Master's Project

Conflict Around the Construction of a House of Worship in Indonesia:

A Case Study of GKI Yasmin

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Abstract

This paper studies the conflict around the construction of a church in Bogor, Indonesia. The church construction was initiated by GKI *(Gereja Keristen Indonesia)*, a group of Presbyterian-minorities that live in Bogor, Indonesia. The city is located 60 miles from the capital, Jakarta, with an exceptionally homogeneous religious demographic with 98% of the population being Sunni Muslim. The church project controversy began when the Muslim citizens of Bogor reacted negatively, saying that the construction was illegal due to invalid construction permits. This paper, based largely on in-depth interviews and literature sources will try to analyze what the root causes of the conflict are and attempts to come up with intervention strategies to solve the conflict since it has been unresolved for ten years.

Introduction

Indonesia has been long recognized as one of the most tolerant Muslim-majority countries in the world and has been lauded as a model of Muslim Democracy (Wolfowitz, 2009). Located along the equator, the country is home to 250 million Muslims, which account for 12.7% of the world's Muslim population, which makes Indonesia the largest Muslim-majority country in the world (Miller, 2009). Demographically, Muslims make up 87% of the nation's population, followed by Protestants (6.96%), Catholics (2.91%), Hindus (1.69%), Buddhists (0.05%) and Confucianists (0.13%) (BPS, 2010). According to the former president of the World Bank and the US ambassador to Indonesia, Paul Wolfowitz, there are a few reasons why Indonesia is appropriate as a model for other Muslim-majority countries: three consecutive fair and free election processes (1999, 2004 and 2009), remarkable transitions from authoritarian to Democratic systems and economic growth of 6% per year (Wolfowitz, 2009).

Additionally, Indonesia's religious tolerance has been recognized by other countries' leaders, one of which is former US president, Barack Obama. In his visit to Indonesia in 2010, he mentioned "the spirit of religious tolerance that is enshrined in Indonesia's constitution, and that remains one of this country's defining and inspiring characteristics" (White house archive, 2010). Indonesia's constitution guarantees religious freedoms for its people. In fact, religious freedom has been part of the Indonesian Constitution since independence in 1945. Additionally, in 2005, Indonesia ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which provides under article 18(2) that "[n]o one shall be subject to coercion which would

impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice," and under article 27 that "persons belonging to ... minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own (Indonesia's basic constitution, 1945).

However, the positive notion of Indonesia's religious tolerance has found itself frequently questioned, following the recently increasing religious intolerance. To give just one example, according to a cross-national study on religious restrictions published by Pew Research Center in September 2012, Indonesia is actually one of the world's most religiously restrictive states. Specifically, Indonesia is one of only five out of the 49 Muslim-majority countries in the world to register "very high" ratings on government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion. The other four countries were Afghanistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen (Pew Research Center, 2012). Domestically, an Indonesia-based research institute, Setara, recorded that there were 220 cases of violent attacks on religious minorities in 2013, an increase from 91 such cases in 2007. In total, there were 1554 assault incidents in the name of religion recorded in Indonesia since the reformation era[1] on 1998 until 2015. This makes religion the most contributing factor to violence in Indonesia with a percentage of 65%. It is followed by racial issues at 20% and domestic violence at 15% (Fakhrana, 2014).

One of the forms of religious intolerance that can be found in Indonesia is the rejection of the construction, the destruction, or the preventing of the use of houses of worship. According to Setara institute, from 2007 to 2014, there were 316 houses of worship that encountered destructive actions, such as burning and rejection of construction permits by the authorities.

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[1] Reformation era or also known as *Reformasi* in Indonesian is the era that began with the fall of Suharto in 1998 during which Indonesia has been in a period of transition. A more open and liberal political-social environment ensued following the resignation of authoritarian President Suharto, ending the three decades of the New Order period (*US Indonesia Diplomatic and Political Cooperation Handbook*, Int'l Business Publications, 2007).

Those numbers include 163 churches, 110 mosques, 14 Buddhist monasteries, 5 Hindu temples, 3 pagodas, 1 synagogue and 20 other religious buildings in various locations (Ruqoyah, 2015).

According to Andreas Harsono (Harsono, 2014), the escalation of religious violence on houses of worship began in 2006, when Indonesia's former president, Susilo Yudhoyono issued a joint decree with his cabinet dedicated to creating "a Religious Harmony, Empowering Religious Harmony Forums, and Constructing Houses of Worship." One of the regulations in this decree was to require a permit for the house of worship construction. The permit proposal should include:

- List of names and ID cards of at least 90 people who will use the house of worship. This list should be endorsed by the village head;

- Support letter from at least 60 people living in the area. This support letter should be endorsed by the village head;

- Written recommendation from the local Ministry of Religious Affairs; and

- Written recommendation from the local religious group (Ministry of religious affairs and homeland affairs, 2006).

The result of the decree has effectively been a legally sanctioned block on construction of new houses of worship for religious minorities in areas where Muslims are in the majority, including the islands of Java and Sumatra. In some cases, the decree has even blocked Christian congregations from renovating existing church buildings (Harsono, 2014). Militant Islamists have in some areas effectively hijacked the decree and imposed enforcement of alleged violations. In 2013 in Bekasi (a city near Jakarta), the local government used an excavator to demolish the new red-brick structure of the Batak Protestant Christian Church (Huria Kristen

Batak Protestan, HKBP). Officials ordered the church demolished for lack of a building permit on the demand of the Islamic People's Forum, a Muslim group organization in Bekasi (ibid).

Human right groups regard these regulations as discriminatory, especially for the religious minorities. Indonesian human rights activist, Musdah Mulia argues that it was not easy to gather signatures of 60 people, especially if asked to people with different beliefs (Aritonang, 2014). Consequently, the believer of a given religion should be able to find a location that is heavily populated by the people from their shared belief in order more easily get signatures. Eventually, this regulation will end up creating a divided society where one's religious identity determines location of residence (ibid).

In fact, Yudhoyono's decree was not the first effort that Indonesia's government took to control the establishment of houses of worship. According to Mujiburrahman (Mujiburrahman, 2006), it started in 1969 when Indonesia's administration under President Suharto issued a decree regulating the construction of houses of worship as a response to church burnings in North Sumatra, Jakarta and Kalimantan. The decree authorized the regional Government to control both the manner and content of religious propagation. The decree also authorized the regional Government to control the establishment of new places of worship, namely that people will not be allowed to build a new place of worship unless they get permission from the governor or the subordinate authorized officials. As discriminatory as it sounds, Indonesia's Church Association (PGI) regards the updated regulation issued by Yudhoyono as more repressive than previous one, since it requires the involvement of citizens. For example, by seeking signatures (Human Right Watch Report, 2013).

Yudhoyono's discriminatory regulations also targeted the Ahmadiyya, a minority group within Islam, since the administration also issued an anti-Ahmadiyya joint decree. The decree

declared the group a deviant sect, therefore they were forbidden from practicing and teaching their beliefs. Since the decree was signed, the government has sealed 30 mosques belonging to Ahmadiyya members. The amount of violence towards the group has also rapidly risen from 3 incidents in 2006, to 50 in 2010, and 114 in 2011. This precedence has caused Yudhoyono to be criticized on his commitment towards religious harmony. One such criticism came from the Human Rights Watch (HRW) which mentioned in its report in 2013, that Indonesia's government has failed in protecting religious minorities from violence and intolerance in the name of religion (ibid).

Case study

Map of West Java

This research will be discussing a situation regarding GKI Yasmin, a case of religious violence in the rejection of a house of worship that occurring in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. It started in 2006, when a Calvinist group named GKI (Gereja Kristen Indonesia –Indonesian Christian Church) initiated the construction of a church in a development area called Yasmin. Upon beginning the construction, the GKI Yasmin group claimed that they already fulfilled all the requirements required by the ministerial joint decrees, including the signatures from 60 people living around the area. They also obtained a construction permit issued by the city of Bogor. On the groundbreaking day, the city even sent its representatives to the ceremony and sent a letter of appreciation towards the construction, signed by the mayor (Prabowo, 2013).

The construction of the church project ran for two years, when in 2008, the construction permit was frozen by Bogor's government. The reason for this action was because there were 80 citizens that lived around the Yasmin area that sent letters to the mayor, stating their objections towards the construction. They mentioned that the signatures were falsified and therefore the permit application invalid. Responding to this request, the former mayor Diani Budiarto, froze the permit, resulting in the sealing of the location and putting the project on hold (Wadrianto, 2011). The rationale behind this sealing is "City of Bogor local regulation no. 7, 2006 which ruled that the government is allowed to freeze the permit of any building or construction causing restlessness to society" (Pemerintah daerah kota Bogor, 2006) . Responding to this situation, GKI Yasmin sued the Bogor government for its decision to freeze the permit, and so the legal process began. Before getting into the discussion about the conflict, it is important to note that there are multiple components that contribute to the escalation of the problem. Therefore, the explanation will be sectioned into legal, religious intolerance, and leadership issues.

Legal issues

GKI Yasmin had been subject to legal action since the permit controversy emerged for the first time. The process had gotten to the nation's Supreme Court and Ombudsman, both of which ordered the construction to be unsealed. Below is the explanation of the Court's structure in Indonesia and the chronology of the legal process and of the GKI Yasmin case.

<p align="center">**Indonesia's Administrative court structure**</p>

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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Administrative Court │      │ Administrative High │      │   Supreme Court     │
│ - First level Court of│ ──▷  │       Court         │ ──▷  │ - Final court of appeal│
│      appeal          │      │ - Second level Court of│    │ -Located in Jakarta │
│ - Located in Bandung,│      │      appeal          │      │                     │
│      West Java       │      │ - Located in Jakarta │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
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Source: Indonesia's Law no. 9, 2004 on Administrative Court

Legal chronology

- July 13, 2006: GKI group obtained the construction permit, followed by starting the construction progress. The groundbreaking ceremony was attended by the representative from Bogor's government (Suara pembaharuan, 2011).

- February 4, 2008: the city of Bogor froze the construction permit, citing the protests against the church. One of the reasons claimed was because GKI group falsified the 60 signatures that they gathered for the permission process. The letter was signed by the mayor, Diani Budiarto and was addressed to Bogor's representative by the department of urban planning and landscape development. The site was immediately sealed (Tarigan, 2012).

- February 14, 2008: GKI Yasmin sues the Bogor government in West Java's Administrative Court in Bandung for suddenly revoking the construction permit. The Court ruled that GKI Yasmin has all the legal requirements needed, hence, it ordered the Bogor government to unseal the site and to resume construction (ibid).

- 2009: City of Bogor, specifically the department of urban planning and landscape development, decides to appeal to Administrative high court in Jakarta. However, the verdict supported the previous decisions by the court in Bandung and ruled that the permit's revocation is unlawful and the city of Bogor should repeal those actions (ibid).

- December 9, 2010: the city of Bogor pursues a judicial review in an effort to support its permit revocation, yet the Supreme Court ruled to reject it. Therefore, the verdict by the previous courts are valid (Restu, 2014).

- January 20, 2011: Bogor's district court issues a verdict that the permit's revocation is not violating the law since the signatures that were gathered by GKI Yasmin were falsified. Up to this point, it is important to note that there are two different verdicts issued by two hierarchically distinct legal institutions: the Bogor district court and the Supreme Court (Febrianto, 2011).

- March 8, 2011: Following the Supreme Court ruling, the city of Bogor revokes its letter that froze the GKI Yasmin permit and re-issued the construction permit, yet, the site is not yet reopened (BS, 2016, 9 December, Skype calls interview).

- March 11, 2011: Bogor's government permanently revokes the construction permit, referring to the verdict by the district courts on January 20. This action shows that the city only complies with the Supreme Court ruling for three days (ibid).

- July 8, 2011: Indonesia's Ombudsman declared that the action taken by Bogor's government to revoke the permit on March 11 is maladministration, against the law and has clearly ignored the Supreme Court's ruling (detik.com, 2011).

Since then, the site remains sealed and abandoned because the construction project has stopped. As a form of protest, GKI Yasmin group has been demonstrating in front of Bogor's mayoral office and presidential palace in the capital, Jakarta. As an alternative, the Mayor offered to relocate the GKI community's church. This proposal was rejected by GKI Yasmin, claiming that they had the legal standing for construction (Permana, 2015).

Religious intolerance issues

Even though the legal perspective indicates that this problem is an entirely administrative issue regarding the permit, it is also important to discuss the background of the society where the construction was originally planned, since it is related with religious intolerance incidents that had frequently occurred in the area previously. Bogor is a city located 37 miles from the capital, Jakarta. The population is 950,000 with Islam as the religious majority representing, 94% of the population and Protestantism coming in second, with 3.4% (Badan Pusat Statistik Bogor, 2010). In 2015, Bogor was ranked as the most intolerant city in Indonesia, based on numerous cases of intolerant actions that happened in the city. Besides the GKI Yasmin case that has been in the spotlight for years, the current Bogor mayor, Bima Arya also prohibited members of the Shiite community from celebrating the religious feast day of Asyura on 2015 (Pitaloka, 2015).

In addition, Bogor is one of the major cities in West Java province, the biggest province in Indonesia. Interestingly enough, the province also topped the rankings as the most intolerant

province in Indonesia in 2016, according to the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) report. This finding is based on the report on religious intolerance received by the commission, which indicates that out of 97 reports nationally, 21 come from West Java, the highest of any province. The incidents include the church sealing, unissued permits for qualified church projects, and discrimination towards Ahmadiyya and Shi'a followers that occurred in Bogor, Bekasi, Bandung and Cianjur (Irfan, 2017).

In relation to the GKI Yasmin case, The Muslim citizens who actively rejected the construction created a group named Forkami (Forum Komunikasi Muslim Indonesia), which according to its official website, is a community based-communication group that consists of the people living around the area. The formation of Forkami was based on the idea that the Muslim citizens need one common organization to voice their rejection towards the construction of the church (tentang Forkami, 2011). Hence, the organization was formed specifically to oppose the GKI Yasmin construction. Since 2010, Forkami has been the most vocal group rejecting the construction and has conducted numerous meetings and communications with Bogor's government regarding the issue. Besides Forkami, Muslim traditional scholars called "ulama" frequently gathered in public spaces such as downtown and the mayoral office to demonstrate against the construction. In addition to the problematic process regarding the permit, the ulamas also raised concern towards apostasy and Christianization in Bogor (Desastian, 2011).

The discussion about Christianization has been a controversial issue regarding Indonesia's religious dynamic for so long, and the history can be tracked back to the colonial era. Indonesia was first colonized by the Portuguese, who carried their mission out under the "gold, glory, gospel" motive. "Gospel" in particular, carried a mission to spread Christianity to the colony. Since independence, Indonesian history has been divided into two major periods, the old

order under Sukarno and new order under Suharto. Suharto ended-up ruling the country for 32 years under a dictatorship, and during first two decades of his reign, he created regulations that clamped down on political Islam. Suharto merged Islamic parties into one and forced them to abandon their ideal of formalizing Islam as a state ideology and had to accept the nation's official philosophy, Pancasila[2] as their only ideology. Suharto's closest advisors were almost entirely non-Muslim, and were believed to have had a strong influence on Suharto's decision-making process. Crossette (Crossette, 1985) argues that the impetus toward secularism comes from President Suharto's deeply held personal convictions, and from his commitment to the national slogan, "Unity in Diversity." One of the major precedence that considered as repressive to Islam was on 1975, when Suharto passed Indonesia's marriage law which adopted Western law instead of Islamic law (Okrizal, 2008).

According to Mujiburrahman (2006, p. 135), these political marginalization's of the Islamic groups during the first two decades of the New Order had created the mentality in which "Indonesia's Islamic group as the majority with a minority mentality" (Wertheim, 1980) The Muslim feeling weak in relation to a very powerful enemy, particularly the ruling army[3]. In this context, within the discourse on Christianization, the Muslims expressed their feeling of being weak and powerless against the religious expansion of the apparently powerful Christians, a narrative told by Suharto's closest advisor. The logic of this discourse is that the state should protect the weak through certain regulations (ibid).

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[2] Pancasila is the official philosophical foundation of the republic of Indonesia. It consists of five principles: (1) Belief in the absoluteness of God, (2) Just and civilized humanity, (3) The unity of Indonesia, (4) Democracy guided by wisdom and the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representative and (5) social justice for all of the people of Indonesia.
[3] Suharto was an army general and known to powerfully using army's forces to maintain the stability of his 32 years of uninterrupted regime

Once Suharto was forced to resign in 1998, Islamic politics enjoyed the freedom of developing and practicing their ideology. The popularity of conservative Islam immediately increased, shown by the election results in 1999, which shows that Islamic-based parties won 37% seats at the national congress (ibid). During this period too, Islamist populist groups such as Islamic Defender Front- FPI (Front Pembela Islam) started to appear and frequently launched mass-actions that attacked minorities. There have been numerous instances of religious violence that FPI engaged in, including the burning or forced sealing of churches, citing Christianization (Indra, 2016). According to Riziek Shihab, the chief of FPI, Christianization is a real threat, and FPI members in different areas have observed these actions.

"Christianization is an undeniable fact, and we have found thousands of proofs of these actions in a lot of places. Therefore, we have to fight against the massive Christianization efforts, since they have targeted the transformation of the entire Indonesian population into Christians by 2020. Let's see how far they can go," (Adhilla, 2014) (translated by author)

FPI also launched attacks on Ahmadiyya and Shi'a groups and forcibly sealed the restaurants that remained open during Ramadhan. According to Wilson (Kapoor, 2015), the government's failure to rein in radical Islam leaves religious minorities vulnerable and undermines Indonesia's transition to democracy after decades of authoritarian rule. With nearly 7 million members, the FPI has been the new Islam populist power that has slowly replaced Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the nation's biggest Islamic organization, with more than 50 million members, which has been the face of Indonesia's global image of pluralistic Islam (Varagur, 2017).

Leadership of the city mayor

The leadership of the city mayor is also among the critical issues that need to be addressed. In 2008, when the conflict first erupted, Bogor was led by Diani Budiarto, a politician

who was endorsed by an Islamic-ideology based party, PKS (Prosperous Justice Party). PKS was founded four years after reformation and based its ideology on Islamic preaching, which implicitly stated on its basic principle, "PKS is a party that has a duty to conduct Islamic preaching in order to pursue universal goal and to channel the aspirations of Muslim and all citizens of Indonesia" (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, 1998). On GKI Yasmin, Budiarto argued that the resistance from the citizens toward the construction of the church is so assertive that it leaves him no choice but to revoke the permit. Additionally, he believed that relocation is the only alternative to prevent continued violence and anarchic incidents around the area (Humaeni, 2012).

Additionally, Budiarto mentioned some other reasons to justify the permit revocation, such as the maintenance of stability in the area, the falsification of signatures, and even the inappropriateness of the street's name. GKI Yasmin is in fact located on "Abdullah bin Nuh street", a name taken from Bogor's respected colonial-era Islamic scholar, Abdullah bin Nuh. Budiarto finds it so inappropriate to build the church on a street that was named after a Muslim scholar, that Budiarto persists strongly in his offer of relocation (Kumaat, 2015). Despite all the reasoning for his church construction permit revocation, during his term, Budiarto has not proposed any solutions to solve the problem other than to relocate (Liputan6, 2013). Since then, the problem remains unresolved even as Budiarto was replaced by Bima Arya by the end of 2014.

Arya was endorsed by a nationalist party, PAN (National Mandate Party) and has voiced his commitment to ending the conflict since his campaign, even before he was elected to office (Maeilana R. , 2014). After being elected, Arya proposed the same alternative as Budiarto, which is to relocate GKI Yasmin, and the group respond with rejection. On 2016, he finally proposed a

new solution that entirely excludes the relocation option. On a meeting with GKI Yasmin group, Arya states his commitment that the conflict should be resolved immediately and therefore, the new settlement proposal that Arya came up with was to build both a mosque and the church side by side at the current location of the proposed church, and the project will be named "Bhinneka building" (Tanamal, 2017). This idea has received positive feedback by the GKI group, but until recently, there has been no actual realization regarding this new project. In fact, according to the spokesperson of GKI group, Bona Sigalingging, the church area in Yasmin is still sealed and the Christian group is still unable to access the project (Ramadhan, 2017). Additionally, in regard of religious intolerance, Arya strongly refutes the accusation that the conflict is caused by religious intolerance. He mentioned that the GKI Yasmin problem is an entirely administrative issue (Maeilana R. , 2015).

GKI Yasmin's conflict has attracted a lot of attention not only domestically, but also internationally. The region's ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission of Human Rights (AICHR) mentioned that Indonesia has a serious lack of goodwill to restore the minimum rights of religious freedom in the case of GKI Yasmin's dispute. In 2012, Human Right Watch also issued the following statement:

"*In January, the Supreme Court ordered the reopening of a Presbyterian church known locally as GKI Yasmin, overturning the Bogor administration's ruling which had revoked the church's building permit. However, Bogor Mayor Diani Budiarto refused to comply. Government ministers offered the church "relocation." In October, an Islamist organization began to harass churchgoers who were holding Sunday services on a sidewalk outside the sealed church. Senior government officials—including Minister of Religious Affairs Suryadharma Ali, Home Affairs Minister Gamawan Fauzi, and Minister of Human Rights and Law Patrialis Akbar—continued to justify restrictions on religious freedom in the name of public order.*" (Human Right Watch, 2012)

Based on the above, it is fair to say that this conflict has been going on for a long time and that it needs to come to an end. In order to do that, the GKI Yasmin conflict requires a comprehensive solution that could accommodate the needs of all parties that are involved. Therefore, the goal of this research is to create a thorough analysis of root causes and approaches to the conflict, and come up with an intervention framework for solving the problem. The framework will be based on the data obtained through literature and interviews, and it will be analyzed using conflict resolution theories so that an appropriate framework can be created.

Literature review

The aim of this research is to analyze what the causes of this conflict are and to come up with a solution framework to help solve the problem. According to Ohlson (Ohlson, 2008), there is no single cause of conflict. Rather, conflict is context-specific, multi-causal and multi-dimensional and can result from a combination of the following factors:

- Political and institutional factors: weak state institutions, elite power struggles and political exclusion, breakdown in social contract and corruption, identity politics.

- Socioeconomic factors: inequality, exclusion and marginalization, absence or weakening of social cohesion, poverty.

- Resource and environmental factors: greed, scarcity of national resources often due to population growth leading to environmental insecurity, unjust resource exploitation.

  Knowing the root of the conflict (ibid).

Identifying and understanding the interactions between various causes, dimensions, correlates and dynamics of conflict – and the particular contexts in which conflict arises, is essential in determining potential areas of intervention; and designing appropriate approaches and methods for conflict prevention, resolution and transformation. Accordingly, one cannot simply point to one reason that contributes to the escalation of the GKI Yasmin case. In fact, there are multiple reasons that need to be analyzed using appropriate theories on conflict resolution so that an intervention framework may be created (ibid).

Identity issues and its relation to conflict

Identity is essential to address the GKI Yasmin case, based on the fact that conflicting parties belong to different identity groups. Identity, according to Kriesberg (Kriesberg, 2003), is developing a sense of self as an essential part of every individual becoming a mature person. Each person's self-conception is a unique combination of many identifications, as broad as *woman* or *man, Catholic* or *Muslim,* or as narrow as being a member of one particular family. Personal identity refers to those traits and behaviors that the person finds self-descriptive and are typically linked to one or more of the identity categories. The formation of identities is based on

various traits and experiences, which there are some traits of personal identity that are fixed at birth, such as parental ethnicity and religion, place of birth, and skin color. Other traits may be acquired or modified later, such as language spoken, religion practiced, clothing worn, or food eaten. Some of the contents of one's identity typically change over time as a result of developmental dynamics and social influences. Individual identity is 'fluid, dynamic, and responsive to its social context (Breakwell, 1986). Failure to establish or maintain a relatively secure identity produces severe psychological discomfort, or even a total personality breakdown, which maybe experienced by the individual as a threat to survival (Bloom, 1990).

The next form of identity that will be discussed is collective identity, which in this category, identities extend to countries and ethnic communities, so that people feel injured when other persons sharing their identity are injured or killed. Additionally, people who share the same collective identity think of themselves as having a common interest and a common fate. It is collective in the sense that the person shares the source of his or her identity (i.e. the relevant group membership), and therefore also the ensuing identity, with other people. In contrast to individual identity (I or me), collective identity (we or us) is a place that is shared with a group of other people. It is thus a more inclusive identity (Turner H. T., 1986).

Finally, to explain the behavior of one group towards another, Tajfel and Turner (ibid) developed Social Identity Theory. Social group, according to Tajfel and Turner is a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share in some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus. According to Kelman (Kelman, 1998), The group's identity consists of the members' shared conception of its enduring characteristics and basic values, its strengths and weaknesses, its hopes and fears, its reputation and conditions of existence, its institutions and

traditions, its past history, current purposes, and future prospects'.

In Social Identity Theory, self-esteem is enhanced through favorable comparisons between one's own group and an out-group. By identifying themselves as a member of a group, it is important for an individual to maintain a positive self-concept, since it will affect their self-esteem. This leads one's own group to evaluate his group in comparison to other groups in terms of value attributes and characteristics. In Social Identity Theory, the tendency to compare our in-group to out-groups is explained as social comparison, when in order to get an idea of the superiority or inferiority of our group and of how reasonable and adequate our belonging to it is, we compare it with the characteristics, members and benefits of other groups. In SIT, the pressures to evaluate one's own group positively through in-group/out-group comparisons leads to social groups attempt to differentiate themselves from each other. Accordingly, the motivating principle underlying competitive intergroup behavior was a desire for a positive and secure self-concept. Therefore, this type of Social Comparison is essentially competitive (Tajfel H. , 1981).

Social Identity Theory, as argued by Tajfel and Turner (1979) will be used to help indicate the identity difference between the actors in the GKI Yasmin case and how these distinctions escalate to the formation of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. It will also explain how this "us vs. them" identification can contribute to discriminative behavior towards each other that leads to the development of conflict. SIT will help me to examine the earliest stage of my analysis process, which is to start with the identification of identity issue. I will begin my analysis with figuring out what identity differences exist between the parties and how might these differences escalate into discrimination towards others. SIT will also be relevant to explain how identity issues will possibly play a key role in the GKI Yasmin conflict and finally, that it is not possible to finding the causes of the conflict without exploring the identity

aspects.

Social-categorization and in-group bias

If Social Identity Theory is used to explain the aspects of identity that differentiate the Christian and the Muslim groups so that the concept of "us" vs "them" can emerge, social-categorization will explore how these identity differences made people categorize themselves as belonging to a certain group that best fits their personal identity. Social categorization developed from Social Identity Theory that was first proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 39), which argues that "people categorize themselves and other as belonging to different social groups and evaluate these categorizations". Social categorization was also conceived of as cognitive tools that segment, classify and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action, since they create and define the individual's place in society (ibid, p. 40). By being ascribed to a certain group, people tend to categorize other people into groups to simplify their understanding of the world and to structure social interaction.

According to Allport (Allport, 1954), Social Categorization is the natural cognitive process by which people place individuals into social groups. Social categorization occurs when people think of someone as a man (versus a woman), an old person (versus a young person), a Black person (versus an Asian or White person), and so on. Just as people categorize objects into different types, so they will tend to categorize people according to their social group memberships. Once people do so, they begin to respond to those people more as members of a social group than as individuals. Social categorizations also function as some form of stereotype that are shared by all group members and help to interpret, explain and even justify one's behavior (Tajfel H. , 1970)

A study by Tajfel and Turner (1970, p. 96) implies that there is a tendency to favor the in-group over the outgroup in evaluations and behavior, and further research implies that this attitude plays a major role in intergroup relations. It has also been found that Social-categorization is sufficient to trigger intergroup discrimination favoring the in-group, and the mere awareness of the presence of an outgroup is sufficient to provoke intergroup competitive or discriminatory responses on the part of the in group. People also allocate more rewards to other members of their own group (Turner J. C., 1978), report more positive social evaluations of them (Hoyt, 1974) and are more likely to help in-group members than to help those in the outgroup (Piliavin, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981). Tajfel argued that the mere process of making salient 'us and them' distinctions changes the way people see each other. When category distinctions are salient, people perceptually enhance similarities within the group ('we're all much the same') and enhance differences among the group ('we're different from them'). Finally, Trepte (Trepte, 2006) assumes that groups tend to show all kinds of behavior such as solidarity within in-groups and discrimination against out-groups as a part of the social identity process, with the aim of achieving positive self-esteem and self-enhancement. These differences between social categories will be more salient if the differences between categories are clear (Oakes, 1987). In-group bias also explains how discrimination is higher towards the out-group and lower or even non-existent to the out-group.

Social Categorization Theory will be appropriate to help explain how social categorization leads to in-group/out-group framing and how it can potentially lead to conflict. Additionally, SCT will also be helpful in understanding why one's group tends to stereotype characteristics of other groups and how it affects their perceptions of them. If social identity theory can be used to explain how identity plays role in the GKI Yasmin conflict, social

categorization will be used to help understand the stereotyping behavior that may be occurring within groups that leads to the formation of different perspectives towards others. SCT will also help to understand how these stereotypes can shape the parties' behavior toward each other and how that can eventually trigger conflict.

Religious identity and conflict

Religion, according to Seul (Seul, 1999) is a system that defines the contours of the broadest possible range of relationships— to the self, to others near and distant, friendly and unfriendly, to the non-human world, to the universe and to God, or that which one considers ultimately real or true. No other repositories of cultural meaning have historically offered so much in response to the human need to develop a secure identity as religion. Consequently, religion often is at the core of individual and group identity.

Religious communities and meaning systems frequently are a source of the belonging and affirmation as a basis for self-esteem that individuals seek. Even though religion is only one identity factor that contributes to a sense of self and helps define individuals and groups in society, it can be a particularly powerful influence in moving people toward or away from violent conflict. It is because religion provides answers to the most fundamental questions of life for many people since it can often overcome other identity factors in making difficult decisions. Religious identity can also draw the most extreme lines between in- and out-groups (ibid, p. 556). In addition to its contribution to fulfill the needs of individual identity, religion can also take a different form on creating or preventing conflict. When being faithful, it could means extending compassion, respect, tolerance, and justice to others. It can lead people to actively contribute to preventing violence and building peace. When religious diversity is respected and

celebrated as something that strengthens rather than threatens one's own faith experience, religious identity becomes not a zero-sum force but an opening for shared understanding and cooperation. Religious identity can also provide an access point for connecting with parties in conflict to build trust and open dialogue. In this sense, religious identity can contribute to what has been called faith-based diplomacy: conflict resolution strategies that integrate faith into diplomacy and seek to tap into religious identities as tools for promoting peace and reconciliation (Johnston, 2003).

Religion, like other identity-based conflicts, are typically caused by the same material factors and social dynamics that incite and fuel conflict between ethnic, racial and identity groups. The presence or absence of effective political structures and capable, conciliatory leaders, relative resource distribution, the degree of international attention and involvement, and many other political and economic factors typically have a significant bearing on the emergence (or non-emergence) and course of identity conflicts. Religion plays an essential role on both individual and group's identity formation that heavily affecting their norms, behavior, tradition and their perception towards another. This broad and important role of religion will be used to explains how religious difference can cause discrimination between groups and can eventually trigger the conflict (ibid).

Understanding the relation between religious identity and conflict is essential in order to analyze the root causes of the GKI Yasmin conflict. Religious identity is definitely one aspect that needs to be examine in this case since both parties holds to a different belief. Additionally, it is also important to be able to figure out how much these differences can actually contribute to the developing of the conflict. This theory is appropriate to helps analyze to what extent does

religious identity differences and stereotypes that arose from one's group perception can leads to the discrimination behavior towards each other.

Minority vs Majority relations

Islam is the religious majority in Bogor. By the latest survey on 2014 (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Bogor, 2017), out of 950,334 of its total citizens, Muslims account for 94% of the population, while Protestants comes next with 3.4%. This is why the minority vs majority dynamic is important to address in analyzing the conflict, since it is understood that Protestants are the minority group with an obvious contrast in size in comparison to the Muslim group. Indonesia itself is highly multicultural, and almost every city has a small minority group, be it based to their ethnicity or religion. For example, despite the fact that Sundanese is the native ethnicity of Bogor, the group constitutes only 69% of the city's total population, followed by Javanese by 21% and Betawi by 4% (ibid) .

In the social psychological literature, majority and minority groups usually are defined in terms of size (Leonardelli & Brewer, 2001) or power and/or status (Blanz, Mummendey, & Otten, 34). Additionally, Eitzen (Eitzen, 1967) In his essay, "A conflict model for the analysis of majority-minority relations", states that power relations are the key to understanding majority-minority relations since power is the chief agency through which minorities are differentiated. Minority groups (which may be racial, ethnic, or religious) are categories of people with less power than the dominant group—hence, with unequal access to the opportunities and rewards of the society. He also explains that majority-minority relations are power relations, in which groups and individuals desire for prestige, power and wealth which are in scarce quantity.

Consequently, groups attempt to hold on to or increase their share of these scarce value (ibid, p. 79).

In a democratic system, a minority group becomes the party that benefits less, since democracy is constituted by "the people", which means the majority group. However, it is understood that International law has recognized that minority groups have rights against majority populations. Although until recently this area of the law had been largely neglected, it is widely understood that the need to protect religious, racial, ethnic, and other minorities is a growing international societal concern. Indeed, as democracy is understood today, the minority's rights must be protected no matter how alienated a minority is from the majority society; otherwise, the majority's rights lose their meaning (Silber, 2011).

Majority-minority relations theory will be used to explain the societal background of the GKI Yasmin case, and how these demographic situations can possibly affect the decision-making process of all the parties involved. It would help to understand how democratic processes such as local elections could probably have direct/indirect effects on how the parties view conflict, especially from the perspective of authority, which is in this case, the city mayor. Finally, to be able to find the root causes of the conflict, it is not sufficient to address the behaviors of the mayor and majority group solely, therefore, the explanation about minority-majority dynamics by Eitzen will be a helpful tool to understand the reaction from the minority group. It is understood that the GKI group has long rejected the alternative proposed by the mayor to relocate their church, and the theory will help to analyze the reason behind this behavior. To sum up, democracy theory and majority-minority relations will be a powerful tool to help to understand the conflict from the perspective of the society, the supporting factors for their reaction and why they adopt a particular attitude. It will eventually lead to the identification

of the root-causes of the conflict according to the involved parties' perspectives.

Indonesia's law enforcement on religious freedom

Indonesia's legal and constitutional system has significant civil and human right protections. In fact, the legal system has established this regulation since the country reached its independence in 1945. Indonesia's basis constitution, article 28E has explicitly ruled that:

"(1) Every person is free to choose and to practice the religion of his/her choice, to choose one's education, to choose one's employment, to choose one's citizenship, and to choose one's place of residence within the state territory, to leave it and to subsequently return to it".
(2) Every person has the right to the freedom to believe his/her faith (kepercayaan), and to express his/her views and thoughts, in accordance with his/her conscience.
(3) Every person has the right to the freedom to associate, to assemble and to express opinions."

Through the years, the protection of human rights and religious freedom in Indonesia continue to develop, one of which, is marked by the issuance of Law No. 39 Year 1999 on Human Rights that reinforced the creation of the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM). Komnas HAM is endowed with the function to study, research, disseminate, monitor, and mediate human rights issues. In addition to Komnas HAM, the Government also set up a number of national institutions relevant to the promotion and protection of human rights and rule of law, namely the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), National Commission for Child Protection (KPAI), and Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition to the establishment of Human Right's enforcement institution, Indonesia had also ratified eight out of nine international human rights treaties, one of which is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which ruled that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. (ASEAN, 2014).

However, despite its progress on institutionalizing and ratifying Human Right's components, the country report issued by the US Department on Human Rights on 2015

mentioned that Indonesia's law enforcement is still substandard and rampant with human right violations. Specifically, on enforcing religious freedom, the report mentioned that the government did little to intervene at the local level to solve past religious conflicts through its mandate, and to enforce court rulings, override unconstitutional local regulations, or otherwise uphold the constitutional and legal protections afforded to minority religious groups. There were instances where local governments and police gave in to the demands of groups labeled locally as "intolerant groups" to close houses of worship for permit violations, or otherwise restrict the rights of minority religious groups. The government at both the national and local levels at times reportedly failed to prevent or appropriately address intimidation and discrimination against individuals based on their religious belief (ibid).

After transitioning to democracy in 1998, the local government was given more authority to create and practice its own regulations on religious freedom. According to the report, local governments have started to selectively enforce blasphemy laws, permitting regulations, and other local regulations in ways that affected various religious groups. Officials at the local level reportedly sometimes gave in to the demands of groups described locally as "intolerant groups" and criminal gangs (including those with religious affiliation) to close houses of worship for permitting violations. The report also mentioned that the government officials and police sometimes failed to prevent intolerant groups from infringing on others' religious freedoms and committing other acts of intimidation. The police also did not always actively investigate and prosecute crimes by members of intolerant sectarian groups, or punish certain individuals but declined to hold the groups themselves responsible (United States State Department, 2015; United States State Department, 2015). I found that the report above accurately explains the actual condition of Indonesia's law enforcement regulation which is believed to be ineffective. I

will use this report to analyze the connection between the lack of law enforcement mechanisms and the long-standing conflict of GKI Yasmin. This report could be potentially useful to explain why the conflict remains unresolved, despite the fact that the court has already issued its decision.

Finally, it is important to address the joint decree on house of worship since it become one of the main reason that prevent the church's construction to be built. This regulation was passed on 2006, and according to Melissa Crouch (Crouch, 2007), there are a number of Islamist groups that's support this regulation. There are at least five core arguments were put forth by these groups, first, the regulation was to prevent conflict and preserve religious harmony (Honoris, 2006). Second, it was required to clarify that the closure of churches is justified where an official permit has not been obtained from the relevant authorities. This is because churches without permits can cause disturbances to the surrounding areas. Some buildings, such as houses and schools, are therefore inappropriate to be used as places of worship (Sijabat, 2005). Third, the regulation will help limit places of worship, eliminate competition between religions and prevent "public disorder" (Senggotro, 2006). Fourth, it was alleged that the establishment of churches in predominantly Muslim districts is aimed to proselytizing non-Christian locals and must therefore to be stopped (ibid), and finally, since this decree is the revision from the old one which issued during the 70's, some group argues that the old regulation is need to be revised. Some group even argues that the new regulation was not "harsh enough", making suggestions to raise the requirements to obtain a permit (Diani, 2006).

Church argues that these arguments find their roots in the fear of proselytization, and in particular "Christianization", which is perceived as a threat to Islam, and is fueled by the belief that the Christians have the power, money and will to build an unlimited number of churches

(Jakartapost, 2006). I found that this argument is very interesting to help me analyze the reason behind the church's rejection by the Muslim group. From the data that I gathered, I will try to figure out if any of the reason mentioned above also discussed during the interview or on the news sources. In order to find the solution for the conflict, it is also important to find the reason behind it, and those reasons could be discovered through addressing the argument above.

It is possible that each of these theories can potentially help to explain the source and escalation of the GKI Yasmin conflict in Bogor. These theories will be used to examine the conflict in relation with religious identities and how political leadership contributes to the development of the conflict. Each of the four theories will be explored and analyzed further in creating a possible framework for a resolution that can be proposed to the conflicting parties.

Research methods

The GKI Yasmin conflict appears to be a multi-actor conflict that is happening between not only two different religious groups, but it also authority figures, such as the mayor and the people that live around the area, who are easily exposed to the conflict. Consequently, the data collection should include the people that have different perspectives on the case, which also directly or indirectly related or affected by the problem. According to that, I conducted nine interviews with the people from various roles and identity categories with the aim of getting a deeper and a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors regarding the conflict to help to answer the research question.

I chose these nine individuals based on their position (such as the chairman of one's group, the spokesperson, the priest, the city's mayor) since they play important roles in this conflict. They are considered important in the way that they have considerable and influential power over their supporters. For example, the priest of the church can engage his followers to conduct prayers in front of certain public area such as the presidential palace (istana negara) or mayoral office, so the prayers also work as a protest tool. Additionally, I found that it is important to get perspectives from those who are not actively involved, but live around the area since they are the party that have been most affected due to their locations. Therefore, I also interviewed three Yasmin residents that live no more than three miles from the location and have been residing there for a long period of time. I conducted nine interviews in total, each one represents a different party that has a different position on this problem. To protect the identity of the party that I interviewed, I decided to use only their initials and their position within the conflict. However, this does not apply to the city mayor since it would be difficult to make him anonymous. Hence, I decided to disclose his identity. Here are the parties that I interviewed for the purpose of this study:

- **AI, the Chairman of Forkami**, a Muslim group that actively rejects the church construction. AI has a background as an employee in an international company and obtained his education in Pakistan. According to AI, he was appointed as the Forkami's chairman by the residents of Yasmin so that they have one institution that could speak on behalf of the people, yet only specifically on GKI Yasmin.

- **AW, active member of Forkami,** is actively involved with the action since the founding of Forkami. AW is an employee at a company based in Bogor, and is a Yasmin citizen. He stated that his involvement with the Forkami is because he wants to helps express the citizen's aspirations, which are to reject the construction.

- **SS, the priest of GKI Yasmin,** religious preacher of GKI Yasmin, SS has been leading the congregation since 2014, and actively perform religious rituals such as Easter and Christmas in front of the presidential palace as a form of protest.

- **BS, follower of GKI Yasmin, group's spokesperson.** BS has been an active member of the church since its construction was initiated, in 2006. BS, who obtained law degree from Utrecht University, has become the spokesperson for the congregation as well as the representative of GKI Yasmin on a lot of important occasions. He also actively joined the protests alongside SS and often times is invited by media to speak about the GKI Yasmin case.

- **Bima Arya, mayor of Bogor.** Bima Arya is a young and experienced politician with a background as an academia. Upon becoming the mayor, Bima Arya was the founder of the National Mandate Party (PAN), which later endorsed him to run as mayor alongside with Justice and Prosperous party (PKS). Arya obtained his master's and doctoral degree from Monash University and Australian National University, both in Australia.

- **MA, Journalist, Jakarta Post.** She has worked at the largest English-language newspaper in Indonesia, the Jakarta Post and writes primarily on politics, human rights and minority-related issues. The journalist was interviewed since she has conducted an investigative report on GKI Yasmin and has a broad perspective on the case since she is not directly involved, yet has in-depth information about the conflict

- **HK, Yasmin resident.** HK lives about 1 ½ miles from the church's construction site, which has allowed him to observe the conflict closely. He has been living there for 15 years, and finds that the conflict is indeed worrying for him, mostly because of the blockade near the conflict site causes traffic.

- **MQM, Yasmin resident.** MQM lives about 3 miles from the site, and has been living there all his life. MQM witnessed first-handed the tension that arose from the conflict, but he says that what is most concerning is the rise of intolerance in his city.

- **AA, Yasmin Resident.** AA lives just behind the construction site, or about 0.3 miles from it. He has been living there since 2005, and he was interviewed because in addition to his residence located close to the construction site, AA also had some engagement through the conflict. He stated that during the signature gathering process, his father was asked for the signature. He also received an invitation to actively reject the construction, but he prefers not to, since he found that his life has been relatively safe even though he sometimes worried that direct violence can happens anytime.

Conducting the interviews is one of the most challenging process of this research, since all of my participants are residing in Bogor and I live in Boston. So, I relied heavily on technology to gather the data. I conducted the interviews through multimedia platforms such as

emails, phone calls and Skype calls. Each of the interviews lasted between 15 minutes for the shortest one, and one hour for the longest, with 30 minutes as the average. My interview protocols revolve around two main questions, which are "what do you think are the causes of the conflict" and "are there any interventions that the authority has done to help solve the problem". These two main questions are to help me answer my research question which is to find the root causes of the conflict and to come up with the intervention framework. The rest of the other questions are in regard to their personal experience of being involved or/and observing the conflict, and their thoughts about what are the methods or ways that they think can help solve the problem. Additionally, all my participants are well informed about the consent of confidentiality, and out of nine participants, only one interviewee, who is the journalist, who has requested that her identity be kept confidential, due to her journalistic ethics. The rest of the interviewees do not object to have their identity disclosed.

Five out of the nine interviews are conducted in Sundanese, the native West Java language and the other four were in Bahasa Indonesia. All of them are transcribed in the original language that was used during the interview, so none of these interviews are transcribed in English. I recorded all the interviews using my iPad, which is password protected, and once I finished with the interview process, I proceeded with the transcribing. To analyze the data, I went through all the transcripts, and even though the interview protocols were adjusted to every individual's role in the conflict, I have two common questions regarding the root causes and the intervention framework. The answer to these questions are what I mainly use to help me answer the research questions. I wrote down their answers and analyzed factors were mentioned the most by my interviewees. In order to answer these two questions, I also looked up other data sources such as yearly reports from the Setara Institute, the Wahid Institute and Indonesia's

national commission on human rights. The first two institutions are known as Indonesia's think tanks that conduct research specifically on human rights and religious harmony, while the human rights commission is Indonesia's national human rights institution that works to protect and to promote human rights values in the country. The data that I looked up from these institutions are their yearly reports on religious and human right issues. From the Setara institute, I looked up reports from 2014, 2015 and 2016 and from the Wahid institute, I obtained the data from its 2014 and 2016 reports, while from the Human Rights commission, I specifically looked up their city rankings on intolerance from 2013, 2015 and 2016.

There are a few challenges that I came across upon conducting these interviews. First, having to do it through voice calls, I disliked the fact that I could not see the person's non-verbal gestures directly. I realized that this type of communication is important for an Indonesian's way of communicating, and being unable to observe non-verbal communication was one of the major hurdles for me. It does not necessarily limit the data that I obtained, but I believe that if I could have conducted the interviews face to face, I would get more in-depth information. In addition to that, some of the participants who agreed to be interviewed at a promised time were also abruptly nonresponsive, and I had to reschedule repeatedly. However, I found that this type of interview is very useful in terms of practicality. Through voice calls, I can finish the interview quickly in less than one hour with all the data that I needed. When I was in Indonesia, I tried to meet with one of my participants; I had to wait for one hour and ended up being turned down.

In addition to oral interviews, I found that court findings and mass media data are also essential to analysis since I believe that those two types of data can provide different important approaches on creating the intervention framework. If the court findings provide with more knowledge on formal regulation, mass media will give information on current societal

circumstances, which change rapidly. Since I am conducting this research from a different location, I found that my disadvantage is the fact that I could not conduct direct observation on the conflict site. Besides the blockade in front of the church and the demonstration in front of Bogor's mayoral office and presidential palace that I came across nearly three years ago, I have no direct contact with the conflict. Therefore, following the mass media that is reporting on this case will help me to keep up with important information that I'd probably missed. So, the court documents that I analyzed are the court's verdicts from the administrative court in Bandung, the verdicts from higher administrative courts in Jakarta, and the supreme court verdict in Jakarta. In addition to that, I also analyzed the joint decree regarding the houses of worship that issued both in the Suharto era in 1965 and Yudhoyono era in 2006. All of these documents I obtained from the official website for the court verdicts at www.mahkamahagung.co.id and the decree I obtained from the minister of religious affairs website, www.kemenag.co.id. All of these documents are in Bahasa Indonesia. Whereas for the news articles, all of them are obtained electronically. I mostly gather the news from Indonesia's renowned news outlets such as vivanews.com, rmol.co, merdeka.com, detik.com, kompas.com, tempo.com, sindo.com, etc. all of these news sources are in Indonesian, and I also gathered information from the only two Indonesian English-language news outlets, which are the Jakarta Post and the Jakarta globe. I also gathered information from local news website such as Radar Bogor, haibogor.com and Bogorku.com. The timeline that I looked at was mostly from 2008, when the conflict first erupted to 2017.

Upon conducting the research, I found it interesting that for some participants, communicating in Sundanese made them become friendlier and more relaxed. It is obvious that the tone changes during the interview process was influenced by the common ethnic identity that

I share with them. The influence of personal identity on the relationship between a researcher and their interviewee and how it affects the researcher's subjectivity can be explained by Peshkin's "In search of subjectivity- one's own" (Peshkin, 1988). In this article, Peskhin explains his encounter with his own subjectivity when conducting a qualitative research which involves in-depth interviews. Peshkin is a Jew and conducted research in a school named Riverview. In the article he mentions that *"In fact, being Jewish shapes my life. When I saw ethnic-maintenance behavior in Riverview, I identified with it, I got a warm feeling from it. I saw people doing something that I realized that I do myself and I valued it".* I found that by being a Sundanese, I felt an instant connection with my participants that led me to use another form of identity, language. When I heard that they had Sundanese accent, I would immediately switch my language to Sundanese and that is when the connection started to form between me and my participant. I also think that this identity resemblance made the interview process go smoothly and a personal connection started to form. However, I am aware that this circumstance will somewhat affect my objectivity as a researcher, but as Peshkin points out in his article, one of the ways to manage the researcher's subjectivity is not by exorcising it, but rather, by managing it. To preclude it from, being unwittingly burdensome as a researcher is progressing through collecting, analyzing and writing up the data.

I found that it is important to keep checking up on myself every once in a while, during the interview process, to assure that I was still maintaining my objectivity. The other thing that I personally found helped me to continue being objective was by trying to find the other shared identity with my other participants who did not speak Sundanese. For example, two of my Indonesian-speaking participants shared a common ethnic identity with me from my father's line, which is Bataknese (an ethnicity from outside of Java island). It was not really salient at

first since I wasn't speaking the language, but I intentionally mentioned it to them with the hope that they would become much more friendly and welcoming. I found that this matter of multi-layer identity is much more complex in Indonesia since one's family can be composed of different ethnicities, but in this matter, I believe it is a useful tool for me to help deepen the conversation. By setting these common tones with all of my participants, I found that I have chosen to use different aspects of my identity to help create trust and relationships that allow for honest conversation during interviews. On "negotiating fluid identities: alliance-building in qualitative interviews" Razon and Ross (Razon & Ross, 2012) explain this phenomena as fluid identity, when us as a researchers have the power to choose which aspects of our identity that we will foreground or background in any given conversation. In other words, researchers have the power to present themselves in certain ways that they hope might influence for good, the data they collect, in as much as their words and silences create a space for open communication. I found that this method helps me to maintain a deeper connection with my participants which effectively generates a more open and productive conversation.

Analysis

This research project is aimed at answering the research question: "what are the causes and underlying causes of the GKI Yasmin case?" By identifying the underlying causes, it is expected that an intervention framework to help solve the problem could be generated. I will examine the data that I gathered from the interview, news sources, and legal documents regarding the GKI Yasmin case. To start off, I will analyze the findings from my interview. After analyzing all nine interviews that I conducted, I found that most answers the participants provided regarding the causes, cited religious intolerance. It was addressed by eight out of nine interviewees. Administrative and legal issues was the second reason that was mentioned the most by six interviewees, while political background and miscommunication were mentioned twice and once respectively. The explanation below will analyze further these findings.

Religious intolerance

It was not unexpected to find that this factor was mentioned the most, regarding the geographical and demographic backdrop of where the conflict is occurring. As explained before, Bogor is located in West Java, where both Bogor as a city, and West Java as the province have the highest rate of intolerance. I believe these features affected the level of intolerance that occurred since the same incident also happened in another city in the province. I believe West Java possesses three major causes of growing intolerance in Indonesia as mentioned by Rogers (Rogers, 2012): the silence and passivity of the majority, growing radicalization, and the weakness of the government at every level. The first reason, which is passivity, is exhibited by my interviewees who, even though they live near the conflict area, chose not to take any action. All three of them, although they agreed that intolerance is the main reason for this conflict, chose to be not involved at all. In fact, one of them agreed to not having the church around the area,

and the other two stated that they don't care, as long as any form of action such as demonstration

or street blockades do not disrupt the traffic which will cause problems for their mobility. This

behavior was shown by the younger generation aged 23-26, the age group of these three

interviewees. Here are pieces of interviews that I conducted with the three participants:

Participant one:
HI: Since you live near the conflict area, what is your opinion about GKI Yasmin?
MQM: I don't feel any burden and I am not directly affected by the conflict, and I think that if they already fulfilled the requirement, why not? However, they also have to acknowledge that it is so hard for them to get the permit because the process took a long time, but again, in another part of the country, there are also places that did not allow mosques to be built, so I think it's just the same everywhere. They just have to deal with it.

Participant two:
HI: Since you live near the conflicting area, what is your opinion about GKI Yasmin?
AA: I'm just ok. I never get involved in any violence, so I basically don't care. But if they face rejection, why are they so stubborn about building it here? They could have built it elsewhere. Personally speaking, I don't like to have a church near my house too, because we are mostly Muslim. I also feel a little irritated because when the Christian are trying to pray at the location, there will be a lot of demonstrations and disrupted traffic. That's the real problem for me.

Participant three:
HI: Since you live near the conflicting area, what is your opinion about GKI Yasmin?
HK: I'm not really aware of what happened, but there are obviously a lot of negative outcomes that me and my family experienced because of this conflict. Since I was a kid, I have always gotten scared when I thought that violence would occur, so I just want this problem to end soon (all quotes have been translated by the author)

All of the statements above directly or indirectly indicated the passivity coming from the

majority. It also illustrates that all the participants are equally ignorant regarding the whole

religious issue yet expected the problem to be solved since it affected their personal life. I found

that "the analysis of majority-minority relations" by Eitzen (1967, p. 78) is an appropriate tool to

explain this behavior. On his argument, Eitzen mentioned that the relation between majority and

minority is a power relation, where the minority group becomes the party that benefits less, since

they they have less power than the dominant group. Eitzen stated that a minority group could be differentiated through race, ethnicity or religion that is different with the majority group (ibid). From the answers provided by my participants, it is understood that the power relations determined the behavior of the majority group in reacting to this conflict. The first participant, he mentioned that the same challenge in constructing the house of worship is also faced by the Muslims in places where they became the minority, so it is clear that the number of religious population plays a significant role on shaping his perspective. The same pattern was also mentioned by the second participant; in which he exhibits this tendency more explicitly. He mentioned that "we are mostly Muslim" and "they could have built it elsewhere where". I found that this statement gives the indication that he views Muslims as more powerful in term of number, and that as the majority, they have the power to tell the Christian group to build their church elsewhere. From these two instances, I found that the imbalance in the population between Muslims and Christians has created the justification for the majority to reject the construction of the church.

The second reason, which is growing radicalization, has been the major point of concern in Indonesia's current social dynamic. As mentioned before, Indonesia has been growing from one of those Muslim majority countries that practices democracy and religious tolerance, to an unfriendly place for minority groups. The outcry against the Church or non-Muslims has become a common norm now in Indonesia, and that the rejection was not solely towards other beliefs or other houses of worship, but it has also developed into a political issue. The Muslims refuse non-Muslim candidates based solely on their religion, and launched campaigns highlighting religious differences. The quote "It's better to have a corrupt leader than a non-Muslim leader" has become normal. This precedence is alarming since it not only caused severe divisiveness within

the society, but also it created a fragile condition where conflict can erupt anytime when religious issues are triggered. These arguments are supported by the statements of my participants below:

Participant one
HI: What do you think are the causes of the conflict?
SS: I view this as the same pattern everywhere in West Java: growing intolerance. It is not coincidence, it is the society just getting less and less tolerant. And honestly, I am sure that there is a grand design behind all of these intolerance things, but I don't know who are the designers or what they want.

Participant two:
HI: What do you think are the causes of the conflict?
BS: I believe that intolerance has been growing fast in our country, especially in West Java. Day by day, we can feel how it grows within society, even sometimes it becomes a tool for political needs. We see more and more extremist group doing thing as they please to the minority, not only in Muslim majority areas, but also in places where the Muslims are a minority. This situation is really disheartening for me.

Additionally, it was not only religious tolerance that was threatened, but also the rule of law. The case of GKI Yasmin is the perfect example. Even though the church has the approval from the Supreme Court to open, the mayor refuses to allow it. The mayor of Bogor is in defiance on the court's verdict, yet there is no affirmative action taken by higher authorities towards this incident. The role of administrative actors in dealing with intolerance leads us to the third factor mentioned by Rogers, which is the weakness of the government at every level. According to Imdadun, the commissioner of Indonesia's human rights commission, one of the reasons why West Java frequently tops the list of intolerance is because the provincial administration has failed to come up with an effective formula to resolve religious conflicts. "As a result, small disagreements become protracted, and grows into larger, more complex conflicts" (Singgih, 2016). Yenny Wahid, the Director of the Wahid Institute concurred with this argument. She stated that in 2012 her organization received at least 46 reports of religious intolerance in

West Java - higher than any other province. "Intolerant groups often use religious issues for their own political gain - using jargon relating to heresy and the closure of 'illegal' houses of worship to gain traction to achieve their means," finished Wahid (Sukamto, 2016). This issue of the weaknesses of administrative actors are also being brought up by three of my participants:

Participant one: this problem of intolerance has indeed occurred at both the national and local level, and sadly, the local government tends to comply with their constituents in issuing intolerance regulations and ruling and unfortunately, at the national level, the government does nothing. They are scared of some extremist organizations while we know, Indonesia is obviously a Pancasila-based country, not a Qur'an or Bible-based country.

Participant two:

HI: Do you think the government has put forth maximum effort on solving this problem?

SS: Obviously not. Maintaining human rights is definitely not on Jokowi (the president) or Bima Arya's agenda. Specifically, the mayor, I am not even sure that he has a clear agenda about how to solve this problem. And we are all know that Bogor is the most intolerant city in Indonesia, but he won't do anything about it. He would rather build things instead of addressing this issue

Participant three:

HI: Please talk me through the groups you see as the main actors in this conflict. From your perspective, what do you think are their goals?

MA: The local government is definitely the one that held most responsibility. In my assumption, there are groups with certain interests that lobbied the mayor to come up with this reaction. Who are these groups? I don't know. But the mayor is clearly in the hot seat. Logically, why can't they solve the problem? It's their civilians that they dealt with, he was elected by them, why would the civilians be more powerful that the mayor?

Finally, as stated above, the narrative of religious intolerance is also emerging most frequently in my interviews. In fact, eight out of nine participants agreed that religious intolerance contributes to the conflict escalation in the GKI Yasmin conflict, but there is a stark difference in the Christian and Muslim interviewees in how they interpret intolerance based on their perspective. The Muslim interviewees mentioned that the insistence of the Christians to build the church in Yasmin was mainly supported by the idea of Christianization, which shows

the intolerance of the Christians towards the majority. From our conversation, the participants mentioned Christianization several times, and that they feel threatened by having the church in the area, fearing that the Christians will be spreading their belief to the Muslims, so it is important to stop the construction before it finished. In fact, the Muslim participants stated that this rejection is one of the forms of struggle to protect those with Muslim beliefs from becoming infidels. When asked about the reason of their worries about Christianization, they believed in the notion that Christianity carries a mission to spread their beliefs since it is taught in their religion. Both Muslim figures that actively reject the construction share this idea. Here are the transcript excerpts on that particular issue:

Participant one
HI: in your opinion, why do the Christian groups reject the option to relocate?
AW: Because they always wanted to build churches everywhere, don't you think? They have it in shopping malls, ruko[4], everywhere! Even though it's against regulation. Maybe because their religion taught them to do that, to spread their beliefs to non-Christians and to convert them. I think their religion told them to do that. If we talk about intolerance, they are obviously intolerant because they can't just leave the Muslims alone, they always have a goal to turn us into Christians.

Participant two
HI: In your opinion, why do the Christian groups reject the option to relocate?
AI: They definitely have a secret mission, that's why they are so stubborn in rejecting the relocation
HI: What is the secret mission going to be?
AI: Christianization, definitely! Yasmin is a very strategic area, there are a lot of Muslims in there so they want to change their belief.

In contrast, the Christian group regards the rejection of the church as a form of intolerance towards them. I interviewed two GKI Yasmin congregation members, and both

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[4] House that integrated with a store

interviewees believed that they should be able to pray anywhere since it's their right that is guaranteed by the constitution. When asked about their insistence to build the church in Yasmin and their stance on rejecting the relocation, one of them stated two reasons: one, is because they already relocated three times, so that they have a trust issue with the city's authority when they are offered this option for the fourth time. The second reason is because they believe that relocation will only make religious groups in Indonesia more segregated, one of the notions that goes against Indonesia's foundational principles. The other interviewee also provided the argument that the option to relocate will never solve the problem and indeed, it will only accommodate the extremist group's requests.

Participant one:
HI: Can you explain me your behavior about the relocation option?
BS: That is definitely not a justifiable option. It is indeed very dangerous because it could create a "segregated Indonesia", where the people are separated according to their belief. Imagine if it happened in Bali, for example, all the Muslims and Christians should leave the island because Hindu is the majority. Also, before we end up in Yasmin, we already relocated three times, so who's going to guarantee that we are not going to be relocated again for the fourth time? So, it is definitely not going to work and we are not going to take that option.

Participant two:
HI: Can you explain to me your reaction to the relocation option?
SS: Relocation will not solve the problem. In fact, it will give justification to the extremist group to voice more rejections of the other's construction. If we take the option to relocate, don't be surprised if the same thing will happen again and again in the future (translated by the author)

Both participants emphasized Indonesia's growing intolerance, and how this common incident has been occurring in a lot of other cities in Indonesia. As minorities, they also mentioned that this situation has been affecting their lives as they have to face a lot of discrimination. Therefore, the insistence to build the Church is one of their efforts to resist intolerance. My finding shows that religious intolerance is the main issue that caused the GKI

Yasmin conflict. It is mentioned by most of the participants and supported by news sources that provide data about surveys and reports regarding the phenomena. It is especially high in Bogor and West Java, the location where the conflict happened. Although every party has a different perspective about how they perceive intolerance, there is clearly mistrust and suspicion between the Muslims and the Christian groups which is based on their own perceptions of each other. These behaviors then are articulated in the form of rejection and insistence regarding the construction. In between these two groups, there are also the parties that chose not to be involved at all with the conflict, even though they live in the area. This passiveness indicates that intolerance is not always the main interest for some people, as long as it is does not interfere with their interest.

There are two theories that I found that help me to explain the trend of rising intolerance in Indonesia. First, Social Identity Theory (SIT) from Tajfel and Turner (1987), and secondly, the concept of religious identity and conflict by Seul (1999). To begin with, I found that the main reason for Indonesia's rising intolerance is religious difference between groups. Religious identity, such as being Muslim and being Christian, in this case, appear to be the most prominent identity trait that differentiates one group of individuals from another. Consequently, it started to make people identify themselves with one group who shares a common religion as their in-group and the person from other religions as the outgroup. As the concept of in-group and out-group started to arise, Social Identity Theory explains that it would eventually lead to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination which are exhibited evidently in this case. From the data that I analyzed, I found that the Christian group is perceived to be the the out-group by the Muslims, and it explains the discrimination that is faced by the group, one form of which is the rejection of their church's construction even though it possessed all the legal requirements.

Furthermore, the anxiety of "Christianization" movement that was mentioned by two of the Muslim participants also shows how identity aspects can really become the motive for the group's actions, even though it is entirely based on assumption. Based from my data, I found that there is no evidential findings about Christianization in Bogor, specifically in GKI Yasmin. It is rather difficult to find the basis of the notion of "Christianization" that was mentioned by the Muslim group, but I found that the anxiety of having its in-group becoming the out-group is enough reason for the Muslim group to take action.

The Muslims believed that it is necessary for them to protect their in-group from becoming the out-group as they shared one common trait of identity. This behavior is explained as collective identity, which according to Turner (1987), is when people with a shared collective identity tend to have a strong solidarism and a sense of belonging towards the members of their in-group. They also share common conceptions, values, interest, condition of purpose to future prospects, that made it important for them to maintain this identity. It is also explained that in-group-out-group relations tends to be competitive (Tajfel 1978a, Turner; 1975b), and that the in-group will perceive the out-group as a threat. This explains why the Muslims became heavily worried by Christianization, since they found that such action is a threat for their shared religious identity as a Muslim.

To understand how religious identity could trigger conflict, the argument from Seul (1999) would be an appropriate explanation. It mentions that religious identity can draw the most extreme lines between in-groups and outgroups, as well as mobilizing people to creating and preventing conflict. Furthermore, it also stated that religion in society can be a particularly powerful influence in moving people towards or away from violent conflict. In this particular case, I found that religious identity leads more towards self-categorization and it eventually

exacerbated the conflict. This could be seen from the interview that I conducted, where "religious intolerance" comes up not only as the most frequent, but also as the only type of identity that is being mentioned as the cause of this conflict. In a society like Indonesia, where religion still plays a vital role within the society, religious identity could be an effective tool to create or prevent conflict, since it is one definite factor that could greatly influence the society. This is in accordance with the role of religion mentioned by Johnston (2003) which stated that religion plays an essential role on both individual and group's identity formation that heavily affects their norms, behavior, tradition and their perception towards another. I found that all of these religious influences can be observed in the GKI Yasmin case.

Administrative and legal issue

Administrative issues are the second most frequent factor that mentioned by the participants, which is five out of nine. These factors mentioned by the Muslim group, the people living around the area and the authority. Notably for the participants that actively reject the construction, they perceived the administrative problem is outweighing the intolerance factor. It is also important to note that during the interview process, I found that both of the Muslim participants assertively express that the administrative issues are the only problems, and denied the possibility of intolerance. However, as we developed the deeper conversation during the interview, one of the participants ended up admitted that intolerance was also an issue, while another one already admit it since the beginning of the interview. From the conversation, I also get the idea that they both views the administrative and intolerance issue as entirely separate, as both of them put more emphasize on the administrative problem. Here are relevant excerpts of these conversations:

Participant one:
HI: What do you think are the causes of the conflict?
AI: Definitely administrative. They are lying about getting the signatures so that caused problems later. You know that they have to obtain at least 60 signatures to build the church here and they are not fulfilling the requirement. That's basically it.
Participant two:
HI: What do you think are the causes of the conflict?
AW: Well, the problem is definitely the permit. You know permits are needed everywhere, not only to build a church, but they don't have it and they started to manipulate the situation to look like they obtained the requirement permit by falsifying the signature. So, this is indeed a criminal problem too, because they manipulate things!

In addition to the Muslim group, the argument about the administrative factor is also addressed affirmatively by the mayor, while the three other participants that live around the area mentioned administrative as the second reason after intolerance.

Participant three:
HI: What do you think are the causes of the conflict?
BA: There are two major reasons. First, it's an administrative problem about the signature and the second one is miscommunication.
Participant four:
HI: In your perspective, how do you think this conflict could have happened?
MQM: I heard it's about the signature. There were also saying that their permit is not approved by the people around the area since the signatures are falsified, so that is the main problem.
Participant five:
HI: In your perspective, how do you think this conflict could have happened?
HK: Based on my knowledge, they did some manipulation in their way of getting the signatures. They know that they didn't have the right permit but they dared to build the church, so this happened.

There is a major misunderstanding that I found between the Muslims and the Christians on how they perceived the administrative issues that made the discussion on this matter more difficult, so to speak. The Christian group believed that they have all the legitimate permits to build the Church since they already won the case three times, from the district court level to the

Supreme Court. Since the Supreme Court is the highest court system in the country, the Christians are so firm in their stance that they have already fulfilled all the requirements for the construction, that there is no way that the Church could not be built in the intended location. This position is supported by the letter sent by the Ombudsman to the mayor of Bogor that ordered him to comply with the court order. During the interview, both of my participants frequently cited the legal position of the construction and criticized the behavior of the city's mayor who was not obeying the court's order.

On the other side, the Muslim group was convinced that those legal verdicts won by GKI Yasmin, from the district court to Supreme Court, are not legitimate, since the signatures that they gathered for the permit process was obtained through fraud. They mentioned that all 60 people that gave their signatures were not informed that it was for permission to build a church, and if only they had been told before, then they would not have signed it. Since the signatures are not valid, so it would prevent any further legal verdicts. That was the rationale that both Muslim participants stated when being asked about the court decision. Whereas the city mayor, Bima Arya refuses to discuss this matter. He mentioned that legal issue can cause multiple interpretations and so he finds it unnecessary to address the legal position since he only wants to focus on solving the problem.

Since there is clearly a sharp difference between the Muslims and the Christians on how they view the court's verdict, I decided to examine the court's documents that I obtained through the court's website. It provides the court's decision from the administrative court, administrative higher court and the Supreme Court. Upon analyzing them, I found that none of these documents contain information about the falsified signatures. In fact, the witness testified that although there was a long process on obtaining the permit, the GKI group indeed gathered up to 170 signatures,

more than the requirement, which is 60 signatories. During this process, the GKI group has also

conducted numerous socialization meetings with the citizens that live around the area, and there

have never been any objections.

To explain the behavior of the Muslim participants who are convinced that the GKI

Yasmin project is still illegal despite the legal status, I found that it is almost entirely based on

ignorance. In my interviews, I questioned them on the basis for their claims of their legal

perspectives, and both of the Muslim participants mentioned that it comes from what is stated in

the verdict from the court, which obviously declared the opposite.

Participant one:
HI: Can you tell me your position about the verdict of the Supreme Court regarding the GKI
Yasmin case?
AI: Yes, the court has decided that the GKI Yasmin group has falsified the signatures. It is
proven that they manipulated the permit. They don't want to accept it so they sue the government
to the district court and they lost, so they appeal to the high court which also lose and finally, the
Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court also confirmed that they falsified the signatures, so the
case is closed. The Supreme court's decision to confirm it is correct,"
HI: But the Supreme Court's verdict says that they are legitimate….
AI: Have you read the verdict, or not?! It is clearly stated there that GKI Yasmin is illegal! This
is why I hate talking to students, you speak without reviewing the entire thing first!

Participant two:
HI: Can you tell me your position on the verdict of the Supreme Court regarding the GKI Yasmin
case?
AW: Well, it is true that the Supreme Court ordered the mayor to reopen the site, so yes, he
opened it. He unsealed it, and I was there, I saw it, but then within three days, it was found that
they falsified the signatures, so it needs to be sealed again. But has the mayor complied to the
Supreme Court's order to reopen the site? Yes. For three days.

From the transcript above, I can find a slightly different perspective being offered by both

participants. If participant one assertively believes that the Supreme Court has decided that the

GKI Yasmin construction is illegitimate, participant two understands that the Supreme Court has

indeed ordered the mayor to unseal the location, yet he supported the fact that it was only opened

for three days. However, it was clearly ruled that the verdict of the Supreme Court is final and the only procedure to revoke it is by pleading clemency from the president (Indonesia's national law No. 14 of 1985 on Supreme Court).

From the legal perspective, it is obvious that the GKI group has a legitimate foundation in their position regarding the construction. All the court verdicts declared that they had fulfilled all legal requirements to build the Church, and ideally, the construction can resume since the Supreme Court ruled on it in 2009. However, it could not happen since the site is still sealed and the Muslims occasionally blockade the site. I found that there are at least two reasons why solely having the legal endorsement does not necessarily guarantee the project continuation for the GKI group. Firstly, the decision is a declaratory judgement, meaning that the judgement only means to declare if one's subject is legitimate or not, yet it has no means to execute. With no power for execution, the implementation of the Court's decision is heavily relying on the will of the conflicting parties, which in this case, is City of Bogor's department of urban planning and landscape. The department has the authority to revoke or issue the permit, yet they work under the instruction of the city's mayor. This leads me to my second point, which is the lack of the political will of the city's authority. It is understood that the Supreme Court issued its decision on December 9, 2010 and it declares that the GKI Yasmin construction permit is legitimate, therefore Bogor's authority has to revoke the letter that froze the permit. In order to comply to the order, the city's authority opened the seal of the construction on March 8, 2011, yet on March 11, they sealed the site again. This is clearly not the manner on how to deal with the court's decision, which is to implement its order only for three days. The reasoning for the second sealing, according the former mayor, is because the 60 signatures are not valid, and there are a lot of rejections from the Muslim community.

I believe that it extremely essential for law enforcement to be implemented in everyday situations, especially in a country that is based on democracy and *rechtstaat* (state based on justice and integrity) principles. Therefore, there is no justification for the city's behavior that does not comply with the court's order. Additionally, the attitude of the current mayor who chose not to discuss the legal issues is also rather disconcerting, since the court order has an obvious judgement. However, this situation also encourages me to explore other means to solve the problem besides from the legal perspective, because clearly, there are a lot of different understandings from the legal standpoint, so realistically speaking, it is difficult to settle the case solely based from legal perspective.

Political background

Political background is one factor that emerged which I found intriguing, since it was mentioned only by two parties, and neither of them are Muslim participants. Both of these interviewees believed that the first permit revocation that happened on 2008 was because the city was having its mayoral election that year, and it was important for the former Bogor mayor, Budiarto to secure the vote from the Muslim constituents. Hence, revoking the GKI permit was one of the efforts taken by Budiarto, even though he ended up losing to the current Bogor mayor, Bima Arya. One of the participants also believed that political affiliation and political endorsement were related to the mayor's decision making process in GKI Yasmin case.

Participant one:
HI: In your perspective, are there any important events or incidents that need to be highlighted from the GKI Yasmin case?
BS: I think one of the things that is important to address is the fact that the permit revocation was conducted by Budiarto in 2008, two years after he released the permit that he issued himself. Why did it have to be in 2008? One of the possibilities is that because there was a mayoral

election that took place in that particular year. So, I believe the permit revocation was also due to a political reason, Budiarto planned to run for mayor again and he was supported by PKS. So, I believe that this is one of the reasons.

Participant two:
HI: Can you tell me about a specific information you had related to this conflict?
MA: From my understanding, there is actually a political reason behind this whole mess, which explains why this case was going on for so long. What made me mad was also that because there were no political elements, from the president to the governor, that could have forced the mayor to follow the Supreme Court's rule. Why is it so hard? There is obviously a political factor at play here.

It is difficult to measure how much political motives really affected the conflict's escalation since both parties mentioned them based on their assumptions. One participant assumed that the mayoral election had something to do with the conflict but it is not necessarily easy to prove if it is true. However, through my research, I found significant information regarding the demonstrations against the church construction. One of the witnesses in court testified that six months after the groundbreaking, the demonstrations against the church started to erupt, and the demonstrators were the members of the PKS party. PKS, stands for *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera,* and is the party that endorsed the former Bogor mayor, Diani Budiarto. PKS is known for its ideology as the "Da'wah (proselytization) party" that aims to proselytize Islam to its members and constituents. I spoke with an official in PKS regarding this matter, and they mentioned that Budiarto was not a party member. They only endorsed him in the mayoral election, but he has never been involved in any organizational matter within the party.

Based on my analysis, I also did not find revoking the permit in this particular case could consequently increase the electability of one's candidate. Budiarto still lost the electoral battle because there was still a lot of other issues that influenced the voters other than the church project. For example, I was still living in Bogor during the mayoral election, and I found that

Budiarto had low approval rating from the citizens since he was regarded as a corrupt leader. Budiarto has been called a few times by the court since he was suspected to have received bribes for issuing the hotel and commercial mall permits, two types of buildings whose numbers have risen rapidly during the Budiarto era. Additionally, Arya, his opponent, had a high electability rating since he has been famous as a young, promising politician who has vowed to stop issuing the permits for malls and hotels. I believe that there are still a lot reasons why Budiarto was not re-elected, but it is hard for me to find the connection as well as the evidentiary support between revoking the GKI Yasmin permit with Budiarto's electability, since it based on assumptions.

However, in relation with the religious intolerance mentioned before, I can see where this assumption comes from. In the current political climate, especially after transitioning from authoritarian to democratic rule, it has become an increasingly common phenomenon in Indonesia that religion becomes one of the tools for political purpose. This could be one of the efforts of the mayor to gain support from the Muslim constituents since the city itself is known to be less tolerant among others. Also, in several occasions, Budiarto mentioned that the revocation is because he gets so much input from the citizens that reject the church. Here is one of the quote from vivanews.com on January, 2012:

"One of the considerations to seal the GKI project again is because of the strong rejection from society, so we decided that we want to maintain stability and peaceful conditions among religious groups in Bogor. This policy taken to prevents conflict and anarchy in the city of Bogor (Kristianti& Humaeni, 2012),"

The statement above explains how input from constituents could affect the decision-making process made by the authorities. However, how much, and to what extent this input could have affected Budiarto's decision to revoke the permit is something that is hard to measure. One thing that I can entirely confirm is that the use of religious issues for political

purposes is a common practice in Indonesia and this could also probably apply to the GKI Yasmin case.

Miscommunication

This factor was mentioned only by the city's mayor, Bima Arya. He strongly believed that the GKI Yasmin case is not a religious intolerance problem, and it happened because there were some misunderstandings between the Muslim and the Christian groups. Arya believed that the Christian group should have been conducted thorough socialization regarding the construction projects to the Muslim groups that live around the proposed location of the church.

Participant one
HI: What do you think are the causes of the conflict?
BA: There are two major reasons. First, it's an administrative problem around the signatures and second: miscommunication. I believe there was a lack of communication from the beginning. I believe that the Christian group should have clearly socialized the project to the society living near the area, way before they started the construction. They should inform the society, such as what the construction is for, what the aim of it is and what the signatures are for. If only the whole picture was clear from the beginning, none of these problems would have happened.

In addition, Arya mentioned that GKI Yasmin is the problem of the administration as is the miscommunication, but now it has spilled over into other ideological issues such as intolerance and pluralism, which he strongly disagrees with.

Participant one
HI: So only these two aspects?
BA: Well, yes. The fact that later on, it spilled over to the other issues such as ideology and pluralism is untrue. Bogor accused of being intolerant and not pluralist because of this case, and you know it's not true. It is really, just because of administration and miscommunication, and not because of intolerance. I strongly disagree if my citizens are being called intolerant because they certainly are not".

In regard to the sealing, Arya said that it is impossible to just open the site since there are a lot of legal procedures that need to be taken, yet he declined to explain it further. I found it interesting that it is only the mayor that mentioned miscommunication as the triggering factor of the conflict. It clearly could be the case since both parties have stark differences on how they view the issue, whether on through a legal or intolerance perspective. Additionally, as the mayor, Arya also mentioned that he has been trying numerous times to bridge the communication between the Muslim and the Christian groups, yet he admits that the differences are too strong. Arya also conveyed his commitment towards religious tolerance in Bogor, and he is willing to find the solution for this problem. So far, the solution that Arya has come up with is the projected construction of "Bhinneka building", a building that will be built in the conflict area which would have both a mosque and church. He has been talking about this plan since 2016, yet until now, no follow up has been done. The site remains abandoned, despite the fact that this idea was approved by the Christian group since they have been strongly disagreeing with relocation.

I found that this attitude that Arya exhibited, by tending to be more problem-solving oriented rather than complying with the court decision is possibly supported by a lot of political considerations. Complying with the court order would most likely anger the Muslim group—a majority population that the support of which is essentially necessary for the upcoming elections, but relocation was also not an option since the Christians rejected it since Budiarto era. However, not obeying the decision from the Supreme Court would also become an indicator of contempt of court, one precedent that is exceptionally unethical to be set by the leader. As the mayor of Bogor, Arya's attitude will become an example for its people, so when he exhibits disobedience towards the rule of law, it could set a bad example for Bogor's citizens. Therefore, by proposing the "Bhinneka building" which would have positioned both mosque and church side by side, is

such a clever option that Arya came up with, but since there had been no follow up on this plan, it is too early to measure if the project would help settle the problem.

These four factors were mentioned the most by my participants as the causes of the GKI Yasmin conflict. Unsurprisingly, religious intolerance topped the list. I found that religious intolerance is also possibly the main reason of the conflict since it possessed the different aspects that could contribute to the escalation of intolerance: religious identity difference, weak government and geographical background. I believe being located in West Java plays as important a role as other aspects such as minority-majority relations or an issue of an ignorant government. Indonesia is a heavily collectivist society where it is easy for one's ideology or belief to spread out across the territory. This also explains why West Java became the most intolerant province since such incidents like that of GKI Yasmin also occur in other cities in the province. This behavior of intolerance then supported by the lack of communication between the conflicting groups that caused misunderstanding between them. Although it is only mentioned once in the interviews, I believe that miscommunication is among the essential aspects that caused the conflict, since there is clearly a different perspective between the Muslim and the Christian groups. Miscommunication could also have created a different narrative about each other that is not entirely correct and could eventually lead to a more divided society. Therefore, I found that these two factors are important to be addressed in the intervention framework since it seems to be slightly more substantial than other factors.

Finally, political background also mentioned and it is also important to be noted, since it could explain the logic behind the permit revocation, especially because it was done in the same year as the mayoral election. However, I believe that the main problem is to be able to address the intolerance and miscommunication aspects, so that religion will not become a commodity for

political means. This is indeed the problem that faced by Indonesian cities and provinces everywhere, since Indonesia's electoral system for local government is based on popular vote. Before 1998, the mayor and governor for cities and provinces in Indonesia is appointed by the congress, but since the country applies to the popular vote once it transitioned to a democratic system, mayoral and gubernatorial elections become incredibly expensive that leads the candidates to justify any means to win the position. One of the proofs that the mayoral election is indeed the downside of Indonesia's democracy is the rapid growth of local corruption. According to Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW), direct election has significantly caused corruption at a local level, shown by the rising number of local governments that were captured because of corruption. The number rose from 401 suspects in 2011 to 1,200 in 2013 (Gatra, 2014). Besides corruption, the use of religious aspects for political needs is also one of the setbacks of direct local election. Religious sentiments are commonly used to gain support, especially during the campaign period. Admittedly, this has to be addressed in order to create a healthy democracy system in Indonesia, and I believe it could be started with addressing the intolerance and miscommunication problem for the beginning.

Once mutual understanding and religious tolerance developed within society, communication will start to take place and misunderstanding about each other's perception could be confirmed and clarified. This will lead to a more constructive communication between different groups and hopefully, will eventually solve the problem caused by religious difference within the society. Based on these findings, I will try to create an intervention framework that targeting the parties that could possibly help the creation of the conducive communication that helps the conflict to be solved.

Intervention framework

Given the stark differences between the Muslim and the Christian groups, as well as the questionable commitment of the mayor to comply with the court's order, I found that the intervention steps will be best addressed to the higher authorities, which are the president and the minister of homeland affairs. I am convinced that letting the mayor solve the problem on his own won't effectively put an end to the problem since clearly, the conflict has been going for ten years and it is still unresolved. Regardless of the justification behind this phenomenon, I believe that it is the time for the higher authorities to jump in and intervene, otherwise, the conflict will likely continue.

There are a few reasons why involving these two actors will make it possible to solve the problem. Firstly, because both the president and the minister are in a higher position than the mayor, so hierarchically, both actors can instruct the mayor to carry out certain regulations or step by step procedures in order to solve the problem. Secondly, both the president and the minister works at the national level, so they have a broader impact on implementing regulations, specifically those that are related to discriminatory regulation in respect to the minority groups. Although GKI Yasmin is the specific case that we mainly discussed, I believe addressing the issue of joint decrees on the houses of worship will be useful not only to solve the GKI Yasmin case, but also to settle some other conflicts with similar patterns in other places in Indonesia.

Finally, I also believe that both actors have not maximized their potential on intervening in the conflict, and could have been more assertive on pushing the settlement of the conflict. Following are the recommendations addressed to both parties:

To president Joko Widodo

Widodo has been ruling the country for two years now, and so far, creating religious harmony is not on his priority list. When he took over the office in 2014 from Yudhoyono, Widodo inherited numerous unresolved religious conflict such as GKI Yasmin, mass attacks on Ahmadiyya and Shi'a groups and none of them have progressed under Widodo. However, Widodo at least has had a better track record on creating religious harmony compared to his predecessor. Before becoming president, Widodo was the governor of the capital, Jakarta. During his time as the governor, Widodo solved the problem on "lurah Susan", a district chief that was rejected by her people since she is not a Muslim. Widodo refused to replace her, citing that Susan had the qualifications to be a leader regardless her beliefs (Julaikah, 2013). Widodo's vice president, Jusuf Kalla, also has a bright role in maintaining peace, the most notable one being when he settled the agreement between Indonesia's government with Aceh's Independent Movement (GAM) through the Helsinski treaty of 2005.

In their presidential campaign, Widodo and Kalla vowed to prioritize the improvement of Indonesia's human rights, as well as to protect religious harmony and to guarantee freedom of religion. Widodo also mentioned that besides Islam, Indonesia is also home for to Christians, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists and followers of Kong Hu Chu. In contrast to his rhetoric, Widodo has not taken any considerable acts to maintain religious harmony so far. In fact, during the Widodo era, the number of religious violence incidents is still considerably high, with violence

towards 236 houses of worship in 2015 alone (Indonesia, 2016). However, immediate action is important to be taken by Widodo, especially since the country is now witnessing fast growing of religious extremism and intolerance. Following are the intervention steps that Widodo can take to promote religious tolerance:

1. **To amend or revoke discriminatory regulation**

As explained before, one of the root problems of religious violence in Indonesia is discriminatory regulation that issued by the government, such as the joint decree on the regulation for the construction of house of worship and anti-Ahmadiyya. These decrees have been criticized by human right groups as discriminatory and as the causes of a lot of difficulties to minority groups. It is also true that in the long run, the regulation on the house of worship will only cause segregation between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in Indonesia, one of the situations that I found dangerous for the future of the country is based on multi-ethnicity and multi-religion. Therefore, it is important for president Widodo to revoke this regulation in order not only to solve the GKI Yasmin problem, but also to create religious harmony in general. Revoking this regulation becomes more urgent because the common pattern of rejection on houses of worship starts to rapidly evolve in other places.

Revoking this regulation will also differentiate Widodo from his predecessor, Yudhoyono in their commitment in creating religious tolerance. Additionally, Indonesia's basic constitution ruled that "all persons has the right to follow one's religion and to worship according to their own religion or belief,". It does not mention that there are restrictions upon conducting the worship, especially if it comes from the authorities. This article can be the justification for Widodo to take the steps on revoking the regulation. From the political perspective, I also found

that it is more reasonable for Widodo to revoke the regulation since he is supported by a heavily nationalist coalition. In Indonesian politics, the ideology of one's party plays a major role on the decision-making process of the leader. It made an even bigger impact since Indonesia adheres to a multi-party system, which makes the importance of accommodating the interests of all parties more complex. Widodo himself is a member of the Indonesian Democratic Party, a party traditionally known for its Social-Liberalism ideology. Four out of five parties that endorsed him based on nationalist ideology, and the only Muslim party in his coalition, the National Awakening Party (PKB) adheres to Islamic-Democracy-Liberalism-Pluralism ideology. In fact, PKB is home to Islamist-Pluralist scholars, due to its alliance with the nation's biggest Muslim group, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Upon referring to the composition of his political alliance, I believe Widodo will not experience significant rejection from his coalition such that he revokes this regulation.

In relation to the GKI Yasmin case, revoking this regulation will automatically resolve the argument of whether or not the church has obtained the rightful permit of the 60 signatures. Since the joint decree states that in order to build a house of worship, one should collect at least 60 signatories from the people that live around the area, revoking this decree will automatically diminish that regulation. If President Widodo revokes this decree, consequently, it will put an end to the controversial discussion about the legitimacy of the project that has been long brought up by the Muslim group to justify their rejection towards the church. The GKI group will also have a stronger position to build their church since the requirement that has been used to prevent them from building the project was revoked. This action will definitely put forth significant progress not only on GKI Yasmin, but also on other conflicts with similar patterns that occurred in other parts of Indonesia. As the highest authority at the country, I believe it will be more

appropriate for Widodo to make a policy that will be impactful to the citizens in general rather than be specific to only one case. This is because Indonesia itself had been struggling with growing intolerance that mainly targets the minorities and houses of worship, so Widodo's assertive action is needed to give closure to those religious conflicts, mostly the ones that occurred because of this regulation.

To Indonesia's minister of homeland affair, Tjahjo Kumolo

Indonesia's homeland minister, Tjahjo Kumolo is among one of the most significant actors that needs to take action in maintaining religious harmony in Indonesia. It is because Kumolo has the authority to coordinate with all regional leaders, both at the gubernatorial and the mayoral level. As minister, Kumolo is also in charge of observing the works of local leaders and assuring that they work within the national laws, and assures that regional law created by these leaders are not in conflict with national law. In addition to his strategic position, Kumolo is also known as a plural politician that has been considerably vocal on promoting freedom of religion in Indonesia. In 2016, Kumolo triggered anger from Muslim extremist groups for his initiative to allowing a "religion column" in Indonesia's national ID to be left blank. He argued that religious identification on national ID can cause discrimination, and since Indonesia only recognizes six religions, he believes that there are a lot of local beliefs that are not accommodated by the law. This regulation immediately gives at least 5,000 ID-less Ahmadiyya followers in West Java to obtain their ID (Wibowo, 2016). Whereas in regard on solving the GKI Yasmin problem specifically, here are intervention frameworks that Kumolo could take:

1. **Take an assertive measure on local leaders that conducting "contempt of court"**

"Contempt of Court", as it is exhibited by city of Bogor mayor is a negative incident that should be strictly examined by the minister to make sure that such actions will not occur again in the future. However, for the incidents that already took place, the minister should create a firm penalization framework that applies immediately for the offender. This penalization can be in the form of suspension or temporarily non-activation of these local leaders from their position. These measures need to be taken to support the administrative court's verdict that are mostly in the form of declaratory judgements that have no executory power. As the minister, Kumolo has this authority to strengthen the court's judgement with issuing this kind of ministerial decree, so it heavily depends on his political will to create such framework. In fact, Arya was not the only mayor that incurred contempt of court in regard to the sealing of houses of worship. Some regional leaders in West Java are also undertake such action, with common pattern like the GKI Yasmin case, where the seal is opened for several days and it will be sealed again. It exhibits the lack of commitment from these local leaders, which shows that the need for a more assertive regulation is tremendously important.

Indonesian law ruled that there are certain acts or offences that would allow the local leader to be suspended from their positions, which are corruption, terrorism and offences that would threaten the nation's security (Indonesia's law on Local Government, no 23, 2014). So far, this penalty works mostly on corruption cases, where the number of local leaders that are suspended from their positions are up to 343 leaders (Asril, 2015). I am convinced that Kumolo could regard this as a framework that could be applied to another offence such as contempt of court, and he has the authority to do so.

2. **Conduct an intensive conversation with the mayor**

The fact that the GKI Yasmin problem has been unresolved for 10 years shows the inability of all parties to sit together and find the solution to the problem. However, the role of the mayor is important to highlight compared to other conflicting parties, since he holds the highest authority that has the legitimate power to take any action in finding the solution to the problem. It is important for Kumolo to address this issue specifically to Arya and calls on him to give serious attention to solve this problem and orders him to take comprehensive action. In 2014, Kumolo states that he will order the mayor to unseal the location (Putra, 2014). However, there has been no follow up on this instruction and according to data that I obtained, it was the only time that Kumolo discussed the GKI Yasmin issue publicly. To push the mayor on finding solutions for this problem, Kumolo can address the findings from the human rights commission and Setara institute on Bogor's position as the most intolerant city in Indonesia. this ranking is definitely not a good reputation to be awarded for the city and Kumolo can highlight the leadership of Arya on this matter. Kumolo can also order Arya to comply to the court's decision.

3. Mediate communication between the mayor, the Muslim and the Christian groups

Finally, mediation steps still be important to take, in order to create a mutual understanding between the conflicting parties. This intervention is in response to Arya's argument that one of the root causes of the conflict is miscommunication between the Muslim and the Christian groups. According to the interview that I conducted with Arya and both parties, I found that the mediation efforts are not being done effectively, since most of the meetings are between the officials with only one party. For example, the city's representative will have a meeting with the Christian group one week, and in another week, they will meet with the Muslim group, yet, a thorough conversation between both groups has never been executed. There are various reasons

why this kind of conversation never happened. According to the Christian groups, they never attend the meetings that involves Muslims since they have always been outnumbered and feel intimidated with the number of Muslims that attend the meetings. For the Muslim group, mediation is not necessarily needed because the law had clearly stated that the construction is unlawful and for the mayor, the difference have been so deep that he has never been able to meet with both groups at the same time. Based on this finding, I do believe that this problem had already created a deep divisiveness among members of society, but I find that the mayor could explore the option to involve the minister of homeland affairs to mediate this issue. With the higher position that the minister has, Kumolo has the authority to order both parties to sit together, including the mayor. I believe, he will hold a more objective position on viewing this conflict so that a progressive discussion could possibly develop.

The framework of the mediation that I will propose is to have an equal number of representatives from both parties, since it is clear from the interviews that I had with the Christian groups, that the main objection for them to sit at the mediation table is that they felt outnumbered. So, this particular obstacle needs to be addressed by only having an equally certain number of representatives coming from both parties. I would say two people from both parties are enough, and one of them should be the leader, and another one would be the follower that is actively engaged in the conflict. I really think that to have only two people to represent the group is appropriate since it will help maintain the power dynamic during the mediation. Additionally, Indonesians tend to obey their leaders, so as long as we can have the leaders agreeing to mediate, a conducive mediation atmosphere can definitely be created. From the Christian group, I would like to have the priest and one of the followers of the Church, and from the Muslim group, I believe that the leader of FORKAMI is essential to be involved since he has been the one that

most vocally rejects the construction. In addition to him, I would like to also involve one of the active members of FORKAMI to sit in mediation.

In this type of framework, the mayor will not be acting as a mediator, rather, he will be involved as an observer that would be required to follow the whole process and to contribute if he has some ideas that he believed would move the discussion forward. I think that the most appropriate person to be the mediator would be the party from the ministry of the homeland affairs. It would be best if the minister itself could facilitate the mediation, but if it is not possible, he can deputize a person from the ministry that he has certainly known as a skillful mediator, who is also problem-solving oriented. There are a few reasons why having the mayor become the mediator is probably not the best option. First, it will be difficult to measure the neutrality of the mayor if he becomes the one that sits as a mediator. As the leader of the city, Arya will definitely receive a lot of input from his constituents regarding this matter. Arya will consider these input, especially since he has an interest to accommodate the aspirations of his constituents. If most of his constituents reject the construction, he will possibly prefer to satisfy this idea and so that it will not accommodate the aspiration of the Christian groups. Therefore, to have other parties that are entirely unrelated to the conflict to be mediators could possibly become one of the strategies to reach the settlement. However, it is also known that as the mayor, Arya understands the situation and the demographical or sociological background of Bogor very well, so he needs to be present in the mediation in order to give ideas about creating an intervention that is also applicable for the people of Bogor. Secondly, it is clearly described in my analysis that the Christian group had lost their trust in the mayor on solving the problem. It is hard to make any progress in mediation if one party is already feeling skeptical about the neutrality of the mediator. Therefore, in order to create a conducive mediation process, the

mediator should be the one that is believed to have no interest in the conflict other than to resolve it. Thus, it is understood that this mediation process will include six people: two from both the Muslim and the Christian groups, the mayor as the third party observer and the mediator from the ministry of homeland affairs.

Finally, the structure of the mediation would focus on bridging the communication between the two parties and to clarify the information regarding the problem that has been circulating since the conflict first erupted. The Muslims, for example, need to address their feelings of suspicion about Christianization which could probably take place if the construction is allowed to be built. The Christians should clarify this, and on contrary, they also need to address their feeling of being discriminated against as a minority group. From my experience as a mediator, I found that acknowledging the feeling is one important aspect that needs to be addressed in order to create a productive outcome of mediation. This is because feeling or emotion is usually indeed plays a major role as the underlying causes of problems. For example, we need to acknowledge the suspicion of the Muslim group in order to understand their rejection of the church, and so does the frustrated emotions of the Christians because they felt discriminated against as a minority group.

Once the emotion is being addressed, then the discussion could move forward to find the solution for the conflict, and to explore the solutions that could possibly be created. I think it is also essential to address to the Muslim group the legal situation of the project, not to confirm that they have been convinced of an incorrect narrative, but to just clarify for them the real situation. It is also important that the solution framework is not primarily focused on legal standing, yet it has to be more comprehensive and most importantly, satisfactory to both parties.

This meeting should be focused on two main things: finding the solution for the conflict and to bridge communication between the Christian and the Muslim groups about the different narratives that they hold about each other, so that a mutual understanding between them could be developed. I would suggest to setting up several meetings regarding this mediation since I believe, there will be a lot of issues that come up and one meeting will not be enough to talk about the entire problem. Finally, this mediation should be able to produce a productive and accommodative result that could settle the conflict as well as to create a harmonious environment between religious groups in Bogor. I believe that this mediation framework could possibly apply to help settle the GKI Yasmin case since it will involve all the parties and will facilitate the communication between the two conflicting groups, one of the intervention methods that has been absent from the settlement effort that has been carried out so far.

To summarize, these are the intervention frameworks that I proposed in order to solve the GKI Yasmin conflict. Upon examining the issue, I am convinced that the long-standing nature of the conflict has created a complex situation that makes it hard to solve solely on the local level. The intervention from higher authority is needed, since I found that the central government has yet to be involved in the efforts to solve the problem comprehensively. In addition, I believe that complying to these frameworks will help to minimize the religious intolerance in the country, not only in the GKI Yasmin case, especially if the president is willing to revoke the joint decree on houses of worship. Finally, solving this problem will need a full commitment from all institutions mentioned, such as the president, the minister of homeland affairs and the mayor of Bogor since the resolution framework are related to each other. However, by observing the background of these actors, I believe that a cooperative action between these actors could be conducted.

Conclusions

Religious intolerance is one of the most common type of conflict that can easily be found in a homogenous society. Miscommunication, misjudgment and inability to engage in a productive conversation can transform the differing beliefs into religious conflict. In some of the most extreme cases, the magnitude of the destruction comes from religious conflict can vary: it could have caused civil war, or the disintegration of a formerly united country. Religion is possibly one trait of identity that caused conflict most frequently, but it is also one of the most important identities that are attributed to human beings. Religion is like a two-edged sword: when perceived positively, it could provide personal affirmation, spiritual satisfaction and boost one's self-esteem. In contrast, when one believes that their religion is the only valid view point, it could increase discrimination and suspicion towards other beliefs, which would consequently have escalated to conflict.

Indonesia is considerably new to democracy. It has been long ruled under authoritarianism, where any form of religious violence is solved single-handedly by the government without being publicly exposed. Therefore, when democracy took over the system, it was not only religious-affiliated politicians that breath the fresh air, but also religious extremist group that are found its momentum to stand up for religious values that they believed as right, even though it means the discrimination to other beliefs. Since the democratic era, extremist groups have been growing rapidly, slowly changing Indonesia's face of religious harmony, pluralism and tolerance to the opposite.

The GKI Yasmin conflict is one of the example of how one's religious group can affect the authority of its decision-making process, even though it means outlawing the court's order. It also shows that accommodating the constituent's aspiration is important since their support is essential in a country with a popular-vote system. As it is stated in numerous democracy theory literatures, "Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people," which in Indonesia's case, it could also have been interpreted as the marginalization and discrimination of minority groups. However, I also believed that the resolution towards the conflict can definitely be achieved with a strong political will from the parties. I also found that the involvement of higher authorities such as the president and the minister of homeland affairs is one of the essential factors, since it is clear that the local authority alone cannot solve the problem.

The intervention efforts include intensive communication and mediation discussions hosted by the minister that could promote mutual understanding for the conflicting parties. Throughout this research, it has been found that religious intolerance is not the only factor that caused the conflict. Miscommunication is also a contributing factor to the escalation of the

problem, which is why addressing this issue to both parties is essential. Additionally, for the

bigger issue on religious intolerance, revoking the discriminatory regulations would be a step

forward in promoting religious harmony. Indonesia has always been known for its moderate,

plural and tolerant society, and I believe those attributions will always adhere to Indonesia's

identity, despite its challenge in dealing with rising extremism.

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