The Conflicts Surrounding Establishment of Places of Worship: A Structuration Analysis of GKI Yasmin Bogor

M. Syaeful Anam
Jurusan Sosiologi, Universitas Palangka Raya, syaefulanam@fisip.upr.ac.id

Mukh. Imron Ali Mahmudi
Departemen Sosiologi, Universitas Indonesia

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M. Syaeful Anam
Jurusan Sosiologi, Universitas Palangka Raya
E-mail: syaefulanam@fisip.upr.ac.id

Mukh. Imron Ali Mahmudi
Departemen Sosiologi, Universitas Indonesia

Abstract
This article aims to map out the conflict over the establishment of GKI Yasmin Church in Bogor, which has occurred since 2006, by looking at the dialectic relations among its sociological dimensions. The Structuration theory of Anthony Giddens is utilized to analyze relationships between structure and agency. However, previous studies have also pointed out that cultural aspects cast a wide influence on this conflict. As such, this paper also uses Paulus Wirutomo’s triadic conception of Structure, Process, and Culture, in which the latter will be explained in-depth to outline the role of cultural hegemony in reproducing the Structure of GKI Yasmin’s conflict. Our study found that structural dimensions, as the result of pragmatic calculations of state actors, resulted in the exclusion of the GKI Yasmin group. Cultural pressure, too, increasingly complicates the efforts of religious minorities to challenge this domination as it also proliferates intolerant culture. Finally, the processual dimension comprises the relations among actors with competing interests, in which masses can (re)negotiate and reproduce structural relations. The novelty of this study lies in the dialectical and holistic conflict-mapping to demonstrate how power relations work through structural, processual, and cultural dimensions. Meanwhile, previous studies have only focused on the role of the government, intolerant culture, and socio-political dimensions in the conflict of GKI Yasmin in particular, and the establishment of places of worship in general.

Keywords: Conflict, GKI Yasmin, Structure, Culture, Agency

INTRODUCTION

The protracted permit case of Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) Yasmin, or the Indonesian Christian Yasmin Church, began in 2006. At the time, the church had already met the administrative requirements of the Bogor City Government (Pemkot Bogor) and obtained a building construction permit (IMB) issued directly by the Mayor of Bogor. In 2008, however, an organization under the name of FORKAMI (Forum Komunikasi Muslim Indonesia, or the Indonesian Muslim Com-
communication Forum) and several local residents demanded the permit be revoked. In response to this pressure, the Bogor City Planning and Parks Office issued a decree to freeze the construction of the Yasmin Church. In return, the congregants of GKI Yasmin took various legal actions. They began by appealing to the Bandung State Administrative Court (PTUN) in 2008, which resulted in favor of GKI Yasmin. The next year, the Bogor City Government filed a counter-appeal to the Jakarta State Administrative High Court (PTTUN); once again, the court decided to strengthen the decision of Bandung Administrative Court. In a final attempt, the city government filed an appeal to the Indonesian Supreme Court, but was rejected even before entering court proceedings. On 8 March 2011, the Mayor of Bogor finally annulled the previous decree revoking GKI Yasmin’s construction permit.

Yet later in that same year, the mayor once again issued a decree to revoke GKI Yasmin’s construction permit. This decision came as the result of Bogor’s Muspida Meeting, in which local state institution leaders (Head of Regional Army, Local Police, et cetera) convened and deemed the church’s construction to have disturbed the local community. The mayor, however, also proposed that the GKI Yasmin congregation can conduct their worship in the Harmoni Building instead. In response, the Indonesian Ombudsman issued a letter of recommendation to “revoke the revocation” against GKI Yasmin’s building construction permit, while the Supreme Court rejected the City of Bogor’s plea for reconsideration. In 2016, the newly-appointed Mayor of Bogor, Bima Arya, promised to resolve this case so that the congregation can proceed to building their church. It took 15 years until construction was finally able to be commenced in late 2021, after over a decade of protracted legal disputes and various social conflicts.

The difficulties religious minorities encounter when attempting to establish places of worship certainly violate their rights for religious freedom. Article 18 paragraph (1) of the International Covenant on Civil Rights—which was ratified by Indonesia and issued nationally as Law No. 12/2005—describes the right to freedom of religion as having an internal and external dimension. Internally, this is the rights of an individual to embrace their religion or belief based on their own personal conviction, while the external dimension refers to the right to manifest one’s religion or belief, including the rights to worship, as well as to conduct religious practice, observance, and teaching (Aminah and Sihombing, 2010).
A 2020 report from the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) stated that complaints related to the obstruction against constructing places of worship have increased over the years. Between 2015 and 2017, the commission recorded a total of 21 complaints; in 2018 alone, they received 23 reports (Komnas HAM, 2020). Meanwhile, a more recent research conducted by the Setara Institute shows that 24 places of worship were disturbed in 2020, comprising 14 mosques, seven churches, as well as a temple, a monastery, and a pagoda. Islamic places of worship that were disturbed belong to adherents of minority sects that are considered as deviant by Muslim majorities (Tempo, 2021). Overall, these conflicts follow a similar pattern: they begin by acts of harassment and intimidation by militant Islamic groups that are facilitated—both actively and passively—by local authorities and security forces (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

Conflicts over the establishment of places of worship have been widely observed. Several researchers assert that minority faiths tend to be able to build their houses of worship if the socio-cultural potential of local communities are aligned to their favor, such as having a tolerant disposition and openness to those of a different faith (Ahmad and Hidayatulloh, 2016; Mujiyanto, 2018; Mustolehuddin, 2015; Putri, 2011; Rosidin, 2015). Nonetheless, local communities do not always espouse such positive attitudes towards multiculturalism—and this can be observed in the case of GKI Yasmin in Bogor. A different research cluster focuses on the legal procedures behind the establishment of places of worship in Indonesia (Fidiyani, 2016), while other studies focus on the spatial aspects and characteristics of the people who inhabit them to identify patterns of conflict and social integration (Jamaludin, 2018). Specific studies on GKI Yasmin, on the other hand, have only focused on issues of identity, the proliferation of religious intolerance, and problems within the relation between state and civil society (Rahardiansah, 2017; Sirait, 2019). Finally, our previous study (Mahmudi and Anam, 2021) had looked into the conflicts surrounding places of worship from a sociological perspective. However, we only soughted to conceptually generalize the patterns of conflict that occurred in Indonesia—but without delving into any specific cases.

Studies that observe conflicts over the construction of places of worship tend to identify three key issues. First, the issue of regulations and legal-bureaucratic procedures for establishing a place of worship. Second, the problem of religious sentiment—in particular the strengthening of
radical and intolerant views that threaten the rights of religious minorities. Third, the socio-political aspects that saturate relations between religious adherents, such as when authorities and security apparatus decided to not side with religious minorities and accommodate interests of the majority instead. Several studies have identified that regulations protecting religious freedom have been instrumental in guaranteeing marginalized groups the right to establish their houses of worship (Arifinsyah and Sofian, 2021; Crouch, 2010; Maula, 2013). On the other hand, religious radicalism and intolerant views have also been documented to curb the religious freedom of religious minorities to build their place of worship (Ibáñez, 2018; Marshall, 2018). Socio-political structures are shown to play a role in the formulation of inclusive policies for religious minorities (Ibáñez, 2018), while practices of participatory urban planning, in spite of its democratic fervor, has also been shown to override negotiations and tend to adopt a pragmatic stance instead (Germain and Gagnon, 2003). Overall, these studies have yet to offer a thick description of conflicts pertaining to the establishment of places of worship, and instead focused on the structural factors that affect their outcome.

This paper describes how structures and agents influence each other in the case of GKI Yasmin’s conflict over the construction of their church. Employing Anthony Giddens’ (1984) concept of the “Duality of Structure”, we assert that the conflict surrounding GKI Yasmin is defined by the dialectical relationship between structure and agency, in which social structure is assumed to be reproduced through social actions. Meanwhile, Wirutomo (2013) offers an approach for social systems that consists of structure, culture, and process. Wirutomo posits “culture”, which lies in internalization, as separate from “structure”, which is based on a process of institutionalization. This entails that the social cannot only be defined as the dialectics between structure and agency, but also involves a separate process of agents internalizing culture.

This paper aims to map the conflicts surrounding the construction of GKI Yasmin Church in a systemic-social manner. Our mapping focuses on how the dialectical relationship between structure, culture, and process or agency works in this particular case. We also contextualize our analysis into alternative and policy solutions for resolving the conflict of GKI Yasmin.
RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilizes a literature study method by collecting data from previous studies and various reports from both government and non-government institutions working on religious harmony. The literature study took place from February to March 2022, and focuses on the conflicts surrounding the establishment of GKI Yasmin. Our findings are then categorized into three aspects, namely the Structural, which involves evaluating underlying policies; the Cultural, which gauges potential and future challenges of the community; and the Processual, which traces how various social groups and actors responded to the establishment of the GKI Yasmin.

STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND PROCESS: A DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP

Giddens (1984) illustrates the dialectical relationship between structure and agency in his concept of “Structuration”. In this perspective, the duality of structure-agency lies in how social structure is both the result and means of social practices (Priyono 2002). Interactions between social agents produce various social institutions, shared values, norms, and social arenas that facilitate the interests of these social agents; on the other hand, these products of social interaction also influence the manner in which social agents interact with one another. For Johnson (2008), “Structure” refers to the existing rules and resources that affect social relations. Meanwhile, Barker (2011) argues that the process of structuration contains three dimensions. The first is interpretation or understanding, which refers to the process in which agents acquire the understanding of their social world. The second is morality, or a sense of “proper direction” in how social phenomena are supposed to normatively unfold. The third is power in action, which describes how social agents achieve their desires.

These processes imply that social structures do not merely “exist” outside the individual as a form of external constraint. Nonetheless, structure does function coercively by enabling certain social actions and limits the possibility to perform others (Giddens, 1984). This is what Giddens refers to as the “Duality of Structure”, namely its dual influence to the actions of actors in a social system. Furthermore, this structural influence also outlines the possibility of social actors in transforming
or maintaining the structural characteristics of the social system they participate in.

According to Wirutomo (2013), structure manifests itself in the relationships among social groups—especially in the typology of power relations between them, such as stratification, composition, and social differentiation. These differences in power have implications for social structures, which can produce coercive mechanisms, imperatives, as well as hinder or constrain the actions of social actors. Furthermore, social structures can also be strengthened by being institutionalized legally and formally. Unlike Giddens, however, Wirutomo posits “culture” as a different social mechanism to structure. For Wirutomo, culture encompasses all systems of values, norms, beliefs, habits, and customs internalized in an individual or society. Unlike structure, culture is a particularly powerful force in shaping the attitudes and patterns of behavior, namely by transforming the subjectivity of social agents. In power relations, culture is manifested as cultural legitimacy, or the values and beliefs embedded within social structures that casts an influence on social agents when negotiating changes.

The influence of structure and culture over social agents is already reflected in Giddens’ (1984) definition of “Agency”. The term does not refer to the end-goal that social agents have in mind when performing social interactions, but rather their capability to achieve this goal in the first place. According to his definition, agents are driven by awareness and motivation to perform purposeful actions. On the other hand, Giddens also (1984) distinguishes the social actor as consisting of three internal dimensions, in which the actor is not always aware of all of them. The first is unconscious motivation, which pertains to the wants and needs of an individual that might lead to action, but not the action itself. There is also practical awareness, which manifests as a disjointed collection of practical knowledge—of “how to do things”. The final aspect, namely discursive awareness, is the capacity of individuals to reflect on and provide explicit explanations for the actions of others around them.

One thing to note is that practical awareness might also manifest in unconscious forms. For Giddens, the key to understanding Structuration is how social reproduction occurs to the repetition of social practices that we take for granted: social agents might know how to perform actions, but are not always aware of the reasoning behind these actions. Agents may internalize different values and rules, but in the end, their
actions always refer to the rules as a form of “practical unconscious”, but not always the *values* that require these rules to be implemented in the first place.

In other words, rules are the primary product of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. The rules that bind social agents define the community they live in, which is eventually institutionalized as power. Eventually, social agents that are able to tap into institutionalized power might even be able create new rules by influencing how agents relate to the structure that governs their actions.

Wirutomo (2013), on the other hand, defines agency as a social *process*—the dynamics within daily interactions between community members that exist outside the influence of structure or culture. Agencies are what enables actors to express new aspirations and negotiate with others; it is the space in which transformation to existing structure and culture is possible. On the other hand, if such spaces free of influence exist within society, it also implies that every social order is a negotiated order, only borne out of negotiations between social actors.

While the Structuration theory of Giddens and Wirutomo’s concept of the systemic-social contains different dimensions, both of them situate these dimensions in a dialectical relation. Priyono (2002) defines the kernel of structuration theory is the dialectical relationship between social actors (individuals or groups) and social structures, while Wirutomo (2013) outlines a complex system in which structure, culture, and processes intersect—supporting each other, influencing the other, and perhaps even embedded within one another.

In the case of GKI Yasmin, the interplay between structure and agency reproduces certain social actions. Various social agents and their different interests attempt to influence the structure that either allows or prevents the construction of Yasmin Church. Changes to the structure occur through the active, deliberate negotiations performed by social actors—all with their own capacities according to the rules and resources in their disposal. We contend that the GKI Yasmin conflict had been protracted due to the complex system of social actions that hindered any quick, undisputed outcomes. These actions, as we shall see, are determined by four variables: motivation, anxiety, awareness, and meaning.

On the other hand, if we apply Wirutomo’s (2013) systemic-social approach, culture also played a role in establishing and reproducing the order of rules, the possible resources being put to use, as well as the view of social agents in deeming the relocation of the church as an acceptable
alternative. Therefore, we deem that a holistic examination of social factors—and not just the duality between structure and agency—is needed to map the conflict of GKI Yasmin. By examining components of structure, agency (process), and culture at play, we aspire to provide alternative solutions to this decade-long social conflict.

**INTERPLAY OF STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND PROCESS IN GKI YASMIN’S CONFLICT OF ESTABLISHMENT**

The social structure represents patterns of institutionalized power relations that regulate, enforce, and delimit the actions of parties involved in a conflict. In the case of GKI Yasmin’s conflict of establishment, a set of formal structures—various policies and decrees issued by state institutions—impose themselves on the contesting actors. These include:

1. Joint Decree Number 9/2006 by the Minister of Religious Affairs and Minister of Home Affairs on Rules for Establishing Houses of Worship;
2. The 2008 Decree by the Head of the Bogor City Planning and Parks Agency to freeze GKI Yasmin’s building construction permit (IMB);
3. Bogor City Mayor Regulation Number 17/2010 containing amendments to the previous Mayor Regulation (Number 4/2007) on Implementation Guidelines for Granting IMBs;
4. The decisions of the Bandung State Administrative Court (PTUN), the Jakarta State Administrative High Court (PT-TUN), as well as the Indonesian Supreme Court to revoke the 2008 Decree of the Head of Bogor City Planning and Park Service Office;
5. Revocation of GKI Yasmin’s 2006 IMB by Mayor Diani Budiarto based on the results of Bogor City 2011 Muspida Meeting;
6. Indonesian Ombudsman’s recommendation in 2011 to annul recommendations of the 2011 Bogor Muspida Meeting, and;
7. The Bogor City Forum for Religious Harmony or Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB).

Nonetheless, social structure is not only composed of official-legal forces. The structure can also manifest as the actions of other social forces that affect the continuity of a conflict and the decisions taken by parties that are directly embroiled in it. Based on our observations, the informal social structure that had influenced the GKI Yasmin conflict include:
1. The 2017 statement by Head of the Presidential Staff Office (KSP) Teten Masduki encouraging Bogor City Government to provide legal basis for GKI Yasmin;
2. The 2016 promise by Bima Arya, Mayor of Bogor, to ensure the opening of GKI Yasmin during his mayoral election;
3. The support of two mass Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, towards congregants of GKI Yasmin;
4. Public support by the pluralist Islamic research center Wahid Institute, and;
5. Mass media coverage that influences public sentiment, both in print and electronic forms.

If “structure” delineates the actions and decisions taken by these parties that define possible outcomes of a social process, “culture” is the ingrained systems of values, norms, beliefs, and habits that propels these actions and decisions in the first place. As cultural aspects are internalized into individuals or society, they shape the models of behavior and attitudes of community members.

Nonetheless, Culture is not simply a social component that guarantees society to function, but is also sutured with power relations. Dominant groups protect their interests and keep the power of other groups in check through cultural hegemony (Wirutomo, 2013). In the case of GKI Yasmin, this cultural hegemony is operative in how several Islamic groups posit themselves as the dominant majority with justified interests in constraining the actions of religious minorities. We deem that a culture of intolerant majoritarianism has shaped the beliefs, thinking patterns, attitudes, and behavior of several ulemas and Islamic groups throughout Bogor towards congregants of GKI Yasmin. It is this culture that generated their intolerant predispositions and behavior, such as persuading residents of Curug Mekar, Bogor, to refuse giving permission for the construction of the church.

A parallel cultural aspect that cast an influence on the GKI Yasmin conflict is that of a weak bureaucracy. Although they occupy an influential structural position, the Bogor City Government possessed little cultural hegemony, and this forced them to be influenced by other social actors who wield more cultural power. Their lack of bureaucratic authority has led the city government to issue inconsistent decisions that self-contradicts their structural role. Initially, the Mayor of Bogor issued a license of building construction in 2006, but this was over-

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turned by the Head of City Planning and Parks (DTKP)—an official with lower structural position—through their suspension letter in 2008. This decision chisels away the city government’s structural authority, as the Head of DTKP had no authority to freeze a permit issued by the mayor as their superior within the bureaucratic structure. Moreover, the Bogor City Mayor had failed to exercise their bureaucratic power when revoking GKI Yasmin’s IMB in 2011. This decision came out from the Muspida Meeting, which has no binding power; at the same time, the mayor ignored official procedures as stated by the Joint Ministerial Decree Number 9/2006, which necessitates a deliberation process between government apparatus and GKI Yasmin. All these indicate the weak political culture amongst bureaucratic elites in carrying out their duties.

Meanwhile, processual aspects within the conflict surrounding GKI Yasmin comprise the daily interactions amongst community members that are not directly influenced by structural and cultural powers. Within Wirutomo’s (2013) conception, “Process” requires spaces in which social actors can freely express their aspirations and negotiate with one another. Non-formal forums, such as daily conversations in coffee shops or protests by social movements, can function as a catalyst for social transformation. These actions subvert the hegemony of dominant social groups that have an interest in impeding other social processes outside their sphere of influence. These spaces also imply that hegemony is never exclusive or total, as there are social interactions that do not contribute to the perpetuation of hegemonic social relations.

It is possible to identify spaces for Process within the case of GKI Yasmin. Several actors that were not directly related to the conflict have voiced their support towards GKI Yasmin congregants, therefore intervening against the direct hegemonic relations within the conflict. Support for GKI Yasmin came from religious leaders such as Kiai Mustofa Bisri, the would-be mayor of Bogor Bima Arya, members of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) such as Lily Wahid, as well as the dialogue between GKI Yasmin management and Head of KSP Teten Masduki. However, there were also Process from external actors in opposition to GKI Yasmin, such as the 2008 protests by ulemas and Islamic organizations throughout Bogor demanding the government to permanently seal GKI Yasmin, as well as another protest from the Muslim Community Communication Forum (FORKAMI) in 2010.

These processes demonstrate that discourse surrounding religion has become an arena for contention between interest groups. Some factions
of the Muslim majority claim to be worried that the establishment of GKI Yasmin Church in the area will disrupt balance and social harmony. Meanwhile, religious minorities and other pluralist groups situate the issue as a struggle for freedom of religion and belief. As each party continues to seek support and alliances to achieve their interest, the church eventually comes to represent interests beyond the relatively simple matter of its legal status, namely a change of power-relations amongst the competing actors.

The following table describes aspects of Structure, Culture, and Process in the conflict surrounding GKI Yasmin’s establishment.

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Process</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Joint Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 9/2006 on the Rules for Establishing a Place of Worship</td>
<td>Teten Masduki (the Presidential Chief of Staff) publicly encourages the Bogor City government to legalize GKI Yasmin (2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Decree of the Mayor of Bogor issuing IMB of GKI Yasmin in 2006</td>
<td>Endorsement from Indonesia’s two major Islamic groups, NU and Muhammadiyah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Decree of the Head of the Bogor City Planning and Parks Office regarding the suspension of of GKI Yasmin’s IMB letter in 2008</td>
<td>Endorsement from the Wahid Institute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The decision of the Bandung Administrative Court (PTUN) to revoke the Decree of the Head of the Bogor City Planning and Park Services.</td>
<td>The influence of media coverage (positing GKI Yasmin’s case as a legal issue with religious and political elements) to public sentiment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The decision of PTTUN Jakarta to revoke the Decree of the Head of the Bogor City Planning and Park Services.</td>
<td>The Setara Institute 2015 report, which categorizes Bogor as an intolerant city.</td>
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</table>
Of these aspects, one action that was pivotal in perpetuating the GKI Yasmin conflict was the decision of the Bogor City government to ignore the decisions of PTUN Bandung, PTTUN Jakarta, and the Indonesian Supreme Court by issuing a second revocation post- Bogor’s Muspida meeting in 2011. This decision conformed to the pressure of militant Islamic groups in Bogor, and demonstrates how intolerant factions of the majority faith were successful in cementing their hegemonic status. In turn, this decision also raised the awareness of GKI Yasmin’s congregants of the structural and cultural obstacles they were facing. Being met with injustice and symbolic violence by the city government and intolerant Islamic groups, congregants became aware that both favorable court decisions and support from public figures to their cause do not guarantee that they will prevail. In the local context, government policies and the dominance of opposing Islamic factions were still able to render them powerless.

On a structural terrain, the GKI Yasmin group had to deal with the discursive struggle of other actors who reinterpreted and criticized court decisions that skewed heavily in the congregants’ favor. Yet it is the cultural conflicts, such as the internalized intolerant beliefs of several groups, that prompted mass action to reject GKI Yasmin and forced local policymakers to accommodate the interests of hardline Islamic groups. Realizing that their battle cannot be won solely through legal-structural avenues, the GKI Yasmin group attempted to bolster their cultural legitimacy by collaborating with various social groups that support religious freedom. This attempt by GKI Yasmin to assert themselves as cultural agents echo Bevir’s (2007) description of actors who “routinely carry out social practices and reproduce interactions and structures within their territory according to their values, culture,
and ideology”. The cultural agency of GKI Yasmin aims to invoke and strengthen the discourse of inclusive and tolerant values in society, which attempts to annul the discursive intolerance that impeded their existence.

The discursive intolerance mobilized by hardline Islamic groups relies on two points. First, hardline groups mobilize the assumption that construction of GKI Yasmin Church is a cover for proselytizing, in which adherents of other religions are invited to convert to Christian faith, therefore altering the demographic composition of a society. Furthermore, this change is also assumed to result in a stricter competition for economic control and socio-political dominance (Pusat Litbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, 2011). Second, the local government prioritizes the interests and narrative of hardline Islamic groups to gain their trust and sympathy. As an actor within the nexus of power-relations, the Bogor City Government prioritizes maintaining their supremacy by siding with the group that is more likely to maintain the status-quo within GKI Yasmin’s conflict. In Structural terms, the government has control over political-legal resources, and was able to determine which social group should be given access to this resource. The byproduct of this control over resource-allocation, unfortunately, was the exclusion of a minority group from their fundamental rights of religious expression.

The actions taken by the government and hardline Islamic groups should also not be seen exclusively as a structural constraint, but also a mechanism of cultural hegemony. While these actions do result in structural limitations for the GKI Yasmin group, they also continue to reproduce certain social interactions and structures. By catering to the assumption that the ban on church construction will maintain stability and avoid undesirable social conflicts, the Bogor City Government had (inadvertently) affirmed the cultural hegemony of intolerant groups; of the supremacy of their particular worldviews and narratives. The cultural dimension of this conflict had the power to bypass existing coercive structural mechanisms. While the Bogor City Government claimed to follow the recommendations of the Muspida meeting, they have largely ignored the legally-binding Joint Ministerial Decree No.9/2006 which provides certain guidelines for establishing places of worship.

As such, cultural hegemony casts a huge influence over the GKI Yasmin conflict. This is especially true when dominant social actors realize that their cultural influence is able to override the structural mechanisms that are supposed to delimit the actions of all parties.
STRUCTURE AND STATE POWER IN THE GKI YASMIN CONFLICT

As a unitary state with diverse religions, faiths, and cultures, conflicts over places of worship have occurred intermittently in Indonesia. While the Indonesian state recognizes—even stipulates—its citizens as religious subjects, the state itself remains governed by secular rather than religious principles. From a policymaking perspective, the secular Indonesian state is driven to ensure harmonious social relations amongst its religious citizens by creating rules that foster these conditions, such as The Joint Ministerial Decrees Number 8 and 9 of 2006 on Rules for Establishing Houses of Worship. In this paper, we reviewed some aspects in the implementation of this important policy.

Some scholars have attributed problems regarding the establishment of places of worship to problematic regulations (Hutabarat 2015, 2017). In particular, there is the glaring absence of Gubernatorial or Mayoral Regulations that follow-up the Joint Ministerial Decree Number 8 and 9/2006. Implementation of the Joint Decree in regional governments is crucial, as Ministerial regulations do not carry legal sanctions. With no legally-binding mechanisms, the implementation of the Joint Decree is highly determined by the moral commitment of all religious groups (Pusat Litbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, 2011).

In a 2007 case in East Jakarta, the construction of a house of worship was hindered as the Provincial government had not issued a Gubernatorial Regulation as a derivative of the 2006 Joint Decree (Pusat Litbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, 2011). By ratifying policies regarding the establishment of places of worship, regional governments are able to foster harmonious social relations between groups of different religions in a smaller administrative area to that of the national level. As constructing places of worship is an issue that has been particularly proven to potentially generate animosity, a legally-binding regulation issued by regional governments will also fill the implementation gap left uncatered by the Joint Ministerial Decree.

Eventually, the Ministry of Religious Affairs declares supporting revision of the 2006 Joint Ministerial Decree to enhance its legal power beyond that of a blueprint for establishing places of worship. Several social actors also advocated for provisions within the joint decree to become legally binding. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), through their proposal of a Bill on the Protection of Religious People, recom-
mended provisions regulating the establishment of religious houses, funeral services, and religious broadcasting.

To optimize the structural provisos designed to promote inter-religion harmony, there were also proposals to extend the roles of Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB), or the Forum for Religious Harmony. As stated in the 2006 joint decree, the FKUB is a forum composed of members of the civil society that can be formed by local governments (Pusat Kerukunan Umat Beragama Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2015). The forum is intended to instill harmony amongst different religious groups, acting as a mediator and overseer of religious affairs on a local administrative level. However, the absence of structural mandates in the Joint Ministerial Decree Number 8 and 9 of 2016 meant that very few FKUBs were established throughout Indonesia. More crucially, the composition of council members have been reported to consist mostly of local elites and those of dominant religions, leaving minority religious groups and other members of the lower strata to be underrepresented.

Normatively, the FKUB is expected to carry out several different roles. First, the forum facilitates matters of interfaith relations within a local administrative region. The establishment of places of worship, being a historically thorny issue, is well-suited for FKUB intervention. Local residents might interpret the establishment of a house of worship as laden with covert political interests. One widespread prejudice is that an establishment functions as a way to extend the geographical influence of a religious group to communities that do not adhere to it, such as through the proximity of religious symbols (Pusat Litbang Kehidupan Keagamaan 2011). While these assumptions tend to be unfounded, the FKUB can help to dispel any possible political interests by bringing together relevant parties. The forum can conduct dialogues with both the congregation building the house of worship as well as the local community to prevent inter-group animosity and prejudice from festering.

Second, the FKUB actively supervises matters of interfaith relations, such as forming monitoring teams to collect data from religious groups. These surveys are supposed to be particularly effective to counter falsification of data, such as when religious organizations inflate the number of their congregation, which is possible when there is weak government oversight. Conducting monitoring also addresses another structural problem, namely the faulty procedures in establishing houses of worship due to an incomprehensive socialization of the Joint Ministerial Decree.
Congregations, communities, developers, and village-level government apparatus often have no idea on the administrative requirements or necessary documents in constructing places of worship, which could jeopardize their existence and fracture interfaith harmony when these errors are brought up in the future. In particular, many religious communities have been reported to ignore existing regulations when they renovate their establishments in the majority area.

Third, the FKUB assumes a role in mediating conflicts. In some cases, a place of worship cannot be established after receiving pressure from social actors outside the community, such as the case of construction of a mosque in the former Texas village of Manado (Putro, 2017). Ideally, the FKUB can also mitigate parties who aim to profit by politicizing the construction of religious buildings, persuading intolerant social actors to respect the rights of other religious groups. This role, however, can also be potentially abused. The FKUB itself might align or concede to the interests and pressure of intolerant groups; in this case, the forum might “solve” a potential social conflict by simply not providing recommendations to the local government committee handling the establishment of places of worship.

Fourth, the FKUB also functions to deter interfaith conflict. The local government apparatus often only responds reactively to a conflict between religious groups; when they do begin to handle it, the government can take a long time and tend to take pragmatic decisions. On the other hand, the monitoring activities conducted by FKUB might allow them to notice sentiments building before an actual confrontation takes place. The forum can also encourage local governments to take a more proactive stance, such as by conducting activities in collaboration with grassroots civil organizations working to promote harmonious interfaith relations.

Fifth, the FKUB can also initiate peace. The forum can proactively organize activities such as cultural dialogue, art contests, sport competitions, social and religious collaboration, ethno-religious counseling, as well as socializing local wisdoms (Asri, 2013). The most important factors to promote peace are the socialization of religious values, the interdependence of life on the collective economy, family values, the cultural values of living in harmony, as well as community education based on local wisdom (Pusat Litbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, 2011). These values are internalized through a culture of negotiation between religious communities, the government, and other relevant parties. By
organizing activities that provide a lived experience of tolerance and diversity, religious communities might even be able to discuss the culture of tolerance itself—not merely arriving at a common understanding, but also help one another trace back where this common understanding comes from. By making the culture of negotiation as the centerpiece of tolerant values and behavior, religious groups could be influenced to refrain from voicing their disagreements in a potentially inflammatory way (such as public protests accompanied by narratives of prejudice and suspicion), and prioritize discussion forums as the most appropriate way to communicate their interests.

In spite of their reported problems and cases of malpractice, we nonetheless argue that it is necessary to establish FKUB as an institution at the national level. Structurally, FKUBs on the provincial and city level are only partially overseen by the Ministry of Religious Affair’s Agency of Religious Moderation and Human Resource Development, but not a dedicated national body. As such, we argue that the development of a dedicated “National Harmony Center” that completely oversees the issues of tolerance, peace, and harmonious interfaith relationship as a strategic, wide-ranging intervention for solving religious conflicts. Thus far, the settlement of disputes surrounding places of worship has often stalled on the local level; it is only when these cases become a nationwide discussion that they are taken seriously by the state.

It is hard to argue that the state wields enormous power in conflicts surrounding the establishment of places of worship: after all, it is the only actor that can structurally determine the range of actions that other actors can take. Such power, however, does not mean it can be wielded without ramifications. When faced with the decision to legitimize or ban the construction of a place of worship, the state will gauge the cost of their decision, including the possibility of facing decreased public trust and satisfaction. Giddens (1984) argued that social actors calculate the risks involved in their actions, weighing in the possibility of receiving (or in the case of the state, applying) sanctions and the costs they have to pay to obtain their goals. As a social actor, the state performs a cost-benefit analysis—social actions are more likely to be performed when the benefits received outweighs the costs, and vice versa.

In the case of GKI Yasmin, elite incumbents decided to not grant their construction permit—even after unfavorable legal decisions imposed upon them by higher level courts—as it will incur several obvious losses. In annulling GKI Yasmin’s IMB, incumbents and high-ranking
officials of the Bogor City Government seek to maintain good relations with the majority group. Militant Islamic factions have the access, networks, and masses to bolster their bargaining position. By showcasing their resources, opposition Islamic groups have convinced the city government that rejecting GKI Yasmin will garner their sympathies and political support.

Although the Bogor City Government wields structural authority, they nonetheless decided to contradict the provisions within the 2006 Joint Ministerial Decree, bypass various court decisions, and ignore the recommendations made by Indonesia’s Ombudsman. These decisions, in turn, reproduce the social structure favoring hardline Islamic groups based on the symbolic domination of annuling the rights of religious minorities. Nonetheless, this domination cannot be asserted unless certain social actors that wield structural authority abide by the entrenched cultural hegemony. Alas, Structure is inherently dynamic. While it has the enormous power to constrain the actions of social actors, it is also influenced by the interplay of competing social interests.

Throughout the conflict of GKI Yasmin’s establishment, the state often assumed itself as a dominating actor against the dominated (religious) minorities. Not only does the Bogor City Government wield legal and political power; it also boasts considerable social support from the mass bases of militant Islamic groups. However, the state is also malleable. Governments can change their stance in response to the dynamics of competing actors, utilizing their structural power to constrain the actions of one party at one point, then proceed to dominate the opposite party in another point. When the state interacts and maintains relations with elements that support GKI Yasmin, they reverted back from their previous stances and promised to legalize the church construction. In a different setting, the city government refuses to allow GKI Yasmin to operate under the pretext of maintaining stability, security, and order. As such, it is important to point out how the Culture and Process surrounding a conflict are able to influence its Structural outcomes.

**PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE GKI YASMIN CONFLICT**

Elements of Indonesian civil society have pointed out that government regulations surrounding religious life are detrimental to religious freedom, as evinced through the myriad social conflicts with religious
undertone occurring across the nation. Nonetheless, these conflicts arise due to the narrow, one-sided understanding of religious freedom amongst several religious groups in Indonesia. It is the Cultural aspects that have made existing regulations to be ineffective and prone to abuse and misinterpretation.

To rectify these problems, the government needs to focus on providing awareness to all religious communities, especially regarding the hot-button issue of establishing places of worship. A 2007 study by the Research and Development Center for Religious Life (Pusat Litbang Kehidupan Keagamaan) posits that the establishment of a place of worship amounts to 17.4% of the 11 factors that might lead to religious conflict. As such, helping religious communities to arrive at the same understanding on the requirements of building a place of worship will help to curb a major driver of religious conflicts in Indonesia.

The state can help amend skewed cultural perceptions by mobilizing its structural power. Government institutions can collaborate with religious leaders and religious assemblies to socialize the mechanisms for obtaining building construction permits (PBM), along with directly approaching officials, religious leaders, and community figures from all elements. To show support for tolerance and protection of religious communities, the state should collaborate with relevant civil society organizations such as the Wahid Foundation, Nurcholish Madjid Society, Setara Institute, and many others. These NGOs often employ best practices in approaching the community, bringing together various parties to foster an inclusive religious life across Indonesia. Finally, savvy young members of the populace can also help to raise awareness on these issues through social and alternative media.

The following table showcases the intersections among aspects of Structure, Culture, and Processes surrounding the case of GKI Yasmin. The Structure-Culture-Process analysis model has the discernible advantage of showing the interconnections between base elements of social life. In short, this model allows us to comprehensively map out a conflict, therefore enabling us to arrive at alternative solutions.
Table 2. Intersection of Elements of Structure, Culture, and Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure -</td>
<td>1. The Bogor City Government accommodates a culture of intolerance by revoking GKI Yasmin’s IMB letter. 2. Two major Islamic groups, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, issued a statement in support of GKI Yasmin. 3. The support from Wahid Institute for GKI Yasmin. 4. The existence of FKUB in Bogor City.</td>
<td>1. Mass protests by hardline Islamic Groups as a pretext for revocation of GKI Yasmin’s IMB letter. 2. The decision of the Bogor City Muspida’s Meeting to revoke GKI Yasmin’s IMB under the pretext of “maintaining order”.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Solutions:**
1. Multiculturalism education. 2. Organizing a “Festival of Diversity”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>1. Local communities lack understanding on the mechanisms for establishing a place of worship. By ignoring the binding power of administrative requirements, a culture of not-complying with regulations takes place. Communities rely on their own assumptions rather than legal processes. 2. The community refuses to obey legal decisions.</th>
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1. Protests by certain Muslim groups against the establishment of GKI Yasmin Church. 2. The support provided by other majority religious leaders towards GKI Yasmin has not been able to solve the problem.

**Solution:** Conducting negotiation between community groups, the government, and other relevant parties to discuss the culture of tolerance between religious communities.
Process

1. A letter, accompanied by a protest, from FORKAMI demanding the ban of GKI Yasmin and a revocation of their IMB.
2. Congregants and supporters of GKI Yasmin organized a protest in front of the Bogor Presidential Palace demanding their rights.
3. GKI Yasmin congregants conducted public worship on the sidewalk after their church construction was banned in 2011.

Solutions

1. Improving mechanisms for negotiating regulations to ensure they are done with deliberation.
2. The Mayor of Bogor should facilitate deliberation between conflicting parties.
3. The Mayor of Bogor ought to implement the Supreme Court Decision annulling the revocation of GKI Yasmin’s IMB in 2010.

1. A protest from FORKAMI after GKI Yasmin congregants conducted public worship on the street sidewalk.
2. Church congregations are prohibited from worshiping in churches by FORKAMI and Municipal Police (SATPOL PP).

Source: processed from multiple sources

In the table above, we showcased possible ways to resolve the conflict of GKI Yasmin. Aside from strengthening elements of Structure, Process (Agency), and Culture, possible solutions must be derived from efforts to reinterpret the symbolization that has been entrenched within society, as well as a critique of state policies and their implementation. We designate these efforts as “forms of negotiation” that are crucial to solving GKI Yasmin’s conflict.

The goal of these negotiations is to achieve dominance over authoritative resources. Structure-wise, this is done by strengthening existing state institutions that foresee interfaith relations, such as the FKUB, and to encourage policy and political reforms. On the Culture front, the values of religious moderation require various breakthroughs and continuous socialization. A constructive space for negotiation can only be
achieved by providing equal opportunities for multiple interests. This is why interfaith meeting points are not simply ceremonial: they must also be able to transform religious participants as more inclusive subjects.

The result of these processes is for values of religious tolerance—as well as the social actors that espouse them—to achieve cultural hegemony and structural control against opposition policymakers, militant Islamic groups, and other potentially-hostile elements. Only through this power formation can inclusive spaces for all be established. Each element needs to work together, including expanding their working concepts on religious freedom, to perform appropriate actions to strengthen minority groups such as GKI Yasmin.

CONCLUSION

By applying the Structuration Theory of Anthony Giddens (1974), which was further elaborated by Wirutomo’s triadic conception of Structure, Process, and Culture (2013), this study bridges previous studies on conflicts surrounding the establishment of places of worship in general, and GKI Yasmin in particular. These studies have tended to only focus on a single dimension of conflict—be it Structure, Culture, or social actors. Analyses that only see the Structure of GKI Yasmin’s conflict are likely to be less observant to changes in the dynamics of structure itself; while a Cultural analysis that simply emphasizes how cultures can be tolerant or intolerant is similarly lacking. Finally, studies focusing on how competing actors were able to “mainstream” their interests largely ignores the structural and cultural factors at play. Instead, we argue that the complexity of GKI Yasmin’s conflict can only be properly mapped by situating these elements in a dialectical process. The actors in this conflict frequently contradict one another, but at the same time, there are also social encounters that make Structure move more dynamically. Structural, processual, and cultural dimensions all have an influence.

All these three dimensions are filled with contradictions. Although structural pressures confine the actions of religious minorities, GKI Yasmin still has the potential to emerge victorious. Congregants were able to fight for and obtain their rights through court decisions, intervention from other state institutions such as the Ombudsman, as well as support for their religious freedom by non-government elements. It is also true, however, that the Bogor City Government ignores the rights of minority groups, and tends to side with Islamic-militant ac-
tors due to political pressures or aligned interests. A widespread culture of intolerance and the pragmatic calculation of interests by state actors had increasingly cornered the position of GKI Yasmin. A tendency to latch on to the status quo perpetuates the domination of the state over minority groups—and was also a key element in the reproduction of conflict surrounding GKI Yasmin’s establishment. Nonetheless, the processual dimensions were crucial for pro-GKI Yasmin groups and their Islamist-militant counterparts to renegotiate their interests. For these reasons, efforts to resolve the GKI Yasmin conflict requires holistic considerations of structural, processual (agency), and cultural elements.

REFERENCES


