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### **Map of Freedom of Religion and Belief and Harmony in Kulonprogo: Social Capital to Face Challenges in the Era of Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA)**

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**Abstract:** *Indonesia is a country with high religious, cultural, and social diversity. Freedom of religion, belief, and harmony between religious communities are important elements to maintain social stability. Normatively, protection for this has been regulated, but its implementation faces challenges, especially in Kulonprogo, which has significant social and religious diversity. This challenge is increasingly complex due to the construction of Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA), which has triggered massive population migration, bringing various religious and cultural identities and increasing the potential for social friction. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach that is exploratory in nature with primary and secondary data collected through interviews, field observations, and documentation. Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, including data collection, reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that although the construction of YIA brings major challenges, Kulonprogo has strong social capital, such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, and mutual respect, which are the basis for harmony between religious communities. In addition, the presence of religious figures who actively promote tolerance is a key factor in reducing conflict. The principles of justice ('adl) and reconciliation (islah) in Islam can be an ethical guide for building social harmony through*

*collaboration between government, local communities, and religious figures.*

**Keywords:** *Freedom of Religion, Belief, Harmony, Kulonprogo, Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA).*

## **A. Introduction**

Social, economic, and cultural changes are inevitable dynamics in the development of a region. Modernization and globalization are often the main drivers of these changes, bringing significant opportunities and challenges to society. In this modern era, human mobility, technological developments, and the increasing flow of information encourage cross-cultural and cross-faith interactions. Although these interactions can enrich people's lives, on the other hand, they also have the potential to trigger friction or conflict, especially in regions with complex social diversity. One aspect that is most vulnerable to being affected by these dynamics is freedom of religion and belief, which is an important foundation in maintaining harmony amidst differences.

Freedom of religion and belief is a human right that is universally recognized and protected by the constitution in Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> This right includes not only the freedom to adhere to a particular religion, but also the freedom to practice worship according to one's beliefs without pressure or discrimination. However, at the local level, the implementation of Freedom of Religion and Belief often faces major challenges in creating harmony between religious communities, especially in areas with high levels of social and cultural diversity.

In Indonesia, freedom of religion and belief is fully guaranteed by the constitution and a number of relevant laws and regulations. This guarantee is stated in Article 28E paragraphs (1) and (2) and Article 28I paragraphs (1) and (2) of the 1945 Constitution (UUD),

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<sup>1</sup> Read more in: Muhammad Mutawalli, "Implementasi Prinsip Konvensi Internasional dalam Mengurai Pelanggaran HAM di Indonesia," *Jurnal Arajang* 6, no. 1 (June 28, 2023): 4, <https://doi.org/10.31605/arajang.v6i1.2829>; See also Mohammad Monib and Islah Bahrawi, *Islam & Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Pandangan Nurcholish Madjid* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2011), 245.

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which grants every individual the right to embrace a religion, practice worship, and be free from discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Article 22 paragraphs (1) and (2) of Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights (UU HAM) expressly states that every person has the freedom to embrace a religion and worship according to their religion, and the state guarantees this freedom.<sup>3</sup> This regulation reflects Indonesia's commitment to protecting religious freedom as an integral part of human rights that cannot be reduced under any circumstances.

The importance of protecting and fulfilling the right to freedom of religion and belief can be fully understood considering that Indonesia is a pluralistic country, consisting of various religions and beliefs that live side by side in society. In addition, freedom of religion and belief is also seen as an important element in encouraging a harmonious life because it plays a role in elevating and respecting human dignity.<sup>4</sup> With an attitude of mutual respect on the basis of humanity, harmony in life between religious and belief communities can become the main foundation for realizing harmony in a pluralistic society such as in Indonesia.

However, the reality shows something different. In recent years, the trend of cases of violations of Freedom of Religion and Belief in Indonesia has shown quite high numbers. Violations of Freedom of Religion and Belief are considered to be increasing. Based on the results of the Imparsial study, at least 23 incidents of violations of freedom of religion and belief occurred in Indonesia throughout 2024.<sup>5</sup> These cases occurred in various provinces, including the

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<sup>2</sup> Majda El-Muhtaj, *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Konstitusi Indonesia*, Cet. Ke-5 (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2015), 105.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Jamil Wahab, *Manajemen Konflik Keagamaan (Analisa Latar Belakang Konflik)* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2014), 122; See also Al Khanif, Herlambang P. Wiratraman, and Manunggal Kusuma Wardaya (eds.), *Hak Asasi Manusia; Dialektika Universalisme vs Relativisme di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Lkis Pelangi Aksara, 2017), 144–145.

<sup>4</sup> Rohit Mahatir Manese, “Pembatasan Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan di Indonesia serta Implikasinya,” *Societas Dei: Jurnal Agama Dan Masyarakat* 8, no. 1 (April 26, 2021): 87, <https://doi.org/10.33550/sd.v8i1.209>.

<sup>5</sup> Baca beritanya lebih lanjut dalam Nandito Putra, “Imparsial: 23 Kasus Pelanggaran Kebebasan Beragama Terjadi Sepanjang 2024,” December 11, 2024, <https://www.tempo.co>; See also Editor Imparsial, “Imparsial Temukan 23 Pelanggaran Kebebasan Beragama Selama 2024,” December 10, 2024, <https://imparsial.org>.

Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), which according to the Setara Institute report is one of the areas prone to violations of freedom of religion and belief.

As one of the regencies in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Kulonprogo Regency also faces challenges in maintaining freedom of religion and belief. Although the number of violation cases in Kulonprogo is not as many as those recorded in other regencies or cities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, the dynamics of the diversity of its society remain a concern. The existence of a dominant majority religious group and a minority group of a particular religion or belief often creates the potential for social friction, especially in terms of licensing for the establishment of places of worship or the implementation of religious activities. This condition shows that, although Kulonprogo is known as a region with a fairly high culture of tolerance, preventive measures and policies that support the protection of the right to freedom of religion remain an urgent need to prevent discrimination and violations. This challenge is increasingly relevant considering the social transformation that has occurred in Kulonprogo due to the construction of the *Yogyakarta International Airport* (YIA).

The development of YIA is an integral part of national development designed in six corridors of the *Masterplan for Acceleration and Equity of Indonesian Economic Development* (MP3EI). In the context of global connectivity, YIA is designed as one of the "gateways" connecting Indonesia with various countries in Asia, Europe, and America. Meanwhile, in the context of domestic connectivity, YIA functions as a hub airport connecting corridors in Indonesia, especially the Java and Bali regions.<sup>6</sup> YIA Airport was also built with the aerotropolis concept. John D. Kasarda, a professor who first introduced the concept of aerotropolis or airport city, stated: "The airport leaves the city, the city follows the airport, and the airport becomes a city".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gunawan, dkk., *Asesmen Dampak Sosial: Penyiapan Masyarakat Menghadapi Era Aerotropolis Kabupaten Kolonprogo* (Yogyakarta: B2P3KS Press, 2020), 1–2.

<sup>7</sup> John D. Kasarda and Greg Lindsay, *Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2011), 170; See also John D. Kasarda "Aerotropolis" in Anthony M. Orum, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Urban and Regional Studies* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2019), 9.

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Every development always brings impacts in the form of social change that includes structural, cultural and interactional aspects.<sup>8</sup> Kulonprogo before and after the construction of YIA will certainly experience significant differences. Structurally, the rapid flow of capital entering this region has driven the transformation of society from a traditional agrarian pattern to an industrial society, reflecting a shift in social structure from a community pattern (*gemeinschaft*) to a community pattern (*gesellschaft*). Culturally, local values, ideas, and cultures that have grown and developed will experience many changes due to the entry of new values brought by immigrants who migrate and settle in Kulonprogo. This shift will create new dynamics in the socio-cultural life of the local community. Interactionally, the social relationships and relations of the community will also change, from a traditional agrarian society that tends to be harmonious to a more individualistic and atomistic industrial society, along with the absorption of society into a new mechanical and busy work system.

As an increasingly plural and diverse region, Kulonprogo will face various challenges after the development of YIA, especially related to conflicts of intolerance and violations of freedom of religion and belief. This condition is an inevitability that is difficult to avoid, considering the many newcomers who bring diverse values and interests. Plurality can be a problem if people have difficulty interacting and do not have *shared norms*. In a plural society, plurality does not always mean that the society is multicultural, because there are often unequal power relations between cultural variants. This gives rise to the hegemony and dominance of the majority group over the minority group.<sup>9</sup> Julia Howell calls this phenomenon *delimited pluralism*,<sup>10</sup> a condition in which privileges and favoritism are only given to the majority group, while the rights of minority groups are ignored or even taken away. This form of

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<sup>8</sup> H. James Bix, *21st Century Anthropology: A Reference Handbook* (London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2010), 450–451; See also Joseph S. Himes, *Study of Sociology*, Wilbert E. Moore (Consulting Editor) (Atlanta: Scott Foresman, 1968), 430.

<sup>9</sup> Choirul Mahfud, *Pendidikan Multikultural* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), 99.

<sup>10</sup> Julia D. Howell, “Muslims, the New Age and Marginal Religions in Indonesia: Changing Meanings of Religious Pluralism,” *Social Compass* 52, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 473–493, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768605058151>.

discrimination clearly contradicts the principle of freedom of religion and belief and has the potential to trigger intolerant conflicts in society.

The development of YIA is projected to transform Kulonprogo into a metropolis. However, it should be remembered that no city can achieve progress without being supported by a strong culture of tolerance and harmony. In the history of civilization, the development of a city or even a nation always requires a social foundation that respects diversity. Tolerance is the social foundation for the advancement of science, technology, and even democracy—three elements that are identical to the progress of a city. Without strong tolerance and harmony, a big city will become fragile and vulnerable to destruction. Therefore, this article aims to explore the social capital and challenges faced by Kulonprogo, especially in terms of freedom of religion and belief, both at the structural and cultural levels. YIA will be used as an empirical and theoretical basis in analyzing various problems that may arise.

This study has great significance in the context of regional social and economic development. With the transformation of Kulonprogo into a new growth center due to the existence of YIA, the challenges in maintaining social harmony, especially those related to religious and belief diversity, are increasingly complex. This study aims to explore the potential of social capital, such as tolerance and harmony, as a foundation in facing the structural changes that occur. Through the analysis of structural and cultural aspects related to religious freedom, this study is expected to provide relevant insights to realize inclusive, stable, and sustainable development amidst the dynamics of rapid modernization.

This study is a continuation of several previous studies, one of which is a study conducted by Manese. Using the *literature review* method, Manese found that freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia experiences limited pluralism (*delimited pluralism*), which causes discrimination against ancestral religions and intolerance towards minority groups.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Nurhidayat also conducted a

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<sup>11</sup> Manese, "Pembatasan Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan di Indonesia serta Implikasinya," 86.

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similar study and concluded that in positive law, freedom of religion is the most basic human right and may not be reduced in the slightest (*non-derogable*). The state and its apparatus are responsible for preventing, obstructing, and taking firm action against all forms of coercion and intimidation against freedom of religion.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike previous studies, this study has a unique focus in examining the relationship between religious freedom and social harmony with the challenges that arise due to the development and development of the post-YIA development area. This study focuses on mapping the conditions of religious freedom and harmony as significant social capital in facing socio-economic dynamics in Kulonprogo. While previous studies tend to discuss religious freedom in general or in the context of discrimination against minority groups, this study specifically integrates the analysis of religious freedom with the specific context of large-scale infrastructure development. This approach makes this study unique because it emphasizes the importance of synergy between social capital and religious freedom to support social stability amidst major changes due to regional development.

This research is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. The nature of this research is exploratory,<sup>13</sup> aims to describe the relationship between religious freedom, freedom of belief, social harmony, and social challenges arising from the construction of YIA. Data sources consist of primary data, obtained through in-depth interviews with religious figures, communities, and stakeholders in Kulonprogo, as well as secondary data derived from official documents, research reports, and related literature. Data collection tools used include interviews, field observations, and documentation. Data analysis and interpretation in this study use the Miles and Huberman model as proposed by Salim, through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing

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<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Zulhidayat, "Ambiguitas Hak Konstitusional Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Ius Constitutum," *Jurnal Nalar Keadilan* 1, no. 1 (May 1, 2021): 59.

<sup>13</sup> Deepak Chawla & Neena Sodhi, *Research Methodology: Concepts and Cases* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 2011), 8.

conclusions.<sup>14</sup> Data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods to identify relevant patterns, relationships, and dynamics,<sup>15</sup> thus producing a comprehensive mapping of religious freedom, freedom of belief, and social harmony in the region.

## **B. Anomalies of Freedom of Religion and Belief and Harmony in Community and National Life: A Theoretical Review**

Indonesia, including Kulonprogo, is a country of law where all aspects of its implementation are based on legal provisions (*everything must be done according to law*).<sup>16</sup> In the context of interfaith life in Indonesia, realizing social order and order is important, especially through efforts to build harmony and tolerance. On the other hand, protection of the right to freedom of religion and belief is one form of protection of the natural rights of citizens.<sup>17</sup> These two aspects are interrelated and inseparable, like two sides of a coin. Freedom of religion and belief contributes to creating a harmonious and tolerant society, because this principle plays an important role in upholding human dignity regardless of identity background. On the other hand, the existence of harmony and tolerance in society also reflects the increasingly strong conditions of freedom of religion and belief as a pillar in national and state life.

The importance of harmony, tolerance, and freedom of religion and belief can be found in Pancasila. This is clearly seen when the *founding fathers* discussed and debated at length about the foundation of the state (*philosophische grondslag*) of Indonesia. In the end, they decided to establish Pancasila as the foundation of the state, not based

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 1994), 15; See also Agus Salim, *Teori dan Paradigma Penelitian Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2006), 22.

<sup>15</sup> R. Madhumathi et al., *Paradigm Shift: Multidisciplinary Research for A Changing World, Volume-1* (India: Redshine Publication, 2024), 113.

<sup>16</sup> Read more in: Happy Ferovina Wuntu et al., *Pengantar Hukum Tata Negara* (Sukoharjo: Pradina Pustaka, 2023), 65; See also Sulistyowati Irianto et al., *Kajian Sosio-Legal* (Denpasar: Pustaka Larasan, 2020), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Shandy Utama and Toni, "Perlindungan Negara terhadap Kebebasan Beragama di Indonesia Menurut Undang-Undang Dasar 1945," *Civitas (Jurnal Pembelajaran dan Ilmu Civic)* 6, no. 2 (2020): 12–24, <https://doi.org/10.36987/civitas.v2i1.1072>.



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on a particular religion.<sup>18</sup> The nation's founders did not lead Indonesia towards full theocracy or secularism, but instead chose a middle path full of wisdom to maintain unity and harmony, considering the diversity of Indonesian society which consists of various ethnicities, religions and cultures.<sup>19</sup>

The Indonesian state was not built to accommodate one particular religion, but rather for all Indonesian people. This state was not founded for one person, one religious group, or one particular group—either the nobility or the wealthy—but, as Sukarno put it, is a state for “all for all.” The establishment of Pancasila as the foundation of the state that is not based on one particular religion shows that the founders of the nation recognized and respected the diversity of religions and beliefs in Indonesia. They believed that the various religions that exist can work together harmoniously so that tolerance can flourish. In such an atmosphere, national unity and integrity can be realized under the auspices of Indonesian independence.<sup>20</sup>

The first principle of Pancasila emphasizes the importance of harmony, tolerance, and freedom of religion and belief.<sup>21</sup> However, the formulation of the first principle often gives rise to various polemical interpretations, one of which is related to the term “divinity.” Divinity is often interpreted as an abstract concept that does not refer to “God” specifically, but rather as a principle related to God. This formulation is also often understood within the framework of Islamic monotheism or monotheism in general, as reflected in Article 29 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution which affirms the belief of the Indonesian people in the One Almighty God. This understanding shows that the first principle plays a role in

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<sup>18</sup> Despan Heryansyah, “Tanggung Jawab Pemuda terhadap Masa Depan Pancasila,” *Jurnal Hukum Ius Quia Iustum* 21, no. 4 (2014): 607–631, <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol21.iss4.art5>.

<sup>19</sup> Abdul Rozak, *Pemikiran Politik & Gerakan Sosial Kultural Kewarganegaraan* (Sumatera Barat: Cv. Azka Pustaka, 2022), 44.

<sup>20</sup> Faisal Ismail, *Ideologi Hegemoni dan Otoritas Agama* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1999), 32.

<sup>21</sup> Felycia Devizca et al., “Analisis Peran Pancasila dan UUD 1945 dalam Menjamin Kebebasan Beragama di Indonesia,” *Civic Education: Media Kajian Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* 8, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 41, <https://doi.org/10.53682/jce.v8i1.10090>.

providing an inclusive spiritual basis, although in practice it is often considered to have the potential to reflect the dominance of one particular religious perspective. In the context of Indonesia's diversity, an interpretation that does not cover all beliefs can give rise to the perception of a lack of support for the principle of freedom of religion and belief, as well as creating a sense of injustice for some religious groups.<sup>22</sup>

Referring to the interpretation of the founder of Pancasila, Sukarno, the formulation of the first principle firmly emphasizes the importance of harmony, tolerance, and freedom of religion and belief in Pancasila. In one of his speeches, Sukarno said that every Indonesian should believe in God according to their respective religions. Christians worship God according to Christian teachings, Muslims worship God according to Islamic teachings, Buddhists practice their worship according to the books believed in in Buddhism, and so on. Indonesia is a country that gives freedom to all its citizens to worship their God freely. Sukarno described this concept as “belief in God culturally,” namely believing in God without being accompanied by “religious egoism,” but with a spirit of divinity that is noble, full of civility, and respectful of one another.<sup>23</sup>

The 1945 Constitution emphasizes the importance of unity and harmony of the Indonesian nation, although in the draft before the amendment, many parties considered that the original constitution still lacked Human Rights (HAM) content. The constitution prioritized national unity and harmony compared to the recognition of HAM as *natural rights* (human rights that a person has because he was born as a human being),<sup>24</sup> dengan hanya enam pasal yang dianggap memiliki substansi HAM.<sup>25</sup> This condition can be

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<sup>22</sup> Ihsan Ali Fauzi et al., *Mengelola Keragaman: Pemolisian Kebebasan Beragama di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2012), 65–67.

<sup>23</sup> Mutaya Saroh, *Ideologi Soekarno: Pandangan Soekarno terhadap Pancasila, Kapitalisme, Revolusi, Gerakan Perempuan, Ketahanan Pangan, dan Kesejahteraan Rakyat* (Yogyakarta: Anak Hebat Indonesia, 2024), 39; Tan Swie Ling, *Masa Gelap Pancasila: Wajah Nasionalisme Indonesia* (Depok: Ruas, 2014), 60–61.

<sup>24</sup> Knud D. Asplund, Suparman Marzuki, and Eko Riyadi (Ed.), *Hukum Hak Asasi Manusia* (Yogyakarta: Pusham UII, 2015), 240.

<sup>25</sup> Hendrik Boli Tobi, “Perjumpaan Budaya Lokal di NTT dengan Hak Asasi Manusia”, in Robertus Robet and Todung Mulya Lubis, *Kultur Hak Asasi Manusia di Negara Iliberal* (Tangerang: Marjin Kiri, 2020), 162.

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understood because the formulation of the 1945 Constitution was greatly influenced by the view of an integralistic state or an organic state put forward by Soepomo. In the debate on the articles of the constitution, four main ideas emerged: a liberal democratic state, a social-democratic state, an Islamic state, and an integralistic state,<sup>26</sup> where this last idea gained widespread support, including from Sukarno. Sukarno himself viewed that Indonesia should be based on the principle of kinship or mutual cooperation, which was in line with the integralist idea as the main guideline for the formation of the state.

After going through several amendments, the post-amendment 1945 Constitution recorded an important breakthrough with the inclusion of articles containing human rights principles into the body of the constitution. If before the amendment there were only six articles containing human rights values, then after the amendment there are at least 27 basic human rights principles regulated in the 1945 Constitution.<sup>27</sup> This change is considered one of the most impressive achievements, because it covers a wide range of human rights, even exceeding the constitutions of several developed countries.<sup>28</sup>

The articles on human rights in the post-amendment 1945 Constitution are contained in a separate chapter, Chapter XA. The amended constitution accommodates the protection of human rights from three generations: the first generation which includes civil and political rights, the second generation which includes social and economic rights, and the third generation which includes collective rights. In the context of freedom of religion and belief, the amendment provides a very strong constitutional guarantee. In addition, the institutionalization of human rights in the post-amendment 1945 Constitution is also strengthened through derivative regulations under the constitution, such as Law Number 39 of 1999

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<sup>26</sup> Wilson, "Politik Identitas Zaman Kolonial", in Robet and Lubis, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Nurul Qamar, *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Negara Hukum Demokrasi: Human Rights in Democratic Rechtsstaat* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2022), 79.

<sup>28</sup> Titon Slamet Kurnia, *Konstitusi HAM: Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945 dan Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014), 90.

concerning Human Rights and Law Number 12 of 2005 concerning Civil and Political Rights, which are the result of the spirit of reform.

Referring to the various concepts above, it can be concluded that Indonesia as a country of law upholds the principles of harmony, tolerance, and freedom of religion and belief. These values are reflected in Pancasila as the foundation of an inclusive state, respecting diversity, and upholding the spirit of unity. Although the first principle of Pancasila often gives rise to different interpretations, especially in the context of divinity, its essence still emphasizes the importance of respecting each other's beliefs without being accompanied by religious egoism. The transformation of the Indonesian constitution, especially through the amendment of the 1945 Constitution, has strengthened the protection of human rights, including freedom of religion and belief, as one of the main pillars in maintaining the unity of a diverse nation. With a solid legal foundation, harmony and tolerance can continue to be maintained in order to realize a harmonious and civilized national life.

### **C. Map of Freedom of Religion and Belief and Harmony in Kulonprogo: Social Capital and Challenges**

In general, the conditions of freedom of religion and belief and harmony in Kulonprogo can be said to be quite good. This is indicated by the minimal cases of sharp religious intolerance, which often occur in other districts in Yogyakarta, such as Sleman, Bantul, and the city of Yogyakarta. This condition also became a factor that caused Yogyakarta to be categorized as one of the most intolerant provinces by the Setara Institute some time ago. Based on mass media coverage and reports from various institutions that focus on religious and diversity issues, Kulonprogo Regency appears to receive less attention. Therefore, Kulonprogo appears relatively calm in the public eye, with few reports related to cases of intolerance or violations of freedom of religion and belief.

In certain assessments, the minimal cases of intolerance and violations of freedom of religion and belief in Kulonprogo are understandable, although this requires a more critical study. This condition is likely related to the structure of Kulonprogo society

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which is still relatively "simple" and has not been fully affected by the dynamics of urbanization or complex social fragmentation. This is different from the Sleman and Yogyakarta City areas, which have more complex social structures and tend to be "compartmentalized" due to the impact of development that has been concentrated in the two areas. This centralized development not only creates different socio-economic dynamics, but also has the potential to strengthen segregation between groups. This condition, in the end, can increase vulnerability to identity-based conflicts, including in the issue of freedom of religion and belief.

It is interesting to observe the research conducted by Ahnaf and Salim regarding the rampant cases of intolerance in Yogyakarta, especially in areas such as Sleman, Bantul, and the city of Yogyakarta. According to them, this phenomenon cannot be understood solely as a manifestation of religious intolerance, but also as an impact of socio-economic changes that create spaces and spatial arrangements that reflect the struggle for access to socio-economic resources.<sup>29</sup> The analysis presented by Ahnaf and Salim, at least, indicates the existence of structural problems in society which have become more complex and tend to be "compartmentalized".

This is certainly different from the conditions in Kulonprogo. In general, the characteristics of the Kulonprogo community are still rural-agrarian and communal. Like the Javanese rural community in general which is traditional and communal, the concept of harmony is still an inherent part of everyday life. Community life in this area is usually based on two main principles. First, efforts to avoid conflict and maintain harmony, as reflected in the proverb *rukun agawe santoso, crah agawe bubrah* (harmony brings strength, disputes bring destruction). Second, this attitude to life is based on the principle of mutual respect to create harmony in life, which is expressed in the proverb *tata titi tentrem karta raharja* (organized, careful, peaceful, and prosperous).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Muhammad Iqbal Ahnaf and Hairus Salim H.S., *Krisis Keistimewaan: Kekerasan terhadap Minoritas di Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: CRCS, 2017), 29.

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Taufik, "Nilai Sosio-Religius Masyarakat Studi Interaksi Antarumat Beragama di Yogyakarta," *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 16, no. 1 (September 12, 2018): 51, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v16i1.2056>.

Head of the Kulonprogo Ministry of Religious Affairs Section, Wahib Jamil, in a *Focus Group Discussion* held at the Islamic University of Indonesia in July 2021, acknowledged that sociologically, the Kulonprogo community is classified as a traditional and communal community. Because they still adhere to the views and values of harmonious living that are typical in communal communities, according to Jamil, the current condition of the community in Kulonprogo can be said to be harmonious and relatively conducive. However, Jamil also emphasized that this does not mean that there are absolutely no cases of intolerance or violations of freedom of religion and belief in Kulonprogo Regency.

The Head of Kesbangpol Kulonprogo Regency, Budi Hartono, said the same thing. He confirmed that there were a number of cases of intolerance that occurred in Kulonprogo, although he called them "small ripples". At the same event, Agung Mabururi, Head of the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) of Kulonprogo Regency, explained that cases of intolerance that had occurred so far had never surfaced in the mass media because they could be immediately handled by the local government and community. In fact, these cases could often be resolved at the grassroots level through a family approach. The government and community tend to ask that these cases of intolerance not be exposed to the media, to prevent a wider escalation.

This raises questions and surprises, considering that in the era of open information like today, it is difficult to imagine that these cases can be completely hidden from public attention. It is not yet certain whether this kind of approach can be considered effective and healthy in the context of diversity management, or on the contrary, is a less than ideal step in solving these problems.

However, on the other hand, there are concerns that need to be considered, if the approach is only carried out by "religious and government elites" solely to maintain a positive image of the region. In such a situation, the approach can become a mere "mask" used to cover up the real problem or conflict. The absence of cases of intolerance in media coverage also creates obstacles for institutions that care about religious and diversity issues in identifying existing

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cases. As a result, these cases are not recorded in their reports, so that efforts to resolve and supervise them become increasingly limited.

Cases of intolerance in Kulonprogo Regency are indeed relatively minimal compared to other areas in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, but this does not mean that these cases have never occurred. One case that has attracted quite a lot of attention is the closing of the statue of the Virgin Mary at the Sasana Adhi Rasa Santo Yakobus Prayer House, Degolan Hamlet, Bumirejo, Lendah, in March 2023. In addition, other cases also involve issues such as rejection of the establishment of a place of worship, discrimination against minority groups, and conflicts related to differences in beliefs. Although many of these cases do not appear in the mass media, the resolution that tends to be closed raises concerns that the problem is simply being hidden, without touching on the deeper roots of the problem. This non-transparent approach to conflict resolution is also an obstacle for institutions that care about diversity issues in monitoring and providing more strategic and sustainable solutions.

In addition to data related to cases of intolerance and violations of freedom of religion and belief, the world of education in Kulonprogo Regency is also an interesting aspect to study. Research conducted by Muzayanah found that, although the index of multicultural education and tolerance of high school students in Kulonprogo Regency is quite high, there are still a number of problems in religious education services. Muzayanah noted that not all schools comply with the constitutional provisions regarding religious education. This is reflected in the practice in several schools that do not provide religious education in accordance with the religion of the students, some even require students to take religious education that is different from their beliefs.<sup>31</sup> The potential for intolerance among students in Kulonprogo Regency, according to Muzayanah, can develop into religious expressions that tend to be extreme. This

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<sup>31</sup> Umi Muzayanah, "Indeks Pendidikan Multikultural dan Toleransi Siswa SMA/K di Gunungkidul dan Kulonprogo," *Edukasi: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan* 15, no. 2 (August 31, 2017): 228–239, <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v15i2.309>.

can be seen from the findings that a number of students gave responses that supported violent actions in the name of religion.

Not only educational and school spaces are being controlled by several parties with a closed and exclusive mindset, but also housing spaces. Currently, in Yogyakarta, many housing estates are starting to emerge that are based on certain religious identities, such as special Muslim housing that is only intended for Muslim residents. This phenomenon causes serious problems because it can worsen social segregation, which has the potential to become a source of religious conflict in a pluralistic society. As Arifin's research shows, these special Muslim housing estates have developed a lot in the Yogyakarta area, especially in two districts, Sleman and Bantul.<sup>32</sup> However, a similar phenomenon is expected to spread to Kulonprogo Regency. This is increasingly relevant with the increasing development momentum in Kulonprogo Regency after the operation of YIA. Muslim housing developers, inspired by the success of similar projects in other areas in Yogyakarta, are expected to start turning their attention to Kulonprogo, which is seen as a new prospective locus for Muslim housing development because it has promising market potential. This indication can be seen from the increasing number of advertisements offering Muslim housing in Kulonprogo circulating on the internet. This phenomenon needs to be examined critically, considering its impact on the social order of society which has so far been known to be relatively harmonious and tolerant.

Harmony in Kulonprogo is not only a social asset, but also a strategic capital that plays an important role in helping society face various dynamics of change. In a society that upholds tolerance, religious and belief diversity is seen as a cultural wealth that must be preserved. This is reflected in how local communities often make places of worship a symbol of diversity that lives side by side, such as mosques, churches, temples, and Chinese temples that stand close together. In addition, collaboration in various social activities, such as community service and village empowerment programs, shows that

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<sup>32</sup> Kamil Alfi Arifin, *Politik Ruang Perumahan Muslim* (Yogyakarta: Lintas Nalar, 2020), 2.



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this social capital functions as a glue that strengthens relationships between individuals and groups.

The cases of intolerance and related symptoms mentioned urge the Kulonprogo Regency government to immediately formulate and take strategic steps in prevention. Prevention efforts that can be taken include strengthening the role of the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) in mediation and interfaith dialogue, organizing community education programs related to the importance of tolerance and religious freedom, and integrating diversity values into the education curriculum. In addition, the local government needs to encourage the involvement of religious and community leaders in promoting social harmony, as well as ensuring the implementation of fair and inclusive policies. These steps are very important to anticipate problems of intolerance and violations of religious freedom that have the potential to threaten community harmony, especially considering the complexity of the challenges that will increase in the post-YIA era.

The existence of YIA has brought significant changes to the social, economic, and cultural landscape in Kulonprogo. As an international gateway, YIA opens access for various parties, both from within and outside the country, to interact with the local community. This modernization provides great opportunities in infrastructure development, economic growth, and job creation. However, on the other hand, this transformation also presents challenges in the form of demographic changes, urbanization, and increased intercultural interaction.

With the increasing number of immigrants from various cultural and religious backgrounds, the potential for social friction also increases. Differences in lifestyle and values brought by immigrants have the potential to clash with established local traditions. Therefore, harmony and tolerance that have been the social capital of the Kulonprogo community must continue to be strengthened to face these challenges. The local government and community need to work together to integrate immigrants into local social life without sacrificing the original values that are the identity of the Kulonprogo community.

The construction of YIA has brought about significant social changes for the Kulonprogo community. The face of Kulonprogo Regency after YIA will certainly be very different compared to the conditions before the airport existed. Sociologically, the impact of these changes can be seen from several important aspects.<sup>33</sup>

Structurally, the entry of large capital through capital-intensive investment will become the material basis that transforms Kulonprogo into an industrial society. This change involves a shift from a traditional and communal community structure (*gemeinschaft*) to an industrial and individualistic community structure (*gesellschaft*). Before the existence of YIA, Kulonprogo society generally had a more traditional structure with a communal lifestyle. However, after YIA operates, the structure of Kulonprogo society is predicted to change completely into an industrial society, with all its social implications, including increased social segregation that will increasingly "compartmentalize" the Kulonprogo region.

Urban sociologists often state that cities are arenas of contestation of various forces,<sup>34</sup> which is seen from the struggle for living space and socio-economic resources. Cities always present contradictions and complex problems that are more complicated than relatively simple traditional societies. These contradictions often frame the emergence of various social problems, including religious intolerance. As explained by Ahnaf and Salim in their research, cases of religious intolerance in urban areas are often not solely triggered by "cultural" problems.

From a political economy perspective, religious intolerance is not only the result of rigid religious interpretations or low literacy of moderate religion. Although the moderate religious model is currently used as one of the strategies by local governments, including the Ministry of Religion in Kulonprogo, to build harmony, the root of the problem of intolerance is often more "structural." Factors such as the struggle for living space, control of socio-economic resources, and

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<sup>33</sup> Himes, *Study of Sociology*, 430.

<sup>34</sup> Purnawan Basundoro, *Dua Kota, Tiga Zaman: Surabaya dan Malang, Sejak Kolonial Sampai Kemerdekaan* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2009), 20; See also Muryanti, *Masyarakat Transisi: Meleburnya Batas-batas Desa Kota* (Yogyakarta: Bursa Ilmu, 2022), 101.

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certain political interests are often the background to the emergence of cases of intolerance.

Culturally, local values, ideas, and cultures that have emphasized the concept of harmonious living—which have grown and been internalized by the Kulonprogo community before the existence of YIA—have the potential to experience significant changes along with the entry of new values brought by immigrants. The friction between these various values has the potential to become a source of new conflict if not managed properly, especially considering that Kulonprogo post-YIA will become increasingly diverse. This concern was expressed by Iriyanta from the Social Section of Kulonprogo Regency in a *Focus Group Discussion* event organized by the Islamic University of Indonesia in May 2021. He stated that “in the future, Kulonprogo will be visited by many ethnicities and religions. Kulonprogo will become a flow of labor, transportation, goods, and services. There will be cultural changes”. In line with this, Romo Yudono Suwondo, a religious figure in Kulonprogo Regency, reflected on this phenomenon as a “cultural tsunami” that has the potential to shake the local social and cultural order due to the massive influx of goods, people, and new values. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of the community, especially the Kulonprogo government, preparing themselves to face this major change with anticipatory steps and appropriate management strategies.

Interactionally, social relations and relationships in Kulonprogo society are also expected to experience changes. This cannot be avoided as an impact of structural changes in people's lives. In a more industrial society, it is usually marked by the strengthening of individualistic and atomistic characteristics, due to the involvement of individuals in a new, busy and mechanical work system.

In the context of interfaith life in Kulonprogo, social and religious ties will naturally become looser, so that the concern and spirit of mutual cooperation that are characteristic of communal society will decrease. This phenomenon has been recognized and has begun to be felt by several community leaders, one of whom is Rev. Andika, a Catholic religious figure and member of the FKUB

Kulonprogo Regency, who expressed this in a Focus Group Discussion event organized by the Islamic University of Indonesia in May 2021. According to him, the current religious relations are very different compared to religious relations in the past. Religious relations are now looser. Based on these sociological facts, the Kulonprogo Regency regional government needs to develop a development concept that is based on harmony, togetherness, and sustainability and prioritizes the values of harmony between religious communities.

From an Islamic perspective, freedom of religion and belief is a fundamental principle affirmed in the Qur'an, "*There is no compulsion in religion*" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256). This principle provides a strong theological basis for respecting diversity and instilling tolerance, values that are very relevant to Kulonprogo. This region is facing social challenges due to the impact of the YIA development, which has brought major changes to the social and economic structure of society. Therefore, the values of tolerance and respect for diversity must be used as a foundation in responding to the social dynamics that occur.

Islam not only recognizes religious freedom, but also encourages harmony between religious communities as part of the collective responsibility in maintaining social stability.<sup>35</sup> The concept of *ukhuwah insaniyah* (human brotherhood) emphasizes the importance of building harmonious relationships amidst differences,<sup>36</sup> both in terms of religion and culture. In the context of Kulonprogo society which is rural-agrarian and communal, traditional values such as mutual cooperation and respect for diversity reflect harmony with Islamic teachings. However, it is necessary to criticize whether these traditional values have sufficient resilience to face the challenges of modernization presented by the construction of YIA, or whether they

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<sup>35</sup> Nur Hadi et al., "Relevansi Konsep Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin terhadap Toleransi Beragama," *Darajat: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 6, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 21–29, <https://doi.org/10.58518/darajat.v6i1.1611>.

<sup>36</sup> Umi Salamah, "Integrasi Nilai-nilai Islam dan Kearifan Lokal," *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars* 8, no. 1 (October 26, 2024): 1061, <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v8i1.646>.

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actually require strengthening through a more focused and strategic religious approach.

In the face of complex social changes, Islam offers the principle of justice (*'adl*) as a guide to maintaining social stability. Social justice not only includes the equitable distribution of resources, but also ensures the participation of all groups in society, including minority groups, in the decision-making process. This principle is particularly relevant in Kulonprogo, where the construction of YIA has the potential to give rise to a struggle for access to resources and economic opportunities. However, the implementation of the principle of justice often faces challenges, especially if structural inequalities remain unresolved.

Islam also teaches the importance of *islah* (reconciliation) as a method of conflict resolution. In the context of Kulonprogo, the *islah* approach can be an effective solution to deal with potential intolerance that may arise. Although the family approach is often successful in reducing conflict, it is necessary to strengthen it through more inclusive dialogue. This is important so that conflict resolution is not only temporary or merely maintaining an image, but truly resolves the root of the problem.

Although Islam emphasizes the importance of harmony and justice, the biggest challenge is translating these values into real practice amidst rapid social change. For example, it is necessary to evaluate whether local government policies and local community steps in Kulonprogo fully reflect the principles of justice and harmony taught by Islam. A family-based approach that is considered too closed risks ignoring transparency and justice, which should be the main foundation in resolving conflicts.

The modernization brought by the construction of YIA also poses a challenge for the Kulonprogo community in maintaining the values of harmony. Islam emphasizes the importance of adapting to changing times without losing the main principles. Therefore, the Kulonprogo community needs to strengthen local values such as mutual cooperation in a more inclusive and relevant way to modern dynamics.

Thus, the Islamic perspective not only supports freedom of religion and belief as a basic right, but also provides an ethical foundation for maintaining social harmony amidst dynamic changes. The principles of justice, harmony, and reconciliation are very relevant guidelines for facing development challenges in the YIA era. However, the implementation of these principles requires critical evaluation and openness to ensure that all community groups in Kulonprogo receive equal rights and justice. Only through an inclusive approach can Islamic principles on freedom of religion and harmony become solid social capital for the Kulonprogo community.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study shows that protection of freedom of religion and belief and harmony has been adequately accommodated in the constitution and laws and regulations in Indonesia, but its implementation still faces various challenges, especially due to the rampant intolerant movements carried out by certain individuals. In Kulonprogo, an area with complex social diversity, the potential for conflict appears small at first glance, but in-depth analysis reveals significant social segregation related to freedom of religion and belief. This challenge is further complicated by the presence of YIA, which has triggered massive population migration to the area, bringing with it diverse religious identities and beliefs that have the potential to increase social friction. In this context, Islam provides guidance through the principles of justice (*'adl*) and reconciliation (*islah*), which encourage inclusive and fair conflict resolution. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen literacy on freedom of religion and belief and harmony, both through government policies and cultural approaches that involve all elements of society. If these values are not strengthened, the development of YIA risks becoming a catalyst for social segregation, rather than providing the expected economic impact. On the other hand, by strengthening the values of harmony, YIA can become a momentum to strengthen social harmony and create an inclusive, tolerant and civilized Kulonprogo society.

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