In reality, within Development Agenda 9, these actors have been acknowledged, albeit not as direct objectives, but rather as benevolent agents capable of effecting change in the prevailing circumstances.

This approach is understandable considering the process of formulating the RPJMN involves many actors, ranging from the bureaucracy at the national and local levels, civil society organizations, to the business world. Bureaucracies generally prefer to maintain the status quo, while the spirit of *Nawacita* is to build change as a strategy to differentiate from the previous government. Here occurs a clash of perspectives, perhaps even deeper than that, namely ideology.

The formulation of *Nawacita* involved a collaborative effort from various stakeholders who shared similar perspectives, garnered public support, and sought to differentiate themselves from their competitors. The document was crafted by Jokowi's supporters known as the Team Eleven (*Tim Sebelas*) after extensive consultations with different groups, including academic institutions and civil society organizations (CNN Indonesia, 2015; Detik.com, 2015). These organizations include Projo, National Secretariat for Jokowi, Almisbat, New Jakarta Mobilizing Volunteers (RPJB), the Volunteer Information Center (PIR), the New Indonesia National Network (JNIB), and Jokowi Advanced Social Media Volunteers (Jasmev) (Detik.com, 2014b).

It is different from when drafting the RPJMN 2015-2019. In this phase, coordination and harmonization among various stakeholders, including within the bureaucracy and with local governments, are key. Some ministries do not consistently adhere to the principles of RPJMN drafting. For instance, there are ministries/institutions that have revised their Strategic Plans twice.

In addition to coordination, the dynamics of local politics poses another challenge in implementing the intolerance prevention program. Regional heads who are not Jokowi's supporters in the 2014 presidential election have

a greater chance of being at odds with central government policy. The intolerance prevention programs in their area may be considered tendentious because it only targets the regions which are not the base of President Jokowi's victory.

The challenges in modifying and revising policies are evident in the RPJMN 2015-2019 document, particularly in relation to the process referred to as "the regulatory framework". In this context, the document outlines the principles and objectives of policy formation and regulation formulation. The RPJMN emphasizes that the regulations within this framework should be guided by the principles of regulatory reform, aiming to achieve regulations that are of high quality, easy to understand, and well-organized (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas 2014a: 7.6-7.7).

The institutional framework contains the principles and guidelines that must be implemented to achieve effective, efficient, accountable, and synergic government institutions among government organizations or institutions. They are the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), President, the House of Representatives (DPR), the Regional representative's Council (DPD), Constitutional Court (MK), Supreme Court (MA), and Judicial Commission (KY); State ministries and non-ministerial government institutions; Non-Structural Institutions such as the KPK, the Indonesian Ombudsman,

the Human Right National Commission (Komnas HAM), the State Civil Apparatus Commission (Komisi ASN); and Regional Government (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2014, p. 7.10).

Conclusion

The complexity and diversity of actors, issues, and interests in policy formulation demonstrate the presence of ambiguity. Therefore, ambiguity often emerges more as something unavoidable and provides a number of purposes including offering various possibilities in addressing various problems that have been formulated in a policy. This perspective indeed differs from the common view that assesses good policies as those capable of formulating clear goals and strategies.

As observed in the religious dynamics of Western societies and Muslim countries, religious matters often exhibit ambiguity and controversy. The formulation of policies aimed at preventing religious intolerance by the Indonesian government highlights the complexity and ambiguity surrounding this issue. This situation has prompted policymakers to intentionally introduce ambiguity in both the objectives and means employed. The Indonesian case serves as an example where ambiguity is deliberately chosen, at least for two purposes: preserving majority values and maintaining dynamism and hete-

rogeneity in response to evolving demands.

The first objective is pursued to maintain a common understanding of the concept of Indonesia as a state that upholds “Divinity” (*Ketuhanan*) as stated in Pancasila, as it is a strategic matter in state governance. The second objective is demonstrated through efforts to seek mutual agreement among the actors involved, including the national and local bureaucracy as well as civil society organizations.

This study also demonstrates how the process of ambiguity unfolds through reframing and blaming in the RPJMN 2015-2019, particularly in Development Agenda 9. Reframing is carried out by creating vagueness and dissociation, as evidenced by portraying common concepts such as fundamentalism and primordialism as sources of problems without further explanation. On the other hand, blaming occurs by formulating various strategies that mostly target society rather than state actors. This approach is expected to garner support for policies, especially from the bureaucracy.

The limitation of this study lies in its challenge to investigate the impact of ambiguity choice on important changes in the implementation of RPJMN 2015-2019. Further studies should be conducted to examine the effectiveness of ambiguity in preventing religious intol-

erance in Indonesia. Through this way, the puzzle that clarity of goals and strategies in a policy does not always guar-

antee effective implementation will be solved.

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