

URBAN CHINESE MUSLIMS AND STATE POLITICS A Historical Analysis of Chinese Muslim Citizenship in the New Order Era

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Abstract: This study departs from two questions: 1) how did state-controlled politics in Indonesia's New Order era influence the negotiation of religious identities among urban Chinese Muslims, and 2) how was the concept of citizenship defined and redefined within this religious and political context? From those questions, this study delves into the interplay between urban Chinese Muslims, state politics, and the concept of citizenship in Indonesia. Using a historical method and sampling of Chinese Muslims in Jakarta this article highlights the experiences of urban Chinese Muslims that are affected by restrictions on their rights as citizens, including political aspirations, and reveals the dynamics shaping the relationship between Islam and state politics in urban areas. The response of Chinese Muslims in Jakarta during the New Order period can be an important contribution to the national narrative and the enduring legacy of the country's politics on religious identity and citizenship in contemporary Indonesia.

Keywords: Urban Chinese Muslims, Citizenship, New Order, State Politics, Religious Identity.

Introduction

In the annals of Indonesia's history, the New Order era stands as a pivotal epoch marked by political dominance. This political dominance can be seen from the treatment of the New Order government on the majority (Muslim) and minority groups, especially the ethnic Chinese. The political dominance of Muslim groups, according to Robinson,¹

¹ Kathryn Robinson, "Citizenship, Identity, and Difference in Indonesia," *RIMA: Review of Indonesia and Malaysian Affairs* 48, no. 1 (2014): 5–34.

arose from the New Order government's choice to repress and not involve Muslims in political participation. This repression and non-accommodating attitude or the de-politization of Islam can be seen in several policies taken by the New Order government. According to Hakim², this attitude reached its peak when it got rid of the Masyumi people and merged all existing Islamic political parties into the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan/PPP) in 1973 and oblige all political parties and mass organizations to adopt Pancasila as the *asas tunggal* (the sole principle) by 1985. In return, the government then provided facilities (public institutions of Islamic religious education and mosques) and provided space for various religious performances, such as *Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an*. The political dominance of ethnic Chinese can be seen from the prohibition of them from entering and engaging in politics. Instead, the government provides convenience to them on the economic side with the existence of the Foreign Investment Law (UUPMA) and the Domestic Investment Law (UUPMDN). In both laws, there is an exemption from the imposition of wealth tax on ethnic Chinese.³

This politics of domination later became the background of the social and cultural transformation of society in that period. One of them is the establishment of contours of citizenship society, especially the ethnic Chinese. This contour of Chinese citizenship is constructed by several policies: Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 on the main policy relating to citizens of foreign (Chinese) descent; Cabinet Presidium Instruction No. 37/U/In/6/1967 on the main policy of Chinese settlement⁴; Presidential Instruction No.2/1980; and Presidential Decree No. 13/1980 on the citizenship of foreigners. As a result, according to Mustaqfirin and Kodiran,⁵ these policies made many foreign Chinese requests to become Indonesian citizens.

These policies related specifically to ethnic Chinese were then accompanied by efforts at assimilation and national integration carried

² Masykur Hakim, "Soeharto and The Politicization of Indonesian Islam (1968-1998)," *Journal of Indonesia Islam* 10, no. 02 (2016): 159–180.

³ Yusu Liem, *Prasangka Terhadap Etnis Cina Sebuah Intisari* (Jakarta: Djambatan dan Pena Klasik, 2000).

⁴ Justian Suhandinata, *WNI Keturunan Tionjhoa Dalam Stabilitas Ekonomi & Politik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009).

⁵ Mustaqfirin and Kodiran, "Asimilasi Etnis Tionghoa Indonesia Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Integrasi Nasional (Studi Di Kota Tanjungbalai Provinsi Sumatera Utara)," *Jurnal Ketahanan Nasional* XVII, no. 1 (2012).

out by the New Order government. Starting from the banning of Chinese-language newspapers, the freezing of Chinese schools, the replacement of national private schools, the ban on the use of the Chinese language, and the enactment of a policy of religious conversion. Although they successfully turned to business and economic sectors,⁶ these efforts then have an impact on the search for citizenship identity of Chinese people, especially in urban Chinese Muslim communities in various cities in Indonesia. The urban Chinese Muslim community is becoming an important entity in terms of civic identity in Indonesia. This is related to the discriminatory treatment carried out by the New Order government against them even though the community has followed the assimilation process launched by the New Order government, such as changing the status of religion.

Based on the above background, there are two main questions in this research: 1) how did state-controlled politics in Indonesia's New Order era influence the negotiation of religious identities among urban Chinese Muslims, and 2) how was the concept of citizenship defined and redefined within this religious and political context? To answer those questions, this research draws from an examination of historical records, policy shifts, and the movements within the urban Chinese Muslim community in Jakarta to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between Islam and state politics. The analysis in this study concerns three things that constitute the three defining characteristics of the concept of citizenship: 1) citizen rights, 2) recognition of social identity, and 3) political participation. These three things are sought from empirical experience from the urban Chinese Muslim community in Jakarta. Starting from how the community realizes the rights of citizens, such as health, human rights, and others, the role of the community in society, and the attitude of the community when participating in public life in Indonesia. This analysis not only endeavors to uncover the multifaceted negotiations of religious identity within the framework of state-controlled politics but also to offer insights into the broader dynamics that shaped the role of urban Chinese Muslims in the political and social fabric of Indonesia.

⁶ M Iqbal, M Mujib, and Yuliannova Lestari, "Does Omnibus Law Affect the Indonesian Investment Regulations towards Chinese Investors?," *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Konstitusi* (2022): 179–197.

Through this historical lens, the study aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the intersections between urban Chinese Muslims and state politics, particularly in the context of citizenship, during a transformative period in Indonesia's history. In addition, the research aims to unravel the historical nuances surrounding the negotiation of religious identities among urban Chinese Muslims and the concurrent evolution of the concept of citizenship. The importance of this research lies in its contribution to a broader understanding of the historical relationship between urban Chinese Muslims and state politics, particularly in the context of citizenship and religious identity, during important periods in Indonesian history. In addition, the study finds its urgency in explaining the historical factors that shaped urban Chinese Muslims within the political domination framework of the New Order era.

History of Chinese Citizenship in Postcolonial Indonesia

The study of citizenship in the postcolonial period in Indonesia can be seen in several works, including a book entitled, "Citizenship in Indonesia: The Struggle for Rights, Identity, and Participation" edited by Ward Berenschot & Gerry van Klinken and published in 2019. The book describes the daily practices and interactions between the state and citizens. The book contributes in terms of identifying new forms of citizenship that emerged in Indonesia in the postcolonial period.⁷ Citizenship itself according to Hannah Arendt is the right to have rights.⁸ According to Janoski,⁹ this concept speaks of the passive and active membership of an individual in a nation-state with universal rights and obligations. More simply, this concept relates to the ways citizens interact with state institutions or relationships between a

⁷ Ward Berenschot and Gerry van Klinken, eds., *Citizenship in Indonesia: Perjuangan Atas Hak, Identitas, Dan Partisipasi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia-KITLV Leiden, 2019).

⁸ Margaret Somers, "Utopianism and the Reality of Society: Decoding Polanyi's Socialism, Freedom, and the Alchemy of Misrecognition," in *Karl Polanyi and Freedom*, ed. Michael Brie and Claus Thomasberger (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2018), 91–109.

⁹ Thomas Janoski, *Citizenship and Civil Society: A Framework of Rights and Obligation in Liberal, Tradition, and Social Democratic Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

person and the political community which are characterized by the rights and obligations of each party.¹⁰

The second is a book section titled, “Cosmopolitan Islam and Inclusive Chineseness: Chinese-style Mosques in Indonesia” by Hew Wai Weng. In that book section, the author concluded that Chinese-style mosques in Indonesia have become a trend for negotiating Chinese Muslim identities in Indonesia. This book provides a study of the relationship between the mosque and the state. How the mosque became a tool for mitigation and protection of anti-Chinese stigma¹¹. The third is an article entitled, “The Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and Malaysia: The Challenge of Political Islam” by James Chin and Taufiq Tanasaldy, 2019. This article explains how the Chinese community is under threat when it comes to the fulfillment of political rights. This is due to institutional frameworks and political Islam.¹² This study provides preliminary knowledge of the interaction of the Chinese community and their political rights.

The contours of Chinese citizenship during the New Order period can be drawn from the Old Order period. In 1946, President Sukarno issued a law on citizenship against the Chinese. The regulation was issued as a response of the Old Order government to people's doubts about the Chinese in Indonesia's nationalism. This rule became known as the Citizenship Law based on *Jus Soli* and the passive system.¹³ The principle of Citizenship usually consists of two principles, 1) *Jus Soli* which means the principle on which a person can become a citizen because he was born in that country, and 2) *Jus Sanguinis* which means the principle on which a person can become a citizen because of his lineage alone.¹⁴

The Citizenship Law then has an impact on automatically Chinese people born in Indonesia becoming Indonesian citizens. This policy changed after the *Dwi* (Double) Citizenship Agreement between

¹⁰ Berenschot and Klinken, *Citizenship in Indonesia: Perjuangan Atas Hak, Identitas, Dan Partisipasi*.

¹¹ Hew Wei Weng, “Cosmopolitan Islam and Inclusive Chineseness: Chinese-Style Mosques in Indonesia,” in *Religious Pluralism, State and Society in Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹² James Chin and Taufiq Tanasaldy, “The Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and Malaysia: The Challenge of Political Islam,” *Asian Survey* 59, no. 6 (2019): 959–977.

¹³ Gautama, *Warga Negara Dan Orang Asing Berikut 42 Aturan Dan Contoh* (Bandung: Alumni, 1975).

¹⁴ Leo Suryadinata, *Dilema Minoritas Tionghoa* (Jakarta: Grafiti Press, 1984).

Indonesia and the People's Republic of China on April 22, 1955. The agreement known as the Sunario-Chou En Lai Agreement was established in 1960.¹⁵ This agreement later inspired the Old Order government to issue a policy of assimilation and integration.

The assimilation policy then made the way of the Chinese people to be considered Indonesian citizens begin to tread sharp gravel. This was due to the issuance of a name-change policy for ethnic Chinese in 1961. This renaming process can be said to be complicated because of the long process. The process starts with having to report to the court and ends with announcing the name change in the State Gazette.¹⁶ The length and complexity of the process, made this assimilation policy met with the emergence of integration issues. Instead of merging the concept of assimilation, adjustment which is the main concept of integration is considered a better way.

This integration concept then received support from President Soekarno. One of them was Sukarno's support for the Baperki and LPKB organizations. These organizations work to assist the government in matters of choice of assimilation or integration of Chinese society. All efforts made by the Old Order Government, especially those related to the integration process of Chinese society then fell apart when the rise of the New Order Government under President Suharto.

Assimilation then turned into total assimilation during the New Order period. The process of changing the name for ethnic Chinese was made easier through the Presidential Decree in 1966. In the Presidential Decree, Chinese people only need to go to the district office or mayor to change their name.¹⁷ This discriminatory assimilation policy culminated when on December 6, 1967, President Suharto issued Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 concerning Chinese religion, beliefs, and customs.¹⁸ The essence of the presidential instruction is the prohibition of all matters related to the Chinese state. One of them is the banning of Chinese New Year celebrations and the banning of Chinese-language newspapers.

¹⁵ Gautama, *Warga Negara Dan Orang Asing Berikut 42 Aturan Dan Contoh*.

¹⁶ Benny G Setiono, *Tionghoa Dalam Pusaran Politik* (Jakarta: Elkasa, 2005).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Stuart W Grief, *WNI Problematik Orang Indonesia Asal China* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1991).

The existence of assimilation policies and the poor sentiment of Indonesian people toward ethnic Chinese made many Chinese people who then in various ways choose to blend in with society. One example is the declaration of loyalty of the Chinese people to the Republic of Indonesia. The declaration of allegiance occurred in several places; 1) On April 2, 1966 there were about 20,000 ethnic Chinese in Medan declared their allegiance by protesting in front of the consulate of the People's Republic of China (PRC). They protested against Peking radio broadcasts and demanded a break in diplomatic ties with the Chinese state. 2) On April 15, 1966, as many as 50,000 ethnic Chinese in Jakarta gathered at Banteng Square to declare their loyalty to the Republic of Indonesia. Their loyalty was then proven by condemning the PRC's actions that interfered with Indonesia's internal affairs and calling for breaking diplomatic relations with the PRC.¹⁹

The declaration of loyalty made by ethnic Chinese in Indonesia is one of the efforts among other efforts made by ethnic Chinese in seeking their form of citizenship. Other efforts include changing names, communicating with their respective regional languages, to embracing other religions, such as Islam.

The Background of the Character of Citizenship in Indonesia

According to Gerry van Klinken,²⁰ three main things need to be considered to unravel the history of citizenship in postcolonial Indonesia. First, the character of citizenship in Indonesia today must be seen as part of the outcome of the process of forming the Indonesian state. A process that then hinders the emergence of impersonal bureaucracies bound by rules. The main cause is the feudalistic nature that emerged since the time of the pre-colonial kingdoms and sultanates. In the view of Henk Schulte Nordholt,²¹ this feudalistic nature then gives rise to an exchange that is personal and clientelistic to maintain power. This feudalistic nature was then developed by the colonial government until it settled and took root

¹⁹ Setiono, *Tionghoa Dalam Pusaran Politik*.

²⁰ Gerry van Klinken, "Demokrasi Patronase Indonesia Di Tingkat Provincial," in *Merancang Arab Baru Demokrasi*, ed. A.E. Priyono and Usman Hamid (Jakarta: Public Virtue Institute dan Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2014), 225–255.

²¹ Henk Schulte Nordholt, "From Contest State to Patronage Democracy: The Longue Durée of Clientelism in Indonesia," in *Environment, Trade and Society in Southeast Asia. A Longue Durée Perspective*, ed. David Henley and Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: BRILL/KITLV, 2015), 166–180.

during the New Order government. This historical point of view is the first thing that must be seen to analyze the character of citizenship in Indonesia. This is because the current citizenship policy in Indonesia is the result of a process that runs from time to time.

Second, the democratic processes that emerged during the reform period failed to strengthen the regulatory and regulatory capacity of state institutions. This happens because democratization goes hand in hand with decentralization. This decentralization was then successfully exploited by local elites to maintain and expand their power. A common way that these local elites do this is to tailor the implementation of state policies and laws to suit their needs.²² This is the cause of the government's inability to carry out autonomous actions. Even according to Dirk Tomsa, the exploitation of authority by local elites will be difficult to eradicate because it then becomes a consequence of intra-elite competition.²³ This political perspective is the next important thing to analyze the character of citizenship in Indonesia.

Third, the high economy of the informal sector in Indonesia. According to John Angelini and Kenichi Hirose,²⁴ more than half of urban workers are informal workers, and the figure for the trade and agriculture sectors is above 80%. One of the biggest challenges of this type of work is the difficulty of seeking legal protection when in trouble. Ultimately, they rely on practical political intermediaries and kinship (ethnic) networks. These three things will be a background for how the character of citizenship in Indonesia continues to be defined in each period.

One period that later became important for defining civic character was the New Order period. The New Order government is known as a period in which citizens' rights were restricted and identity-based politics was suppressed.²⁵ In this atmosphere of discrimination, the New Order government can be said to have succeeded in

²² Vedi Hadiz, *Localising Power in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asia Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Edward Aspinall and Gerry van Klinken, "The State and Illegality in Indonesia," in *The State and Illegality in Indonesia*, ed. Edward Aspinall and Gerry van Klinken (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), 1–28.

²³ Dirk Tomsa, "Local Politics and Corruption in Indonesia's Outer Islands," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 171, no. 2–3 (2015): 196–219.

²⁴ John Angelini and Kenichi Hirose, *Extension of Social Security Coverage for the Informal Economy in Indonesia: Surveys in the Urban and Rural Informal Economy* (Manila, 2004).

²⁵ Robinson, "Citizenship, Identity, and Difference in Indonesia."

improving the ability of rules and regulations of a country to regulate its society. However, instead of being used for the common good, the bureaucracy was then used for the personal benefit of President Suharto and his government. This makes political interference in the bureaucratic process natural. As a result, citizens who are labeled "disloyal" will easily be inhibited and cut off from access, either to public services or career opportunities.²⁶ One example of discriminatory state treatment of citizens is the New Order government's treatment of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.

Rights, Social Identities, and Political Participation of Chinese Muslims in Jakarta

According to Leo Suryadinata, ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are divided into three major groups: locally-born Indonesian-speaking *Peranakans*, foreign-born, and local-born Chinese-speaking *Totoks*. In the realm of religion, the Chinese in Indonesia embraced Christianity and Islam in addition to Buddhists and Confucianists. Politically, Chinese ethnicity is divided into four groups: pro-Jakarta, pro-Beijing, pro-Taipei, and non-committed.²⁷ This Chinese ethnic heterogeneity proves that a comprehensive study is needed to be able to determine the contours of Chinese citizenship in Indonesia, especially the Chinese Muslim community.

There are three aspects to be able to see the contours of citizenship of the Chinese Muslim community in Indonesia, especially during the New Order period: 1) their rights as citizens, 2) their social identity, and 3) their political participation. In general, the rights of the Chinese community were restricted during the New Order period. This is marked by the ban on Chinese Schools, teaching of Mandarin, Chinese Publications, the banning of Confucianism, public exhibitions of Chinese culture, and the obligation to adopt Indonesian-style names. This restriction also subsequently impacted the rights of the Chinese community relating to public services. One example is the difficulty of Chinese people to enter state universities and work in public services.²⁸ In addition, according to Ubaedillah, this restriction also has an impact on the lack of ethnic Chinese representation in

²⁶ Hans Antlov, *Village Leaders and the New Order* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1994).

²⁷ Leo Suryadinata, *Kebudayaan Minoritas Tionghoa Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1988).

²⁸ Leo Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesian, the Chinese Minority and China: A Study of Perceptions and Policies* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2005).

Indonesia's modern history, more specifically in Indonesian National History books and history textbooks in schools and Islamic universities.²⁹ These discriminatory practices against ethnic Chinese then escalated when enshrined in formal regulations. This discriminatory formality of rules then makes it more difficult for Chinese people to obtain their rights as citizens. One of them is what happened to the Chinese Muslim community.

Talking about Chinese Muslims during the New Order era, the study will not be far from the work of the Indonesian Chinese Islamic Union or PITI (Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia). PITI was established on April 14, 1961, in Jakarta. This organization is a merger of two Chinese Muslim organizations that existed before, namely the Chinese Islamic Union or PIT (Persatuan Islam Tionghoa) and the Chinese Muslim Union or PTM (Persatuan Tionghoa Muslim). The main objective of this organization was to form an Islamic society in the framework of nation-building by the ideals of the Indonesian Revolution.³⁰

In its footsteps, PITI can be said to be forced to choose intermingling or assimilation activities. This is driven by the government's desire to make PITI a forum for intermingling. The government's mission was seen when it included elements of the military (Army) in the PITI management structure. In the management of PITI in 1967-1969 there were two people from military elements, namely: Lieutenant General H. Sudirman as a supervisor and Major H.M. Djohansyah as Secretary General.³¹ The involvement of military elements in PITI makes the activities of this organization tend to be more manageable, directed, and controlled.

The accommodating nature of PITI can be seen from the policy choices taken, including 1) will not build their mosque, da'wa will be carried out together with the Islamic community or Muslims in general, and efforts to direct Chinese descendants to assimilate and live as one with the majority natives.³² These policies show how PITI negotiated with the domination politics of the New Order

²⁹ Achmad Ubaedillah, "The Minority and the State: Chinese Muslims in the Modern History of Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ab* 61, no. 1 (2023): 107–136.

³⁰ Abdul Karim Oey, *Mengabdikan Agama, Nusa, Dan Bangsa: Sababat Karib Bung Karno* (Jakarta: PT Gunung Agung, 1982).

³¹ Dewan Pimpinan Pusat PITI, *AD/ART PITI* (Jakarta: PITI, 1963).

³² Oey, *Mengabdikan Agama, Nusa, Dan Bangsa: Sababat Karib Bung Karno*.

government. Many rights are violated, but the survival of the organization is the main goal.

The organization was disbanded on December 5, 1972, due to a government ban through the Attorney General's Office on the use of Chinese words in the organization's name. The ban stems from PITI's request for permission from the Minister of Religious Affairs, Mukti Ali, to release the Qur'an and a Chinese-language da'wah magazine. The purpose of publishing the Chinese Qur'an is so that Chinese people can learn the Qur'an easily. This ban shows that there was still discrimination in the fulfillment of the rights of the Chinese Muslim community in Indonesia during the New Order era.

Figure 1. PITI emblem with round shape



Figure 2. PITI emblem with 5 angles shape



Source: Nia Paramita Tendean, "Pembina Iman Tauhid Islam (PITI)"³³

The name of this organization was later changed from Indonesian Chinese Islamic Union or PITI (Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia) to Islamic Tawhid Faith Builder or PITI (Pembina Iman Tawhid Islam) on December 15, 1972. The objectives of the Islamic Tawhid Faith Builder organization are then adjusted to the goals of the government. This can be seen in the explanation of this organization which states that in addition to aiming to implement *Syiar Islamiyah* in a broad sense, it also aims to participate in government programs in its efforts to develop Indonesian people as a whole, in particular accelerating the process of assimilation and development for the sake of national unity and unity.³⁴ PITI's participation in these government

³³ Nia Paramita Tendean, "Pembina Iman Tauhid Islam (PITI) Sebagai Salah Satu Wadah Asimilasi Etnis Tionghoa Di Indonesia (1972-1987)" (Universitas Indonesia, 2010).

³⁴ Dewan Pimpinan Pusat PITI, *Surat Penjelasan Mengenai Organisasi PITI* (Jakarta, 1984).

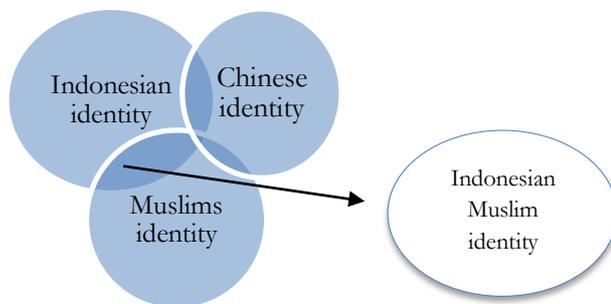
programs shows how the New Order government controlled Islamic organizations.

The New Order government's penetration of this organization deepened. This can be seen from the change in the emblem of the organization. The shape of the organization's emblem became five-pointed from the beginning of the round shape.

This change shows the existence of Pancasila as an organizational principle. The existence of Pancasila as a principle also can be seen in AD / ART PITI in 1980. In the AD/ART it is written that in addition to the Qur'an and Sunnah, the PITI organization is also based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that ethnic Chinese Muslims in Jakarta can be said not to accept the rights of citizens as a whole. This was due to the desire of the New Order Government to carry out the total assimilation of ethnic Chinese into indigenous society. This led to a change in the form of Chinese ethnic citizenship because they were forced to leave their total Chinese identity and switch to Indonesian identity. One of the ways of assimilation that later emerged was converting to Islam.

Figure 3. Forms of negotiation of Chinese Muslim citizenship in the New Order Period



From the picture above, it can be seen that there is a negotiation between the identity of the origin or Chinese identity with the Indonesian identity and the identity of Muslims in the New Order period. In the case of Chinese Muslims in Jakarta during the New Order era, the identity that later strengthened was the identity of Indonesian Muslims, not the identity of Indonesian Chinese Muslims.

Although converting to Islam is one of the best ways to be considered assimilated, data shows that the number of ethnic Chinese

who converted to Islam during the New Order period cannot be said to have increased significantly, especially after the G30/S events. This can be seen from the following data table.

Table 1. Number of Ethnic Chinese People in Indonesia who converted to Islam (1965-1978)³⁵

Year	Man	Woman	Amount
1965	22	8	30
1966	1	1	2
1967	7	3	10
1968	4	2	6
1969	1	2	3
1970	4	1	5
1971	2	-	2
1972	4	-	4
1973	1	-	1
1974	3	-	3
1975	7	2	9
1976	3	1	4
1977	6	-	6
1978	7	2	9
Numbers dating from unknown years			28
Amount			119

In the political sphere, the Chinese people in Indonesia can be said to be very limited in being able to participate. This can be seen from the dissolution of Baperki. Baperki (the Consultative Body of Indonesia Citizenship) is the most important socio-political organization of Chinese society since the time of President Sukarno. The dissolution of Baperki received the support of the Indonesian people for several reasons. First, the organization is considered to be affiliated with the left or communist ideology. The relationship between China and the communist ideology voiced by the government has an impact on people's actions. This can be seen from Matthew Woolgar's research. In his research, Woolgar found that in West Java province, anti-communist forces made the region the center of anti-Chinese agitation in 1959-60 and 1963.³⁶ In addition, Baperki is also

³⁵ Arsip DPP PITI Jakarta Retrieved January 14, 2024

³⁶ Matthew Woolgar, "Ethnic Politics, the ColdWar and Sub-National Dynamics: The Indonesian Communist Party, the Ethnic Chinese Minority and Anti-Chinese Activities in West Java, 1949-67," *Modern Asian Studies* 57, no. 6 (2023): 1959-1983.

considered an organization that represents China's interests in Indonesia. Therefore, the Indonesian people consider Baperki to be a supporter of communion and responsible for the G30S/PKI event.³⁷ Unlike Baperki, the National Unity Development Institute (LPKB) is maintained. The institution, which is also affiliated with ethnic Chinese, was not disbanded because it was considered to support government policies towards ethnic Chinese and had a major role in the intermingling of Chinese society. In addition, the institution also condemned the September G30 events. The use of hatred through this organization shows that the New Order government is trying to maintain polarization among the people. This is in line with Soderborg and Muhtadi's research which analyzes political affiliation and hatred in maintaining polarization in the present.³⁸ According to the two cases above, to be able to participate in the political field, the Chinese community in Indonesia must have the same vision and action as the government.

The process of total assimilation of ethnic Chinese, especially Chinese Muslims in Jakarta in the New Order period that gave rise to a new identity called Indonesian Muslim did not continue to the identity of the Chinese Muslim community in that place now. This new identity cannot be separated from the identity and social work of Haji Abdul Karim Oei and *Yayasan Haji Karim Oei* (YHKO) who live in Jakarta, especially in Sawah Besar.

Haji Abdul Karim Oei is a former member of the Indonesian Parliament, a Chinese Muslim figure who joined the Muhammadiyah organization, and a founder of the Chinese-Indonesian Islamic Union organization (PITI). YHKO is a foundation founded on April 9, 1991, by Junus Jahja with the joint ideas of several figures from other Indonesia Muslim organizations, such as *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), Muhammadiyah, Al-Wasliyah, Islamic Student Association Alumni Corps (KAHMI), Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), and Muslims of Chinese descent. This foundation aims to improve Islamic proselytizing and as a center for Islamic information, especially among ethnic Chinese.³⁹ The foundation has two distinctive

³⁷ Grief, *WNI Problematik Orang Indonesia Asal China*.

³⁸ Seth Soderborg and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Resentment and Polarization in Indonesia," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 23, no. 3 (2023): 439–467.

³⁹ Junus Jahja, *Muslim Tionghoa. Kumpulan Karangan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Haji Karim Oei, 1996).

traits or identities. First, it has a strong sense of brotherhood among Muslims. An identity that later became one of the foundations of all YHKO activities. Second, love for Indonesia. These two characteristics are then manifested in the activities carried out by YHKO.

Since its inception, the main focus of YHKO has been intermingling with others, especially with local people. This can be seen from the figures involved in its establishment, ranging from NU figures, Muhammadiyah, to academics. In addition, its establishment also received the blessing of the Minister of Religious Affairs at that time, Munawir Sjadzali, and was inaugurated by B.J. Habibie.

The choice of the name of the institution is another important thing concerning the blending strategy carried out by Haji Karim Oei Foundation (YHKO). The emergence of Oei's name in the name of the foundation became a wise strategy. In addition, naming the mosque with the name Laotze is also an accurate strategy. The emergence of these Chinese identities is a good strategy to be able to blend in a society dominated by Chinese citizens. The Sawah Besar area, especially in the Chinatown area, is an area dominated by Chinese residents. In addition, the area also has many temples; Venuvana Vihara, Single Dharma Vihara, Tri Ratna Vihara, and Graha Laotze Vihara. This strategy according to Zuhri, et.al. shows that Chinese Muslims try to position the Chinese ethnicity as a cultural entity, not as a representative of other nations. A successful strategy in contextualizing the concept of nationalism.⁴⁰

Intermingling with local people is also carried out with the selection of architectural forms and designs for the Laotze Mosque. The mosque, which is the center of proselytizing from YHKO, is dominated by red and yellow colors. Color combinations are commonly found in temple buildings. In addition, there are many lanterns attached to the ceiling of the building. The walls are also decorated with Shu Fa-style Arabic calligraphy or Chinese calligraphy. A calligraphic shape that only accentuates the results of brushwork with black ink on a piece of white cloth and a red wooden frame. This mosque is also without the presence of beds, domes, and minarets. All

⁴⁰ Achmad Muhibin Zuhri, Winarto Wahyudi, and Abdulloh Hamid, "Chinese Muslims' Ways of Being Nationalist: Combining Islamic Cosmopolitanism, Acculturation and Social Roles," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 9, no. 2 (2021).

of these things are part of an intermingling strategy aimed at making Chinese people who come to the mosque not feel unfamiliar. An affinity is caused by the many shades of Chinese culture that they are used to daily.

The blending strategy is also motivated by the setting of the place. YHKO is located in Chinatown, Sawah Besar, Jakarta, Indonesia. This area, besides being famous as a village for ethnic Chinese people, also has a fairly high diversity of religious believers. This can be seen from the following data.

Table 2. Percentage of Religious Believers in Sawah Besar District⁴¹

No	Religion	Total (+-)	Percentage
1.	Islam	77.785	60,85
2.	Protestantism	22.485	17,59
3.	Catholicism	10.967	8,58
4.	Buddhism	15.723	12,3
5.	Hinduism	818	0,64
6.	Confucianism	51	0,04
Total		127.829	100

From the data above, it can be seen that there are religious believers from 6 religions recognized by the government with high diversity. This is different from the data in Jakarta province as a whole. In Jakarta Province, Islam is the majority religion with the number of adherents of other religions not more than 20 percent of the total population of Jakarta. It can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. Percentage of Religious Believers in Jakarta Province (2021)⁴²

No	Religion	Total (+-)	Percentage
1.	Islam	9.425.575	83,81%
2.	Protestantism	963.190	8,56%
3.	Catholicism	438.128	3,90%
4.	Buddhism	396.906	3,53%
5.	Hinduism	20.343	0,18%
6.	Confucianism	1.665	0,01%
Total		11.245.807	100%

⁴¹ www.dukcapil.kemendagri.go.id retrieved October 3, 2022

⁴² <https://jakarta.bps.go.id/> retrieved February 17, 2023

In addition to religious believers, worship facilities in Chinatown, Sawah Besar, Jakarta also have a fairly even comparison between worship facilities and the number of religious believers. Although there are religions that do not have worship facilities or a percentage of worship facilities, the number of religious believers is still lacking. This comparison shows that there are facilities of worship that are quite representative in the number of their adherents. The number of worship facilities in Sawah Besar District can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. Number of Worship Facilities in Sawah Besar District⁴³

No	Worship Facilities	Number	Number of Adherents	Comparison of the number of worship facilities with the number of adherents
1.	Mosque and <i>Musala</i> (Islam)	46 + 62 (108)	77.785	1: 720
2.	Protestant church (Protestant)	43	22.485	1: 522
3.	Catholic church (Catholic)	1	10.967	1: 10.967
4.	Vihara (Buddha)	21	15.723	1: 748

The move to choose the Chinatown area, Sawah Besar, according to M. Ali Karim Oei when interviewed by Kumparan⁴⁴ is also based on providing an understanding of Islam directly to the majority Chinese region. This, according to M. Ali Karim Oei, is because many Chinese people still do not know about Islam. Islam is only known to be limited to not eating pigs and is linked to terrorism. In addition, the selection of the Chinatown area was also carried out to increase the potential for Chinese citizens to come directly.

⁴³ *Kecamatan Sawah Besar Dalam Angka* (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021).

⁴⁴ <https://kumparan.com/kumparannews>, “ali karim oei dakwah masjid lautze memberi contoh bukan ceramah.”

YHKO's mixing strategy is also supported by inclusive cultural proselytizing methods. One example is the non-abandonment of cultural elements of the local (Chinese) community on the condition that it does not deviate from *aqidah* (an Islamic term of Arabic origin that means "creed"). It is also called Islamic theology) such as the installation of lanterns or typical Chinese ornaments found in the Laotze Mosque. The cultural and inclusive approach to proselytizing can also be seen in the provision of opportunities for converts to become *imams* (one who leads Muslim worshippers in prayer), especially in *salat tarawih* (prayers performed on the eve of Ramadan after Isya prayers'). This is according to M. Ali Karim Oei, chairman of YHKO, in his interview with Kumparan,⁴⁵ aimed at learning. Learning to be a leader. The method of proselytizing is also aimed at motivating converts to become good followers of the Islamic religion. This inclusivity then became a characteristic of the Chinese Muslim community in various regions. In Yogyakarta, the Chinese Muslim community has made the vision of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* their vision of life, especially in the field of education⁴⁶ and according to Aripudin et.al., Chinese Muslims tend to be traditional-moderate. Their moderate attitude also appears in economy and cultural issue. Chinese culture is tolerant as Islam.⁴⁷

The model of proselytizing with a less rigorous approach in terms of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) was initiated by Naga Kusnadi. Naga Kusnadi when interviewed by TV One⁴⁸ said that there are not too many strict *fiqh* rules. The rules of *fiqh* or religious knowledge discussed are adapted to the conditions/culture of the Chinese people. Regarding the looseness of the *fiqh* rules in YHKO, according to Yusman Iriansyah, public relations officer of the Laotze Mosque, when interviewed by Kumparan⁴⁹ this is a policy owned by YHKO. This is

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Imam Machali et al., "Informal Islamic Education for Minority Muslims: Lessons from Chinese Ethnic Minority Muslims in Yogyakarta," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 2 (2023): 598–623.

⁴⁷ Acep Aripudin et al., "The Spiritual Experience of Chinese Muslim Minorities Post-1998 Reformation: A Study of Chinese Muslims Becoming Indonesians," *HTS Theologes Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022).

⁴⁸ "Liputan Khusus TV One: Masjid Lautze, Rumah Para Mualaf" (Indonesia: <https://www.youtube.com>, 2019).

⁴⁹ <https://kumparan.com/kumparannews>, "Menelusuri Jejak Muslim Tionghoa Di Indonesia."

because teaching Islam is a process. The thing that comes first is the strengthening of the obedience of the converts. In addition, another thing to pay attention to is performing piety. This, according to Hertzman, is part of the pedagogical process for the appropriateness of moral and social behavior in the context of religious Indonesia.⁵⁰

In addition to the internalization of Islamic values that are inward, an inclusive approach is also carried out in terms of selecting speakers. Instead of inviting speakers from their circles, YHKO often invites national figures to be speakers in their proselytizing activities. The openness of the proselytizing method is also aimed at providing facilities to people, especially ethnic Chinese, who want to convert to Islam. This activity centered on the procession of chanting the creed sentences witnessed by the foundation people and the making of the converts certificate.

In the case of the Chinese Muslim community in Sawah Besar, Jakarta, Indonesia, it can be seen that their identity is an identity that blends in with the surrounding community. Unlike in the New Order period which discarded all Chinese identity, today the Chinese identity is raised. The mixture of Chinese identity with Muslim identity and the surrounding community then makes the Chinese Muslim community in Jakarta able to live side by side with the surrounding community. This condition can also be seen in PITI in other areas, such as PITI in East Java. According to Mahfud et.al., PITI in this area also uses a cultural approach by taking into account their unique background to understand Islam and to blend with the surrounding community.⁵¹

Conclusion

The contours of ethnic Chinese Muslim citizenship in Indonesia in the New Order Period can be broken down in three major ways; 1) fulfillment of their rights as citizens, 2) social identity, and 3) political participation. The fulfillment of rights as ethnic Chinese/Chinese Muslim citizens can be said to be far from good. This can be seen from the restrictions. Starting from banning Chinese Schools, teaching Mandarin, Chinese Publications, and public exhibitions of Chinese

⁵⁰ Emily Zoe Hertzman, "Performing Piety in Public: Ethnic Politics and Interreligious Harmony in Indonesia," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 13, no. 3 (2023): 526–542.

⁵¹ Choirul Mahfud et al., "Islamic Law Practice among East Javanese Chinese Muslims; PITI's Contribution on Its Enforcement," *Al-Ibkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 1 (2024): 197–220.

culture, until the rules of renaming under the pretext of total assimilation. The far fulfillment of citizens' rights then affected the social identity of Chinese Muslims in Jakarta in the New Order Period. Their identity can be said to be influenced by The New Order government's policy of total assimilation. An identity that throws away their Chinese identity and gives rise to a new identity; a mixture of Islamic identity and Indonesian identity that is called the identity of Indonesian Muslims.

The far fulfillment of citizens' rights then also affected the political participation of the China Muslims in Jakarta. The organization formed can be said to be purely a da'wah social organization, namely PITI. The distribution of political aspirations is difficult, especially since these aspirations are contrary to the policies of the New Order government, as happened to Baperki. The response of the Chinese Muslims in Jakarta is to accept all rules because the most important thing is survival, da'wah, and organization. This attitude shows a compromise in the life of this community. This attitude then became a breath in this Chinese Muslim community in Jakarta until now. Today, through the Haji Karim Oei Foundation (YHKO), this breath manifests itself in a strategy to mix Muslim identity with the surrounding community identity (Chinese identity). This strategy made Chinese identity reappear and this strategy also made them able to coexist with the surrounding community. []

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