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Beyond the Ambiguity of Local Government to Protect Religious Freedom: A New House of Worship Proposal Problem in Indonesia

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Abstract

Currently, problems related with constructing a new worship place and renovating it have been much more contentious especially in the area where minority religious group becomes much bigger. This phenomenon has happened in West Bandung regency of West Java Province where Catholic group need more suitable church. The old church is not enough anymore to accommodate mass ritual. However, rejection from local people was occurred. To respond worship place building, Indonesian government has issued a regulation namely joint ministerial decree between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and The Ministry of Home Affairs) number 9 & 8/2006. However, the implementation of the regulation is not always on the track due to the local situation including misunderstanding among local people and local government's political will. As a result, some worship places can be built normally, while some others cannot. Based on qualitative research that was conducted in October 2018, the authors tried to explore the reason behind the rejection of constructing a new Catholic church in West Bandung. Its results show that theoretically the local leaders really understand their duty to legalize and authorize the documents for the new worship place proposal. But, practically the letter of legalization is not being released due to the pressure from local residents whereby the church is planned to be built.

Keywords: Church building proposal, documents legalization, local government respons, hardliner group pressure

Introduction

Developing a new worship place as well as renovating it in Indonesia's post-Reformasi era has become a crucial issue among society with some different religious backgrounds. Worship places that being targeted for rejection are varied such as mosques, churches, Balinese temples, vihara, and others (Ajiyastuti 2018, Laurensius 2018). This feature was also well portrayed by Crouch (2010) stating that the banning of church installment had been a common feature in the Reformasi era (Crouch 2010). Likewise, interreligious conflict was not uncommon demanding the closing of worship place and destructing it alike (Mujiburrahman 2006, Hurriyah 2020, Habibie: 2018). Due to a significant number of worship place closure and destruction even as the source of conflict between different religious followers, the Indonesian government has issued joint ministerial decree Between Ministry of Religious

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Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs No 9 and 8 the year 2006 (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs 2006). Which outlines the guidance of the local leader's duty to maintaining interreligious harmony in local area, empowering interreligious harmony forums, and giving a recommendation of establishing a new worship place as well. Its main and special aim is to minimize horizontal conflict among citizen caused by a worship place establishment.

In West Java Province for instance, according to Setara Institute, a series of contention over worship place has traumatized some minority religious groups such as Christians, Ahmadiyya, and any other religious groups. For the last several years, Setara Institute has been much more concerned about this province due to its high rate of intolerance behavior (Hasani 2018, Institute 2016,). In 2016, Setara Institute counted 59 worship places were targeted for any kind of persecutions including burning, destroying, confiscating, and banning for usage alike. Most of worship places were churches (34), Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosque (9), small other Islamic sects (2), LDII group (2), Buddhism (2), and Wahabi considered Islamic group (1). Henceforth, data show that development and rejection of new worship place have been growing in this province (Farida 2018).

Accordingly, an ample example of the worship place installment rejection is the case of rejection of Parongpong' Catholic church in Bandung Barat. The plan was firstly submitted in 2015 and until 2018 its permit was not being received. Undeniably, church for Catholics is essential which is the place to meet and to relate with God. The sacred place of Church is written by Verkaaik (2013) which was quoted by Estika et al that...given that many people of religion tend to downplay the importance of religious buildings as merely representing the outside of the superficial part of their religion. (Indeed) Catholic church supposedly considers sacred space (Estika 2017).

The Indonesian government has paid greater attention to the issue of worship places. Additionally, religious regulation is intended to alleviate high tensions among different religious groups. According to the Australian Refugee Review Tribunal (2007), specific forms of evangelistic missions and proselytizing in Indonesia are regulated through decrees issued in the late 1970s by the Minister of Religion, particularly the Guidelines for the Propagation of Religion (Ministerial Decision No. 70/1978). This decree prohibits several actions, including proselytizing to those of different religions, using material incentives to encourage conversion, disseminating religious reading materials to those of different religions, and engaging in missionary activities through door-to-door visits (Section and Tribunal 2008).

A second decree, which reiterated Decree No. 70/1978, was jointly issued in 1979 by the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Internal Affairs. This decree was formulated in response to concerns expressed by Muslim communities in the Indonesian parliament since the 1960s, regarding the perceived misuse of the freedom and tolerance of religion guaranteed by Article 29 Section 2 of the Constitution, specifically by Christian missionaries (Kim, 1998).

Following the issuance of the 1978 and 1979 decrees, the government disseminated the regulations through inter-religious meetings involving the five official religions. In 1983, representatives of these religions agreed to an additional set of five ethical codes, intended to regulate behavioral norms between followers of different religions. Code number 2 explicitly stipulated that "Proselytism should not be directed at individuals or groups who already adhere to another religion."

The increasing numbers of Christian followers and the obscurity numbers of Christians' worship places to a greater extent raise a concern and are perceived threats by some Muslims. They have been critical of the so-called Christianization program conducted by the churches and missionary organizations from Indonesia and abroad. Such a Christianization program provokes insecurity feelings of the Muslim hardliners, and they react accordingly to what they considered as Christian provocation. They acclaim

that they need to defend their faith and reject any efforts to convert their Muslim friends, including through the services that are conducted at a Christian's home for even a birthday celebration (Damayanti 2018:9-12).

Of course, the banning of a church building plan like the Parongpong Catholic church in Bandung Barat is an interesting topic to be explored. To conduct the research, the authors use a qualitative approach specifically with the case study approach. To construct the main idea during field research, the authors utilized the paradigm of constructivism which tries to establish new knowledge over a phenomenon that being studied (Creswell 2013).

Here, its aim is to explore and to understand the root cause as well as the effect of a worship place proposal rejection in Parongpong. The question is to what extent any parties responsible for handling the worship place rejection trying to get any solution to the problem. To understand the root cause of the case deeper, the authors did field research in October 2018. In-depth interviewing was done by the authors with many actors who involved directly or indirectly in the case such as representative of Forum Komunikasi Warga Pondok Hijau Indah (FKWPHI, or Communication Forum of Pondok Hijau Indah Residents), Rukun Warga (citizen neighborhood), the headman of Ciwaruga Village, Indonesian Ulema Council of Ciwaruga Village, the head of West Badung' Ministry of Religious Affairs, the leader of Forum for Interreligious Harmony (FKUB) as well as the representatives of mass Islamic organizations.

Worship Place and Religion in Indonesian Context

In the religious study realm, scholars in this field usually distinguish the sphere of religion into two side, namely the prophane and the sacred. The term sacred is originally rooted in the Latin word *sacrum*, which means everything that relates to God's authority. Srisadono (2012) adds that sacred is also meant spatial meaning that refers to an area or a place. In this regards, sacred space in a Catholic church is distinguished into two forms. The first, sacred place is naturally created and the second, sacred space is constructively designed thanks to the work of an architect. Srisadono continues that the sacred space that naturally formed is God present in a certain place that is naturally created like for example Garden of Eden, the Burning Bush Light, and Mount Sinai. Whereas the sacred space which is formed by the architects is just as like as what we have seen in the following examples; Solomon' House of God and the Great Herodes' House of God. The term sacred itself inevitably makes its opponent, the prophane which is different from the former. Then, the differentiation of the place affects the hierarchical place in the Catholic churches (Srisadono 2012).

It should be also noted that worship place is something that has a close relation with culture and society. According to the Tasmanian Heritage Council (2019), religious places of worship have long served as beacons of cultural, religious, and community identity. Various known as churches, chapels, tabernacles, gospel halls, synagogues, lodges, temples, or mosques, places of worship reflect the faith, aspirations, and investment of earlier generations. They are valued as places of religious practice and rites of passage, communal gathering, and as repositories of community's memory. In the context of Tasmanian people, many of these buildings are the most creative outputs of Tasmanian architects, and a small number are built to plans conceived in England and made to fit the constraints of building sites on the opposite side of the world. For these reasons, worship places have come to be recognized as an important part of the significant cultural heritage (Council 2001:4-6)

In Indonesian context, worship places descried just like Tasmanian Heritage above are very applicable in term of holy place. Unlike Tasmanian Heritage perhaps, worship places in Indonesia can also be a source of horizontal conflict in a certain area. To deal with the development of a worship place and to manage its possible dispute, the Indonesian government has issued some regulations. The latest decree

regulating the worship place is PBM No 9 & 8 2006). In its chapter IV article 13 verse 1 is stated that the establishment of worship place is based on the real need and considering the true composition of population number of religious services for certain religious followers in the village (Kemendagri and Kemenag 2006)

The regulation itself can be said effectively to give solutions to the disputable issues over the new worship place plan. Some research results show that after being socialized in many cities of Indonesia, PBM number 9 & 8/2006 could give a positive effect in the effort to maintaining religious harmony by correlation 17,4 percent. Although the number itself is quite small (only 17,4 percent) the regulation was still significant to handle the disputable issue of developing a new worship place (Muchtar 2010:99).

Needless to say, Indonesia has a unique relationship enough between state and religion. This issue has always been debated and echoed throughout the country for more than three decades. Many says the relation between state and religion is neither a secular model nor a religious model. Indeed, Indonesian people are typically influenced by religious doctrine, especially emphasizing the concept of oneness God (Erman 2018). Henceforth, Menchik continues, Indonesia has a form of nationalism that is neither Islamic nor secular, but rather exclusively and assertively religious (Menchik 2014: 591–621). In the following years of independent in 1945, some assertions demanding to changing semi-secular state to religious state had happened. In return, the privileging religion in favor of mainstream religious group over minority group is vibrant through state support. Menchik consistently defines this feature as divine nationalism, in which this infiltration is famously termed by Anderson, portraying Indonesia as an imagined community that refers to a unity based on common and orthodox theism mobilized through the state in cooperation with religious organizations within society.

Followers of divine nationalism believe that belief in God is a civic virtue that brings benefits to both individuals and society as a whole. Individuals who believe in God are considered to have an enlightened understanding of the world, which is preferred over pre-modern beliefs such as animism, heterodox beliefs, or secular worldviews. They are seen as wiser, more compassionate, generous, and tolerant. As good citizens, individuals are expected to believe in God and use that belief as motivation for their behavior. Similarly, social and political institutions are believed to perform better when individuals within them believe in God. While belief in God is an ideal for good citizens, it is not necessarily enforced through coercion. Divine nationalism can be formally established by the state and enforced through the police, bureaucracy, and courts, for example through personal status laws based on religious principles and limitations on individual freedom. Menchik further explains that divine nationalism can also be informally regulated through social norms, religious organizations, media, and the family. Regardless of the extent to which divine nationalism is enforced, belief in God is seen as a virtue that should be promoted through education, ethical guidance, and social norms. Divine nationalism occupies a middle ground between religious nationalism and secular nationalism. Unlike religious nationalism, divine nationalism is pluralistic; the state promotes belief in God through multiple religions. Overall, divine nationalism is based on theological exclusion rather than geographic or ethnic exclusion; both liminal groups and heterodox groups are considered to be included within the scope of divine nationalism (Menchik, 2014).

Furthermore, Seo (2012) observes that in Indonesia, the state manages religion by shifting religious practices to focus more on state administration rather than spirituality, particularly since 1965 when Indonesia experienced the downfall of Sukarno (1901–1970) and the rise of Suharto (1921–2008). A series of national policies regarding religion have shaped the Indonesian version of secularism, that is, how and why the state manages religion. Seo goes on to identify four specific regulations that best exemplify the government's mindset towards religion, namely the 1965 Presidential Decree on state-

recognized religions, the Joint Ministerial Decree on Houses of Worship in 1969 and 2006, the 1974 National Marriage Law, and the Ministerial Decrees on Overseas Aid to Religious Institutions and Guidelines for the Propagation of Religion in 1978. Briefly, these regulations require that Indonesian citizens are not allowed to be without a religion, and even in marriage documents, they must specify their religion. Building a place of worship becomes a significant challenge without consent, not only from the state but also from the local religious majority (Seo, 2012).

Scholars who have been studying religion and state in Indonesia maybe criticize Seo's statement above especially on the administrative aspect rather than spiritual aspect of state's attention. Some of them say that regulating religious issues in Indonesia is useful to minimize horizontal conflict that potentially happen among Indonesia's plural society (Mughtar 2010, Farida 2018). However, some others say that the Joint Ministerial Decree on Houses of Worship in 1969 and 2006 are still ineffective to deter horizontal conflict resulting from building new worship places and even many worship places are built without previously applying the regulation (Putri 2011, Hutabarat 2017, Mustolehudin 2016).

Method

A qualitative approach was selected by the authors to conduct this research, specifically with focusing on case study style. Some data gathering techniques were implemented such as indepth interview, literature review as well as observation. In-depth interviewing was done during the research with many actors who involved directly or indirectly to the case such as the Catholic activist Robertus from the committee and other leaders of Bandung Catholic Parish, the opponent one those who rejected the plan, i.e. Forum Komunikasi Warga Pondok Hijau Indah (FKWPHI, or Communication Forum of Pondok Hijau Indah Residents). The leader of Rukun Warga (citizen neighborhood), the headman of Ciwaruga Village, Indonesian Ulema Council of Ciwaruga Village, the supporter of church building plan represented by the leader of small citizen neighborhood forum (RT) of 17, the former head of Parongpong subdistrict, the head of One Gate Submission System of West Bandung, the head of West Bandung Ministry of Religious Affairs, the leader of Communication Forum for Interrreligious Harmony (FKUB) as well as the representatives of mass Islamic organizations like for example NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis, FUI, Tarrbiyah group. The authors also met and interviewed the district head (bupati) dan vice district head of West Bandung District.

Building Church Plan and Its Reason

In the Parongpong subdistrict itself, according to the Bandung parish data, there are around 1.000 parishioners. Currently, they mainly settle in some housing complex in the Parongpong subdistrict and its surrounding area to perform rituals (interview the authors with Robertus, a Catholic activist of Bandung parish, 12 October 2018). Unfortunately, only one Catholic church is provided in the Badung Barat Regency (Badung Barat' Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2011) (Statistics of West Bandung Regency 2019). It was not a big enough church, but only a chapel that belongs to the Karmel nunnery at Lembang subdistrict. Henceforth, developing a new Catholic church was an urgent need for Catholics in West Bandung regency. To respond to the idea, Badan Pengurus Gereja dan Amal Katholik (BPGAK, or Catholic Church board and Charity) of Santo Laurentius Bandung parish appointed Fr. Petrus Suparman, OSC as the person in charge to execute the new church construction planning at Ciwaruga village of Parongpong subdistrict.

The following step was to create the construction committee, then. Subsequently, they have started the process of church establishment by following the instruction of PBM No. 9 & 8/2006. Initially, they collected any required documents for the new church building like for example ownership rights letter

of five land certificates that were united into one single document. Its size was 15.000 meters per square. Then, they also prepared any other documents such as the technical consideration from the National Land Body of West Java Province, the recommendation of place usage from West Java Province, and the document of usage land planning as well.

At the same time, the committee continued to complete any other required specific documents such as the list and the copy of ID cards of a worship place users that stated 90 at the minimum but in fact, they got 219 signed users which surpassed the minimum standard. So long as the minimum users were not enough at Ciwaruga village, then legalization went to upper on the subdistrict level namely Parongpong subdistrict. Subsequently, they got the list of local people's names as well as their ID cards to support the plan which was suited according to the regulation was 60 signed name list. In reality, they obtained 153 signatories' names. Indeed, the shocking problem happened when those documents were not yet authorized by the local headman. The proposals went also to the FKUB of West Bandung regency and the Office of The Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung Barat although the legalization of local headmen has not yet been obtained. Finally, the committee sent the incomplete documents to the regent of Bandung Barat Regency to get the permission letter, IMB, or Developing Building Permit) dated 12 October 2015 with the number Ref: 009/Perizinan-PPRIK/10/2015.

Targeted location of the new church plan is at Pondok Hijau housing complex of Ciwaruga village. This area is popular for its flower tourism destination. Most of the villagers are working at the flower farm. This housing complex is inhabited by approximately 400 families which most of them are Muslim. A mosque was established at this housing complex, namely, Masjid Darussalam that was built by self-own funding with its size is 328 meters per square. The land of the mosque was given by a Muslim (waqf) which was previously bought from the developer of the housing complex, Pondok Hijau Permai Tbk. Some additional lands were given by the developer as public facility. The authors observed that the location was on the left side of the gate of the Pondok Hijau Indah housing complex. Some houses were found in front of the place. Catholics at the housing complex were about 20 families whereas the rest are Muslim and other religious followers.

On the following day, the authors have also visited the chapel complex which belongs to the Karmel nunnery at Lembang subdistrict. Its size was no more than 5.000 meters that some permanent buildings found within the complex. One of the buildings was a chapel for Sunday service. According to a local people, the original function of the chapel was as the place only for the hermitage of Catholics those who want to recollect the vestige of Jesus' journey until He reaches the crucifixion (Stated by Robertus 2018).

Unfortunately, the plan to build a new church building was unsuccessful yet. Some reasons to reject the plan were varied like for example the threatening of tranquility of the housing complex' location, the accusation of wrong doing when gathering local people approval, and misusing of housing complex' site plan alike. The rejection was not only from the local headman but also from some Muslim figures at the housing complex. They argued that according to the housing complex site plan brought by the developer, the committee has bought land about 10.000 meters per square. Latterly, its size extended to 15.000 meters per square. Whereas the West Java province Regulation No 1/2008 about Pengendalian Pemanfaatan Ruang Kawasan Bandung Utara (Controlling of Using Place of North Bandung Area) says that only 20 percent permitted of the owned total area to establish a public building (Peraturan Daerah Provinsi Jawa Barat 2009 2013).

Then, started in mid-year 2016, various local people forums were held to refute the new church building proposal. Local citizen institutions ranging from neighbourhood/ward, mosque boards, to the Union of Pondok Hijau Indah Resident involved in these meetings. One of the meeting points was to install some banner of rejection. On Friday 17 June 2016, a banner of rejection church proposal was finally put the

main highway side of Pondok Hijau Indah housing complex. Knowing the situation, on Friday night some cops and the headman of Ciwaruga village came to the housing complex. The head of RW 10 and the Secretary of IPWI welcomed the cops and the headman of the village at the security room. The top level of police officer said that he was asked to find out the one who was responsible for installing the banner and ordered to drop the banner to avoid horizontal conflict in the area.

However, the head of RW 10 and the IPWI secretary complained about the cops' desire because the church that will be built was designed not solely for the resident of the housing complex. The protesters were afraid that the tranquility of their housing complex would be disturbed if the church had been established. Another reason was the installation banner was the right of the resident. And the road at the housing complex and other facilities were bought by all resident and were not yet transferred them into the local government. Furthermore, the residents had the right to install the banner everywhere within the housing complex. In addition the reason of rejections were the threatening of location tranquility, rumors that would develop the largest Catholic Church in Southeast Asia, the suspicion that the church complex will be built comprehensive education and health facilities, the fear of religious conversion of Muslims in the future, and other similar things (Said by the Head of Forum of Communication of Pondok Hijau Indah Housing Complex Residents 2018).

On 28 August 2016, several months after installing the rejection banner, Forum of Communication of Pondok Hijau Indah housing complex residents and Daarut Tauhid Islamic Boarding School, along with some RWs and mosque boards hosted an event public Islamic preaching in conjunction with the commemoration of the 71st Indonesia' independent day. The theme of the preacher was to strengthening faith and Muslim brotherhood. The event was done peacefully.

To know more about the response of the church construction committee, the authors visited the Santo Laurentius Bandung parish at Sukajadi street, Bandung. The authors were welcomed by the whole church board which consists of 5 pastors. One of them was the head committee Fr. Petrus Suparman, OSC. He was born in Bandung Barat. The authors paid attention to hearing of how the real plan of the church construction proposal. Indeed, the new church was needed to accommodate Bandung Barat parishioners because the old church was no longer enough to accommodate the religious community. Henceforth, the Bandung parish wanted to build a new church in Bandung Barat regency that was supposed to provide religious service mainly for the parishioners of the Parongpong subdistrict and its surrounding area. The authors were told by the committee that the committee had tried to gain approval from local people and finally the document of approval was rejected by the head of the village. The committee even accused that the headman of the village had provoked the Ulama council of Ciwaruga and some villagers to reject the church building plan (Mentioned by Fr Suparman 2018).

From the government point of view, law number 7/2012 about dealing with social conflict chapter 9 intrinsically urging the responsibility of central and local government to muffle the potential of social conflict (Indonesia 2012). One of the strategies is to intensify a dialog between the group in society. Besides, PBM 9 & 8/2006 delivers the authority for the head of the regent and its vice-regent to responsible for maintaining harmonious conditions in society. It is clearly stated also that maintaining interreligious harmony is the duty from governor/regent/major and other levels of government to the village level.

Unfortunately, the Bandung Barat government in responding to the case of the church plan rejection has never been satisfied. The head of the district has never done anything to facilitate the problem. Conversely, the central government has sought some solutions to cease the case. The representative of the central government which is done by the Sub Desk SARA, or ethnic, religion, race, and intergroup), PKGDN or Managing Home Affair Instability of Security the Coordinator Ministry of Politics, Law and

Security Affairs has had series of meeting with many parties in local level to seek the solution (Said by the Former of the Head of Parongpong Subdistrict 2018).

Sub Desk SARA, or ethnic, religion, race, and intergroup, PKGDN the Coordinator Ministry of Politics, Law and Security Affairs has held at least two consecutive meetings to stimulate the local government to solve the disputable case between local people of Pondok Hijau Indah and the church developing committee. These meetings were facilitated by the Office of political stability of West Bandung Regency by inviting some stakeholders of the. Like for example on 5 August 2016, a meeting was held.

The meeting results were, among others, that the solution of the church construction plan problem has become the responsibility of many parties and stakeholders considering the peace resolution. Second, the Bandung Barat government will take serious effort and be more proactive by arranging some meetings to invite many parties specifically to those who objected the plan. Third, if it is failed to seek the solution through a persuasive method, then the solution goes on to the court which means it will follow the formal law. Fourth, the Bandung Barat government should make an action plan to solve the problem to make the solution of the problem is easily monitored.

Subsequently, on 23 May 2018, it was held a coordination meeting that its result makes unhappy for the applicant side. The meeting was chaired by the Head of Section of Intelkam (Spy and Security) of the Coordinator Ministry of Politics, Law and Security Affairs. The participants were the acting head of Nation Unions and Politics of Office Bandung Barat regency, the head of the Parongpong subdistrict, the head of Ciwaruga village. The head of Ulema Council of Parongpong, FKUB of Bandung Barat, representative of Cimahi Police Officer, the representative of Pondok Hijau Indah resident, and the security forces of Bandung Barat regency. The results of the meeting were, among others, that the problem of church construction plans that had been initiated since 2015 was not yet being solved due to the rejection of local people. Second, Bandung Barat government has been trying to mediate both parties that are between the church construction committee and the headman of Ciwaruga village as well as the headman of the Parongpong subdistrict to seek a solution to the problem. Third, the Bandung Barat government has not been issued a stipulation whether to approve or rejecting the plan. Fourth, the Bandung Barat government soon will issue a stipulation letter concerning the church construction approval no more exceed than one month since the meeting (the minute of the meeting that was obtained by the authors). Another meeting was held again on 22 September 2016 by inviting those parties. Its recommendation was to urge the head of West Bandung regency to facilitate a meeting and to make a decision very soon Stated by the Acting Head of National Union and Politics of West Bandung 2018).

To understand more about the detail of local government efforts in facilitating the case, the authors visited the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of West Bandung to meet its office head and its deputy. The head of Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of West Bandung and his deputy has said that until October 2018, the problem was not yet solved because there was a replacement of the regent of Bandung Barat. The newly elected regent was just vowed in September 2018 (Said by The Head of Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of West Bandung 2018).

Once again, a meeting that the authors joined was held on October 8, 2018, which was organized by the Head of DPMPITSP, the One-Stop Integrated Investment, and Licensing Office by inviting the Prongpong Sub-District Head and the head Ciwaruga Village, Kesbangpol and PUPR, or General Construction and People Housing Office alike. The participants agreed that the approval letter could not be issued because the specific requirements in constructing houses of worship had not been fulfilled as stated in the PBM 2006 Chapter IV article 14. The Ciwaruga village head was also present at the meeting along with several village officials and RW 18, RW 10, and Chair of the Pondok Hijau Citizens Communication Forum. They requested that the area where the church must be built relocate to another

place and or if the developer is willing to provide land, a church should only be provided to accommodate Catholics in the Pondok Hijau complex area and not for outsiders. If not, it will have an impact on the residents in terms of security and road congestion. The village head still did not want to authorize the ID card of his citizens who supported the construction of the church due to inconducive conditions. Henceforth, there was a conflict between citizens who support and reject the plan.

As mentioned above, the church construction committee has not been able to fulfill some specific required documents as stated in the PBM 2006. Of the 4 requirements that must be fulfilled, the Committee only fulfilled 2 requirements, namely the list of prospective church users, and FKUB recommendations with the notes. Although it has already the community's approval, the approval was not yet legalized by the Village Headman as required by PBM 2006.

Therefore, the authors had a chance to meet the Deputy district head of West Bandung at a hotel in Bandung before his duty to opening the Coordination Meeting with the Regional Parliament of the West Bandung Regency. The deputy only promised to coordinate immediately with the regent and related agencies (Stated by the Deputy Regent of West Bandung 2018). Subsequently, the authors tried to interview the Head District of West Bandung Regency in a hotel in Bandung before his meeting with the West Java Prosecutor's Office. It was only a fairly short meeting and the regent answered that he had understood the problem so he asked for a time first to resolve the problem immediately and promised to hold a meeting as soon as possible.

The Delicate Matter of PBM 9 & 8 2006 To Be Implemented

The construction of a church is a complex process. Since the implementation of the Joint Ministerial Decree on March 21, 2006, every religion wishing to build a place of worship is required to apply for a building permit (IMB). The IMB application obliges the church to submit a list of at least 90 congregants, including their identification card numbers, to the local government. Additionally, a minimum of 60 signatures from the local community who support the construction of the church in their neighborhood is also required. The church must also provide a written recommendation from the local head of the FKUB, or Religious Harmony Forum. Many churches face difficulties in this process (Chong 2019:1-7). Furthermore, as explained by Seo (2012), in Indonesia, the state manages religion by shifting the focus of religious practices towards state administration rather than spirituality. This change has occurred primarily after 1965, when Indonesia witnessed a transfer of power from Sukarno (1901–1970) to Suharto (1921–2008). In this context, religion becomes a part of state policy and political considerations at the local level (Mughtar and Putro 2021).

Policy described above is to ascertain religious harmony in Indonesia. But the realization is still uneasy task. It will be become a delicate matter to implemThe establishment of a worship place is a factor that often causes communal conflict in the community. enting the regulation due to the availability and good responses of local citizen to provide religious rights fulfillment for all communities. In the case of developing a worship place, the Indonesian government has issued some regulations. In the PBM, particularly chapter IV article 13 verse 1 states that the establishment of worship place is based on the real need and considering the true composition of population number of religious services for certain religious followers in the village.

On the one hand, the regulation itself can be said effective enough to give solutions to the disputable issue of developing a new worship place. In Indonesia's past, precisely in 1969, a very loose policy happened wherever to build a worship place. Because of the loose policy, the provisions in the construction of a worship place were largely determined by local wisdom. But on the other hand, the regulation what not worked due to the horizontal conflict in various regions. For the last few years,

similar incidents in the past have been reoccurred especially in the rejection of the worship place, like for example in Bekasi and Bandung of West Java Province. The problems are the difficulty of getting recommendations from FKUB and the Ministry of Religion of the Regency/City, and the permit from the local authority, even though all the required documents were completed.

Apart from the difficulties to gain permit for building new worship place, another feature of irregularities in worship activities could be seen everywhere. It can be seen everywhere that dwelling houses, shop houses, meeting houses, hotels that have been used as worship place. The problem here is that because of the difficulty of getting building permits. To address all the problems such problems, all representatives of religious assemblies namely the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), Indonesian Church Council (PGI), Indonesian Catholic Church Representative (KWI), Indonesian Council of Hindu Dharma (PHDI), and Indonesian Buddhists Council (Walubi) along with the state representative have gathered to issue a regulation were agreed to issue the PBM 2006.

Unfortunately, the strong points of PBM are questioned by many who critics against the regulation. According to them, PBM is not known in the legislation in Indonesia as like as many other regulations regulated in Law No. 10 of 2004 which is about the Formation of Legislation. In line with it, there is a doubt on the legal position of the PBM 2006 so long as the provisions contained therein are not binding and rely solely on moral sanctions. As a result, various violations against the regulation easily occur in almost all regions, both in the eastern, central, and western parts of Indonesia (Lubis 2016).

Conclusion

The Catholics in Bandung Barat regency need to build a new church because the number of Catholics has reached out to around 4,500 people, and there is no permanent Catholic Church to accommodate them. The planned church will be built in Pondok Hijau Indah housing Complex, Ciwaruga Village, Parongpong District, West Bandung Regency. However, some residents of the Pondok Hijau Indah Complex rejected the plan because the church construction committee was deemed not transparent and unfair during the collection of local people signatures who supports the plan. Other reasons are the threatening of location tranquility, rumors that would develop the largest Catholic Church in Southeast Asia, the suspicion that the church complex will be built comprehensive education and health facilities, the fear of religious conversion of Muslims in the future, and other similar things.

The current local Governments are expected to immediately take some concrete actions to resolve this case under Law No. 7 of 2012 concerning Handling of Social Conflicts and PBM No 9 & 8/2006 which states the duty of local government is to mediate social conflict by having dialogues with both parties. They are also given the duty to facilitate the relocation of places to build a worship place. The facilitation is intended to find a new land that is acceptable to all parties. All in all, struggling and opposing of religious rights for Indonesian citizen is the issue that must be handled by local government promptly and wisely in the current Indonesia' democracy era.

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