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Research Article

Strategy for Preventing Potential Conflicts in the Establishment of Religious Minority Houses of Worship in the City of Semarang

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Abstract.
Semarang City is a city that has social, religious, and cultural diversity. There is currently potential for conflict in several areas of Semarang City due to the rejection of the establishment of religious minority places of worship. The purpose of this research is to reveal the potential causes of conflicts over the construction of houses of worship of minority religions and to find appropriate strategies to prevent conflicts from occurring due to the construction of houses of worship of the majority religion. This qualitative research adopted a case study approach with data collection techniques of observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with key informants and supporting informants. The results of this study indicate that in the Tlogosari and Sendangmulyo areas there is the potential for conflicts to occur against the background of the construction of a church house of worship, the root cause of this potential conflict is due to the refusal of permits. The conflict prevention strategy is to provide social education to the community regarding pluralism education with a social approach that is carried out with synergy between the government and the community. The implications of this research can be used as a reference by the Semarang City Government in preventing conflicts due to the establishment of religious minority places of worship.

Keywords: conflict prevention; conflict potential; social conflict; religious conflict

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a nation that has ethnic, cultural, racial and religious diversity. Religious life in Indonesia has challenges and threats of community conflict [1]. There needs to be tolerance to create harmony in religious life in Indonesia [2]. Religious tolerance will create harmony, mutual cooperation and mutual help in Indonesian society [3, 4]. The awareness of dialogue between religious communities can foster mutual understanding and peace between communities of different religions [5, 6].

Differences in beliefs between religious followers are one of the triggers for conflict in Indonesia [7, 8, 9] Differences in viewpoints and differences in worship rituals have

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several times been the cause of conflict, even though the constitution guarantees citizens' rights to practice their beliefs [10]. Religious communities must carry out worship, one of which requires infrastructure in the form of places of worship [11, 12, 13]. In reality, the establishment of places of worship for minority religions is often rejected and gives rise to social conflict in society [14, 15].

Religion is often a trigger for conflict in society [16]. Seeing this reality, religious communities are called to develop a pluralist perspective in this plural life [17, 18]. Pluralism is a way of respecting each other in a heterogeneous society, namely ethnic, racial, religious and social, to accept each other, encourage participation and development of traditional culture and specific interests in a shared living environment [19, 20].

Pluralism is a view or value system that recognizes diversity within an ethnic group [21]. Pluralism in a nation needs to be seen as something positive, which is a necessity experienced by people in social and state life [22]. The meaning of the nature of pluralism is not interpreted only as recognition of national diversity, but pluralism also implies political, social and economic aspects [23, 24]. Cultural pluralism can be used as a basis for assimilation between different ethnic cultures [25, 26]. Assimilation through pluralism enables cultural fusion between immigrant communities and local culture [27, 28]. Cultural pluralism does not eliminate the identity of immigrant groups, cultural pluralism avoids attempts to absorb identity into the original cultural structure [29, 30].

From a sociological perspective, religious pluralism is an inevitability for the Indonesian nation which has religious diversity and differences [31, 32]. The recognition of religious pluralism is a simple implementation of pluralism because this recognition does not mean recognizing the truth of religious beliefs or the ethics of other religions [33]. First, be open to differences in religious pluralism. Second, understand the differences because they cannot be avoided as something natural. Third, there is a critical attitude that respects differences without belittling or prejudiced against those that exist. Fourth, try dialogue to find similarities between differences, dialogue by placing different parties at the same level. Fifth, namely the desire to understand and respect the beliefs, culture and practice of other religions. It is hoped that all parties can try to understand pluralism in depth so that the application of pluralist religion is not only displayed on the outside but can be absorbed and felt in the heart.

Semarang City is the capital of Central Java which has ethnic, cultural, racial and religious diversity. The existence of places of worship for each religion is spread across the city of Semarang. Several mosques, churches, temples, temples and monasteries are relics of the past and are now used as a form of local wisdom which is still maintained to ensure it remains sustainable. Semarang City is a city that has tolerance for harmony

between diverse communities, religious tolerance in Semarang City is included in the top 10 Tolerant Cities in Indonesia. The city of Semarang received an award as a city of harmony in 2022, however, cases of religious-based social conflict have occurred in the city of Semarang, namely cases of rejection of the establishment of the Tlogosasi Kulon Indonesian Baptist Church, Semarang City and rejection of the construction of a church in the Sendangmulyo housing complex, Semarang City.

Research on religion-based social conflict has been carried out by previous researchers. The novelty of this research is to reveal potential conflicts causing the construction of houses of worship for minority religions and to find appropriate strategies to prevent conflicts resulting from the construction of houses of worship for minority religions. It is hoped that the results of this research can recommend the Semarang City Government to find the right strategy to prevent conflicts resulting from the construction of places of worship in Semarang City.

2. Method

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research which aims to analyze the potential causes of conflict in the construction of minority religious houses of worship and look for appropriate strategies to prevent conflicts resulting from the construction of minority religious houses of worship. The basis for using qualitative methods is because this research requires in-depth analysis to obtain a clear, detailed and scientific picture that describes analyzing the potential causes of conflict in the construction of minority religious houses of worship and looking for appropriate strategies to prevent conflicts resulting from the construction of minority religious houses of worship.

This qualitative research adopted a case study approach with data collection techniques of observation, documentation and in-depth interviews with key informants and supporting informants. The informants in this research were 10 people consisting of the Chair of the Communication Forum for Religious Harmony in Semarang City, the Chair of the National Unity, and Politics Agency for Semarang City and 8 informants who were directly involved in the social conflict over the establishment of places of worship in Tlogosari and Sendangmulyo, Semarang City. Researchers tested the validity of the data using source triangulation and technical triangulation. The analysis used in this research uses an interactive model, the elements of which include data collection, data coding, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

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3. Result and Discussion

The results of this research show that the population of Semarang City based on data from the Population and Civil Registry Service is very heterogeneous, where based on religion, the largest percentage is Muslim, and the smallest is Muslim. However, this does not mean that Muslims act arbitrarily towards minority groups, in fact they must all be able to position themselves and live side by side so that harmony, harmony and peace can be realized. Even though the tolerance index for religious harmony in Semarang City in 2021 is included in the very high category, namely 77.09, this does not mean that there are no obstacles or obstacles in realizing religious harmony in Semarang City. In the current conditions, there are still several obstacles that must be faced, including hampered communication and friendship which can trigger the destruction of religious harmony in the city of Semarang.

The city of Semarang is one of the cities ranked among the 10 cities with the highest tolerance scores in 2022 with seventh place. The inclusion of Semarang City in the top 10 is a manifestation of the seriousness of all city elements in managing building tolerances in Semarang City. Tolerance for building arrangements can be seen in the city development designs that have been implemented, including through the designation of a number of places of worship as cultural heritage to advance group rights. minorities, grants for all religious organizations and religious backgrounds to the establishment of Mayor regulation no. 47 of 2019 concerning Strengthening National Insight Through Pancasila Literacy in the City of Semarang.

On 1 August 2019 there was a rejection of the establishment of an Indonesian Baptist church in Tlogosasi Kulon. This rejection was due to accusations that there was no building permit for a place of worship and fake signatures from local residents. On 5 August 2019 mediation was held in Pedurungan District. The mediation involved two parties who opposed the establishment of the church, namely the Tlogosari Indonesian Baptist Church group, the police, Koramil, the Chair of Semarang City Religious Harmony, the Semarang City Kesbangpol, and the Head of Pedurungan District as moderator. Several matters that were discussed in the mediation were conveyed regarding the agreement to establish the church on the grounds that, firstly, the building permit came from fraudulent signatures, secondly, the building permit had expired because it had not been implemented 6 months later. a building permit has been issued. From the Gereja Baptis Indonesia (GBI) group, Tlogosari said that the Building permit (IMB) was issued according to government procedures.

On September 23 2019, Legal Aid emarang as GBI Tlogosari's attorney for this case complained about this case to the Ombudsaman of the Republic of Indonesia Representative for Central Java. On October 21 2019, GBI Tlogosari sent a letter to the Mayor of Semarang stating that the chosen option was to continue building the GBI Tlogosari house of worship on Jl. Malangsari No.83 RT06/VIII Tlogosari Subdistrict has been in accordance with the IMB since 1998 with number 645/387/Year:1998 and Church Establishment Principles No.45.2/42/1998 and welcomes objections to taking legal action. GBI Tlogosari appealed to the Semarang City Government to exercise their rights as religious people with a sense of security. With this option, GBI Telogosari did not accept the offer to move the location for the construction of the house of worship to public facilities provided by the Semarang City Government. The results of research regarding the rejection of the Indonesian Baptist Church in Tlogosari Kulon, Semarang City are in accordance with research conducted by (Wijayanto, 2021)

The refusal to establish a church in the Sendang Mulyo Housing Complex, Semarang City is one of the potential conflicts that could occur. Based on the results of interviews with Muslim community leaders, they stated that the reason for refusing to build a church was because the location of the building was a public housing facility. Meanwhile, when confirmed with the Chair of the Semarang City Religious Harmony Forum, he stated that public facilities were instead building mosques, while the land on which the church would be built was land owned by the church. Church leaders have moved locations several times to build the church, but always received approval from the residents. Church leaders tried to approach the community to obtain permission to build a church, but still had not received permission so church leaders refrained from building a place of worship. Rejection of the establishment of a church in the Sendangmulyo housing complex could become a conflict if it is handled incorrectly, so strategies need to be implemented to prevent conflict.

The strategy carried out by the Semarang City Religious Harmony Forum together with the Semarang City National and Political Unity Agency is to provide social education for the community based on pluralism. This community social education is provided by inviting sub-district officials, community leaders and religious leaders regularly to meetings to provide community social education based on pluralism. One of the community education provided is an understanding of religious moderation and community diversity which is a reality in the city of Semarang. The pluralism-based community social education strategy can be said to be successful in preventing potential social conflict, especially in the establishment of minority places of worship in Semarang City. A pluralism-based community social education strategy is still being implemented in

the Sendangmulyo housing complex, where the community rejects the establishment of minority places of worship. It is hoped that through pluralism-based community social education, it can provide public awareness to respect and give permission for adherents of different religions to practice their beliefs with the facilities of houses of worship that have permits to be established around the Sendangmulyo housing complex so that there can be harmonization and tolerance of religious communities.

4. Conclusion

The conflict prevention strategy is to provide social education to the community regarding pluralism education with a social approach that is carried out with synergy between the government and the community. The implications of this research can be used as a reference by the Semarang City Government in preventing conflicts due to the establishment of religious minority places of worship.

Acknowledgements

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