

Patterns of Chinese Muslim Theological Identity in the Kediri Residency in Post-Reformation

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Abstract: *This research examines the hidden intentions of Chinese Muslim diversity in the Kediri Residency. The Kediri Chinese Muslims are theologically unique in their social-religious affiliation and religious motives. This study aims to explore the religious practices of the Chinese Muslims in Kediri, their theological features, fiqh references, interpretations, and political affiliations so that the theological characteristics of Chinese Muslims can be identified clearly. This research uses Paul Ricoeur's Critical Phenomenology approach with reflective analysis as the main feature to dissect the intention of awareness of the direction of their religion. The result of this research is that the style of appreciation practiced by Chinese Ethnic Muslims is more directed toward the practical life of religion. PITI provides a space for community-based expression, while Cheng Ho symbolizes unifying the Chinese Muslim ethnicity in Kediri. The spiritual practices carried out are more representative of Sharia and community-based social interactions, paying little attention to the realm of Sufism or Philosophy. The existence of the Chinese Muslim Ethnicity for a long time has significantly impacted the political situation in favor of Indonesia. At the same time, religious affiliation has also significantly impacted the community so that it has a more expansive religious space.*

Keywords: *Theological Identity; Chinese Muslim; Kediri; Post-Reformation*

Abstract: *Riset ini berupaya menelisik intensi tersembunyi dari keberagaman Muslim Tionghoa di Karesidenan Kediri. Muslim Tionghoa Kediri mempunyai keunikan secara teologis, afiliasi sosial keagamaannya, dan motif beragamanya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelusuri praktik keagamaannya Muslim Tionghoa Kediri, bagaimana corak teologinya, rujukan fikihnya, rujukan tafsirnya dan afiliasi politiknya, sehingga corak teologi Muslim Tionghoa dapat diidentifikasi dengan jelas. Riset ini menggunakan pendekatan Fenomenologi Kritis Paul Ricoeur dengan analisis reflektif sebagai ciri utama untuk membedah*

intensi kesadaran arah keberagamaan yang dihayati oleh mereka. Hasil penelitian ini adalah gaya penghayatan yang dilakukan oleh Muslim Etnis Tionghoa lebih mengarah pada practical life of religious atau penghayatan praktis keagamaan. PITI memberikan ruang ekspresi berbasis komunitas, sedangkan Cheng Ho lebih menunjukkan sebagai simbol pemersatu Etnis Muslim Tionghoa di Kediri. Praktik spiritual yang dilakukan lebih terlihat representative pada sisi Syariah dan interaksi-sosial berbasis komunitas, tidak menaruh perhatian penuh pada ranah Tasawuf atau pun Filsafat. Keberadaan Etnis Muslim Tionghoa dalam kurun waktu yang lama memberikan dampak yang signifikan pada situasi politik yang menguntungkan Indonesia dan dalam waktu bersamaan, afiliasi keagamaan juga memberikan dampak signifikan pada komunitas tersebut sehingga memiliki ruang beragama secara lebih luas.

Kata Kunci: *Identitas Teologi; Muslim Tionghoa; Kediri; Pasca Reformasi*

INTRODUCTION

Efforts to find foundations based on classic books (turats) on nationalism are increasingly spreading to the surface, including the pesantren community. Islamic boarding schools are required to have the ability to read the Yellow Book well as a basis for finding arguments about nationalism as an ideology that is in line with Islamic values. At the same time, higher education academic groups also carry out dialogues on national issues using the perspective of the norms of Islamic boarding schools' books. It is done solely because it wants to emphasize that pesantren, the Yellow Book, and nationalism can become one within the cultural framework of pesantren.¹

One proof of the relationship between pesantren, the Yellow Book, and nationalism is what Ahmad Hidayat et al. did, which emphasizes that national fiqh is one of the products of Bahts al-Masâil. Bahts al-Masâil is a forum characteristic of salaf Islamic boarding schools (Pondok Pesantren), which discusses the problem of finding the law. Hidayat's research results explained that infiltration of radicalism and extremism in pesantren alums influenced the basic framework for the birth of national fiqh. Hidayat gave an example; currently, there are more and more discussion forums in online media containing their doubts about nationalism

¹Smith, Anthony, D. *Nasionalisme : Teori, Ideologi, Sejarah*. (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2003).

based on Pancasila as the state ideology.² Furthermore, the study results also show a new phase of acceptance of the concept of nationalism in Islamic boarding schools. For this reason, it is necessary to study classical books to support nationalism.

The existence of ethnic Chinese Muslims in Karisidenan Kediri is still maintained in several other areas around it, such as Nganjuk, Jombang, Kertosono, Blitar, and Surabaya. The existence of Chinese Muslims is getting stronger with community ties, forming an identity called Cheng Hoo Chinese Ethnicity. Cheng Ho's Chinese Muslim community is a strong community with a plural Islam and considers all types of Islamic organizational affiliations to be the same. This community, although it still holds a belief in ancestors that cannot be forgotten, commitment to Islam for Chinese ethnicity is needed to prevent ethnic fanaticism and counter-identity conflicts because ethnic fanaticism that occurs can affect religion and trigger conflicts in society. Their social status, religious affiliation, and political tastes determine their religious values.

This research seeks to find religious patterns within the framework of the concept of identity, which will then be analyzed through the religious perspective of where this Chinese Muslim community survives in a pluralistic society in Kediri and how they determine their religious way to continue to exist and get public attention without causing severe conflict. Finding a religious pattern means looking for identity within religion. This effort then leads the author to identity theory and social construction to be chosen as an analytical tool. According to Chris Barker, Identity is similarities and differences regarding personal and social aspects, the similarity of individuals with several people, and what distinguishes individuals from others.³ The author will use three forms of identity to find out the religious pattern of the Chinese community in Kediri raya. *First is* cultural

²Hidayat, A., & Arifin, Z. "Narasi Fikih Kebangsaan di Pesantren Lirboyo". *Jurnal Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Keislaman*, 10 (3, 2021), 315–328. <https://doi.org/10.33367/ji.v10i3.1491>

³ Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies, Theory, and Practice*, (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2004). 172

identity. Every created individual must have a cultural identity formed by social construction on shared consciousness. The Chinese community is one of the *sub-cultures* in Indonesia that has a civilization that their group consciously forms. Usually, cultural identity is formed by the equation of the following three elements: tradition, innate nature, religion, and descent from a culture.

Second, social identity. This identity is formed by a person's membership in a particular community. In addition to being a cultural identity, the Chinese community is also a social identity. Through this theory, this paper seeks to find a theological style, a religious identity that is formed. Social identity is acquired in a particular community through agreed values and education within an indefinite period. *Third*, personal identity. This identity is based on personal characteristics, such as talent, self-ability, self-character, etc. In general, the Chinese Muslim community is people of both Chinese descent and the Chinese themselves who convert to Islam. Through this individual identity, we can go deeper into their theological references.

According to Stuart Hall, identity is determined and created through symbolic public representation in a form that is contestation and negotiation to history that society remembers collectively.⁴ Human instincts and minds will be directed towards identity and always learn history from the roots of the past and strive to revive their former identity together. The collective memory that happened in the past can be traced to his ancestors. In the context of Chinese people, Cheng Ho is one of the noble ancestors of ethnic Chinese, regardless of religion. On the other hand, Cheng Ho was one of the missionaries from China who then traveled to the archipelago to trade and spread Islam. This is concrete evidence of the process of Islamization of indigenous peoples.

Through a review of social construction, the identity building of the Chinese ethnic community can be seen through everyday life experiences. Based on this, the various expressions of each identity, in essence, remain united in the same identity. Aihwa Ong and D. Nonini exacerbate the problem that a person

⁴ Stuart Hall, *Political Belonging in a World of Multiple Identities. In Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*. edited by S. Vertovec and R. Cohen, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 25

with a Chinese identity needs to be sufficiently assessed based on the application of Chinese norms and values. Still, the most important thing is also seen from the variety of ways a person "becomes Chinese," which is then depicted in interactions between groups and individuals in their lives. According to Muslim Chinese, this identity must be described and illustrated in various activities in forming and reproducing Chinese Muslim identity in forms of live interaction. The intended communication and human relations are about the response of Chinese who have converted to Islam and become Muslims in textual and social understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reflections on the Meaning of Life as Individuals and Religious Communities

The existence of Chinese Muslims today can undoubtedly be more developed both by descent and mixing with native Chinese people. Almost in the economic sector, they have mastered and, of course, have a reasonably existing solid land in terms of business. For example, the Chinese merchant community on Jalan Yos Sudarso in the Pakelan Region of Kediri shows itself as a distinctive trading community, namely typical Kediri souvenirs. Indeed, in the past, this place has become the center of their business and trade because of its location on the Brantas River. Local people called it "Kediri Chinatown" because, at that time, people of Chinese descent lived along the Brantas River to facilitate trade transactions.⁵

Furthermore, assimilation through trade channels is becoming more lenient, so they are also expanding their 'community' by buying and selling food (culinary) and building materials—for example, the supply of tofu products from China. Furthermore, the distinctive process of making tofu, namely Takwa tofu or Pong

⁵ Bastian Yunariono and Retno Andriati, *The Construction of Chinese Muslim Identities in Surabaya*, (Semarang: Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan, 2020) .56-86

tofu, further strengthens Chinese ethnic identity. This feature clearly shows how the pattern of cultural dissemination that shapes their identity is more striking.

This solid trade base for generations has become a domain of identity that has been interpreted for both ancestral religions and those committed to Islam. However, whether they are Muslims or not, they direct the meaning of their religion by linking it to buying and selling transactions or business. For example, fair buying and selling exemplify an excellent audit system, such as self-held companies' financial system and management.

The model of religious transformation of ethnic Chinese into adhering to Islam can be assumed, one of which is through cultural pressure from both local communities and adherents of Islam as the majority. The conversion does not seem as smooth as it is, almost every ethnic Chinese Muslim adheres to the norms and rules of the state, so they are more inclined to cultural Islam. Of course, this assessment is not entirely correct, but it seems more meaningful in views of Islamic beliefs, judging from its work ethic and family network support.

Religion in the Shadow of Political Repression

In the early days of his arrival in Indonesia in the 15th and 16th centuries, ethnic Chinese made many dynamic contributions to the local population, including Javanese. They interact with the locals through economic transactions while maintaining social stability. The most appropriate way to be protected from various repressions is to stay side by side peacefully and even inter-ethnic marriages with Javanese, Kalimantan, Eastern, etc. This method was pinned based on an attempt to overcome political pressure where the significant impact was racism perpetrated by indigenous elites. It alleged widespread cooperation with the Dutch colonial government.⁶

During the early period of Dutch colonialism in the 18th century, existing pluralism was under pressure. Socio-political and economic rivalries and jealousy began to increase when the Dutch used the Chinese as their partners in oppressing

⁶ Ahmad Alwajih, *The Discourse of Tionghoa Muslim Identity in Indonesia After the Reform Order: A Critical Discourse Analysis of 'Komunitas' – 'Cheng Hoo' Magazine*, (Asian Journal of Media and Communication, 2020)

the local Javanese community and exploiting their economy and natural resources. Many Chinese people were considered to be on the side of the Dutch, which created a negative impression among the local community about the existence of the Chinese. This negative impression was exacerbated by the establishment of Chung Hwa Hui (CHH), an exclusive ethnic Chinese community—an organization affiliated with the Dutch colonial government in the East Indies.

Despite the possible socio-political and economic jealousy of local people targeted against the Chinese, some involved themselves in efforts to achieve Indonesian independence and develop it economically. Prominent figures such as Liem Koen Hian (born in 1896 and leading Indonesian newspapers such as Surabaya-based *Soeara Publiek* [1925–1929] and Jakarta-based *Kong Hoa Po* [1937–1938]) and Yap Thiam Hien (born 1913) and critical lawyer and a key figure behind the establishment of the Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body [Baperki]) were among the Chinese actively involved in the seizing effort Indonesia's independence from Dutch and Japanese colonizers and built Indonesia as a new country. During Sukarno's regime, selected Chinese activism penetrated the political arena.⁷

Religious Life and Religious Community

The religious situation during this political turmoil significantly impacted "living religion ."In this position, Sujarwo further explained that the types of Chinese ethnic appreciation are very diverse, following the trend of those affiliated with certain groups, and there are some hidden intentions where religious appreciation cannot be separated from the state's religious and political phenomena. For Chinese people interested in socio-political issues, the only way to give meaning to Islam is to actualize themselves by joining inclusive organizations oriented towards the benefit of all ethnic types. For example, in the

⁷ *Alwajih*. 105-107

past, they were members of the Golkar party and other organizations that also involved prominent Chinese figures, such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Communication Board for the Appreciation of National Unity (Bakom-PKB).

Founded in 1971, primarily focusing on policy-oriented studies on domestic and international issues, CSIS is closely tied to the Suharto regime. Many of the key figures in it (including Jusuf Wanandi, Harry Tjan Silalahi, and J. Panglaykim) have been associated with people very close to Suharto, such as Ali Moertopo, Dawoed Joesoef, and LB Moerdani since Suharto's rise to power in 1966, and has also been active in Golkar. Like CSIS, Bakom-PKB, founded in December 1977, was not a mass organization but a communications center led mainly by the Chinese and organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Junus Jahja, K. Sindhunata, and Lo SH Ginting are among the ethnic Chinese who are the leading figures in this organization.⁸

Even in the realm of education and culture, the policies of the Suharto regime were repressive. Soon after Suharto came to power, the regime blocked the operation of several Chinese culture-based schools that used Chinese as the official language of instruction.⁹ Repeated a similar case in the 1950s.¹⁰ Any cultural activity that leads to Chinese traditions, including Barongsai performances (Chinese theater performances), of Ethnic Chinese Muslims in Indonesia 85 is prohibited. So, Chinese people have little space or opportunity to articulate their sociocultural identity.

Legalization of Religion in the Suharto Regime

⁸ Leo Suryadinata, *State and Minority Religion in Contemporary Indonesia: Recent Government Policy towards Confucianism, Tridharma, and Buddhism, in Nation-State, Identity, and Religion in Southeast Asia*, ed. Tsuneo Ayabe, Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 1998, 5–23; Abdul Munir Mulkhan et al., *Agama dan Negara: Perspektif Islam, Katolik, Buddha, Hindu, Konghucu, Protestan [Religion and State: The Perspective of Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Buddhism]*, Yogyakarta: Institut Dian/Interfidei, 2002.

⁹ Ariel Heryanto, *Ethnic Identities, and Erasure: Chinese Indonesians in Public Culture*, in *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, ed. J. Kahn, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998, h. 95–114.

¹⁰ Leo Suryadinata, *Dilema Minoritas Tionghoa*...., h. 158–162

After Suharto came to power, the regime enacted laws requiring all citizens to adhere to one of five state-sanctioned religions (Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Buddhism). Confucianism, which represents the majority Chinese religion, is not formally recognized by the state as one of the state-sanctioned religions. Following the so-called legalization of the five religions, the Chinese are legally forced by the regime to convert to one of the five religions. Religious conversion is necessary for the Chinese to gain formal recognition from the state, accompanied by all citizens' civil responsibilities and rights. By failing to adopt one of the five religions, the state will deny a person complete civil service, including providing an identity card. Also, a person cannot legalize his marital status.

Given the above circumstances, ex-communists (including nominal Muslims) and ethnic Chinese, who are generally considered to have ties to the Indonesian Communist Party, mostly converted to Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. In Java, for example, more Chinese converted to Christianity than to Buddhism. According to Hefner's account, the number of people who converted to Christianity in the late 1960s and early 1970s reached nearly two million, and about 400,000 converted to Hinduism.¹¹

Very few people converted from Confucianism to Islam among the ethnic Chinese, compared to those who converted to Christianity or Buddhism. As a result, the number of ethnic Chinese Muslims in the first half of the Soeharto government tended to be minor, including in Kediri. Therefore, the legalization of the five state-recognized religions did not significantly impact the number of Chinese Muslims in Indonesia because there were almost no conversions among ethnic Chinese or former communists to Islam.

¹¹ Robert W. Hefner, *Globalisation, Governance, and the Crisis of Indonesian Islam*, paper presented at the Conference on Globalisation, State Capacity, and Muslim Self Determination, Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, University of California-Santa Cruz, 7–9 March 2002, h. 23–24 (Accessed September 20 2022: <http://www2.ucsc.edu/cgirs/conferences/carnegie/papers/hefner.pdf>).

For more than three decades during the New Order era, ethnic Chinese Muslims, like ethnic Chinese in general, experienced socio-political repression and faced state discrimination in various sectors of life. The unavailability of easy access to bureaucratic services for economic and cultural interests; their citizenship status has also been marginalized. Ironically, this state discrimination continued during the reform era, when bureaucratic reform was more emphasized. In the following discussion, we will describe how experiencing Islam in Kediri significantly impacted his dealings with trade and politics. Cheng Ho is the central symbol of the Chinese Muslim ethnicity in Kediri and, more broadly, in Indonesia.

Cheng Ho Mosque is a symbol of ethnic Chinese Muslims.

The establishment of the Cheng Ho mosque, officially opened to the public on May 13, 2003, by PITI East Java, also played an essential role in expanding the means for Chinese Muslims to express their socio-religious and cultural identity. After their social security increased, in particular due to the active contribution of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the Chinese began to feel safe enough to show and express their socio-religious and cultural identity. Several stories the PITI-based Community Journal reported show increased social security for ethnic Chinese Muslims in Surabaya. The stories can be categorized into three types: religious conversion, socio-political and economic activities, and cultural exchange.

Cheng Ho Mosque has become one of the places of choice for Chinese who want to convert to Islam from other faiths, including Confucianism, and to perform their religious conversion ceremonies. Looking at almost every volume published in the PITI-based Community journal, it appears that Cheng Ho mosque has gradually aroused the enthusiasm of Chinese people in Surabaya to convert to Islam secretly. The journal always publishes reports on conversion ceremonies held in mosques every Friday immediately after Friday prayers. These reports were included in regular newspaper columns such as "Album" or "Chinese Activities."

The increasing number of Muslims in the Chinese community is undoubtedly a recent development, different from what happened in the past. As pointed out earlier, instead of converting to Islam from their own religious beliefs, including Confucianism, ethnic Chinese tend to convert to Christianity or Buddhism. The enactment of a set of laws requiring all citizens to recognize one of the five state-recognized religions (Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, or Buddhism) by the New Order regime was a factor in this conversion pattern among ethnic Chinese.

Cheng Ho Mosque has also given confidence to middle-class Chinese Muslims in Surabaya to express their socio-political, economic, and religious identity. (However, it should be noted that political identity here refers more to social and class identity rather than practical politics). Hotel or house as a place of execution of marriage rituals according to Islamic traditions.

One of the significant and influential figures is Herman Halim, an advisor to the most influential Chinese Muslim community and president director of PT Bank Maspion (a banking company operating under the umbrella of the Maspion Group, owned by Alim Markus who is a prominent Chinese Muslim businessman). He married Fatimah Linna (or Péng Linna'). Many East Java figures reportedly attended the ceremony, including the local immigration department and former East Java police chief Koesparmono Ihsan.¹²

In addition to conducting socio-political and economic activities, Cheng Ho mosque is also one of the crucial places for cultural exchange between social and ethnic groups in Indonesia and between nations. Local visitors, such as a group called "Indonesian tourism youth ambassadors 2005",⁴⁴ who came from Lampung, Sumatra, and a group of 50 students of Airlangga University based in Surabaya⁴⁶ came to take a closer look at the cultural heritage attached to the mosque building. They also studied the sociological features of mosques, such as

¹² Komunitas: Majalah Cheng Ho Edisi 30, *Jangan Ada Lagi Diskriminasi Diantara Kita*, Desember 2006.

the relationship between mosques and Chinese Muslims, as well as their administrators and local communities. International visitors who came for cultural exchange to the mosque included members of parliament and government officials from the Chinese city of Xianmen, a group of government officials from Thailand, and 10 tourists from Singapore.¹³

The reported stories show that Cheng Ho mosque has recently become a place to perform routine rituals in Islam, such as prayers, and to strengthen the presence of the Chinese Muslim minority in Indonesia. This became fertile ground for the creation of social security for the Chinese Muslim minority, especially in Surabaya. This development follows increasingly close and strong relations and cooperation between the ethnic Chinese community, particularly those of the Muslim faith, and faith-based organizations, particularly NU. Such explanations send a significant message that intimate relationships with faith-based organizations have helped Chinese Muslims maintain their socio-political security against state discriminatory practices.

Religious Identity and Social Reconstruction of Chinese Muslims

Identity construction between nationalism and discrimination. After the New Order, precisely four years later, the magazine *Community: Cheng Hoo* slowly began defining ethnic Chinese as part of the Indonesian nation by ignoring their physical characteristics. This can be seen in the article 'Chinese Ethnicity is Also Part of the Indonesian Nation, Chinese Tribes are Also Part of the Indonesian Nation.' The text frames the Chinese with historical features that they have lived for hundreds of years in Indonesia. Therefore, this tribe is considered to have blended naturally with the locals. Thus, China is not a nation, but an ethnicity, just like other ethnicities such as Javanese, Madurese, and others. Through historical construction that was formed slowly, the direction of

¹³ Komunitas: Majalah Cheng Ho Edisi 34, *Semangat Kemerdekaan dengan Meningkatkan Nasionalisme*, Agustus 2007

understanding ethnic Chinese showed that its existence had a significant impact on the Indonesian state.

However, there seems to have been ethnic discrimination at that time, which makes it clear that the Indonesian nation for Chinese people seems ironic when underestimating discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group in Indonesia. From here, they gave birth to the pattern of diversity they lived, namely ancestral beliefs. Significant discrimination discussed in this session, one of which concerns law and citizenship rights, is illustrated by stories about the complicated problems that Chinese people often face in obtaining ID cards, passports, and various other civil permits. This refutes the notion that Chinese people do not have a sense of Indonesian nationalism.

They are avoiding Apolitical Conflict. Being Chinese does not mean being apolitical and anti-nationalist but instead being part of the democratic process in Indonesia. This idea is represented through important Chinese figures, such as Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, who was once the Deputy Governor and then Governor of DKI Jakarta. This magazine also supports the ratification of Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2014 by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who has formally shifted the official nickname from 'China' to 'China'. Even though it is political, the Chinese community has been waiting for this new regulation for a long time. They argued that the old Perda was deemed to have violated the constitution, so the President revoked it.

Consequently, following these new regulations, the Chinese community has developed a more mature Chinese identity, especially in the distinction between 'China' and 'Chinese'. China refers to the state and ridicule from Japan towards China, as was also done by the New Order regime. Once again, criticism is directed at the New Order regime for imposing the term 'Cina' instead of 'Tionghoa'. Indonesian Chinese actually prefer the term 'Tionghoa' because it is more cultural than political. The blurring, the identity pinned by the reality of this reality. Ustad Hasan emphasized that there should be no more pejorative cynicism

towards calling 'China' or 'China' and that every citizen must be respected regardless of ethnicity.¹⁴

Unifying Islamic Perceptions Through the Role of Indonesian and Chinese

The Community magazines and Cheng Ho Magazines also discussed 'Chinese Muslims', although they did not identify who and how Chinese Muslims were. In early editions, particularly in 2002, the term 'Chinese Muslim' does not appear explicitly in the text. Chinese Muslims are considered simply 'Chinese,' along with other Chinese adherents.

After the New Order regime, there were still fears and doubts about presenting Chinese and Islamic ideas simultaneously in the text as a single identity. This feeling is directly related to the traumatic events in 1998 which killed many Chinese people. Such incidents are still firmly embedded in the social memory of the Chinese community in Indonesia. Today, the Islamic and Chinese codes seem to have never met.

The phrase 'Muslim China' was first described in the January 2003 issue of Community Magazine entitled 'Never represented – Never represented.' H.M. Lukminto, a well-known Muslim businessman in Java, represented Chinese Muslims as subjects, especially in Solo. The article emphasizes the popularity of H.M. Lukminto, his obedience in practicing Islam, his humility or humble personality, and his trustworthy attitude as an honest businessman and always committed to every business agreement that has been made. Another aspect highlighted in the text is the Chinese name H.M. Lukminto. Adding this Chinese name to his identity as a Muslim businessman, the text represents H.M. Lukminto as an ideal Chinese Muslim figure.

Another ideal figure presented in the magazine is H. Sibro, who is described as having a significant role in building mosques and compensating orphans and Islamic boarding schools. The text also recounts his active role in various socio-religious organizations such as NU and the Baiturrohman Mosque Management. In addition, he also served as Chair of PITI Pasuruan.

¹⁴ Wawancara dengan Ustad Hasan, tanggal 8 Juli 2022 di Surabaya

The cultural representation of Chinese Muslims is not single. In a direct interview with Ustad Hasan, he explained that Chinese Muslims in Indonesia are also diverse after coming into contact with local traditions. There is no difference between Muslim Chinese and non-Muslim Chinese; Muslim Chinese can sing Madurese songs or perform Balinese dances. The story also explains how a cultural exhibition combines Chinese and Middle Eastern clothing that can be adapted in Indonesia, even though the performer is a Chinese Muslim from Xinjiang Ningxia with a blend of European, Chinese, and Middle Eastern faces. Through most of the photo documentation, his speech describes verbally what and how Chinese Muslim culture is. However, this means that the cultural identity of Chinese Muslims in Indonesia is Chinese-oriented. However, this speech also seems ambivalent when it says that the culture of Xinjiang Ningxia can be adopted in Indonesia.

Interestingly, the discourse on citizenship and Islamic identity is represented beyond the Chinese Muslim cultural identity. In Ustad Hasan and Sujarwo's explanation about the 'Wisdom of Celebrating Heroes' Day, we might find an interesting discussion, namely: "We must pray for the heroes. Have we ever prayed for them? – We must pray for the heroes. Have we ever prayed for the deceased?". This discussion shows cultural acculturation between their original Chinese culture and local culture. The Chinese community, especially Muslim Chinese, actively participates in the annual Independence Day celebrations, such as holding social games or social services. In short, an Indonesian Chinese Muslim is a true nationalist.

Indonesian Chinese Muslims are also highly concerned about the spread of Islam in Indonesia, reported coaching of people who recently converted to Islam. In this sense, 'Cheng Ho, ' the actual name of an ancient Chinese hero, is considered an icon of Chinese Muslims. Magazines and the foundations that publish them are considered essential institutions in the propagation of Islam in Indonesia. In carrying out this missionary role, the Chinese Muslim community

avoided taking sides with certain Islamic sects or groups and taking sides in politics. However, this neutral attitude is dynamic but changes over time, especially after 2013.

Religion Inclusively Through Religious Communities

Islam in Indonesia is indeed diverse, and within this diversity, Chinese Muslims are positioned in an inclusive-rational group along with several other Islamic organizations, such as NU and Muhammadiyah. In the Production of Community Magazine – Cheng Ho does not show conflict or conflictual relationship with these Islamic groups. Meanwhile, exclusive and radical Islamic groups were not mentioned as participants in the magazine. Likewise, liberal Islamic groups are also absent from the text.

Interestingly, the most prominent relationship between Chinese Muslims and Islamic organizations is their relationship with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Their relationship is mentioned several times on different topics of discussion. On the social role of a community leader and businessman, particularly in the role of H. Sibro Mulisi, a Chinese Muslim who is also a member of NU, NU is mentioned as a participant in the text. Other NU figures are also mentioned in this edition, including KH Mas Subadar, Gus Idris, and KH. Hasan Abdullah, and KH Abdul Hamid Pasuruan. This shows that Chinese Muslims have the same Islamic vision as NU figures. Moreover, Chinese Muslims are represented as part of the pesantren community. Among NU figures, the one that received the most attention was KH Abdurahman Wahid or Gus Dur, who was reported in several editions.

CONCLUSION

At least it can be seen that the appreciation of Islam can be seen from the affiliation of religious organizations that surround it. It can be concluded that the style of appreciation carried out by ethnic Chinese Muslims is more towards the *practical life of religion* or practical religious life. The large container in PITI provides a space for community-based expression, while Cheng Ho symbolizes unifying Chinese Muslim Ethnicity in Indonesia and Kediri in particular. In

everyday life, spiritual practices are more representative of the Sharia side and community-based social interactions, not paying full attention to the realm of Sufism or Philosophy. However, giving color that shows that the existence of ethnic Chinese Muslims for a long time has a significant impact on the political situation that benefits Indonesia, and at the same time, the religious affiliation also has a significant impact on the community so that it has a more expansive religious space.

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