



CHINESE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND PSEUDO-MULTICULTURALISM IN WEST KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA

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Abstract: This research aims to explore pluralism in West Kalimantan, a paradoxical place in Indonesia, where multi-religious and multi-ethnic people meet. For social researchers, this situation is unique because, on the one hand, West Kalimantan is known as a conflict-prone area in Indonesia. On the other hand, part of its territory, namely the Singkawang area, is called the most tolerant area. Previous researchers assumed this situation was false because conflicts between religious and ethnic groups still occur frequently. However, the communication strategies and social interactions by ethnic groups in this area have rarely been investigated. The role of the Chinese Muslim group is significant in bringing about harmonization between the polarised groups. Chinese Muslims have provided a link that is socially very instrumental in deconstructing the firm ethnic and religious group identities and boundaries. Although they seem to form their own identity, two sides of that identity are related to religious groups and ethnic groups. Their presence thus balances inter-group communications and interactions. In conclusion, theoretically, the presence of the Chinese Muslim community in West Kalimantan breaks the ice of identity and becomes a bridge of communication between communities.

Keywords: Social Identity, Chinese Muslim, Communication, Religion, Become Malay.

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Introduction

WEST KALIMANTAN, Indonesia, presents a paradoxical situation regarding pluralism. On the one hand, the area is conflict-prone,

having experienced several deadly conflicts, including significant wars between groups from 1997 to the 2000s. The conflicts between groups amidst their contestation in various arenas have not disappeared until today.

On the other hand, Singkawang, a region in West Kalimantan, has been declared the most tolerant city for the last three years and has been awarded a Harmony Award certificate. The Harmony Award is the highest award given to regions that have successfully managed conflict and whose residents show a high tolerance for differences.

According to Atmaja, this paradoxical situation is pseudo-multiculturalism.¹ Pseudo-multiculturalism refers to conditions where attention, regulation, or policy is promised to minorities or different communities, but this is never delivered.² This opinion reflects the researcher's lack of confidence in the harmony of the current population, and this also implies a potential conflict situation, especially between the three main groups in West Kalimantan, namely Dayak, Malay, and Chinese.

These three main groups are the majority and are prominent as territorial and political rulers. Each group has an ethnic territory as its main base: Dayak has an inland base, such as Landak, Bengkayang, and Sanggau. Malays have coastal areas, such as Pontianak, Sambas, and Kayong. The Chinese base in Singkawang

¹ Dwi Surya Atmaja et al., "Islam and the Struggle for Multiculturalism in Singkawang, West Kalimantan: Local Ulama, Theological-Economic Competition and Ethnoreligious Relations," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 1 (June 14, 2023): 172–200, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v27i1.516>; see also Muhammad Hasan, "Construction of Modern Islamic Inheritance Law Based on Ijtihad of the Judges at the Religious Court of Pontianak, West Kalimantan," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 2 (May 9, 2023): 650–68, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i2.8852>.

² Giovanna Campani, "Facing Diversity and Democracy: European Neo-Nationalism, Canadian Multiculturalism and Latin American Experiences," *Comparative Cultural Studies - European and Latin American Perspectives* 1, no. 1 (December 20, 2016): 19–35, <https://doi.org/10.13128/ccselap-19986>; Alexandra Stewart, "The Possibilities and Limitations of Change from Within: How Alternative Schools for Marginalized Youth in Toronto, Ontario Fare in the State Education System" (Master Thesis, Canada, McGill University, 2020).

was previously stated as Indonesia's most tolerant area. In areas such as Kapuas Hulu, Sekadau, Melawi, and Ketapang, the Dayak and Malay ethnic groups work together equally. Despite having a limited territorial base, China remains socially, politically, and economically prominent. Sometimes, its role exceeds that of the Dayak and Malay groups. Although known to be migrants, Chinese in West Kalimantan are sometimes more prominent than Dayak and Malay. Its long history has been stated through several previous studies by Jackson³ and Qodir et al.⁴

Chinese Indonesians constitute a minority ethnic group, comprising approximately 7,670,000 people, or 3.4% of Indonesia's population.⁵ Wang outlines four patterns of Chinese diaspora from China to other parts of Asia and the world in Sinological studies.⁶ The second stage, beginning in the mid-19th century, is referred to as huagong (Chinese labor period) and was characterized by the arrival of coolie workers. The third stage, beginning in the early 20th century, is referred to as *huaqiao* (sojourner period) and was characterized by the arrival of pastoralists. The fourth and final stage, beginning in the mid-20th century, is referred to as *huayi* (period of Chinese descendants) and was characterized by the arrival of Chinese citizens.

The history of the Chinese presence in Indonesia can be divided into four migration patterns based on historical periodization. The earliest stage is referred to as Huashang, which was characterized by trade. The presence of the Peranakan Chinese group in Indonesian sinological studies is supported by

³ James C. Jackson, *Chinese in the West Borneo Goldfields: A Study in Cultural Geography* (University of Hull, 1970).

⁴ Zuly Qodir, "Kaum Muda, Intoleransi, dan Radikalisme Agama," *Jurnal Studi Pemuda* 5, no. 1 (August 9, 2018): 429–45, <https://doi.org/10.22146/studipemudaugm.37127>.

⁵ Lucky Nugroho, Ahmad Badawi, and Nurul Hidayah, "How Indonesian Women Micro and Small Entrepreneurs Can Survive in Covid-19 Pandemic?," *Amalee: Indonesian Journal of Community Research and Engagement* 3, no. 1 (April 28, 2022): 215–22, <https://doi.org/10.37680/amalee.v3i1.1375>.

⁶ Dudley L Poston and Juyin Helen Wong, "The Chinese Diaspora: The Current Distribution of the Overseas Chinese Population," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 2, no. 3 (July 1, 2016): 348–73, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057150X16655077>.

Indonesian citizenship. This aligns with the argument that Indonesia's political climate no longer supports the dichotomy between *pribumi* (native citizens) and *non pribumi* (citizens of Chinese descent).⁷ The Chinese community in Indonesia is commonly referred to as 'Cina' or 'Tionghoa' and is divided into two groups: *totok* Chinese and *peranakan* Chinese.

Chinese *totok* and Peranakan Chinese are two Chinese immigrants who arrived in the archipelago at different stages. The *totok* group retains their original language and culture. At the same time, the Peranakan Chinese have adapted to the local culture and speak the local language, such as Javanese, as their first language. In sinological studies, two groups are commonly recognized. However, there is also a Chinese Muslim community in Indonesia that is not often studied.

Literature Reviews

Scholars in Malaysia and Indonesia have studied Chinese Muslim communities in the Malay world. In Malaysia, studies have been conducted by Mahmud and Shah Haneef, Awang and Hambali, and Lam. Mahmud and Haneef's study focuses on how Chinese Muslims adapt to Islam.⁸ Aspects discussed relate to the history of Islamisation in Malaysia and the monarchy's role in pursuing this agenda. An explanation of the contextualization of Islam for converts follows this. Awang and Hambali's study focuses on the social networks of the Chinese Muslim community with the surrounding community in Terengganu and illustrates

⁷ Dwi Wijayanti et al., "Genetic Polymorphisms within the ETAA1 Gene Associated with Growth Traits in Chinese Sheep Breeds," *Animal Genetics* 53, no. 3 (June 2022): 460–65, <https://doi.org/10.1111/age.13197>.

⁸ Mek Wok Mahmud and Sayed Sikandar Shah Haneef, "Expectations from Chinese Muslim Converts for Islamization of Society in Malaysia: Lessons from Life of the Companions (Angkaan Pengubahsuaian Cina Islam Untuk Pengislaman Soci-Ety Di Malaysia: Pelajaran Dari Kehidupan Para Sahabat)," *Journal of Islam in Asia* (E-ISSN 2289-8077) 16, no. 1 (April 12, 2019): 278–96, <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v16i1.783>.

the socio-communal phenomenon of this minority.⁹ This study formulates that the Chinese Muslim community, by wisdom, establishes relationships with the Chinese and Malay communities according to the framework provided by Islam. This study is important to review here because in discussing the Chinese Muslim identity in West Kalimantan, the aspect of relations with other communities seeks to determine their social categorization status in the multi-ethnic society of West Kalimantan. Regarding the issue of Chinese Muslim identity in Malaysia, Lam's study states that it is precisely because of the enigma that Islam is associated with Malay identity and the history of conflictual relations between Chinese and Malays.¹⁰ Both of these enigmas have impacted the formation of Chinese Muslim identity and contributed to the formation of Chinese Muslim identity.

In contrast to Malaysia, the vocabulary of studies on Chinese Muslims in Indonesia is more extensive. Relevant studies include Amaruli and Utama, Elizabeth, Ratnawati et al., and Herwansyah. These studies address the main issues in Chinese Muslim studies and implicitly relate to categorization, identification, and social comparison in Social Identity theory. It shows that Chinese Muslim societies differ in how they assimilate, interact, and adapt to the area in which they are spread.

Amaruli & Utama explore the situation of Chinese Muslims in Indonesia, particularly on the island of Java.¹¹ The factors that led the Chinese to choose Islam are discussed in detail, such as the factor of 'doubt' about their original religion, the perfection of

⁹ Azarudin Awang and Khadijah Mohd Hambali, "Apresiasi Dialog Kehidupan Berhikmah Komuniti Cina Muslim Di Terengganu (An Appreciation of the Dialogue of Life Wisdom among the Chinese Muslim Community in Terengganu)," *KEMANUSIAAN The Asian Journal of Humanities* 24, no. 1 (April 15, 2017): 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2017.24.1.1>.

¹⁰ Desmond Lam, "Slot or Table? A Chinese Perspective," *UNLV Gaming Research & Review Journal* 9, no. 2 (December 17, 2012), <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/grrj/vol9/iss2/6>.

¹¹ Rabith Jihan Amaruli and Mahendra Pudji Utama, "Konversi Agama Dan Formasi Identitas: Tionghoa Muslim Kudus Pasca-Indonesia Orde Baru," *HUMANIKA* 22, no. 2 (December 1, 2015): 103-13, <https://doi.org/10.14710/humanika.22.2.103-113>.

Islam, the factor of living in a predominantly Muslim environment, mixed marriages, and so on. The adoption of Islam is said to have created a new identity based on Javanese rather than Chinese culture. The local indigenous community more easily accepts them because of their religious background. They are in a dilemma. Their relationship with the non-Muslim Chinese has become looser. This study is an example that shows that the Chinese are in a crisis of identity and social relations after their religious conversion.

Elizabeth focused on conversion conflicts among Chinese Muslims; conversion is a cultural process that can cause conflicts, such as maintaining the original identity and merging with the new identity adopted.¹² The article 'Chinese Muslims in Semarang' identifies several types of conflict, including sarcasm, the use of harsh words, rejection, and hostility. In conflict situations, the informant may forgive, explain the situation to the other party, or even leave and seek another community. The study's findings support the issue of the relationship between Chinese Muslims and their families of origin, which will be discussed later in this paper. Chinese Muslims are confronted with this phenomenon everywhere.

Ratnawati et al. and Maulana's study also examined Chinese Muslims in Kediri and Yogyakarta. The term 'Chinese Muslim' is used to facilitate assimilation into the surrounding community. The selection of this identity is a lengthy process influenced by political factors.¹³

¹² Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth, "Pola Penanganan Konflik Akibat Konversi Agama Di Kalangan Keluarga Cina Muslim," *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 21, no. 1 (June 15, 2013): 171–90, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.21.1.241>.

¹³ Devi Ratnawati, Nurhadi Nurhadi, and Abdul Rahman, "Pembentukan Identitas Tionghoa Muslim Di Kalangan Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia Semarang," *Ideas: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 8, no. 4 (November 10, 2022): 1237–46, <https://doi.org/10.32884/ideas.v8i4.998>; see also Rezza Maulana, "Pergulatan Identitas Tionghoa Muslim: Pengalaman Yogyakarta," *Kontekstualita: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 26, no. 1 (2011): 37104, <https://www.neliti.com/publications/37104/>.

ccording to Herwansyah's study on Chinese culture in Palembang, the assimilation of the Chinese community into the Malay culture occurred due to the fusion of Malay-Javanese and Chinese cultures. The community embraced Islam, leading to the absence of the term 'Muslim-Chinese' in Palembang. Essentially, the Chinese Muslim community in each region of Indonesia exhibits variations in terms of identity and socio-community issues. Herwansyah's study indicates that Muslim Chinese in Palembang have assimilated into the Malay-Javanese community and do not use Muslim-Chinese terms.¹⁴

However, this differs from the situation of Muslim Chinese in Singkawang City, West Kalimantan. The term 'Chinese Muslim' is used to refer to Chinese people who have converted to Islam and assimilated into the local indigenous community. The study highlights the challenges faced by Chinese Muslims in their relationships with their families of origin, who often reject and oppose them. The Chinese Muslims in the study are tolerant and trying to change the perception of them held by the Chinese community.

'Tidayu,' commonly used in media and scientific works, is an acronym derived from Chinese, Dayak, and Malay.¹⁵ According to Google Trends, the term 'Cidayu' existed earlier than 'Tidayu,' with data from 2004. The emergence of the terms Cidayu and Tidayu indicates that the Chinese community in Singkawang is open to accepting a new social identity that integrates various ethnic communities. This self-openness is demonstrated by ethnic Chinese grouping themselves according to their demographic landscape. Although the concept of Tidayu is prominent in the context of Singkawang City, Chinese communities elsewhere in

¹⁴ Herwansyah Herwansyah, "Menjadi Tionghoa Yang Bukan Kafir: Kajian Atas Konstruksi Identitas Tionghoa Muslim Di Palembang," *Jurnal Studi Agama* 3, no. 1 (2019): 40–62, <https://jurnal.radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/jsa/article/view/3662>.

¹⁵ There are also local expressions in West Kalimantan that can be used for social inclusion and character building. See Purniadi Putra et al., "The Use Malays-Sambas Expressions in Developing Character Education in Sambas Primary Madrasah in Millennial Era," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 9, no. 2 (May 30, 2021): 329–44, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v9i2.482>.

West Kalimantan have long recognized similar concepts due to the diverse society of the region. The term 'Tidayu' became popular after it was formalized through the combined efforts of the government and local communities and subsequently popularized through mass media.

One interviewee stated that the idea of being Tionghoa was initially unfamiliar and not used to identify individuals in their Pontianak community. The term was not used to describe themselves or the Chinese community and was never associated with that identity. Even within the community, this term was rejected due to the belief that they were not Chinese. The interviewee explained that the term 'Tionghoa' is related to the nation of China (Tiongkok), and they did not wish to be associated with their country of origin as it is now part of the Indonesian state.

The individual preferred the Chinese designation, which has been used for a significant period. Typically, individuals from birth to over 50 years old use the term "Cina" or "Cin" for self-identification and identification by others. A monument at the crossroads in Nanga Taman, Sekadau, 300 kilometers inland from Pontianak, uses Tugu Cidayu, a shortened form of Chinese, Dayak, and Malay. The monument was built as a memorial to the peace accords after the riots of the 1990s, and the monument became an argument for this opinion.

The Theoretical Framework

This paper utilizes Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, which explores the categorization of individuals into 'us' and 'them' groups and how this affects attitudes and behavior toward members of these groups. Social classification can lead to intergroup bias, where a group favors its members over outsiders. This theory was developed to explain how individuals perceive and act based on their membership in a social group and to understand intergroup relations. It also seeks to understand the relationships between groups in life, often determined by differences in status hierarchies. According to the social identity

theory pioneered by Tajfel and Turner, individuals want to emphasize the differences between their group and outside groups.¹⁶ This theory helps to explain how individuals perceive and relate to other groups.

Greil and Davidman state that social identity theory mainly focuses on basic social categories such as ethnicity and gender, while religious identity is often overlooked and considered a type of ethnicity.¹⁷ The article discusses the application of social identity theory in terms of religious content that contributes to identity formation. However, the description begins with the concept of identity, formed by differences in understanding, such as religious doctrine, origin myths, and cosmology.

Religious identity and ethnicity are significant factors in shaping the social identity structure of the Chinese Muslim community in West Kalimantan. It is important to discuss these factors together, as religion is the primary determinant of ethnic identity. An example of this close relationship between religion and ethnicity in Kalimantan is the exchange of Dayak ethnic identity for Malay identity.

Research Methods

This study was conducted in Pontianak and Singkawang, two major cities in West Kalimantan (see Map 1). The local community knows Singkawang as 'China City,' 'City of a Thousand Temples (Tokong),' and 'Naga City,' all synonymous with the Chinese community. Regarding the study methodology, the data in this paper was collected through two methods: literature review and face-to-face interviews. Secondary references for scientific writing are obtained from various repositories such as libraries and online

¹⁶ Nils Karl Reimer et al., "Self-Categorization and Social Identification: Making Sense of Us and Them" (OSF, March 19, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/gub8a>.

¹⁷ Arthur L. Greil and Lynn Davidman, "Religion and Identity," in *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, by James Beckford and N. Demerath (1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2007), 549–65, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848607965.n27>.

databases. The following subsection provides a more detailed explanation of the face-to-face interview method.



Map 1. The location of Pontianak and Singkawang, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

From early November 2021 to January 2022, face-to-face interviews were conducted. The researcher focused on Chinese Muslim figures, including the Chairman of the Indonesian Chinese Islamic Association or *Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia* (PITI) West Kalimantan, the Secretary of PITI West Kalimantan, the Chairman of PITI Singkawang, a former PITI administrator, and Muslim Chinese informants.

Purposive sampling methods were used to select informants for this study. This sampling method involves deliberately selecting samples to achieve a specific goal or objective. The reviewer selected informants as samples when discussing the Chinese Muslim community in West Kalimantan. This targeted group of informants can provide representative information on the discussed topics. The participants were asked about their background, religious conversion process, conflict issues, dynamics faced, current life choices, views, and recognition of self-

identity. The collected data will be recorded and processed for discussion.

As a qualitative study, data validation is prioritized through member checking. According to Lincoln and Guba, Member checking is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility.¹⁸ In this case, the data has been verified through member checking with academic experts from the West Kalimantan PITI organization, namely Dr. Hamzah Syawal, Dr. Ahmad Jaiz, and Chinese Muslim academic expert Mr. Segu Atio. Three lecturers from the Pontianak State Islamic Institute (IAIN) were asked to assess and comment on the study results. The study used a triangulation method, integrating various data sources, review staff, theories, and methodological techniques to ensure that the qualitative data is representative and validated.

Chinese Migration to Western Borneo

The migration of large numbers of Chinese to West Kalimantan began in the mid-18th century with the discovery of gold deposits in the Sambas and Montrado area. Heidheus states that the local government actively encouraged Chinese migration to West Kalimantan to work in the gold mines.¹⁹ According to Jackson (1970), the success of Chinese miners in supplementing the Sultan of Palembang's income in the tin mining business on Bangka Island was a significant factor.²⁰ In the 1740s, Panembahan Mampawah invited a small group of Chinese from Brunei to work in his lombong at Sungai Duri. This led the Sultan of Sambas to grant land in Lara to the Chinese in 1772 to work the gold mines. As a result, the Chinese population and the size of the gold mines increased. However, there was a dispute between the Panembahan and the Sultan over land rights, which caused them

¹⁸ John W. Creswell and Dana L. Miller, "Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry," *Theory Into Practice* 39, no. 3 (2000): 124–30, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1477543>.

¹⁹ Mary Somers Heidhues, *Golddiggers, Farmers, and Traders in the Chinese Districts of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 2003).

²⁰ Jackson, *Chinese in the West Borneo Goldfields*.

to lose control over developing neighboring gold mines such as Monterado, Lara, and Mandor. This dispute led to the Chinese war in Monterado in the 1850s.²¹

After nearly 50 years, the gold deposits in West Borneo began to diminish. For instance, most of the gold mines in Mandor had stopped operating by 1884. The decrease in gold content affected the Chinese economy and prompted migration to the Kapuas River area. After gold mining ceased, they grew cash crops and traded as an alternative economy. Sandick states that 1919 an economic survey noted a complete shift in the area's economy as agriculture and trade replaced mining.²² The earliest crops cultivated were pepper and gambier, followed by sap and coconut cultivation. The pattern of Chinese presence in West Borneo and the form of economy practiced is classified within the hugging periodization, as Wang (1991) explains. The Chinese population in West Kalimantan is mainly concentrated in urban areas such as Singkawang, Pontianak, and Sintang, as well as small towns along the Kapuas River valley and its branches, including Sanggau, Sekadau, Sungai Ayak, Nanga Taman, Sepauk, and Nanga Belitang.²³

Religions of the Chinese in West Kalimantan

The Chinese community in West Kalimantan is often associated with Buddhism due to the presence of Chinese temples attached to Buddhist monasteries. However, many Chinese in the region also practice Taoism or Khonghucian, Christian-Catholic, and a small minority are Muslim. It is worth noting that those who

²¹ Nicholas Ferns, "Colonialism as Foreign Aid: Australian Developmental Policy in Papua New Guinea, 1945–75," *Australian Historical Studies*, October 1, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1031461X.2020.1808689>.

²² Mary Somers Heidhues, "Identity and the Minority: Ethnic Chinese on the Indonesian Periphery," *Indonesia Circle. School of Oriental & African Studies. Newsletter* 24, no. 70 (November 1, 1996): 181–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03062849608729877>.

²³ Chong Shin, *Masyarakat multilingual dan pemilihan bahasa: Minoritas Tionghoa di Kota Sekadau, Pulau Borneo* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Atma Jaya, 2012).

converted to Islam were initially absorbed into the Malay group and were considered to have left China, a situation that is of particular interest. This statement reflects the common belief in West Kalimantan that Islam is associated with Malay culture.

There is no complete data on Chinese Muslims in West Kalimantan as Indonesia's statistical center, the Central Bureau of Statistics, does not conduct ethnic or religious-based counts. Additionally, the local Ministry of Religious Affairs does not have any information on Chinese individuals who have converted to Islam. According to data obtained by the author's team from the management of the Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia (PITI) West Kalimantan, approximately 2000 Chinese Muslims were found in the region. The exact number could not be obtained due to the lack of a complete list of names (interview with informant, January 2022).

Chinese Muslims are considered a minority within the Chinese ethnic group, but they are part of the Malay majority from a religious perspective. Therefore, the adaptation of Chinese Muslims in West Kalimantan is often a topic of interest.²⁴ The Chinese Muslim community's situation in West Kalimantan is considered a paradox by many groups studying multicultural issues. It is important to maintain objectivity and avoid subjective evaluations.

The Communication and Social Interactions

In terms of the social categorization of Chinese society, Chinese Muslims in West Kalimantan form a subcategory of identity based on religious identity. The identity situation of the Chinese Muslim community is different from that of the Dayak tribe, who adopted Islam. In this case, the Dayak tribe was recognized as 'Malay' after exchanging religious beliefs. In the

²⁴ Atmaja et al., "Islam and the Struggle for Multiculturalism in Singkawang, West Kalimantan"; Ayu Gintari, Wanto Rivaie, and Supriadi, "Adaptasi Sosial Tionghoa Muslim Dengan Keluarga Non Muslim (Studi Keluarga Tionghoa Muslim Di Kecamatan Singkawang Barat)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa (JPPK)* 2, no. 12 (December 18, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.26418/jppk.v2i12.4092>.

local context, this is known as "entering Malay." After "entering Malay," the Dayak group recognized themselves as "Malay" (or Senganan; see Sutlive Jr.),²⁵ Moreover, they spoke local Malay as the mother tongue of the next generation. The phenomenon of 'entering Malay' by the Dayak tribes in West Kalimantan was recorded as early as 1903 by the Dutch explorer J.J.K. Enthoven.²⁶

The "Chinese Muslim" identity found in West Kalimantan originates from a group of Chinese who converted to Islam in the 1990s. This group uses the name "Chinese Muslims," a name that combines ethnic origin and religious belief. This group initially formed an association called the Islamic Tauhid Faith Association. This association is a branch of the same organization in Jakarta, founded in 1982. The Islamic Tauhid Faith Association in Indonesia was founded in 1961 by H. Abdul Karim Oey. Its establishment aimed to benefit Da'wah and religious development among Chinese Muslims. This is because there is an awareness that the Chinese are alienated from the Islamic religion compared to other indigenous tribes. In 1992, the association founded in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, was renamed the Indonesian Chinese Islamic Association (PITI). Now, the organization has spread to almost all regions and districts in West Kalimantan. Among them, PITI in Singkawang is the most active, carrying out social activities that strengthen Chinese Muslim identity. They are also a symbol of the presence and recognition of the existence of Chinese Muslims in Singkawang (Kominfo. 2022). In general, PITI plays a role as an originator of identity and the maintenance of Chinese Muslim identity in West Kalimantan, rather than simply being part of efforts to assimilate Chinese people into the Islamic religion. Through PITI, a new identity has been constructed as a Chinese Muslim, namely a person who meets the criteria of being Chinese descent and Muslim.

²⁵ Vinson H. Sutlive Jr, *The Iban of Sarawak: Chronicle of a Vanishing World* (Waveland Press, 1978).

²⁶ Victor T. King, "A Question of Identity: Names, Societies, and Ethnic Groups in Interior Kalimantan and Brunei Darussalam," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 16, no. 1 (2001): 1–36, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41057049>.

After categorizing the Chinese community in West Kalimantan, the second stage will describe how Chinese Muslims accept and apply this new identity. After changing their identity to become Muslim Chinese, the Chinese faced various challenges. The social identification that exists within the Chinese Muslim community can be seen through new practices such as belonging to the ethnic identity of origin, physical appearance, traditional practices, and names for individuals who become Muslims.

Socially, Chinese Muslims have faced particular difficulties in reconstructing their identity as 'Chinese Muslims' precisely because various historical and political factors during the New Order era have created negative sentiments in local society towards the Chinese community. However, the Chinese Muslim community in West Kalimantan is trying to strengthen its identity through the PITI organization, which is an umbrella organization for Chinese Muslim identity. Through this organization, they have presented themselves as different from non-Muslim Chinese and Malays and have built mosques that display symbols of their identity. In the capital of West Kalimantan province, Pontianak, two mosques were built as symbols of Chinese Muslim identity, apart from being places of worship: the PITI Mosque on Jalan Tanjungpura and the Cheng Ho Mosque in Siantan, which was built in 2019. Cheng Ho Mosque instead became the Islamic Centre in Pontianak. The mosque is now a place of worship for all Muslims, regardless of ethnic origin. This mosque was not only owned by its founding community (Chinese) but also demonstrated its acceptance of Chinese Muslims.

Chinese people who convert to Islam are faced with two choices: keep their old name or change to a new name. This choice is linked to their identity. The table below shows this.

Table 1. List of Muslim Chinese names sample

| No | Nama Lama | Nama Baru |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Li Khiun/A Khiun | Muhammad Nur |
| 2 | Tan Bun Seng/ Buntoro Tempong | Muhammad Buntoro Tempong |
| 3 | Ahi Sutrisno | Akhi Sutrisno |

| No | Nama Lama | Nama Baru |
|----|-----------------|------------------------|
| | A Ton/Anton | Anton |
| 4 | Ahwad / Susanto | Muhammad Ilham Wahyudi |

Source: Interview and Data Documenter 2022.

The examples of names chosen by Chinese Muslims in West Kalimantan in Table 1 above confirm the two variations noted.²⁷ For example, the change of the name Li Khiun to Muhammad Nur does not contain elements of the original Chinese name, and the name Tan Bun Seng (Chinese name) or Buntoro Tembong to Muhammad Buntoro Tembong is a variation in the category of combining Islamic and Chinese names. The name Buntoro Tembong is the Indonesian name that replaced his Chinese name after the implementation of Ampera Cabinet Presidium Decree Number 127 of 1966. In this case, the term Bun, included in the original name, is retained. The feature of retaining some Chinese words when changing names applies to non-Muslim Chinese and Muslim Chinese. This case is the same as the name changes of non-Muslim Chinese reported by Suharyo.²⁸ In his study, Chinese names such as Tan Hay Djang, when changed to Indonesian names, become Ferry Tanudjaja (Tan is retained in the Indonesian name).

The Chinese Muslim informants interviewed did not explicitly state matters relating to social comparison, namely comparing with outside groups, but social comparison did apply to non-Islamic Chinese communities. In another sense, after having a new identity, this group tries to differentiate themselves from non-Muslim Chinese by abandoning their original Chinese practices. The most prominent aspects are life practices and culture. According to the informant, in the early stages of their conversion to Islam, they still celebrated the Chinese New Year and visited

²⁷ Johny Alfian Khusyairi and Muhammad Nurdin Razak, *Akulturasi Ala Cina Muslim di Surabaya* (Surabaya: UNIVERSITAS AIRLANGGA, 2005).

²⁸ Suharyo Suharyo, "Pola Nama Masyarakat Keturunan Tionghoa," *HUMANIKA* 18, no. 2 (July 13, 2013), <https://ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/humanika/article/view/5952>.

their relatives' homes during the celebrations. However, they are increasingly abandoning this celebration after being Muslims for a long time and feeling like they are part of the Malay people, even though they are no longer referred to as "Masuk Malay."

In this case, it does not mean they are distanced from Malays. The actual situation is still the same as before. Those Chinese who embraced Islam were still considered the same as the Malays or close to the Malays.

From outside informants, especially from Chinese family groups and colleagues, sometimes there is still a little problem in accepting the Chinese Muslim identity. For example, there was a perception that Chinese Muslims were no longer part of them. However, this was not considered a big problem for the informants. They admitted that since deciding to convert to Islam, they had taken into account all the possibilities that would happen. Several more examples show that the family has accepted some of them. The relationship he has with his family is still the same as before the religious conversion took place.

Apart from his determination for this new identity, a Chinese Muslim informant revealed that his family now accepted his new identity. He has become his mother's life support even though he does not share her religion. As several previous researchers found, the mother and some of the siblings depend on him for life, without social barriers.²⁹ This occurred because the economic situation became strong after embracing Islam, and he could support his family.

Mayor of Singkawang (2017-2022) Tjhai Chui Mie, a Chinese woman, acknowledged the existence of Haji Aman. The culinary business of the Chairman of PITI Singkawang, Bakmie Kering Haji Aman, was promoted by Thjai Chui Mei to Muslims who came to Singkawang. Haji Aman himself admitted that he was often involved in government and religious meetings. He is also

²⁹ Gintari, Rivaie, and Supriadi, "Adaptasi Sosial Tionghoa Muslim Dengan Keluarga Non Muslim (Studi Keluarga Tionghoa Muslim Di Kecamatan Singkawang Barat)."

involved in resolving socio-religious societal problems through the police, the ministry of religion, and the city government.

This situation reflects that the presence of Chinese Muslim identity has been accepted and acknowledged, and its social liaison role has been implemented. So, it is no longer pseudo.

Conclusion

The term "Chinese Muslim/Chinese Muslim" is an identity constructed institutionally by PITI so that religious elements are reflected in the new labeling of Chinese ethnicity. This identity is used as a social communication strategy to get closer to the two ethnic groups, namely the Malay and Chinese ethnic groups. In terms of social identification, although the Chinese consider their ethnic group who converted to Islam to have "become Malay," the concept of "entering Malay" is not like the concept of "Dayak entering Malay." They have not lost China and still tend to maintain their Chinese cultural identity through symbolism as Chinese Muslims.

In social comparison, the most prominent aspect is realizing a new identity different from the non-Muslim Chinese identity. However, this new identity was chosen as a bridge to dilute the situation of ethnic polarization in West Kalimantan. While the boundaries between Malays and Chinese are apparent, the presence of Chinese Muslims blurs these boundaries by presenting a space of religious equality with ethnic Malays and a space of ethnic equality with ethnic Chinese. This identity means they can still "enter" these two groups, compared to previously only entering one group. So, by taking the example of the Chinese Muslim community in West Kalimantan today, we are shown that multiculturalism in society is genuine and practiced, not pseudo-multiculturalism.

This study suggests that further research be carried out to obtain more data about the Chinese Muslim community in West Kalimantan. There are still many unknown aspects, such as trust and psychological and social aspects. These aspects are important to understand in this community and the overall ethnic dynamics

in West Kalimantan. This knowledge will also erase the stigma that has existed towards Chinese and Chinese Muslims.

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