

# REPRESENTATION OF AGENT AND STRUCTURE OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THE FILM "BID'AH CINTA"

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## REPRESENTATION OF AGENT AND STRUCTURE OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THE FILM "BID'AH CINTA"

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## REPRESENTASI AGEN DAN STRUKTUR MASYARAKAT MUSLIM INDONESIA DALAM FILM "BID'AH CINTA"

**Abstract.** There were two problems to be solved in this research. The first problem was the ideology of Islamic law practiced by Islamist individuals or groups to solve the problems in society. However, it often leads to clashes between individuals or groups in its structure. Second, Islamist individuals or groups used religious beliefs as a source of social (political) action by showing that social change is not based on agent routines, as Giddens argues in structuration theory. We illustrated these two issues in the text of "Bid'ah Cinta" (2017) film, directed by Nurman Hakim. The theory used was a combination of Giddens' structuration and the concept of Islamism. Meanwhile, the method used was van Dijk's critical discourse analysis using three tools: text, cognition, and social context. At the text level, this study used Peircean semiotics to identify icons, indexes, and symbols in the text. At the same time, we conducted the interview method to determine cognition and social context. The result was that religious beliefs encouraged agents to take action to bring about social change. This explanation contradicts Giddens's opinion. He said that social change was based only on agent routines and repetitive social practices that have access to rules and resources (structures). Examples of this were changing the practice of prayer, the prohibition of local Islamic traditions, and changes in the procedures for establishing social relations in the community. At the level of cognition and social context, the background of the filmmaker and the social situation in society determined the issues raised in the film, especially about the discourse of bid'ah (in a negative sense, akin to deviant), kafir (unbeliever), and the massive presence of Islamist groups after the New Order era.

**Keywords:** agent, structure, Muslim, Islamism, film.

**Abstrak.** Ada dua persoalan yang ingin diselesaikan dalam studi ini. Pertama, ideologi syariat Islam yang digunakan individu atau kelompok Islamis dalam upaya menyelesaikan persoalan di masyarakat. Namun hal itu justru sering menimbulkan benturan antarindividu atau kelompok dalam struktur. Kedua, keyakinan agama yang digunakan sebagai sumber tindakan sosial (politik) oleh individu atau kelompok Islamis memperlihatkan bahwa perubahan sosial bukan didasarkan pada rutinitas agen, sebagaimana pendapat Giddens dalam teori strukturasi. Kedua isu ini tergambar dalam teks film Bid'ah Cinta (2017) yang disutradarai oleh Nurman Hakim. Teori yang digunakan adalah penggabungan antara strukturasi Giddens dan konsep Islamisme. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis wacana kritis van Dijk yang menggunakan tiga perangkat yaitu teks, kognisi, dan konteks sosial. Pada level teks, studi ini menggunakan semiotika Peircean untuk mengidentifikasi ikon, indeks, dan simbol di dalam teks. Sementara metode wawancara dilakukan

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untuk mengetahui kognisi dan konteks sosial. Hasilnya adalah keyakinan agama mendorong agen untuk melakukan tindakan perubahan sosial. Hasil ini membantah pendapat Giddens bahwa perubahan sosial hanya didasarkan pada rutinitas agen dengan didasarkan pada praktik sosial berulang yang memiliki akses pada aturan dan sumber daya (struktur). Misalnya, tindakan perubahan praktik salat, pelarangan terhadap tradisi Islam lokal, dan perubahan tata cara menjalin hubungan sosial di masyarakat. Pada level kognisi dan konteks sosial, latar belakang sineas dan situasi sosial di masyarakat menentukan isu yang diangkat dalam film, khususnya tentang wacana bid'ah, kafir, dan masifnya kehadiran kelompok Islamis pasca era Orde Baru.

**Kata Kunci:** agen, struktur, muslim, Islamisme, film.

## INTRODUCTION

Subsequent to Indonesia's political reform initiation in May 1998, many individuals and organizations advocating social change have flourished. One of those organizations is Islamic organizations that advocate for the purification of Islam and apply Islamic systems, constituting what Bassam Tibi (Tibi, 2012) identified as an Islamist movement. Islamism understands that the State and Religion are inexorably interrelated. Political and governmental systems must be rooted in Islamic legal (*sharia*). Tibi understands Islamism not as a spiritual practice but rather as a religionization of politics.

Nurman Hakim's film *Bid'ah Cinta* (2017) constructed such a reality, using a religious (Islamic) background to illustrate the social changes in Indonesia's majority-Muslim society. One of its main characters was a religious scholar, Ustadz Jaiz (Alex Abad), who reintegrated into local society after completing his studies in the Middle East—the center of the Muslim world (Tibi, 1994). However, he felt uneasy with the Islamic traditions practiced in his village for generations, including pilgrimages to graves and commemorations of the Prophet's Birthday. He believed that the Prophet Muhammad did not teach these forms of worship, and thus these are deviant. As a result, social practices in the current Muslim society do not reflect the actual teachings of Islam (Bahruddin, Hamad & Triputra, 2021).

Allying himself with like-minded individuals, Ustadz Jaiz seeks to create a new social and religious order that reflects his understanding of Islam's teachings. He thus began actively preaching a "pure" exegesis of

the Qur'an and the hadiths, challenging the prevalent social and religious practices that he perceived as deviant. *Bid'ah Cinta* thus presents a social reality wherein individual community members actively promote the exegesis that they perceive as most correct, thereby (re)constructing and (re)producing the social order through dialectical interactions with the structure.

Giddens (Giddens, 1984) referred to this construction of social reality as structuration. It is a process through which agents and structures interact and negotiate values, laws, rules, and resources. This theory challenged the structuralist paradigm, which positioned individuals as passive entities, and thus social change can only be instigated by the structure. Similarly, Giddens rejected the view that individual agents are the only ones capable of creating social change, as offered by humanism. At the same time, although linguistics contributed significantly to Giddens' structuration, it was not a form of hermeneutics or interpretative sociology. Even as its premises departed from a structural duality, it was not a theory of dualism (Giddens, 1984b). Instead, it maintained that social dynamics and change occurred dialectically through interactions between individuals and structures, which exist as two sides of a coin. Individuals have the freedom to act, but on the other side, individuals must recognize all applicable rules and resources.

Berger et al. has conducted a study of individual Muslim agents' interactions with surrounding structures (Berger, Essers and Himi, 2017). He investigated the Moroccan Muslim employees of 'white' organizations in the Netherlands and found that their workers faced both obstacles and opportunities at their places of employment. They created identities

and agencies strongly associated with their religious practices, for instance, by consuming only halal food and non-alcoholic beverages, observing Ramadhan and similar holidays, worshipping five times daily, and veiling themselves. Based on their interviews with informants, Berger et al. identified three general strategies: adaptation/negotiation, avoidance, and refusal/opposition. In the first strategy, Muslim employees attempted to adapt their beliefs to suit their employers' structure. In practicing avoidance, Muslim employees seek to avoid potential conflict with their employers. They may even abandon religious practices and doctrines perceived as potentially detrimental to their organizational position, which is necessary for creating and maintaining a professional identity. However, this strategy reinforced the structures of the 'white' employers, as employees are seen as conforming to the practices of the dominant structure (Berger, Essers & Himi, 2017b).

One previous study of individual Muslim agents' interactions with surrounding structures was conducted by Berger et al., who investigated the Moroccan Muslim employees of 'white' organizations in the Netherlands. Berger et al. found that Moroccan Muslim workers faced both obstacles and opportunities at their places of employment. They created identities and agencies strongly associated with their religious practices by consuming only halal food and non-alcoholic beverages, observing Ramadhan and similar holidays, worshipping five times daily, and veiling themselves. Based on their interviews with informants, Berger et al. identified three general strategies: adaptation/negotiation, avoidance, and refusal/opposition. In the first strategy, Muslim employees attempted to adapt their beliefs to suit their employers' structure. In practicing avoidance, Muslim employees seek to avoid potential conflict with their employers. They may even abandon religious practices and doctrines perceived as potentially detrimental to their organizational position, which was necessary for creating and maintaining a professional identity. This strategy reinforced the structures of the 'white' employers, as employees were seen as conforming with the practices of the dominant structure (Berger, Essers & Himi, 2017b).

Finally, Berger et al. identified refusal/opposition as a strategy through which structural rules and regulations are rejected as fundamentally against Islamic principles and doctrines. However, the objection did not extend to meetings considered tolerable following Islamic teachings; companies are thus urged to provide new spaces wherein employees' identities can be maintained (Berger, Essers & Himi, 2017b).

However, while Berger et al. recognized agents as Muslim, they did not investigate their diverse understandings and interpretations of Islamic teachings. As such, they failed to consider the extent to which agents' views inform their behaviors. At the same time, Berger et al. did not consider individual agents' motivations; fear of unemployment, a crisis of faith, and even political ideology.

The question of film and Islamism in Indonesia was previously explored by Akmaliah (Akmaliah, 2020), who found that the film *"212: The Power of Love"* had been designed to link the "212 Movement" with the electoral politics of the Jakarta Capital District while simultaneously framing Islam as a religion of peace. The 212 Movement, also known as the Action to Defend Islam, was a movement that used blasphemy charges against incumbent Governor of Jakarta Basuki Cahaya Purnama (better known as Ahok) to legitimize its involvement in Jakarta's 2017 gubernatorial election. Ahok was accused of having denigrated the Qur'an, particularly Verse 51 of Surah Al-Maidah, during a speech in the Kepulauan Seribu Regency; more specifically, he had urged the audience not to allow themselves to be deceived during elections by persons citing the verse. In the film *"212: The Power of Love"*, Akmaliah found a hidden agenda: conveying a political message in a non-political package (i.e., presenting Islam as a religion of peace). Akmaliah also did not examine how the film presented its political message through its visuals and dialog; it limits its discussion to the particular events that provided the film with its political momentum.

## CONCEPT

### Structure and Structuration

The theory of structuration (see(Giddens, 1984) viewed individuals as entities with the freedom to act within the dominant structure. Previously, the paradigms of structuralism and functionalism had emphasized society's dominance over individuals, with the structure determining members' behaviors and actions; as such, these paradigms had shown objectivist tendencies. Conversely, the hermeneutic paradigm that underscored humanist tradition had emphasized human behavior; interpretative sociology, similarly, had viewed individual actions and meanings as the only means of explaining human behaviors. Giddens offered a middle ground through his structuration theory: individuals have the freedom to imagine and act and thus are not passive entities that are inexorably molded by the structure. Instead, they can act of their own volition and realize their own goals, thereby producing and reproducing the structure. At the same time, however, they are not entirely free of the structure around them. Giddens' theory of structuration thus differentiates itself from structuralism and functionalism, which tend to ignore individual agency, as well as humanism and interpretative sociology, which tend to ignore structural influences. Giddens maintained that individuals and structures are inexorably related; they are two faces of the same coin.

Important in Giddens' theory of structuration is the distinction between system and structure. The system encompasses social interactions (at the micro-level), groups, organizations, and networks (at the mezzo level), and the economy, society, and organized religion (at the macro level); all of these may be covered by the theory of structuration. Meanwhile, the structure refers to the rules (principles, routines) and resources (all elements that facilitate human activity) incorporated into individual behaviors. As such, the structure cannot be directly observed or sensorily perceived but rather a potentially useful reification (McPhee, Poole & Iverson, 2014a).

Giddens' structuration theory focuses predominantly on the actions and activities commonly repeated in society and involves dialectics between agents and structures. Agents and structures are two sides of the same coin; in other words, all social activities require structure (McPhee, Poole & Iverson, 2014b).

There are three main dimensions in the structure, namely signification, domination, and legitimation. They closely relate and influence each other. Each dimension of the structure gets connected with interactions between agent actions. Modalities mediated both. In the structure of significance, an actor must interact through communication using a particular scheme or means of interpretation. These structures produce meaning through organized language networks (semantic code, interpretive schemas, and discursive practices). Domination structures are concerned with the exercise of power. This dimension comes from the control of facilities, production, and resources (Lamsal, 2012, pp. 114–115). For example, control of the economy, use of financial assets, control of workers by employers, a captain over the sergeants, or control over students by teachers. The sanctions provided by the teacher against students involved a legitimacy structure (Priyono, 2016, pp. 25–26)). This structure produces a moral order processed from the naturalization of norms, values, and community standards. Therefore, the right or wrong of action is based on a social order structured within a framework of legitimacy (Lamsal, 2012b).

### Islam and Islamism

Tibi (Tibi, 2012)) used the term Islamism to refer to a global movement that seeks to apply Islamic systems in society, which members of the movement view as the antithesis of secular systems (which they brand as *kafir*). This research argued that Islamism is different from Islam. It is not a matter of faith but a religionization of politics. It is not from Islam. Instead, it is a political ideology packaged as a teaching, a specific interpretation of Islam.

At the same time, we argue that Islamism is different from the Islamist revival

movements widely discussed by scholars. It remains deeply steeped in a romantic view of Islam's past glory and imagination of Islam as a system of divine rule (*hakimiyyat Allah*) that gets no support from the historical record. However, Islamist practices are often denigrated, viewed as lacking significant social capacity, even as Islamist practices create significant social change. Islamists view themselves as the most pious and devout of humanity and act following this belief. Even Islamism gets recognized as political and gets acknowledged as a religious ideology. We must thereby distinguish secular totalitarian ideologies such as communism and fascism (Tibi, 2012).

Islamist groups have emerged in response to the internal and external crises of the Muslim world (Azra, 2016). According to (Tibi, 2012), they share six common characteristics: an interpretation of Islam as a system of governance (*nizam Islami*); genocidal antisemitism, wherein the Jewish people and religion are positioned as the enemies of Islam; an opposition to democracy; an evolution from classical jihad to terrorist jihad; an application of Islamic legal "*sharia-ization*"; and an obsession with the purity and authenticity of Islamic tradition. Tibi (Tibi, 2012) further distinguishes between Islamism and jihadism. Islamism works through organizational channels rather than through acts of violence; indeed, Islamists may even present themselves as supporters of democracy, participating in public elections and casting votes. Nonetheless, both Islamists and jihadists share the same goal: establishing an Islamic social system rooted in Islamic legal.

In Indonesia, such Islamist groups have gained prominence since Indonesia began its political reform in May 1998. Islamist organizations have included the Islamic Defenders Paramilitary, the Jihad Paramilitary, the Mujahidin Paramilitary of Indonesia, the Indonesian Muslim University Students' Action Union, the Hizb al-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the Ka'bah Youth Troops, the Muslim Youth Movement (GPI), the Crescent Star Front, and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) (Mahmudah, 2018). Historically, similar groups have included the Islamic State of

Indonesia (NII), also known as Darul Islam, founded in 1949 (see (Kersten, 2018); a similarly named group has worked in the shadows since the beginning of Indonesia's political reform.

### Islam and Islamic Film in Indonesia

As noted by van Dijk and Kaptein (Dijk and Nico J.G. Kaptein, 2016), Indonesian Islam has been known worldwide for its tolerance and ability to create harmonious relations with minority religions such as Christianity. However, since the fall of the New Order, groups identifying themselves as Muslim have been involved in conflicts throughout the archipelago, including in Poso, Banjarmasin, and Maluku; others have committed acts of domestic and international terrorism.

The diverse exegeses found in the Islamic tradition are a logical consequence of the religion's growth and development (Azra, 2015), including its historical expansion through the geographically and ethnically diverse Indonesian archipelago. Located at a significant distance from the Arab Peninsula, where Islam first emerged, Indonesia has developed Islamic traditions that differ significantly from those in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (Azra, 2002). Meanwhile, the cinematic construction of Islam in Indonesia has been influenced significantly by the country's press/media freedoms and the penetration of global (read: Western) cultures. Thus, the cinematic construction combined with various political strategies has resulted in an Islamic reality that combines the local and the global (Bozdogan and Kasaba, 1997); (Erol, 2011).

Steele (Steele, 2018) identified three types of Islam in the mass media: scripturalist Islam, with interpretations driven predominantly by holy texts (the Qur'an, the Hadiths), but also influenced by scholarly exegesis (used to determine points not covered by the aforementioned texts); Islam as a market niche; and cosmopolitan Islam. Meanwhile, in the film, Islam can become closely intertwined with popular culture (Sasono, 2010); in other words, it can be used to spread diverse interpretations and understandings of Islam. Similarly, films with

Islamic themes can be used to shed light on the dynamics of the Muslim world or specific Muslim communities (Imanjaya, 2019).

A review of the Indonesian film indicates that, between 1998 and 2019, approximately 85 films with Islamic themes have been produced in Indonesia; these have fallen into diverse genres, including drama, romance, biopic, horror, action, and comedy (Film Indonesia, 2019a). Although Indonesian filmmakers have long shown an interest in Islamic themes, in the past two decades, these films have become increasingly widespread and drawn ever-larger audiences (Barker, 2011).

Studies of films with Islamic themes have often viewed religion as a commodity traded on the open market. With its majority-Muslim population, Indonesia has significant market potential for Islamic films (Imanda, 2012); (Izharuddin, 2017). Other studies have examined how socio-political conditions and the global market have inexorably shaped Indonesian Islam. In such studies, especially those conducted within the context of Indonesian cinema, the rise of the Muslim middle class has been particularly important (Heryanto, 2015).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study incorporates Giddens's theory of structuration and Tibi's concept of Islamism in a Van Dijk model of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This approach can be readily combined and incorporated into a range of social and humanities studies (Dijk, 2001a). Jaworski and Coupland (in (Habiburrahim et al., 2020)) understand CDA as an analytical approach for explaining the social practices found within a specific social structure, one that draws macro-level conclusions from actual micro-level discourses and practices (Dijk, 2001b). We complete three levels of analysis: textual, cognition and social context. We chose *Bid'ah Cinta* because this film represents the interaction between agents in the structure of the Muslim community in Indonesia to carry out social change. To understand how representation in this interaction in the film, the researcher

conducted interviews with the director *Bid'ah Cinta*, Nurman Hakim, and Producer Willawati. The authors employed Peircean semiotics at the textual level to identify the icons, indices, and symbols. *Icons* are signs that directly imitate the object or concept. *Indices* are signs for which signifier and signified get causally connected, and *symbols* are signs for which signifier and signified are artificially connected. Semiotics deals primarily with the meanings contained within texts (Stokes, 2007).

In social cognition, the creators of texts absorb the values within their social structure (i.e., their society), thereby enabling them to influence the text (Eriyanto, 2015). In-depth interviews with filmmakers (directors and producers) to identify such cognitive forms, including collective knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, and values (Dijk, 2001).

At the social context level, filmmakers attempt to select situationally relevant information, interpret it and convey their interpretation to audiences, thereby using discursive practices to construct particular structures. For this, the authors used language. It thus has a central role in creating meaning and culture (Hall, 2003). We observed discourses by observing social environments and contexts, enabling creators' internal and external considerations (Hamad, 2004).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The film *Bid'ah Cinta* focuses on a pair of Muslim teenagers, Khalidah and Kamal, whose romance get hindered by their specific interpretations of Islamic teachings. Khalidah is the daughter of Hajji Rohili (Fahmi Idris), the village *Kiai* (religious scholar), and has been raised following the majority-Muslim village's traditional exegesis. Hajji Rohili has several students in the village, including Hasan (Ibnu Jamil), who also embraces a traditional form of Islam. Although Hasan has fallen in love with Khalidah, and her parents favor him as a potential son-in-law owing to their shared interpretations, his love is unrequited. On the other hand, Khalidah has already fallen in love with Kamal, the son of Hajji Jamat (Rony P.

Tjandra), one of the respected elders of his community.

More relevant to this article's discussion, however, is Hajji Jamat's nephew Ustadz Jaiz (narrated as having returned home after studying in the Middle East). This Ustadz (religious scholar) challenges and modifies the village's social and religious practices, thereby becoming an agent acting against the dominant structure. Through Ustadz Jaiz, *Bid'ah Cinta* examines everyday social realities, including prayer practices (*salat*), grave pilgrimages, commemorations of the Prophet's Birthday, and interpersonal interactions.

### Social Actions and Practices of Muslim Society

Figure 1 shows the villagers at the village mosque during congregational prayers. This scene is supported by the film's index, wherein villagers are shown forming skewed rows. To strengthen his message, as well as the legitimacy of his claim, Ustadz Jaiz cites a hadith regarding the importance of maintaining perfect rows: "The devil can enter a loose and skewed shof (prayer row, ed)," he states before leading the congregational prayers" (Hadits, Abu Daud 667).

Nonetheless, some agents continue to resist, refusing to touch the feet of other worshippers during prayer. These agents maintain and reproduce the traditional practices and structures.

Figure 2 shows Hasan is on a grave pilgrimage, a practice rejected by Kamal, his family, and their followers. Although the film indirectly conveys its message, it still claims that such pilgrimages are *bid'ah* and were never taught by the Prophet Muhammad. In the above image, the index is a graveyard that frequently hosts Muslim pilgrims. Hasan is depicted as carrying a small book, which contains quotes from the Qur'an (Surah Yasin) and the *tahlil* (a form of recitation that involves the praising of God). In the scene, Khalidah is also sympathetic to Hasan and his efforts to maintain traditional practices, thereby maintaining and reproducing the dominant structure.

As depicted in *Bid'ah Cinta*, conducting pilgrimages to graves has become traditional amongst the village Muslims. Ustadz Jaiz, meanwhile, perceives such pilgrimages as against the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (i.e., the *sunnah*); he even brands the practice *shirk* (the deification or worship of



Source: Karinga Pictures, 2017

Figure 1. Congregational Prayers in the Village Mosque Tabel



Source: Karinga Pictures, 2017

Figure 2. Hasan is on a Grave Pilgrimage



anyone or anything besides God), as he equates it to seeking the blessings of the deceased. This interpretation differs significantly from that of the villagers, who see themselves as visiting these graves to ensure that God absolves their ancestors' sins.

This dialectic was evident in a scene between Hasan and Kamal. Hasan, as with most Indonesian Muslims, regularly conducts grave pilgrimages. In this, he agrees with his teacher, Hajji Rohili. Meanwhile, Khalidah's beloved Kamal rejects this view. Instead, as with his father Jamat and his uncle Ustadz Jaiz, he identifies these grave pilgrimages as *bid'ah* and *shirk*.

In Figure 3, the icon is the interruption of the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday by the followers of Ustadz Jaiz. The villagers involved in this commemoration, almost all women, are depicted as carrying *rebana* (traditional musical instruments, similar to tambourines). Hajji Rohili—an agent who has maintained and reproduced the structure—is shown opposing Lukman and rejecting the interruption of their ceremony.

In one scene, the film shows the villagers commemorating the Prophet Muhammad's birthday by reciting a *salawat* for him. However, they are interrupted by Lukman (Tata Ginting) and other followers of Ustadz Jaiz, who drive them away from the mosque. For Ustadz Jaiz and his followers, although done with the best of intentions, such commemorations are *bid'ah*, as they were never practiced by the Prophet Muhammad.

Figure 4 shows Kamal during an interaction with Khalidah and her friends on campus. As Kamal believes that Islam prohibits people from touching persons of the opposite sex who are not their *muhrim* (unmarriageable kin), he refuses to shake hands with these women. In this scene, the index is Kamal. He folds his arms across his chest to indicate his unwillingness to take the hand offered to him. This index indicated that, although Kamal rejects the dominant structure, he continues to adhere to its code of etiquette and avoids needlessly offending others. Khalidah's friends, meanwhile, act as agents that maintain and reproduce the structure.



Source: Kaninga Pictures, 2017

Figure 3. Worshippers are Forcibly Dispersed during a Commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday



Source: Kaninga Pictures, 2017

Figure 4. Kamal Refuses to Shake Hands with Khalidah's Friends

Over time, Kamal refuses to shake hands with people of the opposite sex, a common practice in Indonesia. Nonetheless, he does so politely, as expected by society. This act showed that, even though an individual (agent) such as Kamal may refuse to follow a certain course of action, that individual can still observe society's code of etiquette. Khalidah's friends, meanwhile, act as agents that maintain and reproduce the structure.

Figure 5 shows *Ustadz Jaiz* and his followers' disapproval of Sandra and her trans identity, as a result of which they require her to dress as a man and join cisgender men in worship. In this image, the index is Sandra wearing a *mukena* (a type of garment worn by women during prayers) and attempting to join the female members of the congregation. *Ustadz Jaiz's* follower is depicted as a bearded man wearing a Muslim shirt and a white skullcap; he is shown directing Sandra to join the male members of the congregation. When Sandra refuses, this man and several others resort to violence, dragging Sandra outside the mosque. For *Ustadz Jaiz* and his followers, Islam teaches that humans were created as male and female, and thus transmen and transwomen are artificial identities that violate God's natural order.

As agents, *Ustadz Jaiz's* followers staunchly reject non-binary genders in society, which they perceive as against Islamic doctrine. They assert themselves using both physical and verbal violence against Sandra. In this, they act against a structure that they perceive as permitting

transgender "deviancies," allowing transmen and transwomen to maintain and reproduce their identities freely.

## Discussion

### Application of Islamic Legal Systems

In introducing its plot, *Bid'ah Cinta* depicts *Ustadz Jaiz* delivering a sermon that urges congregation members to observe an Islamic legal system and promote its implementation in Indonesia.

"Follow the teachings of Islam, as in the Qur'an and the hadiths!" *Ustadz Jaiz* says during his first sermon to the gathered congregation after returning from the Middle East.

"Following the Qur'an and hadiths, how? The Islam that exists only in his head?" *Haji Rohili* interjects elsewhere, having heard *Ustadz Jaiz's* sermon over the mosque loudspeaker. (Tibi, 2012).

Agent-structure dialectics continually evolved throughout the film. For example, *Ustadz Jaiz* holds that villagers' social and religious practices are contrary to Islamic teachings and thus seek to modify, shape, and transform public practices into more orthodox ones. *Haji Rohili*, meanwhile, understands the villagers' common social and religious practices as concurring with the teachings of the Qur'an and the hadiths and promotes this view to his followers and his students.

As mentioned above, Islamist groups seek to create a social system that conforms with Islamic *sharia*. As such, all Muslim communities must act, behave, and present



Source: Kaninga Pictures, 2017  
Figure 5. Sandra is told by *Ustadz Jaiz's* Followers to Join the Men

themselves as taught by the Qur'an and the hadiths. However, such a discourse is rejected by Hajji Rohili, who holds that villagers' practices reflect Islamic values and conform with Islamic teachings.

Throughout the film, Ustadz Jaiz and his followers begin to implement Islamic sharia symbolically. They dressed in traditional Islamic clothing, wearing turbans on their heads, robes around their bodies, and pants above their ankles. They further symbolize their piety through their beards and the black marks on their foreheads. Thus, these Islamists' religiopolitical goals are furthered through their worship practices.

#### Eliminating Local Muslim Traditions

As part of the purification of Islam, the Islamist group in the film *Bid'ah Cinta* is described as a group that seeks to eliminate local Islamic traditions. This picture is represented by Islamist groups who campaign to abolish local traditions such as a pilgrimage to the grave, as described by Hasan. This action is considered misleading and shirk (associating partners with God). The abolition of local Islamic traditions is also seen in the commemoration of *Nishfu Sha'ban* and the commemoration of the *Prophet's Birthday*. Islamists considered these two acts as heresy or *bid'ah* (worship never performed by the Prophet Muhammad). In order to purify the teachings of Islam, They consider these practices as incompatible practice with the teachings of the *Prophet Muhammad*.

The actions taken were by Ustadz Jaiz and his group illustrate that social change can not only be carried out by structures but also by agents. Agents try to get out of repetitive social practices because they are considered misleading (*bid'ah*). For example, in the film *Bid'ah Cinta*, individuals and Islamist groups try, avoid, eliminate, and make new rules that follow Islamic law, which they believe to be true. To make these changes, some use their power as chairman of the mosque takmir in the Muslim community.

#### Touching Hands with the Opposite Sex

Touching or shaking hands with members of the opposite sex from a different *mahram* (legal spouse or guardian

based on Islamic law) has become a habit in Indonesian Muslim society. This habit, which is considered to violate Islamic law, tries to avoid the figure Kamal, a representative of the Islamist group. The character of Kamal is played differently by Ustadz Jaiz and other members of Islamist groups. Kamal is described as more polite and tries to understand people's habits but still applies the rules of Islamic law, which are believed to be the truth. Kamal does not try to create new rules like Ustadz Jaiz and his group. He only acts in the social sphere for his own sake and does not try to change his environment.

#### Majority-Minority Relations

*Bid'ah Cinta* also depicts majority-minority relations, in this case through the interactions between the cisgender majority and a transwoman named Sandra (Ade Firman Hakim), who is renting a house from Hajji Rohili. Ustadz Jaiz and his followers staunchly reject Sandra's trans identity, continuing to view her as a man. Furthermore, they believe that Islamic teachings forbid all trans identities and preclude transwomen from joining cisgender women during prayers. Ultimately, as her identity and way of life are threatened, Sandra chooses to leave the village.

Islamist groups take strong measures against the behavior of agents who are considered not per Islamic law to take advantage of his power (dominance) in the mosque. Sandra is described as an agent who tends to be tolerated and protected by the structure of Muslim society. In this case, the Islamist group wants to make structural changes related to actions against God's destiny.

#### Social Cognition: Maintaining and Reproducing Structures

The film *Bid'ah Cinta* was produced by Kaininga Pictures, formally known as PT Kaininga Sinema Indonesia. This production house was established in 2014 by Willawati, the CEO of the power company PT Kakiatna Indonesia. Kaininga Pictures is headquartered in Jakarta, Indonesia (Kainingapictures.com, 2018). As a production house, Kaininga Pictures handles film funding, production, marketing, and distribution. Its first film, *Cinta*

*Selamanya* (Love Forever), was produced in 2015. In 2016, it produced three films: *Terjebak Nostalgia* (Trapped by Nostalgia), *Bangkit* (Rise), and *I am Hope*. In 2017, Kaninga Pictures produced *Bukaan 8* (Opening 8), *Marlina Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak* (Marlina, the Killer in Four Acts), *Night Bus*, and *Bid'ah Cinta* (the film discussed in this article). In 2018, it produced three more films: *Pai Kau, The Man from The Sea*, and *The Returning*. The director of *Bid'ah Cinta*, Nurman Hakim, had previously produced *3 Doa 3 Cinta* (Three Prayers Three Loves 2008), *A Silent Wait* (2009), *Khalifah* (2011), and *The Window* (2016).

Both Nurman Hakim and Willawati are alumni of Islamic boarding schools, also known as *pondok pesantren* (see (Mas'ud, 2007). Nurman Hakim had attended Futhiyah Mranggen in Demak, Central Java, before studying cinematography at the Jakarta Institute of Art. Willawati, meanwhile, was an alumnus of Tebuireng in Jombang who had continued her studies at the Bandung State Polytechnic. She is also a leader of Muslimat NU (an Islamic organization under the Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia and globally that seeks to empower Muslim women).

For *Bid'ah Cinta*, Willawati acted as executive producer. In interviews, she stated that the film expresses her thoughts and feelings regarding Indonesia's current situation. Its screenplay was written by Ben Shohib, based on the ideas of Willawati and Nurman Hakim. As such, these filmmakers' thoughts—as shaped by their *pesantren* studies—have significantly influenced the film and its presentation of traditional practices as Maulid Nabi.

Unlike many other Indonesian films, *Bid'ah Cinta* was not sponsored by major corporations, nor was it distributed widely or aggressively advertised. It was only advertised through social media—YouTube, Facebook, and others. As stated by Willawati, the film would optimally achieve its goals if it were screened in *pesantren* and schools, as it depicted a social reality that students (especially Muslim ones) experienced in their everyday lives (Willawati, personal communication, 2019, June 3).

From the beginning of the film, *Bid'ah Cinta* presents the dialectics between society's dominant structure and those agents opposed to it. First, *Ustadz Jaiz* and his followers are presented as antagonists, disrupting the village Muslims' peaceful lives. Then, through subsequent scenes, the filmmakers depict *Ustadz Jaiz* and his followers as creating social unrest. At the same time, however, *Bid'ah Cinta* attempts to present a balanced depiction of social reality; it does not simply show Islamists as destabilizing the existing social order but rather as modifying and transforming the social structure in order to address real shortcomings.

Nevertheless, the Islamism of *Ustadz Jaiz* and his followers are still presented as threatening Indonesian society. The presentation is particularly evident towards the film's end when one of *Ustadz Jaiz's* followers is involved in a suicide bombing. Ultimately, Kamal embraces the values of Khalidah and her family and is allowed to marry his beloved. *Ustadz Jaiz*, meanwhile, begins to adapt himself to the dominant structure after learning of his followers' involvement in the attack. This indicates that filmmakers have reproduced the structure out of concern that Islamism and the social transformations it offers—no matter how agreeably presented—can foster radicalism (Hakim, 2018). Moreover, radicalism often correlates closely with specific socio-political and religious conditions, including promoting "pure" Islam, religious chauvinism, anti-Western ideologies, and weak law enforcement (Hakim, 2017).

At the same time, however, *Bid'ah Cinta* criticizes the existing structure's failure to promote Muslim regeneration, empower Muslims, or revivify mosques (N. Hakim, personal communication, December 12, 2017). These shortcomings have created gaps, which Islamist groups have filled with ideas that differ from local society. The filmmakers also address economic and social issues, using the example of Ketel to show that unemployment can drive people to participate in activities that endanger society.

Islamist groups, such as that led by *Ustadz Jaiz*, view their ideology as an emancipatory one. They believe that Islamism offers a means of empowering Muslims who

have been plagued by economic and social inequality. In this, they criticize Muslims' willingness to accept mistreatment at the hands of tyrants and dictators, characterizing such societies (to borrow from (Qutb, 2001) as hypocritical ones that do not understand Islam and its essence.

#### Social Context: Post-Reform Indonesia

The floodgates have been opened for Indonesian Muslims to express their religious identities in the past twenty years freely. As a result, Islamic and Islamist groups have thrived. At the same time, however, there have been significant frictions within and between Islamic groups with different exegeses, resulting in violence and radicalism. Thus, for example, the conflict between Muslims and Christians in Poso; the bombings of Paddy's Club and Sari Club in Legian, Kuta, Bali; the JW Marriot Hotel and Australian Embassy in Jakarta; and hundreds of other acts of violence by Islamist groups. Recognition of such radicalism informed the production of *Bid'ah Cinta*.

Recent years have also seen significant transformations within Muslim communities. For instance, it is increasingly common for Muslims to refuse to shake hands with the opposite sex, using spiteful terms such as *kafir* (unbeliever), *sesat* (deviant), and *bid'ah* (in a negative sense, akin to deviant) to describe Muslims with various exegeses. Another example includes identifying themselves through fashion such as pants that rise above their ankles, hijabs (veils), *niqab* (full-body garments), or beards. This social reality is readily evident in such public spaces as schools, malls, schools, and universities. Recognition of this social reality further contributed to the production of *Bid'ah Cinta* (Willawati, personal communication, June 3, 2019).

At the same time, films with Islamic themes have become increasingly common. Since 1998, more than 85 films with such themes have been produced in Indonesia (Film Indonesia, 2019). This situation has enabled filmmakers to produce films that depict diverse social realities, using them to package various social and religious practices.

Freedom in the atmosphere of Indonesian cinema after the New Order gave filmmakers space to express their ideas in representing social issues, especially regarding the presence of massive Islamist groups in Indonesia. It is this social context that influences filmmakers in constructing the *Bid'ah Cinta*. Filmmakers want to describe the changes in the structure of Indonesian Muslim society, which are represented through the interagency dialectic in the *Bid'ah Cinta*.

#### CONCLUSION

This study showed that the social and religious practices that constitute the agent-structure dialectics in Indonesia's Muslim community are rooted in convention and rather informed by political goals taking a religious guise. Many of Indonesia's new Islam(ist) groups have sought to create a new structure, one rooted in Islamic sharia; in this, they conform with Tibi's understanding of Islamism as seeking to cultivate sharia through everyday social practices. At the same time, this study also addresses a significant shortcoming in Giddens' theory of structuration, which fails to seriously consider the potential for religion and politics to create and shape the social order.

Ustadz Jaiz's studies in the Middle East result in him taking the political mission of transforming the social structure, even as he follows its rules and utilizes its resources. In this, he reflects Giddens' argument that the structure simultaneously empowers and constrains the agents that act within it. Ideologically, the *Bid'ah Cinta* presents a desire to maintain and reproduce the structure, even as issues such as weak law enforcement, economic disparity, social inequality, and limited regeneration are criticized. The filmmakers hold that the real shortcomings of the structure have made it possible for Islamist groups to foster radicalism and violence in Indonesia, all with the shared religiopolitical goal: implementing an Islamic system in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation. This study recommends further research, especially research on Islamophobia-themed films such

as 3: Alif Lam Mim and 212: The Power of Love.

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# REPRESENTATION OF AGENT AND STRUCTURE OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THE FILM "BID'AH CINTA"

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