Representation of Indonesian Democratic Leaders by Jamā’ah Anṣāru Tawḥīd and Ḩizbut Taḥrīr as Radical Muslim Groups

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Abstract—This study aims (1) to describe how radical-muslim groups representate Indonesian democratic leader in Indonesia; (2) to identify the implication from the way they representate system of democracy. To get these aims, we collected data, i.e., postings on the websites they managed. We focus on Jamā’ah Anṣāru Tawḥīd (JAT) and Ḩizbut Taḥrīr Indonesia (HTI) as representatives of radical-muslim groups, indicated by democracy refusal. We analyze their postings by adopting Leeuwen’s model of discourse analysis. We find that JAT representate democracy as a “religion”. For JAT, democratic leaders are “Islam apostates”, “kāfir”, “ṭaghūt”. Meanwhile, HTI regard democracy as an instrument for capitalists or colonialists. They regard Indonesia democratic leaders as a colonialist’s cat’s paw. We conclude that radical muslim groups have different perspectives and rationale in representing and delegitimizing leaders within democracy context. Language functions as a structure to oppose, delegitimize democratic leaders. Even more, the practice of language can be used to legitimize violence. For example, construction of “democracy as a religion” and “leader as a kāfir” legitimize sacred violence, e.g. terrorism.

Keywords—radical-muslim groups; delegitimization; democracy; discourse analysis

I. INTRODUCTION


The leaders will conduct leadership: persuasive activities within social system (group, community, organization, nations) to achieve shared goals. They have an important role in changing culture and systems, and in driving organizational resources. They achieve the goals by influencing, facilitating individual and collective efforts, persuading and giving models to community members, making transformative changes, articulating and realizing the vision, and creating an environment that supports the achievement of organizational goals [2].

Because leaders are the result of a democratic process, peoples make different meaning towards leaders. This is the implication of the different construct among peoples, especially among muslim towards democracy. Some muslim accept democracy e.g., Nahdatul ‘Ulamā, Muhammadiyyah. But others reject it e.g., Ḩizbut Taḥrīr, Jamā’ah Anṣāru Tawḥīd [3,4].

Those accepting democracy are affixed a label to as moderate muslim or muslim with substantivism. Those disagreeing and opposing to democracy are named as fundamentalists [5,6], scripturalist [7,8], revivalist [9], literalist, “mutaʾāśibīn”, ‘muʿātāṭarrifīn’, ‘right extremist’ [10], or radicals. They believe that they are fighting against forces threatening their most sacred values [11]. They think of the sacred texts as God’s stipulation. The texts are free from mistakes and self-interpretation, glorious, authoritative, and everlasting [12]. They fight against those who threaten their existence, fight for their life goals and identity, and fight in the name of God [13].

Two variants of the radical groups are Jamā’ah Anṣāru Tawḥīd and Ḩizbut Taḥrīr Indonesia (hereinafter referred to as JAT for the former and HTI for the latter). These groups reject democracy and delegitimize democracy leaders. This article focuses on answering research questions about “how radical-muslim groups representate democratic-leaders”. This article aims: (1) to describe how radical-muslim groups representate democratic leaders in Indonesia; (2) to identify the implication from the way they representate democracy and the leaders as a product of democratic process.

We harness perspective of linguistics (practice of language usage) in describing representation of social actor (democratic leaders) and action (e.g. leadership). Every language serves as a channel to externalize author’s consciousness, ideology. Languages play a role in the constitution of social reality and individual experience. Thereupon, they are not neutral and passive in describing external reality [14-16]. Instead of transmitting message, languages transmit ideology because their function as material of ideology [17]. The answer to the question above offers a perspective in explaining the relationship between state and society.
II. METHODOLOGY

This article focuses on JAT and HTI. Those two organizations as an institution have been dissolved. But, as consciousness or ideology, their though still exist. We limit this research problem to the level of texts, namely: articles posted on their websites. Those websites belong to JAT website (http://ansharuttauhid.com), and HTI website (http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id). At the present time, we identify that their websites are not active anymore. Website is communication medium in disseminating their construction towards reality of democratic leader and democratic leadership.

We collect data by searching for articles on the website using the word of "democracy" in the website search functionality. The word of “democracy” is the context of this research. Then, we sort articles to determine the ones dealing with democratic leaders. We analyze the data with a discourse analysis as introduced by Van Leeuwen [18]. His discourse analysis model is called representation of social action and representation of social actors. Leeuwen focuses on ways to investigate the representation of actions or social actors: how they are positioned within texts. This discourse analysis approach includes (1) the strategy of exclusion: how texts eliminate, exclude social actors or actions; and (2) the strategy of inclusion: how the texts present, include social actors or actions.

A. Exclusion Strategy

For Leeuwen, text eliminates social actors and social action through techniques of suppression and backgrounding. The suppression techniques exclude social actors and action in order not to be traced in any texts. Meanwhile, exclusion by the backgrounding technique leaves traces for readers (researchers) in order to detect and identify social actors and action excluded.

The suppression technique can be identified from the structure of sentences. The structure consists of: passive voice, nonfinite or infinitive clauses, removal of beneficiaries (actors who benefit from an actions), nominalization, adjective sentences, absence of participant. The backgrounding technique can be identified from the structure of elliptical sentence, nonfinite clauses, infinitive clauses, and paratactic clauses [18].

B. Inclusion Strategy

This strategy presents social actors with certain techniques. First, role allocation (by active or passive voice), participation by prepositions (among others, with "by" or "from"), nominalization, possessive pronoun, generalization (by assimilation and collectivization techniques) or specifications (with singularization), association / dissociation, determination and indetermination, personalization and impersonalization, and inclusion by over determination, for detail, see [18].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Jamā‘ah Ansārū Tawhīd (JAT)

JAT made de-legitimization against democratic leaders. It's as consequence of their view towards general election. In democratic system, general election is absolute condition in choosing leaders in any states. JAT issued a decision No.: 05 / VII / 1430, 2nd July 2009, on the presidential election of the Republic of Indonesia. This official decision was a response to the presidential election held on July 14, 2009. JAT’s response are: to abandon democracy. JAT advise muslim to refer to and practice Islamic teachings perfectly.

They encouraged muslim to adopt system of jamā‘ah ah-wal-Inmāmah and the system of ahlu-halli-wal-‘aqdi or leadership among muslim. JAT encouraged muslim to reject the practice of leadership on the basis of secularism, including democratic system. For JAT, Muslims should not justify democracy by manipulating Islamic teachings. JAT decided not to get involved in the agenda of election for national leadership because they regarded it did not practice Islamic system and did not uphold Islamic law.

JAT delegitimized election with a theological perspective. For them, democracy was a heresy. Therefore, they criticized muslim practicing Islam and democracy at the same time [19]. They argued that Islam and democracy were different to each other. Democracy placed the sovereignty onto the peoples and man-made law. On the contrary, Islam placed sovereignty onto Allah on the basis of the law of Islam (Al-Quran and As-Sunnah). They disagreed because in democracy, everyone had the same right to become a representative. In Islam, the representatives are ‘ulamā (plural Arabic word of ‘ālim or ‘alim to mean muslim scholars in Islamic studies). According to JAT, democracy separates religion and world or secularism, but Islam does not [20].

JAT labelled “democracy as a religion”. They encouraged Muslims living in any states with democratic system to reject democracy because it was an ideology of kāfir [20]. They argued: democracy allowed everyone to become apostate; democracy tolerated false beliefs/religion, wickedness, and (democracy) supported permissive values [21]. Hence, according to them, implementing democracy meant recognizing institutions and principles of kāfir.

For JAT, democracy promulgated Islamic law or shari‘ah and combined “the-right” and “the-wrong”, “Islam” and “jāhibiyah (Arabic language for stupidity of Islamic teachings, or age of ignorance in pre-Islamic era)” [21]. They also encouraged every muslim to replace democracy with Islam by doing “da‘wah and jihād”. If having not been able to do da‘wah and jihād, JAT obligated muslim to prepare maximum strength or emigrate to countries which allowed them to carry out the shari‘ah perfectly [20].

The language JAT used to representate democracy was associating democracy with belief out of Islam. JAT stated that participating in democracy mean following Judaism. JAT also named democracy with bad labels. Those labels are: “incubation of heresy”, system of kāfir, system of vanity, jāhibiyah, a mother of disbelief. Regarding democratic leader representation, JAT believed that leaders resulting from democratic process belonged to religion of democracy. This can be seen in this excerpt:

“Jamaah ansharut tauhid tidak sepi dari berbagai pressure yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah yang
mengusung agama demokrasi" (Jamā’ah Ansārū Tawhīd was not free from various pressures carried out by the government which belonged to religion of democracy) [22].

JAT represents leaders (government) through website texts by using generalization technique. By this technique, we don’t know the leaders (which government) they meant. Social actors were not clear. The phrase of “religion of democracy” informs us about JAT’s belief which regards democratic leaders as non-Muslim. Democratic leaders were murtād (convert from religion of Islam to the one of democracy). JAT regarded democratic leaders as taghūt (object worshipped). Government servants were murtād as well. This is the excerpt.

“Muslims becoming government servants whole-heartedly are murtād, as long as they loyal to head of state (taghūt), do not regard him/her as a kāfīr, do not hate and fight against taghūt. Instead, they defend and protect taghūt” [23].

JAT believes that the government do not create justice [21]. For them, neither muslim nor non-muslim get justice. Law that democratic leaders make is for ordinary peoples, not for rulers. JAT represents democratic leaders as acting responsibility, playing a role in committing bad actions. The bad actions include: to open the door for lust expression and permissiveness, "to drive fractionality and disputes", "to support colonialism programs", "to divide Islam into tribalism, nationalism, small nations", "to integrate the righteousness and the vanity". JAT represents leaders negatively by technique of epithets. Democratic leaders were labelled by ill-favored epithets. They were: “despotic rulers”, “foul rulers “, “haughty rulers”. JAT also featured leaders with bad qualities: “hypocrite”, “hedonic”, “arrogant”, and “liar”.

Leader’s representation as "murtād" and “kāfīr” become a foundation for JAT to legitimize or sacralize violence, e.g., terrorism. Indonesia became the target of terrorism acts on October 12, 2002 in Bali. The actors were: Amrozi, Imam Samudra / Abdul Azis, Mukhlas / Ali Ghuroon. They were sentenced to death consecutively on 7th July 2003. 10th September 2003, and 2nd October 2003 by Bali high court. And, they were executed in Nusakambangan Island on 9th November 2003. However, JAT legitimized their crimes. They regarded Bali Bomb actors as "mu’ājdīt (martyr). They refused the execution of death penalty [24]. Instead, JAT represented the Indonesian leaders as wrongdoers because of making decision opposing God's law. On the contrarily, they regarded Bali bombers as "their Muslim brothers" [24]. On the contrary, JAT supported the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or ISIS (Jihadi militant organization in Syria and Iraq) and "Ikhān Nūsrah. Both of them are radical group in The Middle East. JAT also recognized ISIS as a khilafah and persuaded others to acknowledge it.

The word of “brother” indicates representation with the honorific technique. It indicates that JAT are appreciative, proud of Bali Bombers. JAT have a sense of empathy, feeling of in-group, solidarity towards Bali Bombers. For JAT, terrorism is not a crime or violence but it is a part of sacred violence. We argue that ideology of “democracy as a religion” is the base for sacralizing violence, including terrorism.

This is in line with JAT method in achieving their goal. Their method is "Da’wah and jihād”. Da’wah or proselitizing is attempt to improve behavior in order to be in line with Islam. Jihād is persistence in carrying out Islam or holy war. If cannot do that, they suggested muslim to make i’dād (preparation) for “da’wah” and “jihād” or “ihrijah” (move to somewhere in order to practice Islam perfectly) [20].

B. Ḥizbū Tahrīr Indonesia (HTI)


There are two perspectives on which HTI’s argument based in repudiating the general election: theology and political-economy. From the theological perspective, HTI views (first) democracy as a "kufur system". Hence, all process and elements of democracy are kufar. For HTI, the election contradicts Islam, Allah law. Therefore, democracy is illicit to adopt, practice, and disseminate [25]. HTI did not recognize the islamization of democracy. They regarded democracy as a form of "shirīq" (polytheism). Democracy makes humans as competitors of Allah because of making rules for human life [26]. In the perspective of political economy, HTI rejects democracy system because the election is an instrument for the rulers and the businessmen, instead of “from, by, and for the people”. Ruler's policies always get influences from the businessmen because they sponsor the rulers in the general election. The policy will always support interests of the political elites and the capital owners. Election is only a tool to turn political investment back and keep in power [27].

In the election, politician distributes money without violating the election rules, instead of fighting for programs. As a result, corruptors keep to arise because of having to return capital and profits. The corruption will be something reasonable and keep to occur. Election is only a tool for interests of the western countries. The interests are secularization and liberalization of the Islamic world, colonialism and efforts to distance muslim from Islam.

The implication and consequence of the general election rejection is the rejection democratic leaders. HTI considers the Indonesia democratic leaders to be “the lackey of invaders",...
and "the corrupts" so that they will not make betterment for Indonesia. They are only imprisoned in neoliberalism which sided with the capitalists rather than the people [28]. According to HTI, the deterioration of Islamic countries results from bad political conditions, due to the control and occupation of the Western countries. Although the Islamic governments appear to be independent, they are subject to qiyyādah fiqrīyyah of capitalism. Hence, for HTI, the problem of democracy is actually the problem of kufur, not as simple as election for rulers [28].

HTI's stance as illustrated above cannot be separated from what they called mabda as explained by An-Nabhan (founder of Ḥizbut Taḥrīr). Mabda is “‘aḍīdah ‘aḍīyyah”: the foundation of thought which gives birth to the rules of overall life and becomes the ideological bond. It functions as a qiyyādah fiqrīyyah (intellectual leadership) and qiyyādah fiqrīyyah (principles and system of thought). Mabda determines how individuals interpret reality (e.g., economy, political, social, culture). Accordingly, mabda can be named as an ideology, worldview, or weltanschauung (in Germany).

Meanwhile, HTI’s methods are -tathājīf (Arabic language for formation and improvement of cadres), taʃā’ul ma’a al-ummah (interacting with the umma), istilām al-ḥukm (power acceptance). Criticism of HTI is the effort to build awareness for formation and improvement of thought (Arabic word for a martyr) and their brother). Consequently, because believing democracy are in need.  Consequently, because believing Muslims have much wealth but do not share to others to HTI, the deterinvestment of thought (Arabic word for a martyr) and their brother). Consequently, because believing Muslims have much wealth but do not share to others. In comparison, HTI regards capitalism. Hence, for HTI, the deterpolitical conditions, due to the control and occupation of the Western countries. Although the Islamic governments appear to be independent, they are subject to qiyyādah fiqrīyyah of capitalism. Hence, for HTI, the problem of democracy is actually the problem of kufur, not as simple as election for rulers [28].

IV. CONCLUSION

JAT and HTI understand democratic leadership in theological discourse. Their de-legitimization against leaders is the consequence of their de-legitimization of democratic system, including general elections. JAT sees general elections as a "religion of democracy", a form of "kāfir", and “murtād”. On the contrary, HTI regards general election as a form of kufur, a tool for the sake of the Western country’s interests. It means that HTI regrets muslims participating in general election as muslim. The word of kufur describes attitude of having not little thankfulness to God. They with kufur are Muslim. For example, Muslims have much wealth but do not share to others in need. Consequently, because believing that those accepting democracy are kāfir, (first) JAT legitimizes violence and crime against them as something sacred. JAT supports and makes legitimation of sacred violence (terrorist regarded as mujāhid (Arabic word for a martyr) and their brother). Second, JAT closed the door of dialogue with out-of-group because unwillingness to interact with kāfir. But, HTI opened for dialogue. Dialogue is an opportunity for disseminating thought of HTI. It is in compliance with one of their method: “taʃā’ul ma’a al-ummah”

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