

# Chinese in Minangkabau: A Typological Study of Chinese Ethnicity in Padang City

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the typology of Chinese ethnicity based on aspects of religious life and Chinese ethnic organization in Minangkabau. So far there is not much literature that discusses the typology of Chinese ethnicity in the city of Padang, so an effort is needed to complement the existing literature. This study used a case study qualitative research method, the Chinese ethnic group studied in Padang City. Data obtained by means of documentation. This study found that there are two typologies of ethnic Chinese in Minangkabau. First, based on religion, Chinese Muslims in the ethnic Chinese Muslim community in Padang city are members of the Indonesian Chinese Islamic Association (PITI). Second, based on ethnic similarities,

**Keywords:** Typology; Religion; China; Minangkabau

## INTRODUCTION

Studying the history of China in Minangkabau will never escape from the existence of trade relations carried out by ethnic Chinese and the people of the Minang realm. There is no definite record of when the ethnic Chinese first came to the realm of Minang. It is estimated that the Chinese came since the Dutch trading company VOC established its headquarters in Minang in the 17th century (Hanura Rusli & Arios, 2020). Trade unions owned by the Dutch made the Minang realm the center of economics and politics. Later, the Minang Realm became a trade magnet where Chinese traders and the VOC still maintained

trade interactions with the local population, who were originally also traders from the interior of Minangkabau.

The ethnic Chinese in Minangkabau are classified as a minority, however, ethnic Chinese often explore culture that attracts the attention of the Minang people. Recently the Chinese phenomenon in the Minang realm has been in the spotlight in the Cap Go Meh religious activity which has become a debate among both the government, religious leaders and the surrounding community who also witnessed the Cap Go Meh celebration in the Minang realm on February 5 2023. Before the Cap Go celebration This event was carried out due to the issue that the Cap Go Meh celebration should not be carried out. Elements of the Minangkabau community consisting of the Minang Community Forum (FMM), Paga Nagari and the West Sumatra Mujahiddin Council urged the cancellation of the Cap Go Meh celebration procession for the safety and comfort of the local community(Ede, 2023). There were several reasons why FMM and mass organizations refused the Cap Go Meh commemoration procession. First, the Provincial Government of West Sumatra, through APBD funds, assisted the Cap Go Meh celebration in the amount of IDR 1 billion, while many people were still in dire straits. Second, the Cap Go Meh celebration can damage the beliefs of the Minangkabau people, who are predominantly Muslim, considering that the commemoration is inseparable from the implementation of worship. Third, the Cap Go Meh celebration on a large scale can be used by provocateurs to disrupt the atmosphere. "If that were to happen, West Sumatra would be branded as an intolerant area," said Ustadz Munzir(Ede, 2023).

The Provincial Government of West Sumatra through the National and Political Unity Agency (Kesbangpol) of West Sumatra Province stated that there was no longer any objection to the implementation of the Cap Go Meh Parade in Padang City (Metrokini, 2023). "It's over, friends from the Minang Community Forum can understand this activity," said the Head of West Sumatra Kesbangpol, Jefrinal Arifin, Monday (30/1) contacted. In the end, all the debates resulted in the fact that the Cap Go Meh celebration could be held in the Minang Realm.

This study is examined further using the perspective of the study of religions, by borrowing several approaches. Among them approaches:

1. Tripolar Typology (Alan Race)

Tripolar Typology Theory by Alan Race. Which tripolar theological approach is a standard reference in the study of theology of religions, to map the various approaches of theologians and non-theologians regarding the relationship between religions and religions. This right is based on similarities and differences in perspectives on religions, namely exclusivism, then inclusivism. So, the religious typology approach is a useful reference for studying types of religion. Often equated with the phenomenology of religion. But on the other hand, people try not to pay attention to these things that are private and sacred in religion.

## 2. Typology of Religious Communities from the Perspective of the Sociology of Religion

Religion is positioned as a vessel for the regularity of human life which has implications for individual change and social change. Clifford Geertz (1992) states that Religion is (1) a system of symbols that acts to (2) establish strong, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in human beings by (3) formulating concepts about a general order of existence and (4) clothe these concepts with a kind of radiance of factuality, so that (5) the moods and motivations seem realistic. The existence of religion in individuals and groups is very important, as according to Jalaluddin (2002) religion has several functions in society, namely, it functions as an educative function, it functions as a savior, it functions as an atonement, it functions as social control, solidarity builder, transformative function, creative function, and sublimative function. All of these functions will have a changing effect on individual life and social life in society.

## 3. Phenomenological theory of religion

The theory of religious phenomenology is to look at religious phenomena or symptoms that exist in the Muslim Chinese ethnic community in Minangkabau.

So far, studies on Chinese ethnicity in Padang City have paid little attention to the typology of Chinese ethnicity in Padang City. In general, the studies that have been carried out cover at least three major themes, namely, first, the study of Chinese ethnic identity in the city of Padang(Erniwati, 2019;Nafriandi, 2016; Dewi, 2018; Putri et al., 2023). The second study of Chinese politics in the city of Padang(Rafni, 2007;Alfirdaus et al., 2014). Third, the existence of Chinese in the city of Padang(Dwi, 2023;Valentine, 2022).

Complementing the existing studies, this article fills in the blanks on the typology of Chinese religion and ethnic organization in Minangkabau.

Through the typology study method, this text-based article aims to complement the lack of studies on typology of Chinese ethnicity in Padang City by analyzing how Chinese in Minangkabau present a typology of Chinese ethnic religion in Padang City.

## **METHOD**

The method used is a qualitative case study method, there are several sources of data used in this study. First, the primary data sources are ethnic Chinese Muslims and ethnic Chinese Catholics in the Minang area. Second, secondary data sources, namely data obtained through literature taken from journals, theses and library books. All data in this research were collected through several data collection techniques. The first is the observation technique, which is the technique of observing and recording systematically the observed phenomena. This observation technique is used in this research as a data collection technique related to proving the truth that ethnic Chinese really exist in the Minang Realm. Second, structured interview techniques, This technique conducts interviews based on a list of questions that have been prepared before the interview begins. This interview technique was used by researchers to collect data related to the typology of Chinese ethnicity in the city of Padang. Third, documentation techniques, this technique is used to obtain data and information in the form of books, archives, writings, numbers and pictures in the form of reports and information that can support research. In this study, the authors used data analysis techniques used by Miles and Huberman. Miles and Huberman said that in qualitative research it is possible to do data analysis while the researcher is in the field or after returning from the field and then doing the analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION Existence of Chinese Ethnicity in Minangkabau**

### **1. The Existence of Ethnic Chinese in Minangkabau**

Minangkabau is a term to refer to areas inhabited by ethnic Minang. Minangkabau is an area that is famous for its diverse traditions and culture, and is famous for its multicultural, with the cultural diversity of the Minang people being an interesting thing to observe. Minangkabau is not only inhabited by one ethnic Minang, but several ethnicities such as Chinese, Nias, Javanese and

Batak make this area uphold tolerance among people. Chinese ethnicity is thought to have entered Minangkabau since the 13th century, namely during the Dutch colonial period. Initially, ethnic Chinese lived in the port areas of Pariaman, Padang, Painan and Tiku. Although ethnic Chinese were found living in the ports of Painan and Tiku, the majority of ethnic Chinese settlements were formed in the city of Padang. This is because the trading activities of ethnic Chinese are more focused in the city of Padang. The ethnic Chinese in Padang City consist of ethnic Chinese who are Muslims (Muslims) and ethnic Chinese who are not Muslim (non-Muslims). From the information obtained, the number of non-Muslim ethnic Chinese in the city of Padang is approximately 12,000 people, while Muslim Chinese are approximately 300 people.(Hanura, 2020).

As a minority group, non-Muslim Chinese ethnic groups try to continue to build interaction with the Muslim majority Chinese ethnic group in the city of Padang. To establish cooperation and peace among themselves. The interactions they do can be seen from several activities that occur in everyday life(Hanura, 2020).

The dynamics of interaction between Muslim Chinese and non-Muslim Chinese is not only in the form of peace, but conflict between them occurred before 2000 which tended to lead to conflict. This is because non-Muslim Chinese consider that Chinese who convert to Islam tend to be ostracized by their families. The ethnic Chinese in Minangkabau are members of the Indonesian Chinese Islamic Association (PITI). The PITI organization was founded in Jakarta, on April 14, 1961, among others by Abdul Karim Oei Tjeng Hien Abdusomad Yap A Siong and Kho Goan Jin. PITI is a combination of the Chinese Islamic Association led by the late Abdusomad Yap A Siong and the Chinese Muslim Association led by Kho Goan Jin. PIT and PTM which before Indonesia's independence were initially established in North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Riau and the Riau Archipelago. However, the existence of PIT and PTM has not been felt by the Muslim ethnic Chinese and Indonesian Muslims(Muhyiddin, 2017).

## **2. Chinese Ethnic Association in the Minang Realm**

Ethnic Chinese who have status as Muslims in Minangkabau come together to form a unit which is known as the Teguh United Association (HBT) and the Tjinta Friend Association (HTT). These two organizations are social organizations where ethnic

Chinese, both Muslims and non-Muslims, gather in the city of Padang. In general, there are differences and similarities between the two organizations. The HBT organization was founded around 1876. This organization has a general chairman named Toako who is held by Sho Yong Tjoan. while the HTT organization was founded in 1863 the general chairperson named Jiko who was in charge of managing financial matters was held by Gho Goan Ham. This organization is the oldest ethnic Chinese organization in Padang City,

The existence of the HTT organization has been maintained until now, even though there were several problems with the natives in 1968 and the government in the New Order which harmed the Chinese ethnicity, despite all the problems that existed, the indigenous people, especially the Minangkabau, still accepted the existence of the Tjinta Friends Organization, an organization for ethnic communities. China in Minangkabau is a house. There are two types of organizations formed by ethnic Chinese, namely Kongsik and Kongsik Gedang. The Gedang Kongsik, namely the Hok Tek Tong (Tjinta Friend Association), Hok Beng Teng (Teguh United Association), See Heen Kiong Temple, and the Kongsik Kongsik, which is an association of Chinese ethnic clans, such as the Lie Kwe family association (Long See Tong), the Tan family, the Gho family, the Indonesian Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation, the The family, and the Lim family(Mardoni et al., 2022).

The aim of this organization is to serve the ethnic Chinese who are its members as well as the ethnic Chinese who are not its members in social, cultural and funeral contexts. And these two organizations provide equal opportunities for ethnic Chinese Muslims and non-Muslims to occupy the organizational structure. The ethnic Chinese also have clans. The Chinese ethnic clan association in Padang City aims to serve members of the same surname, as well as being a place to conduct friendship. Famous Chinese ethnic clans such as the Gho, Lie and Kwee Ong Tjoa and Kwa, Lim Kho (Xu) clans(Hanura, 2020). The Chinese ethnic clan association has a gathering place where they hold deliberations. The Chinese ethnic clan and the HBT and HTT organizations are different, because the Chinese ethnic clan does not carry out social activities in matters of funerals.

## CONCLUSION

Ethnic Chinese in Minangkabau cannot be separated from trade relations, this trade relationship has started since 17th century when ethnic Chinese carried out international trade with kings in the archipelago. The Chinese ethnic in Minangkabau are active in showing a different culture diverse. The Cap Go Meh celebration is an art and cultural performance in Minangkabau, the peak of the Cap Go Meh celebration centered under the Siti Nurbaya Bridge in the Kampung Pondok Village area, West Padang District, Sunday (5/2/2023). Even though there had been objections made by the Minangkabau Community Forum, this had been resolved through discussions with West Sumatra Provincial Government through the National and Political Unity Agency (Kesbangpol).

The results of this study indicate that there are two ethnic typologies Chinese in Minangkabau First: based on religion, Muslim Chinese in the ethnic Chinese Muslim community in Padang city are united in the Indonesian Chinese Islamic Association (PITI). Second, based on ethnic similarities, Chinese in Minangkabau form an association or community known as the Tjinta Friend Association (HTT) and the United Teguh Association (HBT).

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