



Ancestral Religions and The Grand Narrative of Official Religions in Indonesia: A Postmodernist Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research presents an updated analysis of the dynamics of ancestral religion in Indonesia using a postmodernist approach. This research aims to review how ancestral religions are understood within the grand narrative of official religions and the implications for the division of rights and treatment of citizens based on religious choices, which often become political issues. Through a qualitative approach and analysis of postmodernism popularised by Lyotard and Foucault, this research dismantles the single narrative of official religions. The method used is critical discourse analysis. The main findings of this research show that ancestral religions in Indonesia face pressure from the grand narratives of official religions. Ancestral religions are often positioned as part of problematic activities that result in not getting equal recognition with official religions. On the other hand, the grand narrative of official religion impacts the meaning and interpretation of ancestral religions that are still considered sinful, and there are still restrictions on their religious practices. The implications of the findings of this research point to the political and social aspects of categorising ancestral religions as "other" or "profane" and the impact on their treatment and rights in society. Although in November 2017, the Constitutional Court (MK) granted a judicial review of some articles in the Population and Administration Law, acts of persecution still occur against them.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The discourse on local religion or ancestral beliefs will never be finished because it follows the spiritual dimension as well as the sociological aspects of the community (Oviedo & Szocik, 2020). Historical, political, and missionary approaches strongly influence the understanding of ancestral religions in Indonesia (Reuter, 2015). The discourse of ancestral religions in Indonesia is present, developed, reduced, recommended, allowed, and prohibited to exist depending on the contestation of the discourse developed. From the perspective of politics, law, economics, socio-culture, and urban development to state policy, it stems from a grand narrative about official religions and their doctrines, contesting to interpret the existence of ancestral religions in various perspectives.

Based on data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri), in 2022, 117,412 Indonesians adhered to ancestral religions. The number is equivalent to 0.04% of Indonesia's population of 277.75 million (Mustajab, 2023). The presence of adherents of ancestral religions in Indonesia, or what is called the appreciation of belief in God Almighty (*Penghayat Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan yang Maha Esa*), especially after the reform era in Indonesia, has an impact on the presence of various organisations that oversee them (Widayani, 2018). If observed, their existence is closely related to power relations through complex interactions of political discourse in the practice of official religious institutions in Indonesia (Ma'arif, 2017).

The Indonesian government has only officially recognised six religions (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism). They are seen as having religious sacred values, namely seeking experiences with a divine dimension, separating them from the profane world and bringing them closer to the divine (Eliade, 1959). Ironically, ancestral religions and their practitioners are positioned as part of activities that are classified as problematic in various aspects, such as ethics and morality. This issue has positioned the State (government) to categorise their activities as misguided and potentially discriminatory (Hasse, 2011).

However, in recent trends in religious studies research, discriminatory approaches have long been the object of criticism as they tend to oversimplify complex and diverse spiritual practices. Defining boundaries for each religion is often tricky (Kabir, 2020). Research written by (Ma'arif, 2017) on "*Pasang surut rekognisi agama leluhur dalam politik agama di Indonesia*" provides clues to explain how identity politics develops along each phase of ancestral religion recognition, as well as the dynamics of the relationship between the state, official religion, and ancestral religion. Tracking the process reveals the division of citizens based on religion as a result of the state's political efforts. This separation occurs through mobilisation, interest claims, mass pressure, majority religious identity, political party power, and state infiltration through legal policies and regulations, resulting in increased violations of freedom of religion and belief (Silvia, 2023).

So far, many studies on local religions in Indonesia have been carried out. Based on the author's reading, many studies describe the relationship between local and official religion from a socio-anthropological perspective. For example, research from

(Abdillah & Izah, 2022) discusses the relationship dynamics between ancestral religions and official religions. According to them, the definition of local religion is complex in the socio-cultural context and needs to be viewed from a socio-anthropological perspective. The study also highlights the importance of tightening government policy socialisation through the role of religious institutions and associative organisations to reduce discrimination against local religions. According to the author, this study tends to elaborate on normative aspects in the form of the importance of strengthening a government policy through the role of religious institutions but does not see the implications that may arise if the state (government) is still trapped in the perspective of world religions that view ancestral religions as different teachings from official or majority religions. Postmodernism's approach to looking at the existence of ancestral religions or local religions can be said to be minimal in researching it.

Several issues related to ancestral religions in Indonesia are important to study using a postmodernist approach. At least this research seeks to review how ancestral religions are studied using a postmodernist approach, as well as the dynamics of the existence of ancestral religions in the grand narrative of official religions in Indonesia. This research question is important to answer because it will have a severe impact on the category of division or distinction of citizens' rights based on religious choices that appear to have political connotations. This study is important because our research aims to examine and criticise how the existence of ancestral religions in Indonesia is still seen as different from official religions in Indonesia. Several cases show that they are often the object of discrimination about policies on freedom of belief and religion in Indonesia. Specific issues about ancestral religions and the grand narrative of official religions in Indonesia may include various aspects related to the recognition, protection, and integration of local cultures and beliefs within the framework of a plural state, which is the main study in this research.

2. METHODS

The approach in this research carries a qualitative method, which is a method that prioritizes efforts to understand the context, meaning, and complexity of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This research is explanatory research, which focuses on efforts to understand the relationship patterns of each variable to gain a more complete understanding of a phenomenon in society (Yin, 2018). This research applies postmodernism analysis, a philosophical idea that questions authority and existing power structures. It has influenced various fields, from literature to politics, and represents a significant shift in contemporary thought and culture (Dybicz & Hall, 2021).

In this research, we use the analysis of postmodernism initiated by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard in his famous book, "The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge" (1984). This analysis examines the grand narrative, a big story with a legitimizing function because it is unifying, universal, and totality in absolute truth. In addition, we adopt the views of (Foucault, 1988) on the archaeology of knowledge to analyse how knowledge is formed in a society. It shows how knowledge and power are always intertwined, and the formation of knowledge is related to the control and regulation of power (Rabinow, 2020). This theory critiques

how regulations on ancestral religions are understood and applied in Indonesia. It is produced by dominant discourses, resulting in knowledge being used to create rules or policies that potentially discriminate against ancestral religions.

The dismantling of grand narratives tends to reject single narratives or "meta-narratives" that claim to have absolute truth or describe a linear historical development. Instead, it questions and undermines those narratives that have been taken as the single truth, recognising that there are different points of view and different experiences (Lyotard, 1984). In our research, we revisit the existence of ancestral religions in the grand narrative politics applied to official religions in Indonesia. This grand narrative has an impact on the meaning and interpretation of the single truth of ancestral religion in Indonesia.

Data collection techniques are examined using qualitative analysis with characteristics (deductive and inductive), namely the data owned is organized in detail to be reduced, codified, and classified based on the pattern of findings. In this case, using Intertextuality is a useful tool in discourse analysis because it clarifies the relationships between texts and how they impact or change one another. It entails looking at how writings rephrase or echo one another, either overtly or covertly, to convey meaning (Allen, 2022). In addition, data was collected through the classification technique of several Indonesian online news articles that reported discrimination against adherents of ancestral religions. It is important to understand how the discourse of ancestral religion is constructed in the narrative of Indonesia's official religions by noting the context of the news. This technique is instrumental in news analysis. It can help reveal how news stories shape public perceptions and support or challenge existing power structures, creating a complex web of references and meanings.

Primary data sources were obtained from several news, photos, or written narratives. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from literature reviews, online news, scientific journals, and so on, which explain and explain the supporting data of the primary data that has been obtained in the form of scientific narratives about the theory and application of similar research themes (Silverman, 2017).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presence of ancestral religions in Indonesia as cultural and spiritual products has long existed along with the development of the Nusantara civilization (Hilman, 2015). Ironically, their existence has received a lot of pressure and crush from the grand narrative of official religions in Indonesia (Hasse, 2011). The grand narratives of official religions in Indonesia can have various views depending on the context (Kholiludin, 2009; Sari, 2021). Starting from the development of major religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, stories about important figures, key events, and their spread in various regions. Narratives about religions can also include the philosophical, doctrinal, and ritualistic aspects of each of Indonesia's official religions that have long been the source of absolute truth (McDaniel, 2015). On the other hand, ancestral religions, known as traditional beliefs or indigenous religions, refer to belief systems and religious practices that originated with the ancestors of a

particular community or culture often closely related to the traditions, culture, and identity of a group or tribe (Harvey, 2000; Keegan, 2023). One of the distinctive features of ancestral religions is their relationship with the natural universe. They believe that nature, including mountains, rivers, forests, and other living things, has spirits or supernatural powers that must be honored and given offerings (Cusack, 2016).

For example, the Ammatoa indigenous people in Sulawesi express their religion through forest conservation (Arumningtyas et al., 2023). For the Ammatoa indigenous people, the forest is interpreted as a "mother" who must be cared for and preserved. The function of the forest as a link between God and ancestors, ecology, and a source of life is a form of symbolic interactionism of the Ammtoa indigenous people between fellow communities and outside their community (Hijang et al., 2019). Likewise, the old Minahasa religion. In the observation (Pinontoan, 2019), it was found that Christianity has become the religious system and practice of the Minahasa people in the present. However, it does not mean that the system, practice, and meaning of this 'Minahasa (old) religion' have completely disappeared. Nowadays in Minahasa, many cultural groups make efforts to preserve customs and traditions, one of which is by performing Minahasa religious rituals.

Reviewing Ancestral Religion in The Perspective of Postmodernism

Postmodernism is an approach to philosophy and cultural studies that emerged as a reaction to modern thought and beliefs about certainty, universal truths, and a single narrative. It emphasizes uncertainty, plurality, and relativity and rejects claims to absolute truth (Jameson, 2016). Postmodernism questions structures of power, language, and concepts of identity and explores the complexity of reality that cannot be reduced to a single narrative or view (Campbell, 2018). This critique of postmodernism is explicitly presented by Francois Lyotard that there is a paradigm shift from modernity to postmodernity, highlighting the uncertainty and plurality in knowledge that has been believed by the philosophy of modernity (Ionescu, 2019). Meanwhile, to write this theme, the author refers to the views of Foucault (1988) in his approach called the "archaeology of knowledge," he analyzes the way knowledge is formed in a society. He shows how knowledge and power are always intertwined, and the formation of knowledge is linked to the control and regulation of power.

The conversation about postmodernism has recently begun to be responded to by the religious community and scholars of religious studies (Jassim & Rashid, 2022; Shah, 2022). They categorize postmodernism as a liberation movement based on the theological vision and activities of local Christian communities in various places, for example, in Latin America (Cox, 1984; Waitkus, 2019). This movement has indicated the emergence of a theology of postmodernism. The study of religion from the perspective of postmodernism was briefly addressed by (Caputo, 2019), who initiated an approach known as the "theology of the stranded" or "theology of uncertainty". He highlights the uncertainty in religious beliefs and emphasizes the importance of accepting a plurality of beliefs without seeking absolute certainty. His thought views religion as an endless quest, which does not always reach certainty or clear answers. It values complexity and the possibility of multiple paths to spiritual understanding.

Religion in its growth supported by modernism is now seriously challenged by the philosophy of postmodernism (Caputo, 2019). According to (Shah, 2022), problematizing religion in the post-truth era cannot be well understood unless a discussion of modernism is involved because postmodernism is largely a response to modernity on the understanding (knowledge) of religious teachings that develop in society. In the context of ancestral religion, we use Foucault (1988) postmodernist study of knowledge and power (Power and knowledge) to serve as a unit of analysis to examine truth claims about faith about the existence of ancestral religion as a political government policy that has been established in the community.

For this reason, the perspective of postmodernism in the form of criticism of the construction of the grand narratives of official religions in Indonesia, especially in the context of the production of knowledge discourse, is focused on how state discourse shapes the view of the existence of ancestral religions in the policy of fulfilling their belief rights. Thus, this shows that the discourse of ancestral religions in Indonesia is present and developing until it is prohibited, influenced by the contestation of discourse developed by the government system where there are official religions. Ranging from legal, economic, socio-cultural, and educational perspectives relying on the grand narrative about official religions to interpret the existence of ancestral religions. Including having a role to assess and correct good, profane-sacred (Berger, 2022) until the case is allowed or prohibited as a heretical claim.

Looking at Foucault's theory, we find that the existence of ancestral religions is closely related to power relations generated through complex interactions of a plural discourse and institutional practices. In particular, the state apparatus and official religion are seen as having religious sacred values. Meanwhile, ancestral religions and their appreciation are positioned as part of activities that are not classified as "heavenly/official religions". It was not revealed with the presence of a prophet or apostle. So that the tendency to place them as the number two or subordinate party of the official religion becomes increasingly open because it has the potential for problems from various aspects such as different beliefs, not being by the teachings of the six official religions, and accusations of infidel (kafir) stigma.

The Dynamics of Ancestral Religion in The Grand Narrative of Official Religion in Indonesia

In the New Order (Soeharto) Indonesia was known as a country of cultural and religious diversity but only recognized five official religions (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism). According to the basic framework of the Republic of Indonesia, Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution. The problem continues; almost all policies on indigenous faiths make Law Number 1/PNPS/1965 their legal reference. The law makes the believers "blasphemers" (Budijanto, 2016). They do not even get a guarantee of freedom of belief and worship according to their beliefs. Ancestral religious believers become second-class religious communities under the adherents of "official religions". The political policy of segregation and recognition, such as that in Law Number 1/PNPS/1965, no doubt has fatal consequences for local belief groups embraced by various ethnic or sub-ethnic groups in Indonesia. Moreover, the "religion" column is an obligation that must be filled in, starting with

the Family Card and Indonesian citizen identification card (KTP) and continuing to other important civil deeds. Law No. 23/2006 on Population Administration was passed on December 8, 2006, the era of reform, but it still requires it to be filled in.

Historically, practitioners of ancestral religions have lived safely and comfortably practicing their beliefs in Indonesia. All of that then became a gray story when the G 30 S PKI erupted. After the events of September 30, 1965, the existence of *penghayat kepercayaan/kebatinan* was often juxtaposed with the event. The "Pakem" team was assigned to supervise the ancestral believers. As a result of stigmatization and its association with the 1965 tragedy, there was a massive exodus of believers to other "official" religions (Budijanto, 2016; Mulder & Nugroho, 1984).

In Indonesia, the group that refers to the designation of ancestral religion attached to *penghayat kepercayaan*, at least contains four elements.

Table 1. List of Categories of Religions and local beliefs and religious sects in Indonesia

Local Religious Beliefs	Dayak (Kaharingan, Manyaan), Batak (Parmalim, si Raja Batak, Na Mulajadi Nabolon), Badui, Sunda Wiwitan, Buhun (Jawa Barat), Anak Dalam/Kubu, Wana (Sulawesi Tengah), Tonaas Walian (Minahasa, Sulawesi Utara), Tolottang (Sulawesi Selatan), Wetu Telu (Lombok), Naurus (Pulau Seram, Maluku) and various local beliefs in Papua.
Belief in an Almighty God (<i>Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan yang maha Esa</i>)	Adherents of the Kejawen tradition centered in Java include Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal (Pangestu), Sumarah, Susila Budi Dharma (Subud), Perjalanan, Sapta Dharma, Tri Tunggal and Manunggal, Persatuan Eklasing Budi Murko, Sumarah Purbo, Paguyuban Hardo Pusoro, Ngesti Tunggal, Mardi Santosaning Budi (MSB), Budi Luhur.
Beliefs of religious sects	Religious sects are based on groupings of religious congregations such as Ahmadiyah, Buda Jawi Wisnu, Children of God, Yehova, Hari Krisna, etc.
Mystical/occult beliefs	Shamans, psychics, fortune telling, medicine, black magic, sorcery, magic and metaphysics.

Source: (Budijanto, 2016)

The explanation above shows that the religious life system in Indonesia is strictly regulated by the state by recognizing only five "official" religions, namely Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Fuad, 2007). Diversity outside of these official religions is considered a cult and is considered part of the culture, so it is not monitored by the Ministry of Religion. During the reign of President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), Confucianism was added as the sixth religion recognized by the state (Philpott, 2019). This recognition was political and had an impact on the state's discriminatory treatment of local religious styles, teachings,

and rituals (indigenous religions) that have existed since before imported religions were officially recognized in Indonesia (Hefner, 2021). At the horizontal level, official religious groups often intimidate and persecute other groups that are considered "deviations" or "different" from what is considered "correct and official" by the main religious group.

In Indonesia, ancestral religions, often referred to as indigenous religions or local beliefs, have not been officially recognized by the state Nusrat (2018) in Kompas.com. While many local religious practices have existed since before the arrival of official religions, ancestral religions are not recognized by the government. Ironically, in 2016 a Constitutional Court ruling allowed local beliefs to be recorded on their electronic identity cards, but in reality the ruling has not changed their situation. They are positioned as the *(liyan)* or the *Other*, a term phenomenology uses to identify and distinguish oneself from others in their claim to exist (Riyanto, 2020).

"The Constitutional Court's decision that local beliefs can be recorded in electronic identity cards has not been fully enjoyed by indigenous peoples who adhere to their ancestral beliefs. In the government registration process, their beliefs are still questioned. The Constitutional Court's decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 has also not yet impacted the registration of marriages using traditional beliefs. This causes indigenous people who are married to still have difficulty obtaining a family card, which is the basis for recording ID cards or issuing birth certificates for their children". (Kompas, 18 March 2018)

Not only are they positioned as "different" ancestral religions are also attributed as profane, meaning "those who are other" in religious and cultural contexts referring to things or places that are not considered holy or sacred. Something that is considered profane is usually outside the religious domain or is an everyday world that does not have holiness. Eliade (1959) reviews the concepts of sacred and profane in the context of comparative religion and provides deep insights into the way cultures categorize religious and non-religious experiences. This can create challenges and inequalities in the rights and treatment of adherents.

Greetz (1973) an anthropologist who researched Indonesian culture explained that profane things in a cultural context are parts of everyday life that have no direct connection to religion or spirituality in the view of society. In this condition, the existence of ancestral religion is seen as profane, which can include activities, objects, or places that are considered ordinary or everyday worlds that do not have certain religious values. They are attached to an identity that is not sacred, sinful, and often seen as deviant.

Polemics of Bureaucracy for Ancestral Religions

The understanding of religion declared "recognized" by the state only applies to the six religions mentioned earlier. This recognition has been applied in law and bureaucratic practice (Sezgin & Künkler, 2014). This understanding turns out to have an impact on the exclusion of citizenship rights for adherents of religions that are considered not "recognized". Starting from the lack of recognition of equality in the law and government, discrimination in public services, and restrictions on religious rights to encourage the emergence of intolerance in society.

Ironically, in November 2017, the Constitutional Court (MK) accepted the material test of ancestral religious believers on Article 61 paragraph 1 and Article 64 paragraph 1 of 2013 regarding Administration and Population regulation. The Constitutional Court's ruling implies that the Indonesian government is now obliged to add an option to the religion column on the Indonesian citizen ID card, namely "*aliran kepercayaan*" or ancestral belief for indigenous believers (Mubarok, 2019). However, discrimination and stigmatization of cults still occur after the legal decision for adherents of ancestral religions in 2017.

An interesting example of heretical stigma for ancestral religious believers as described Wafi (2020) on July 22, 2020, the Sunda Wiwitan residents of Cisantana Village, Kuningan, West Java, experienced difficulties when the construction of the tombs of two of their community leaders was forced to stop due to the lack of a Building Construction Permit (IMB). This bureaucratic reason arose after the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Cisantana Village sent a rejection letter, concerned that the tombs could become a source of polytheism (*musyrik*)

In another example, on June 21, 2022, Wale Paliusan - the residence and gathering place of Lalang Rondor Malesung (Laroma) believers in Tondei Dua Village, West Motoling Sub-district, South Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi - was vandalized due to the provocation of a handful of clergies. One cleric was also involved in the vandalism. When the vandalism occurred, two other people intimidated a family in Wale Paliusan with the stigma of heresy and idol worship (SETARA Institute, 2022).

The incidents in Sunda Wiwitan and Laroma Minahasa show that local believers are bad and misguided. Because they believe in superstition far from the teachings of official religions (Islam, Christianity) use *Ilmu Hitam* or "black magic" and are idolaters. different from ulama and priests, they are good in behavior because they use *ilmu putih* or "white magic" which comes from the true Divine. Ancestral religious practitioners and the ritual activities associated with them as offerings, flowers, incense, or heirlooms are often perceived as deviant mystical beliefs (Wafi, 2020). Although the Constitutional Court has revised the regulations on citizenship, discrimination and persecution still occur.

In contrast, official religions recognized by the government are in a sacred position. It refers to things or places that are considered holy, sacred or have high religious value. Places of worship protected by law, religious objects, and religious rituals are often considered sacred. The concept of sacred is often related to things that are considered connected to divine existence or high spirituality (Smith, 2004). The discrimination that still occurs against adherents of ancestral religions in Indonesia shows that State institutions have a role in controlling and disciplining them to be subject to various rules and norms in the exercise of their power. This control effort appears in physical and institutional forms, for example, the absence of law enforcement and legal protection for ancestral religious adherents is an important instrument in implementing and maintaining power relations.

In this condition, it is necessary to question the position of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which does not have the authority to regulate, but its guidance is given to the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Technology through the Directorate of Culture. This shows that the followers of ancestral religions have not been categorized as

official or recognized religions. Placing them in cultural affairs further emphasizes the identity and existence of ancestral religions as a cultural product of the archipelago's ancestral heritage (Picard, 2017). The organization of religion and religious affairs in a country is generally the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The main reason why the Ministry of Religious Affairs does not take care of believers in God can be related to several factors, such as the Majority Population Assumption. The Ministry of Religious Affairs usually focuses more on religions that are recognized and followed by the majority of the country's population.

Adherents of ancestral religions may be a minority group, so government priorities may focus more on majority religions. This is troubling because it can lead to political majoritarianism, the view that a majority in a population, be it a religious, linguistic, or other majority, is the main group and has the right to make decisions that affect society as a whole. This view is now increasingly criticized and democratic systems are increasingly limiting majoritarianism to protect citizens' human rights (Przeworski & Maravall, 2003).

The Implications of The Postmodernist Perspective to Understanding Ancestral Religions in Indonesia

The postmodernist approach, which emerged as an implication of ancestral religion in Indonesia, offers a different view of social and cultural life. Postmodernism emphasizes relativism, deconstruction and plurality in understanding various phenomena, including religion. It shows that postmodernism emphasizes plurality and relativism, recognizing that different belief systems have their own values and truths. This supports greater recognition of ancestral religions in Indonesia as legitimate and valid forms of belief. However, it may differ from the dominant and official religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. The results of this research also want to explain the tendency to revalue and appreciate traditional and local values that may have previously been considered irrelevant or marginalized. This includes giving better space to ancestral religious practices and beliefs in the national narrative.

Another implication is that Postmodernism encourages the deconstruction of grand narratives and hegemony. In the Indonesian context, this can lead to challenges to the dominance of major religions and efforts to reconstruct space for ancestral religions in public discourse. Our analysis shows that there are efforts to revitalize and revive ancestral religious practices as part of broader efforts to preserve and value local cultural heritage. This often happens through academic, cultural and community efforts. As is the case with the ancestral religion in Minahasa, which annually holds the Tumo'tol pilgrimage to Watu Pinawetengan every January (Karundeng, 2019), or Pahoman Sejati believers perform the Sesaji Pisungsung Gunung ritual to commemorate the annual eruption of Mount Merapi in the valley of Mount Merapi - Sawangan, Magelang, Central Java.

This condition shows that the postmodern approach helps in emphasizing the importance of cultural identity and cultural diversity is given space for appreciation. Ancestral religions in Indonesia are an integral part of a community's cultural identity.

Postmodernism provides a framework for appreciating and strengthening such identities amidst diversity while criticizing the universalist and homogenous views often associated with modernism. As such, postmodernism supports the recognition of the uniqueness and specificity of ancestral religious practices that may be overlooked by more homogenous views.

4. CONCLUSION

Ancestral religions in Indonesia have been the subject of complex and evolving conversations as society has developed spiritually and socially. Our research shows that understanding ancestral religions is influenced by history, politics, and mission. The discourse on ancestral religions develops and changes according to the contestation of existing discourses, which are influenced by various factors such as politics, law, economics, and socio-culture.

The use of a postmodernist approach can be a relevant analytical framework to understand the dynamics of ancestral religions in the Indonesian social and political context. The concept of postmodernism highlights diversity, uncertainty, and plurality in religious understanding and rejects claims to absolute truth. In the context of ancestral religions, the postmodernist approach challenges grand narratives that claim the singular truth of official religions and emphasizes the need to accept and appreciate the diversity of religious beliefs and practices.

The postmodernist analysis in this research criticizes the construction of grand narratives of official religions in Indonesia, especially about the existence of ancestral religions. These grand narratives create inequalities in the meaning and treatment of ancestral religions and influence the formation of policies and bureaucratic practices that limit the rights of adherents. Among them are the views of adherents of official religions who still believe that ancestral religions are superstitious, far from the teachings of official religions (Islam, Christianity), and use black magic.

In the political and bureaucratic context, official recognition is only given to official religions recognized by the state, while ancestral religions are often considered profane groups or "the Other". This creates polemics in power structures and decision-making, which results in discrimination and disregard for the rights of adherents of ancestral religions. Although the number of adherents of ancestral religions is relatively small compared to the overall population, they face various forms of discrimination and denial of their rights. The lack of official recognition from the government as well as the stigma of being a heretical or profane group creates inequality in society.

Implications for religious policy in Indonesia of ancestral religions could trigger adjustments to religious policies that are more inclusive and sensitive to cultural diversity. For example, formal recognition of ancestral religions in religious registration and administration should not only be championed but also understood and applied without discrimination and support for the practice and preservation of ancestral cultures. In addition, this research can enrich interfaith dialogue by highlighting new ways to understand and value ancestral religions in the context of pluralism. This can support efforts to create harmony and mutual understanding between different religious groups. Future research recommendations for the study of ancestral religions could encourage the development of a more comprehensive

educational curriculum that values diversity of beliefs, including teaching ancestral religions in schools and universities.

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