

The Hypocrisy of Liberation: Power, NGOization, and Crisis in West Kalimantan Legal Aid

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Abstract

The structural legal aid movement was initiated by the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) as an ideological project aimed at cultivating political and legal consciousness among marginalized groups, marking a departure from conventional legal aid models grounded in legal neutrality. Despite its emancipatory narrative, the movement has become increasingly entangled in processes of NGOization, generating institutional ambivalence and dysfunction between parent and local organizations. This article examines the crisis of the structural legal aid movement in West Kalimantan by analyzing the hierarchical relationship between LBH Kalbar and YLBHI. It addresses how emancipatory ideals within the

legal aid movement are undermined by NGOization, managerialism, and a fragmented civic space, and explores how power operates within the movement's internal governance. Employing an empirical legal approach informed by socio-legal ethnography and participant observation, the study investigates organizational dynamics, work culture, and advocacy practices within LBH Kalbar. Primary data were collected through participant observation as an external supporter involved in project-based initiatives and advocacy programmes, while secondary data were drawn from internal documents accessed with institutional permission. The findings demonstrate that the decline of LBH Kalbar cannot be attributed to technical deficiencies or individual incapacity, but rather reflects a deeper ideological conflict between emancipatory praxis and a technocratic governance regime imposed by the parent organization. NGOization has redirected advocacy from community organizing toward performance-driven project work, producing depoliticization, weakened solidarity, activist burnout, and discriminatory governance practices. Power operates through disciplinary mechanisms such as standardization, performance metrics, symbolic surveillance, and organizational restructuring. The study concludes that revitalizing the legal aid movement requires not merely administrative reform, but a reconfiguration of power relations through enhanced regional autonomy and dialogical, participatory governance.

Keywords

Structural Legal Aid; NGOization; Power relations; Institutional governance; West Kalimantan.

I. Introduction

The notion of legal aid has from the outset been understood as a legal instrument available to anyone requiring assistance.¹ However, traditional legal aid is often viewed as being constrained by a paradigm of legal neutrality grounded in the principle of *equality before the law*.² As a result, in structural contexts, legal aid frequently fails to reach vulnerable groups,³ and falls short of addressing entrenched social inequalities and conditions of structural poverty.⁴ The strengthening of civil society movements has, however, catalyzed a transformation within legal aid institutions, particularly in relation to recognizing and responding to structural poverty.⁵ The structural legal aid movement was introduced by the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) as the ideological foundation of the legal aid movement in Indonesia.⁶

¹ Oki Wahyu Budijanto, “Peningkatan Akses Bantuan Hukum Kepada Masyarakat Miskin (Intensify Access of Law Aids To the Poor),” *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum De Jure* 16, no. 4 (2016): 464, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.30641/dejure.2016.V16.463-475>.

² Muhammad Rinaldy Bima, “Effectiveness of Legal Aid For The Poor Communities of Makassar City,” *Unnes Law Review* 6, no. 1 (2023): 3167, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31933/unesrev.v6i1>.

³ Wiwik Afifah, “Bantuan Hukum Kelompok Rentan,” *DiH: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 16, no. 1 (2020): 131–33, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30996/dih.v16i1.3045>.

⁴ Ni Gusti Agung Ayu Mas Triwulandari, “Problematika Pemberian Bantuan Hukum Struktural Dan Non Struktural Kaitannya Dengan Asas Equality Before The Law (Problematic Provision of Legal Assistance Structural and Non-Structural Relation to The Basis of Equality Before The Law),” *Jurnal Ilmiah Kebijakan Hukum* 14, no. 3 (2020): 544, <https://doi.org/10.30641/kebijakan.2020.V14.539-552>.

⁵ Gatot et al., *Bantuan Hukum: Akses Masyarakat Marjinal Terhadap Keadilan (Tinjauan Sejarah, Konsep, Kebijakan, Penerapan Dan Perbandingan Di Berbagai Negara)* (Jakarta: LBH Jakarta, 2007).

⁶ A. Patra M. Zen, “Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation : Struggling for Democracy and Its Own Sustainability. Focus Asia-Pacific News,” *The Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA)* 38, no. 1 (2004): 1–5.

Unlike the highly formal and static legal concepts underpinning traditional or constitutional legal aid, the notion of structural legal aid is dynamic and grounded in the movement's core values.⁷ Since its inception, the structural legal aid movement in Indonesia has never been merely a technical project but has instead constituted a form of political praxis aimed at challenging state legal domination, unequal power relations, and systemically legitimized structural poverty.⁸ However, after the fall of the *Orde Baru*, The structural legal aid movement in Indonesia, founded on an emancipatory ideology, finds itself in a state of profound ambivalence, caught between its liberationist ethos and the pervasive logic of managerialism and NGOization.⁹

Despite its continued existence and significant role in strengthening democracy and civic engagement, the legal aid movement's functionality within institutional governance is consistently constrained by the inherent dysfunction of local institutional structures. This condition is evident in the relationship

⁷ Muhammad Raafi Adiputra and Indah Sri Utami, "Existence And Position Of Paralegal In Legal Assistance And Provision Of Legal Aid In Indonesia," *Law Research Review Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (2025): 1111–12, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/llrq.v11i3.28479>; Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia, *Panduan Bantuan Hukum Di Indonesia*, ed. Muhammad Yasin and R. Herlambang P Wiratraman (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2014); Danil Akbar Taqwadin, Sulaiman Sulaiman, and Taqwaddin Husin, "Bantuan Hukum Struktural Dan Eksistensi YLBHI/LBH Di Aceh: 1980an - 2014," in *5th Biannual International Conference on Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS)* (Aceh: UIN Ar-Raniry, 2014), 3–5.

⁸ Todung Mulya Lubis, *Bantuan Hukum Dan Kemiskinan Struktural* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986); Burlachenko Petro Dmytrovych, "Interaction of State and Public Structures in The Field of Legal Aid," *The American Journal of Political Science Law and Criminology* 7, no. 6 (2025): 11, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37547/tajpslc/Volume07Issue06-02>.

⁹ Stefan Hielscher et al., "Saving the Moral Capital of NGOs: Identifying One-Sided and Many-Sided Social Dilemmas in NGO Accountability," *Voluntas* 28, no. 4 (2017): 1562–1594, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9807-z>; Herlambang P Wiratraman, "Mempertimbangkan Kembali Orientasi Gerakan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia," *Veritas et Justitia* 2, no. 2 (2016): 468, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25123/vej.v2i2.2276>.

between YLBHI and the West Kalimantan Legal Aid Institute (LBH Kalbar). Nivesh Dolšak and Aseem Prakash argue that the failure of an NGO movement can stem from the entrapment of a virtue narrative as institutional ideology while simultaneously overlooking the internal relationships and work culture of its members.¹⁰ A more technical perspective is offered by Reema Rasheed and Keith Jackson, who contend that NGO failure may arise from complex communication patterns rooted in a lack of congruence in the cultural trajectories of the actors involved.¹¹ While both perspectives resonate with the dynamics shaping the professional relationship between YLBHI and LBH Kalbar, the issue is further complicated by the discrepancy between the extrinsic virtue narrative, which functions as a movement ideology, and the authoritative work culture embedded within the intrinsic virtue narrative.

LBH Kalbar was not afforded the opportunity to participate in the formative phase of the movement's development; instead, it was compelled to enter directly into the advocacy production phase under technocratic imperatives imposed by the parent organization. This transition marked an early moment of NGOization and ideological disorientation, in which emancipatory praxis was subordinated to a hegemonic project framed as organizational "professionalism." The phase was characterized by the intensification of internal conflicts, the erosion of interpersonal trust, and the depoliticization of local institutions. From a Gramscian perspective, these dynamics reflect a shift from counter-hegemonic struggle toward the reproduction of dominant common sense within the movement itself.¹² From Larsson's

¹⁰ Nives Dolšak and Aseem Prakash, "NGO Failure: A Theoretical Synthesis," *Voluntas* 33, no. 4 (2022): 662, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00416-9>.

¹¹ Reema Rasheed and Keith Jackson, "Communication, Culture, and Discord: A Case Study of Avoidable Leadership Failure in European-Palestinian NGO," in *Cases on Management and Organizational Behavior in an Arab Context* (London and New York: IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2014), 17, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-5067-1.ch009>.

¹² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

perspective, the NGO movement, rather than embodying the ethos of virtue at the core of the movement, is characterized by internal struggles among divergent interests, thereby calling its integrity into question.¹³

In its operational environment, LBH Kalbar operates within a plural yet fragile social configuration¹⁴ shaped by the lingering effects of past conflicts,¹⁵ including ethnic relations,¹⁶ tensions involving religious minorities,¹⁷ and identity-based politics. These elements frequently function as symbolic capital in local power struggles, thereby sustaining recurrent social tensions.¹⁸ Within such a context, civic space is never fully autonomous; rather, it is continuously negotiated amid state pressure, local oligarchic interests, and practices of intolerance that are often concealed beneath narratives of stability.¹⁹ This contested social landscape positions LBH Kalbar as an institution expected to play a pivotal role in human rights advocacy and the consolidation of local

¹³ Ola Segnestam Larsson, "Convergence in Ideas, Divergence in Actions: Organizational Hypocrisy in Nonprofit Organizations," *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 35, no. 2 (2013): 274, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2753/ATP1084-1806350205>.

¹⁴ Kristianus Kristianus, "Nasionalisme Etnik Di Kalimantan Barat," *Masyarakat Indonesia* 37, no. 2 (2011): 151–53.

¹⁵ Faraz Sumaya, "Identitas Dalam Konflik Di Kalimantan Barat (Sebuah Pemetaan Konflik)," *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik* 2, no. 2 (2020): 91–92, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24198/jkrk.v2i2.28149>.

¹⁶ Kristianus Atok, "Budaya Kekerasan Dan Konflik Etnisitas Di Kalimantan Barat Periode 1966-2000," *Borneo Review* 1, no. 1 (2022): 49–50, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52075/br.v1i1.81>.

¹⁷ Moh. Fadhil and Muhammad Rosyad Sudrajad, "Ahmadiyya Congregation in the Shadow of Religious Politics: Tensions Between Law and Freedom of Religion," *Analisa Journal of Social Science and Religion* 8, no. 1 (2023): 21–40, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v8i1.1829>.

¹⁸ Alif Alfi Syahrin et al., "Kerukunan Masyarakat Multikultural Pasca Kontestasi Politik Identitas Saat Pilkada Gubernur Kalimantan Barat Tahun 2018," *Harmoni* 22, no. 1 (2023): 121, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v1i22.676>.

¹⁹ Moh. Fadhil et al., "Navigating the Tensions Between Sharia and Human Rights in Regional Legislation," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syar'iah* 16, no. 2 (2024): 413–14, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v16i2.29031>.

democracy.²⁰ Yet, rather than enabling the organization to develop an autonomous trajectory of struggle responsive to these conditions, LBH Kalbar has been compelled to confront persistent internal turbulence. Since its establishment as a project-based or pilot office under the auspices of YLBHI, it has been embedded in a problematic institutional relationship. On the one hand, LBH Kalbar is discursively framed as a moral representative of the national legal aid movement; on the other, it is structurally positioned as a technocratic extension of the center. This tension reflects asymmetrical power relations in which authority,²¹ access to financial resources, work standards, and political direction are shaped by structural imbalances.²² The present study seeks to analyze this ambivalence within the legal aid movement in West Kalimantan and to examine the stagnation that has left the movement operating at a largely mediocre level.

A substantial body of work by legal scholars has examined the legal aid movement from a range of multifaceted perspectives. First, research on constitutional legal aid frequently highlights the strategic role of LBH in facilitating access to justice.²³ Other studies have identified significant challenges at the local level, particularly regarding their institutional capacity and the inadequate dissemination of information to the public.²⁴ A further issue concerns the welfare of LBH

²⁰ Purwanto Purwanto, Syarifah Arabiyah, and Ivan Wagner, “Strategi Pengembangan Institusi Pemberi Bantuan Hukum Sebagai Jembatan Akses Keadilan,” *Jurnal Pembangunan Hukum Indonesia* 5, no. 3 (2023): 395–96, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14710/jphi.v5i3.389-410>.

²¹ Sam Wong, “A Power Game of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives,” *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 2014, no. 55 (2014): 27, <https://doi.org/10.9774/gleaf.4700.2014.se.00006>.

²² Nina F. O’Brien and Sandra K. Evans, “Civil Society Partnerships: Power Imbalance and Mutual Dependence in NGO Partnerships,” *Voluntas* 28, no. 4 (2017): 1399, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9721-4>.

²³ Mustika Prabaningrum Kusumawati, “Peranan Dan Kedudukan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Sebagai Access To Justice Bagi Orang Miskin,” *Arena Hukum* 9, no. 2 (2016): 204, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.arenahukum.2016.00902.3>.

²⁴ Andi Marlina et al., “Akses Keadilan Yang Tidak Sampai: Studi Kajian Bantuan Hukum Bagi Masyarakat Miskin,” *Jurnal USM Law Review* 7, no. 2 (2024): 540, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26623/julr.v7i2.8668>.

workers, who often struggle to secure donor and government support.²⁵ Second, studies focusing on traditional legal aid have largely concentrated on the legal-formal dimensions of legal aid, with particular emphasis on the role of law enforcement agencies in criminal cases.²⁶ This research reveals several conditions requiring critical scrutiny. First, the cost of legal assistance for economically disadvantaged groups remains a pressing concern. Second, disparities in advocates' economic standing present a substantial challenge. Third, government funding is tied to accreditation processes that are administratively burdensome.²⁷ Fourth, court fees for legal aid posts (Pos Bantuan Hukum) are often insufficient.²⁸ Lastly, many cases the poor lack awareness of how to access legal aid services.²⁹ Third, research on structural legal aid focuses on the specific needs and experiences of marginalized or underprivileged groups. Illustrative examples include studies on gender-based structural legal aid as part of LBH APIK's strategy,³⁰ community organizing by the

²⁵ Agus Raharjo, A Angkasa, and Rahadi Wasi Bintoro, "Akses Keadilan Bagi Rakyat Miskin (Dilema Dalam Pemberian Bantuan Hukum Oleh Advokat)," *Mimbar Hukum* 27, no. 3 (2015): 432, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/jmh.15881>.

²⁶ Ramdhan Kasim, "The Giving Legal Aid For The Poor On A Criminal Case," *Substantive Justice International Journal of Law* 1, no. 1 (2018): 33, <https://doi.org/10.33096/substantivejustice.v1i1.12>.

²⁷ Alycia Sandra Dinar Andhini, "Juridical Analysis of Legal Aid Implementation for Underprivileged Communities: Problems and Challenges," *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 3, no. 4 (2021): 496, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/iccle.v3i4.36529>.

²⁸ Khoirum Lutfiyah, "Equality Before The Law Principle And The Legal Aid For The Poor: An Indonesian Insight," *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 3, no. 4 (2021): 522–24, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/ijicle.v3i4.48292>.

²⁹ Dhimas Danu Wicaksana et al., "Justice for Tajudin: Proposal of Legal Aid for the Poor (Keadilan Untuk Tajudin: Rancangan Bantuan Hukum Bagi Masyarakat Miskin)," *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 4, no. 2 (2022): 213, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/iccle.v4i2.36549>; Pascoe Pleasence and Deborah Macourt, "What Price Justice? Income and the Use of Lawyers," *The Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales* (New South Wales, 2013).

³⁰ Ahmad Alif and Benjamin Laura, "Protection of Women in Legal Cases: Objectivity of the Case Monitoring Process by Paralegals (Comparative Study of

Sangihe people against the mining licensing regime,³¹ the consolidation of civil society actors, academics, religious leaders, students, and public figures in anti-corruption campaigns,³² the strengthening of inclusive legal aid for persons with disabilities,³³ advocacy for religious minority groups facing blasphemy charges,³⁴ and policy advocacy for women.³⁵

As demonstrated by the three research trends outlined above, most studies on legal aid are characterized by a strong emphasis on access to justice as the ultimate objective of the legal aid process. This pattern is reflected in analyses that situate legal aid within the social context of economically disadvantaged groups, with particular attention to critical assessments of case observations, thereby focusing primarily on the outcome. Notably, there is a lack of research that examines the legal aid crisis through the lens of advocacy practices, governance structures, and the work patterns associated with the NGOization of legal aid institutions.

LBH APIK Semarang Indonesia and AWARE Singapore),” *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 4, no. 1 (2022): 21–22, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/iccle.v4i1.36538>.

³¹ Arisa Risma Rizalda et al., “Legal Aid Program for Mining Cases between PT Tambang Mas Sangihe and the Sangihe Community (Program Bantuan Hukum Atas Kasus Pertambangan Antara PT Tambang Mas Sangihe Dengan Masyarakat Sangihe),” *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 4, no. 1 (2022): 112–17, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/iccle.v4i1.36544>.

³² Hidayat Hidayat, Dhiauddin Tanjung, and Mhd. Yadi Harahap, “The Concept of Structural Legal Aid in Handling and Corruption Eradication,” *Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum* 21, no. 2 (2024): 92, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32332/istinbath.v21i02.8712>.

³³ M. Syuib, “Equal Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities: A Comparative Legal Analysis of Indonesia and Australia under the CPRD,” *As-Siyasi: Journal of Constitutional Law* 5, no. 1 (2025): 33, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24042/as-siyasi.v5i1.26855>.

³⁴ Adam Tyson, “Blasphemy and Judicial Legitimacy in Indonesia,” *Politics and Religion* 14, no. 1 (2021): 193, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048319000427>.

³⁵ Elizabeth Kristi Poerwandari, Ratna Batara Munti, and Jackie Viemilawati, “Pro-Women’s Policy Advocacy Movements in Indonesia: Struggles and Reflections,” *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies* 24, no. 4 (2018): 489, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2018.1538646>.

To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the legal aid crisis in West Kalimantan, this study proposes an analysis of the structural conditions that shape the crisis. This research makes a substantive contribution to the sociology of law and legal practice, particularly within studies of the legal aid movement by offering a critical analysis of intra-movement power relations and patterns of subordination in peripheral regions, an area that remains largely underexplored in existing scholarship. Sociologically, it advances the field by providing new interpretations of how power operates within legal aid movements beyond formal state–society relations. Politically, the study challenges dominant assumptions underlying centralized models of legal aid governance and foregrounds alternative practices oriented toward equity and regional autonomy. By critically examining processes of NGOization and internal governance, this research demonstrates that institutional failure in social movements cannot be reduced to technical or managerial deficiencies but is structurally produced through internal power arrangements. Beyond critique, the study exposes the disciplinary mechanisms through which centralization erodes local autonomy and undermines the emancipatory ethos of legal aid practice, thereby contributing both analytical depth and normative insight to debates on movement governance and democratic accountability.

II. Method

This research employs an empirical legal methodology,³⁶ utilizing a socio-legal ethnographic approach to analyze the complexities of work relations within the Legal Aid Institute (LBH).³⁷ The study seeks to determine how organizational culture and structural features of legal aid influence the accountability of NGO work, while also examining the

³⁶ Muhaimin, *Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Mataram: Mataram University Press, 2020).

³⁷ John Flood, “Socio-Legal Ethnography,” in *Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research*, ed. Reza Banakar and Max Travers (Canada: Hart Publishing Oxford and Portland Oregon, 2005), 47.

tensions that arise among actors. To adequately capture the multifaceted dynamics of the legal aid movement in West Kalimantan, it is essential to conduct careful and sustained observation of these interactions.

The research adopts a qualitative design with a focus on participatory observation.³⁸ Data collection was conducted through sustained participation in a range of advocacy and evaluative initiatives involving LBH Kalbar and YLBHI between 2024 and 2025. Primary data were obtained through participant observation and unstructured interviews with LBH Kalbar personnel, ranging from the chairperson to staff members and legal aid assistants. In addition, informal interviews were conducted with the chairperson and several staff members of YLBHI, as the parent organization, to enable cross-perspective validation of the findings.

The data were further subjected to source triangulation by incorporating insights from several civil society organizations that had supported YLBHI in the establishment of LBH Kalbar from its inception. These organizations included *Lembaga Pemberdayaan Gerakan Rakyat* (Elpagar), *Mitra Sekolah Masyarakat* (MISEM), *Satu Dalam Perbedaan* (SADAP), and *Jemaat Ahmadiyah Pontianak*. The analysis was also supported by secondary data in the form of institutional documents accessed with the approval of LBH Kalbar.

To deepen the analysis, data collection was intensified during two key collaborative initiatives. The first was the LBH Kalbar Working Meeting with YLBHI, which included a dedicated session examining internal communication patterns with the aim of addressing personnel conflicts. The second was the final meeting with YLBHI, which culminated in the decision to dissolve LBH Kalbar.

³⁸ Zuchri . Abdussamad, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Makassar: Syakir Media Press, 2021).

III. The Ambivalence of the Legal Aid Movement in West Kalimantan

Within critical movement traditions, legal aid is not understood as a philanthropic legal service but as a form of political praxis grounded in the principle of structural liberation. The Legal Aid Institute (LBH) emerged as an early proponent of structural legal aid, employing strategic litigation, community organizing, and critical legal education to challenge state domination. The UNDP's emphasis on structural legal aid as a pathway to access to justice further highlights the relationship between poverty and the restriction of personal autonomy, opportunities, and access to essential resources. The consequences of marginalization are multifaceted, manifesting in the erosion of decision-making power and a diminished capacity to participate meaningfully in societal processes.³⁹

The theoretical foundations of this pedagogical approach are grounded in the philosophical principles articulated by Paulo Freire, particularly his concept of liberation education.⁴⁰ This framework contends that education should function as a vehicle for expressing resistance to social injustice, systemic exploitation, and structural violence.⁴¹ Within the field of legal education, the legal aid movement emerged from the initiatives of legal scholars trained in socio-legal methodologies and interdisciplinary legal studies.⁴² Consequently, structural legal aid requires a clearly defined political commitment

³⁹ Ineke van de Meene and Benjamin de Rooij, *Access to Justice and Legal Empowerment: Making the Poor Central in Legal Development Co-Operation* (Amsterdam: Leiden University Press, 2008).

⁴⁰ Flávia Souza Máximo Pereira and Flávia Coelho Augusto Silva, "Theory and Practice in Legal Education Dialogue between the Decolonization of Knowledge and the Pedagogy of the Liberation of Paulo Freire and Bell Hooks," *Revista De Direito Da Faculdade Guanambi* 6, no. 1 (2019): 1–2.

⁴¹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, ed. Patrick Clarke (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998).

⁴² Sulistyowati Irianto, "Legal Education for The Future of Indonesia: A Critical Assessment," *Indonesian Journal of Socio-Legal Studies* 1, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.54828/ijsls.2021v1n1.1>.

namely, solidarity with vulnerable groups,⁴³ a rejection of the depoliticization⁴⁴ pervasive during the regime of *Orde Baru*,⁴⁵ and the adoption of advocacy and judicial activism as forms of praxis aimed at achieving social transformation.⁴⁶

In recent years, the legal aid movement has experienced a form of ambivalence that can be described as a paradigmatic crisis. This crisis emerges when legal aid becomes institutionalized through state regulation. Purwanto et al. argue that the Legal Aid Law and its implementing regulations function merely as formal and procedural frameworks for service delivery, without addressing the substantive reconstruction of legal aid paradigms necessary to confront fundamental issues such as poverty and social transformation.⁴⁷ Similarly, Ni Gusti Agung Ayu highlights this paradigmatic crisis, noting that many LBHs lack both the logistical capacity and the institutional commitment required to ensure meaningful access to justice.⁴⁸ In this context, legal aid is increasingly reconfigured as a professionalized service governed by administrative standards, accreditation regimes, and performance-based logics.

⁴³ Zainal Abidin Bagir, Samsul Maarif, and Budi Asy'ari, "Keadilan Bagi Kelompok Rentan Dan Koalisi Masyarakat Sipil: Studi Kasus Advokasi Akses Pada Keadilan Di Indonesia (MAJu, 2016-2021)" (Yogyakarta, 2022).

⁴⁴ Žižek identifies several versions of depoliticization based on political dynamics, especially in eurocentric studies, including arche-politics, parapolitics, metapolitics, and ultrapolitics. See in Slavoj Žižek, "A Leftist Plea for 'Eurocentrism,'" *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 4 (1998): 991–92.

⁴⁵ Timo Duile and Jonas Bens, "Indonesia and The 'Conflictual Consensus': A Discursive Perspective on Indonesian Democracy," *Critical Asian Studies* 49, no. 2 (2017): 6–10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2017.1295358>.

⁴⁶ Siri Gloppen, "Courts and Social Transformation: An Analytical Framework," in *Courts and Social Transformation in New Democracies: An Institutional Voice for the Poor?*, ed. Roberto Gargarella, Pilar Domingo, and Theunis Roux (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 38.

⁴⁷ Purwanto, Arabiyah, and Wagner, "Strategi Pengembangan Institusi Pemberi Bantuan Hukum Sebagai Jembatan Akses Keadilan." 393.

⁴⁸ Triwulandari, "Problematika Pemberian Bantuan Hukum Struktural Dan Non Struktural Kaitannya Dengan Asas Equality Before The Law (Problematic Provision of Legal Assistance Structural and Non-Structural Relation to The Basis of Equality Before The Law)," 548.

The concept of legal aid appears to be increasingly confined to its traditional role as a professional service that merely complies with administrative standards.⁴⁹ Although many LBHs are struggling with a paradigmatic crisis, there remains potential for developing their institutional ideology and advocacy strategies. Addressing this crisis requires a structural approach that redefines the values and spirit of the Legal Aid Law and its implementing regulations. Such reform should draw on Dian Sanjaya's concept of legal aid within a transcendental legal paradigm, which integrates moral, ethical, and spiritual values into the philosophy of the legal aid movement and frames it as a form of humanitarian *jihad* for the poor, minorities, marginalized groups, and the *mustad'afin*.⁵⁰

In light of the prevailing conditions within LBH, the sense of ambivalence is reflected in the fragmentation of the movement, marked by a decline in collective solidarity and the growing influence of donor logic and managerialism.⁵¹ Under such circumstances, legal aid organizations like LBH risk losing their radical character and becoming entrenched in bureaucratization and rigid accountability structures.⁵² This paradigm crisis is closely linked to processes of NGOization and managerialism, which foster movement fragmentation, weaken collective solidarity, and intensify the influence of donor-driven logics and audit cultures. As a result, legal aid organizations risk losing their radical character and becoming embedded in bureaucratization and rigid accountability regimes. These dynamics provide an important

⁴⁹ Sinto Adi Prasetyorini et al., "Reimagining Legal AID Institution Regulation to Enhance Legal Certainty," *Revista De Gestão - RGSa* 18, no. 9 (2024): 13–15, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n9-021>; Budi Suhariyanto and Cecep Mustafa, "Analysis And Evaluation Of Legal Aid In The Indonesian Court," *Jurnal Hukum Dan Peradilan* 11, no. 2 (2022): 189, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25216/jhp.11.2.2022.176-194>.

⁵⁰ Dian Sanjaya, "Legal Aid in Indonesia: A Study of Legal Aid with a Transcendental Dimension," *Journal of Transcendental Law* 2, no. 2 (2020): 97–98, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23917/JTL.V2I2.11854>.

⁵¹ Wiratraman, "Mempertimbangkan Kembali Orientasi Gerakan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia."

⁵² Theerapat Ungsuchaval, "NGOization," in *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, ed. Ali Farazmand (Cham: Springer, 2022), 8590.

context for understanding developments within the project-based LBH Kalbar, where a crisis of identity and ideology became evident within the first year of its establishment. This crisis, pervasive and insidious in nature, has significantly eroded the movement's energy and momentum. Consequently, LBH Kalbar has been compelled to operate within a fragmented civic space in West Kalimantan, severely constraining its capacity for cohesive and effective collective action.

Civic space is defined as an arena for maneuvering, building consensus, producing discourse, and enabling expression, association, and opinion.⁵³ However, in principle, civic space is never entirely free from power relations. Within Gramsci's theoretical framework, civic space is conceptualized as a site of hegemony, where dominant values are negotiated and reproduced between two principal entities: political society or the state, and civil society or dominant groups, in relation to subalterns.⁵⁴ In the context of West Kalimantan, civic space is fragmented by a constellation of conditions, including identity politics,⁵⁵ unresolved conflict residues,⁵⁶ *tribalism* within local politics,⁵⁷ the dominance of local oligarchs,⁵⁸ labor disputes between workers and PT Duta Palma,⁵⁹ violations of freedom of religion or belief against

⁵³ Antoine Buyse, "Squeezing Civic Space: Restrictions on Civil Society Organizations and the Linkages with Human Rights," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 22, no. 8 (2018): 969, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2018.1492916>.

⁵⁴ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*.

⁵⁵ Sumaya, "Identitas Dalam Konflik Di Kalimantan Barat (Sebuah Pemetaan Konflik)."

⁵⁶ Sutianti Sutianti, "Dinamika Konflik Antar Etnis Dayak Dan Etnis Madura Di Samalantan Kalimantan Barat," *International Journal of Demos* 2, no. 1 (2020): 90, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37950/ijd.v2i1.35>.

⁵⁷ Khuswatun Hasanah, "Ethnicity Issues as a Political Mobilization Instrument of Cornelis MH Direct Elections in 2007 in West Kalimantan," *Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2018): 55–56.

⁵⁸ Iqra Anugrah, "Land Control, Coal Resource Exploitation and Democratic Decline in Indonesia," *TRaNS: Trans -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 11, no. 2 (2023): 202, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2023.4>.

⁵⁹ Ivan Wagner et al., "Jerit Dalam Jerat: Derita Warga Berhadapan Dengan Kelindan Pelanggaran HAM Dan Politik Pecah Belah" (Pontianak, 2024).

minority groups,⁶⁰ threats of ecological degradation, and the shrinking living space of indigenous communities caused by the conversion of forests and peatlands into oil palm plantations.⁶¹ This fragmentation is further compounded by paradigmatic tensions surrounding tolerance,⁶² and persistent gender-based violence.⁶³ This fragmentation produces a dual effect: it generates external pressures while simultaneously draining collective energy, thereby reinforcing the ambivalence of the structural legal aid movement.

Within this distorted civic space, LBH Kalbar confronts a dual challenge. On the one hand, it is expected to play a pivotal role in the defense of human rights and the strengthening of local democracy. On the other hand, the fragility of local conditions renders the organization increasingly vulnerable to structural interventions from the center. The interaction of social fragmentation, ideological tensions, and weak bases of local consolidation with the processes of NGOization and managerialism imposed by YLBHI has intensified disciplinary power relations within the movement. In this context, the ambivalence experienced by LBH Kalbar cannot be understood solely as a matter of local capacity or organizational weakness. Rather, it emerges from the convergence of specific local conditions and internal power mechanisms operating within the legal aid movement itself. This leads to a critical question: how are internal power dynamics between YLBHI and LBH Kalbar enacted through managerial and disciplinary mechanisms, and to what extent do these dynamics directly contribute to governance failure and the erosion of organizational autonomy at the local level?

⁶⁰ Moh. Fadhil, "Ketertiban Umum Atau Ketertiban Mayoritas: Analisis Sosio-Legal Terhadap Praktik Pembatasan Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia Di Kabupaten Sintang Kalimantan Barat," in *Kebebasan Beragama Atau Berkeyakinan: Konteks Dan Dinamika Di Indonesia*, ed. Al Khanif (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Gading, 2024), 267–68.

⁶¹ Bartolomeus Samho and Yohanes Slamet Purwadi, "Menelisis Dampak Perkebunan Kelapa Sawit Bagi Hutan Adat, Hak Ulayat, Dan Visi Ekologis Masyarakat Hukum Adat Di Kalimantan Barat," *Veritas et Justitia* 9, no. 2 (2023): 357–58, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25123/vej.v9i2.6476>.

⁶² Fadhil et al., "Navigating the Tensions Between Sharia and Human Rights in Regional Legislation."

⁶³ Wagner et al., "Jerit Dalam Jerat: Derita Warga Berhadapan Dengan Kelindan Pelanggaran HAM Dan Politik Pecah Belah."

IV. NGO-ization: The Relationship between YLBHI and LBH West Kalimantan

The process of NGOization is not merely a matter of institutional technocratization, rather, it is deeply intertwined with the core challenges faced by movements, particularly in contexts marked by acute social conflict. Within institutional theory, Rashed Al Jayousi and Yuko Nishide argue that the dynamics of NGOs are shaped by two key phenomena: institutionalization and institutional entrepreneurship. The former refers to pressures compelling organizations to conform to established institutional norms and practices, while the latter encompasses efforts to transform the institutional environment in which they operate.⁶⁴

Dolsak and Prakash demonstrate that the transformation of NGOs into project-based professional entities has produced four forms of institutional failure: (1) principal-agent failure, (2) pseudo-professionalization, (3) failures of community representation, and (4) the erosion of collective solidarity.⁶⁵ However, from a more radical perspective, NGOization can also be understood as a process of depoliticizing the movement through the bureaucratization of justice discourse.⁶⁶ In such conditions, NGOs cease to cultivate subjects of resistance and instead orient their work toward report production, performance indicators, institutional legitimacy, and donor patronage.⁶⁷ This dynamic generates a profound ambivalence within the movement,

⁶⁴ Rashed Al Jayousi and Yuko Nishide, “Beyond the “NGOization” of Civil Society: A Framework for Sustainable Community Led Development in Conflict Settings,” *Voluntas* 35, no. 1 (2024): 63, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00568-w>.

⁶⁵ Dolšak and Prakash, “NGO Failure: A Theoretical Synthesis.”

⁶⁶ Clothilde Facon-Salelles, “NGOization and Politicization of Aid,” *Middle East Law and Governance* 16, no. 2 (2024): 241, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18763375-16020004>.

⁶⁷ Rabeh Morrar and Suhail Sultan, “The Donor-Driven Model and Financial Sustainability: A Case Study from Palestinian Non-Government Organizations,” *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 12, no. 2–3 (2020): 144–47, <https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v12.i2-3.6771>.

as it becomes trapped in the logic of “managing injustice” as a pseudo-humanitarian project rather than “challenging injustice.”

A systematic examination of the four factors contributing to NGO failure is therefore necessary. First, *principal-agent failure*, as conceptualized by Dolsak and Prakash, refers to the relationship between NGOs as agents and their principals. What distinguishes NGOs from state institutions and corporations is their prioritization of a social mission as the core of their ideology, rather than organizational interests or hierarchical leadership structures. This social mission enables NGOs to build legitimacy through close engagement with local communities, which constitute the foundation of their movements. In this context, LBH Kalbar emerged from the collective initiative of various civil society organizations and academic actors. In 2022, thirteen institutions and individuals formally endorsed the establishment of Project-Based LBH Kalbar before YLBHI. This endorsement took two forms: first, through commitments to legal aid cooperation, and second, through assuming the role of new agents for YLBHI.

From its inception, however, LBH Kalbar experienced uncertainty regarding the direction of the movement. The founding principals advocated a gradual and phased approach, emphasizing the need to carefully navigate the fragmented civic space of West Kalimantan and to avoid rapid or radical intervention. Concurrently, YLBHI positions itself not as a partner organization but as a parent authority. This hierarchical posture produces relations of subordination that compel rapid, report-driven action oriented toward annual performance targets formalized through annual work meetings.

Second, *pseudo-professionalization* constitutes another key dimension of NGOization, rooted in donor perspectives that emphasize efficiency and budget accountability through professionalized NGOs. Donors often assume that NGOs, due to their flexibility, motivation, and proximity to communities, are best positioned to implement development and advocacy programmes. However, NGO organizational structures are typically bifurcated into managerial and volunteer components. At the managerial level, NGOs represent viable career pathways, enabling professional mobility across organizations and even between NGO and government sectors. These actors are often

adept at media engagement, cultivating elite networks, and securing visibility at national and international levels. By contrast, local-level volunteers are frequently marginalized within these networks, despite their critical role in producing reports and data used to demonstrate performance to donors.

In the case of LBH Kalbar, access to programmes funded by YLBHI's regular donors was initially restricted. This suggests that the disciplinary measures imposed by YLBHI were oriented toward projecting national-level performance, potentially at the expense of local movement development. Limited access to donor funding compelled LBH Kalbar to prioritize efficiency and to allocate its already constrained budget to support logistical needs across multiple entities involved in the movement.

Third, the *absence of community representation* reflects internal structural challenges within NGOs, where diverse member backgrounds and interests may generate implicit biases along lines of race, gender, religion, class, or ethnicity. In this regard, LBH Kalbar and YLBHI have demonstrated relatively progressive engagement with minority issues in Pontianak, particularly through coordinated initiatives over the past two years. These initiatives have included labour organizing in Bengkayang and Sambas, advocacy for religious minorities such as Ahmadiyah communities, legal defense in blasphemy cases, network-building among civil society organizations, policy advocacy with local governments, pro bono legal mobilization, and academic collaboration.

Fourth, the *erosion of collective solidarity* emerges because of competitive dynamics among NGOs, particularly under conditions of limited access to donor funding, media exposure, and strategic resources. As Dolsak and Prakash note, this vulnerability is especially acute in NGOs with branching organizational structures, such as YLBHI and its regional LBH offices. LBH Kalbar's exclusion from national strategic programmes further constrained its access to funding, reinforcing competition and internal fragmentation. This erosion of solidarity can be understood as a cascading effect of managerial conflict between YLBHI and LBH Kalbar, wherein YLBHI framed LBH Kalbar as lacking sufficient capacity to sustain structural legal aid in line with its ideological expectations.

Beyond representational challenges, these failure factors converge through processes of NGOization. The power relationship between YLBHI and LBH Kalbar does not operate through overt domination, but rather through disciplinary mechanisms that subtly shape institutional behavior. As Michel Foucault explains, power is exercised not only through prohibition but through the production of norms, hierarchical ordering, and the neutralization of conditions deemed noncompliant.⁶⁸

In the early relationship between YLBHI and LBH Kalbar, discipline was enacted through standardized procedures, performance indicators, normalized work targets framed as markers of loyalty, symbolic surveillance of ideological compliance, and restructuring as a corrective instrument. These mechanisms were institutionalized through annual work meetings and reporting requirements. Although YLBHI emphasized the need for strategic advocacy, it did not adequately address the significant disparity in human resource capacity between LBH Kalbar and more established LBH offices. Capacity-building initiatives were limited, and LBH Kalbar personnel were frequently excluded from managerial training programmes. Despite these constraints, performance discipline remained a recurring evaluative standard. The inability to meet advocacy and litigation targets stemmed not from a lack of cases, but from unresolved personnel shortages and structural constraints.

The founding principals consistently emphasized that LBH Kalbar should prioritize learning and capacity-building during its initial five-year phase to foster deeper engagement with local communities and to develop a legal aid model tailored to West Kalimantan's specific conditions. This vision stood in tension with YLBHI's technocratic approach, which prioritized strategic planning and quantifiable outputs.

As the movement evolved, its dysfunction entered a more critical phase when the leadership of LBH Kalbar initiated an internal legal challenge against the leadership of YLBHI in response to the restructuring of LBH Jakarta, which was itself unfolding amid internal conflict. This dispute reveals a form of hypocrisy, wherein NGOs

⁶⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, ed. Alan Sheridan, Random House, Inc., Second Vin (New York: Random House, Inc., 1995).

systematically construct a disjuncture between their articulated concepts and their practical actions. Such developments challenge the institutional theory assumption of organizational order namely, the presumed consistency of governance and the mutually reinforcing relationship between ideas and practices. The broader transformation of the movement has thus acquired a neo-institutionalist character, as it contests conventional institutional assumptions and manages ideas and actions through hegemonic modalities.⁶⁹

This relationship produces what can be described as *hegemonic subordination*, a condition in which local organizations become trapped in a state of movement hypocrisy. Internal criticism is widely perceived as an act of defiance against the center's moral legitimacy. A parallel can be drawn with the efforts of LBH Kalbar's leadership to defend their colleagues against YLBHI, actions that were construed as a form of resistance to the status quo. This clash of interests illustrates the complex dynamics of accountability within NGO leadership, which are notoriously difficult to manage. In this case, an attempt was made to pursue institutional reconciliation through the consolidation of civil society organizations in West Kalimantan, facilitated by external mediators, with the aim of fostering an egalitarian and deliberative environment. Over the course of six months, however, the process failed to produce any substantive outcome and instead generated an atmosphere of tension reminiscent of the Cold War.

YLBHI argued that the tension could be resolved by removing the leadership of LBH Kalbar and replacing them with individuals who lacked technical experience in managing legal aid organizations. This decision produced internal divisions and a pervasive sense of exhaustion. These findings indicate that NGOs which outwardly project a radical commitment to deliberative democracy and an egalitarian society often operate internally within authoritative, hegemonic, and asymmetrical structures that closely resemble those of state institutions.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Larsson, "Convergence in Ideas, Divergence in Actions: Organizational Hypocrisy in Nonprofit Organizations."

⁷⁰ Tatag Muttaqin et al., "Asymmetric Power Relations in Multistakeholder Initiatives: Insights from the Government-Instituted Indonesian National Forestry Council," *Trees, Forests and People* 12, no. June (2023): 3, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tfp.2023.100406>.

In the YLBHI–LBH Kalbar case, personal conflict was not articulated as a form of productive political disagreement but was instead framed as a threat to organizational stability. The restructuring of personnel did not emerge as a collective resolution; rather, it functioned as a disciplinary instrument that effectively terminated dialogue. As a result, the notion of solidarity became ineffective and was superseded by a condition of systemic mental fatigue or burnout. This tension subsequently generated a form of governance discrimination which, following David Lewis’s interpretation of Robert Michels, can be understood through the ‘iron law of oligarchy’.⁷¹ In this sense, the consolidation of central leadership control over organizational resources and information functions as an authoritative signal that the center possesses the power to impose structural change upon LBH Kalbar.

This dynamic manifested in YLBHI’s actions, including the blocking of LBH Kalbar staff from accessing training, internal capacity-building initiatives, national action research, donor engagement, resource allocation, and national work programmes. These measures led to a deterioration of internal governance, heightened staff tensions at the local level, widespread burnout, and, in its most severe form, the dissolution of LBH Kalbar.

V. Rebooting Emancipatory Legal Aid

The establishment of LBH Kalbar was grounded in the collective expression of civil society’s deep concern over the shrinking democratic space in West Kalimantan. The initiative was conceived as a project of emancipation through the provision of structural legal aid, enabling the realization of fundamental rights and liberties. However, this organizational idealism soon confronted an unequal relationship with its parent institution. LBH Kalbar was not afforded the opportunity to undergo an incubation phase within the movement; instead, it was

⁷¹ David Lewis, “When Things Go Wrong in NGOs What Can Be Learned from Cases of Organizational Breakdown and “Failure”?,” in *Politics and Governance in Bangladesh*, ed. Ipsita Basu, Joe Devine, and Geof Wood (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2017), 153.

compelled to shift immediately into the clinical production phase of advocacy. While this demand may be strategically necessary for ensuring the movement's sustainability and aligning with its overarching vision and mission, such acceleration is nevertheless unnatural, tendentious, and artificial and crucially disregards the organization's internal capacities, which remain in the formative stage of movement orientation.

This analysis demonstrates that the failure of the legal aid movement in West Kalimantan is not merely technical in nature, but rather an expression of ideological conflict between the logic of emancipation and a managerial regime that suppresses the movement's radical potential. This depoliticization does not eliminate conflict; instead, it neutralizes it in ways that avoid disrupting organizational stability.

In this context, it is evident that the spirit of the LBH Kalbar movement no longer aligns with that of YLBHI. The present moment thus provides an opportunity for the organization to disengage from the YLBHI structure. Such a separation aims to enable a transformation of LBH Kalbar's internal framework through a process of "dying momentarily in order to be reborn" in an emancipatory spirit. The findings indicate that small, local, and decentralized NGOs like LBH Kalbar may, in fact, be better positioned to cultivate a more open and emergent form of praxis one unburdened by the demands of the non-profit industrial complex and the resource-intensive requirements that constrain larger NGOs.⁷²

To facilitate a smooth and sustainable transition, LBH Kalbar must adopt a strategic plan that addresses institutional financial recovery, the psychological well-being of staff, and the reorientation of the movement toward deeper grassroots engagement. From a managerial standpoint, the organization should strengthen collaborative relationships with both local and national NGOs to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of its advocacy efforts. Such collaboration

⁷² Garland Mason and Kim L. Niewolny, "Participation and Empowerment as Emancipatory Praxis: An Ethnographic Study of an NGO in Chiapas, Mexico," *Development in Practice* 32, no. 5 (2021): 2, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2021.1937527>.

is essential for identifying funding opportunities that align with donor priorities targeting specific issues in West Kalimantan.

LBH Kalbar has demonstrated a capacity to engage with a range of national and international NGOs, enabling the coordination of advocacy programs and the expansion of funding opportunities. For example, the International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) has initiated programs aimed at advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),⁷³ while Sawit Watch focuses on advocacy related to the palm oil plantation sector.⁷⁴ LBH Kalbar has actively implemented advocacy initiatives across several districts, particularly in policy and labor advocacy within plantation areas. To enhance the effectiveness of its structural advocacy model, LBH Kalbar should also consider fostering more collaborative relationships with local governments. Such engagement would extend the reach of the model beyond civil society alone and create a more effective linkage between grassroots movements and local government policy agendas.

In addition to strengthening partnerships and securing funding opportunities, it is imperative to implement strategies for mental recovery and work culture reorientation. These efforts should be undertaken in collaboration with clinical psychologists who can support mental well-being, self-reflection, and capacity building among staff members. To sustain these initiatives, the organization should move toward a more autonomous organizational structure and a locality-based work culture, thereby fostering a more independent, resilient, and locally grounded working environment. The values underpinning this approach correspond closely to the realities of West Kalimantan, including a radical reorientation of the movement's philosophy toward an emancipatory framework that organizes marginalized groups and

⁷³ Salsabila Pratiwi and Yuyu Sriwartini, "Manajemen Komunikasi Infid Dalam Pendampingan Pemda Kabupaten Cirebon Dan Kota Yogyakarta Mencapai Sustainable Development Goals," *Syntax Literate: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia* 5, no. 9 (2020): 941–56, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-literate.v5i9.1584>.

⁷⁴ Heldi Yunan Ardian and Delima Hasri Azahari, "Strategi Komunikasi Dalam Tata Kelola Pengembangan Kelapa Sawit Di Indonesia," *Analisis Kebijakan Pertanian* 18, no. 1 (2020): 59–74, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21082/akp.v18n1.2020.59-74>.

indigenous peoples through an inclusive model of activism. This includes a “*tree-root philosophy*” that reflects the ecological conditions of the region, an ecocentric approach that strengthens grassroots constituencies and advances environmental justice, and a “*bird philosophy*” that captures the broader protective mandate aimed at safeguarding natural habitats and preserving ecosystems.

Although the movement’s philosophy is shaped by its specific local context, it is grounded in the universalism of environmental ethics. This universalism, as articulated by John Passmore through the concept of *responsible dominion*, holds that humans bear an ethical obligation to safeguard environmental sustainability.⁷⁵ Within this framework, LBH Kalbar’s advocacy movement is anchored in efforts to advance ecological justice by emphasizing the interconnected roles of human agency, local communities, and Indigenous peoples in environmental protection.

To ensure that this transformation is both accountable and measurable, the movement’s philosophy must be translated into a strategic plan and an advocacy roadmap. These documents should function not only as operational guidelines shaping everyday work culture, but also as instruments for consolidating ideology as a distinctive advocacy identity. To strengthen the movement while avoiding the reproduction of a disciplinary work culture or the emergence of new internal power relations, as previously observed in the relationship between YLBHI and LBH Kalbar, a bottom-up approach is preferable, accompanied by greater internal democratization. Accordingly, the development of this framework cannot be conducted in isolation. It must instead be co-produced with local civil society organizations and the communities served, including labor groups, local communities, Indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable or marginalized groups. Such an approach fosters a more open, movement-based mechanism of accountability and equips civil society with the capacity to critically assess the sustainability and emancipatory orientation of LBH Kalbar’s legal aid movement in the future.

⁷⁵ MD. Abu Sayem, “Philosophical Roots Of Our Environmental Problems,” *International Journal Of The Asian Philosophical Association* 14, no. 2 (2021): 162.

VI. Conclusion

The crisis experienced by LBH Kalbar cannot be reduced to technical deficiencies or local managerial failure but must be understood as the outcome of a convergence between internal structural pathologies and fragmented local conditions. This study demonstrates that NGOization operates through managerialism and standardization while simultaneously intertwining with cultural hegemony in civil society. Together, these forces produce a form of hegemonic subordination that is not coercive, but internalized through compliance, normalization, and the delegitimization of alternative praxis. Such dynamics generate institutional hypocrisy when local organizations are instrumentalized to strengthen donor relations and media access at the center without a corresponding commitment to grassroots consolidation. Governance failure within the legal aid movement thus appears as a process of institutionally produced depoliticization. Overcoming this condition requires a dual transformation: critical reform of centralized legal aid governance structures and the creation of space for the reconstitution of autonomous, locally rooted, and context-sensitive legal aid organizations. In this regard, LBH Kalbar's articulation of tree-root and bird philosophies points toward a particularistic model of emancipatory legal aid that resonates more closely with the social configurations of West Kalimantan. The effectiveness of such a model depends on dismantling uniform performance regimes and replacing them with collectively constructed, reflective, and locally grounded benchmarks.

This finding underscores the need to reassess center–local relations within the legal aid movement, particularly in relation to other LBH offices. For YLBHI, movement transformation should prioritize the strategic role of local LBH offices, with YLBHI repositioned as a non-dominant umbrella organization rather than a centralizing authority. This requires YLBHI to strengthen local LBH offices' access to donor networks in ways that support locally grounded advocacy initiatives, while simultaneously reinforcing the movement's ideological foundations through dialogical and egalitarian capacity-building for legal aid staff. For LBH Kalbar, it is imperative to strengthen the reformulation of the movement through locally grounded and

particularistic ideologies. This can be achieved by organizing civil society as a movement-based network and by positioning marginalized groups as principals rather than mere beneficiaries. In addition, it is crucial to cultivate donor networks aligned with the specific socio-legal issues of West Kalimantan. Finally, strengthening partnerships with local government institutions and law enforcement agencies is essential to establish effective and accountable channels of engagement with these principals.

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