

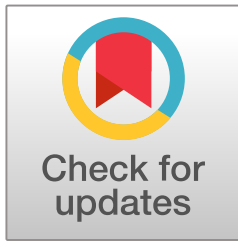
ARTICLE

Cultural Acculturation on the Acceptance of the Role of Chinese Ethnicity in Singkawang City Government

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Abstract: The Chinese ethnic community in Indonesia faces challenges in integrating with other groups, including in Singkawang. Singkawang is a positive example of a community where harmony and mutual understanding among ethnic groups have prevailed. Rarely are incidents, whether riots or conflicts related to the Chinese ethnic group, found. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the active role of the Chinese ethnic community in the governance of Singkawang through acculturation. This study was conducted with the direct involvement of the researcher on-site. The study used qualitative-descriptive to understand the phenomenon or events regarding cultural acculturation in Singkawang. Historical, anthropological, and sociological approaches are employed to comprehend this phenomenon. Interviews were conducted with ethnic communities to gather primary data, including the Chinese, Dayak, Malay, and Madurese ethnic groups and the Singkawang local government. Secondary information was collected from various research findings, news sources, and historical documents. The results indicate an active role of the Chinese ethnic community in the governance of Singkawang. Their presence is accepted and supported by all ethnic groups in society as a result of the acculturation process that has been ongoing for some time. More specifically, cultural acculturation has occurred between the Chinese ethnic community and other groups, such as the Malay and Dayak communities. This acculturation has generated positive perceptions among the community. Acculturation has also led to language, material culture, dietary habits, and clothing changes. The direct interaction among diverse groups and shared economic conditions play a role in shaping or influencing this situation.

Keywords: acculturation; ethnic Chinese; active role in government.

1. Introduction

Indonesia stands out as a nation characterized by a remarkably high level of ethnic diversity on the global scale, boasting a multitude of distinct ethnic groups. These ethnic groups, in turn, are further categorized into various subgroups. The array of ethnicities is perceived as having the potential to yield beneficial contributions to the nation's progress. It is because each ethnic group possesses unique identity, demeanor, and work ethic attributes that complement one another and can be effectively harnessed in developmental endeavors (Hidayatullah, 2019, p. 3; Tanjung, 2007, p. 1). Populations who have become Indonesian citizens mainly comprise individuals from Arab, Chinese, and Indian origins. Among these, the Chinese community predominates as the largest non-indigenous group commonly referred to as the Chinese ethnic group or Tionghoa (Databoks, 2016; Taher, 2021).

In the historical journey of the Chinese ethnic community in Indonesia, negative stereotypes about the Chinese community did not emerge spontaneously. Still, they were shaped by various historical, social, and perceptual factors that have influenced people's views. Several factors are believed to have contributed to the formation of negative stereotypes among some segments of Indonesian society regarding the Chinese community. One such factor is the lack of sufficient information or understanding about the history and early contributions of the Chinese community in Indonesia, leading to negative stereotypes. Some people perceive that the Chinese ethnic group had a minimal role in the nation's struggle for independence (Kurniawan, 2014, p. 19). Another factor is the perception of the Chinese community's involvement in unethical or detrimental business practices to the Indonesian economy. Younger generations may have inherited or been influenced by negative perceptions of the Chinese community from previous generations. This can create deficiencies in empathy, social integration, and collective nationalism. These factors have contributed to developing and perpetuating negative stereotypes about the Chinese community among some segments of Indonesian society. These stereotypes may not always reflect reality but can affect how people view and interact with the Chinese community (Sudiana et al., 2020, p. 146).

In actuality, the Chinese ethnic population in Indonesia is renowned for being prominent figures in the national economy (Nurul Amin, 2015, p. 82). This perception originates from public observation, as most of the Chinese community in Indonesia is involved in economic sectors, mainly small-scale traders (shop owners) and prominent entrepreneurs. Participation of the Chinese ethnic group in social, community, political, and governmental aspects is notably scarce. This is not unrelated to the minimal interest of the Chinese ethnic group. Historical records mention an unwritten policy that certain professions, such as the military (TNI), the police (POLRI), and even civil service, were indeed closed to the Chinese ethnic group (detikNews, 2014; Utama, 2013). The coexistence of the Chinese ethnicity, marked by differences in skin color, language, and culture compared to the local populace, along with the strong influence of state dominance and the majority ethnic group's control over the Chinese community, has consistently placed the Chinese in challenging circumstances affecting their identity as an ethnic entity. Additionally, intermarriage with other ethnicities, particularly the Malay group, has led to the emergence of Peranakan Chinese, further impacting the Chinese ethnicity's overall existence.

Throughout its history, Singkawang is a remarkable example of a community where inter-ethnic harmony and understanding have prevailed. Notably, there has never been a recorded instance of riots or conflicts targeting the Chinese ethnic

group based on their ethnic background. The remarkable absence of tensions is a testament to the enduring relationships cultivated between different ethnic groups within Singkawang.

One of the key factors contributing to this harmonious coexistence is the deep-rooted inter-ethnic bonds that have been nurtured over an extended period. These relationships have transcended ethnic lines and are deeply embedded in the social fabric of Singkawang. The community's commitment to maintaining peace and mutual respect has played a pivotal role in preventing any form of ethnic-based unrest. Moreover, the diverse social conditions in the city of Singkawang nurture a united and mutually accepting environment. The majority of Singkawang's population comprises immigrants who have migrated from various regions and ethnic backgrounds. This diversity has created a shared understanding of the challenges and experiences associated with newcomers to a new land. This shared experience has, in turn, led to a sense of solidarity and empathy among the residents, regardless of their ethnic origins.

The natural cultural fusion occurring in Singkawang contributes to creating a harmonious atmosphere. Various ethnic and cultural groups in Singkawang have naturally interacted, shared cultural elements, and established a peaceful and mutually accepting environment. This cultural fusion illustrates how different cultural elements have come together and influenced each other, resulting in a cultural harmony that reflects the diversity of the Singkawang community. With a blend of traditions, languages, and practices from various ethnicities, Singkawang has become a melting pot of cultures. This cultural diversity has enriched the daily lives of its inhabitants and fostered an environment where differences are celebrated rather than stigmatized. The absence of ethnic conflicts targeting the Chinese community in Singkawang is a testament to the power of inter-ethnic understanding, empathy, and cooperation (Purmintasari & Yulita, 2017, p. 6). The longstanding relationships and a population predominantly composed of immigrants have laid the foundation for a peaceful and harmonious coexistence that continues to serve as a beacon of hope for societies seeking to bridge ethnic divides.

The province of West Kalimantan is characterized by its ethnically diverse population, encompassing various religious beliefs (Nuryadi & Widiatmaka, 2022, p. 107). These groups have coexisted amidst shared experiences of challenges and successes over an extended period. While their interactions have sometimes been harmonious, friction and inter-ethnic conflicts have also arisen, resulting in property damage and loss of human lives. The historical records have documented several inter-ethnic conflicts in the West Kalimantan region, warranting significant concern (Nuryadi & Widiatmaka, 2022, p. 110).

Singkawang City, as an integral part of West Kalimantan Province, similarly hosts a blend of diverse ethnicities, religious affiliations, and beliefs. The primary ethnic groups in the region are the Malay, Dayak, and Chinese. Malays predominantly adhere to Islam, the Dayaks are predominantly Christian, and the majority of the Chinese population follow Confucianism. Beyond these major groups, there exist various smaller ethnic groups, constituting less than 10 percent of the population. These include Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Bugis, Minangkabau, Batak, and ethnic groups from Eastern Indonesia, notably East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) (Kompas.com, 2009).

Singkawang City distinguishes itself from other regions in West Kalimantan Province by the prominence of its ethnic Chinese community in governance roles, such as regional leaders and members of the legislative assembly. Numerically, this

ethnic group constitutes over 40 percent of the city's population, earning Singkawang the moniker "Amoy City," reflecting its Chinese majority (Mulyanto, 2022). Here, one can observe ethnic Chinese individuals leading modest lives in simple homes, engaging in occupations less commonly pursued by their counterparts elsewhere, such as small-scale trading, farming, gardening, manual labor, and driving. Nevertheless, despite their majority status, the ethnic Chinese community remains, like other groups, essentially composed of migrants in Singkawang City and throughout the broader West Kalimantan Province.

While the Chinese ethnic presence is notable, the vibrant cultural identities of other groups, especially Malays and Dayaks, remain distinctly preserved. The cultural and religious harmony among these three major ethnic groups is evident in various aspects of life, encompassing customs, beliefs, and practices. Notably, places of worship for Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism coexist peacefully, embodying harmony among their adherents. Singkawang City, a hub for Chinese culture, hosts one of Indonesia's largest Chinese New Year celebrations, rivaled only by Jakarta and Semarang. Annually, ethnic Chinese from both within the country and abroad converge here to celebrate this festive occasion. This celebration is underpinned by Singkawang's historical significance as the ancestral land of many Chinese migrants who dispersed to various corners of the globe, including Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and beyond.

Research on the cultural acculturation of the Chinese ethnic group in Singkawang has been conducted extensively. However, studies addressing Cultural Acculturation Impacting the Acceptance of the Chinese Ethnic Group in Governance in Singkawang, West Kalimantan, have been scarce thus far. Therefore, this research aims to fill this knowledge gap by focusing on how the cultural acculturation process influences the acceptance of the Chinese ethnic group's role in the city's governance.

For example, several studies related to inter-ethnic acculturation have been conducted by Rudiansyah (2021). He investigated how Chinese culture could blend with the coastal communities in Sibolga City. The research findings indicated that different cultural groups could merge and transform their distinctive characteristics into a mixed culture. Another study on ethnic acculturation was carried out by Halim and Mahyudin (2019) among multicultural communities in Polewali Mandar, West Sulawesi. Their research stemmed from the discourse on the importance of understanding multicultural communities, as social differences among people can potentially lead to social disintegration. The results showed that good inter-ethnic group integration was characterized by stable social relationships among ethnic groups bound within the framework of group integration.

Additionally, a balance among ethnic groups led to cultural assimilation and acculturation within society. These ethnic groups collaborated in economic and social activities without experiencing social conflicts. Another study was conducted by Varanida (2016), who explored cross-cultural communication between the Chinese ethnic group and the Malay and Dayak ethnic groups in Singkawang. The research findings revealed an adaptation process that resulted in acculturation, promoting integration between the two ethnic groups through cultural means facilitated by communicators and communicants, in this case, the Chinese ethnic group and the Indigenous ethnic group. The smooth communication process was attributed to the mastery of language by both ethnic groups.

As well as research that explores ethnic and cultural diversity and its dynamics in society. For instance, research conducted by Sanjaya et al. (2023) examined the impact of cultural heterogeneity on violence in Indonesia. Their study revealed that

ethnic polarization (rather than fractionalization) is a key driver of conflict intensity, indicating that local-level conflicts are often related to the control of public goods. This research also demonstrated that cultural heterogeneity has a curvilinear effect on conflict. Meanwhile, [Najwan \(2009\)](#) research focused on alternative approaches to resolving ethnic and cultural conflicts in Indonesia. It found that the law plays a vital role in controlling social order and that social control serves as a means to prepare for societal life. As one alternative for conflict resolution, a deeper understanding of the function and role of the law in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic social life is essential.

Further research was conducted by [Faisal et al. \(2019\)](#), who explored strategies employed by Muslim immigrants in Papua during the era of special autonomy. The study discovered that newcomers experienced heightened tensions and competition in economic and political spheres. The research also revealed that Muslim migrants undertook various efforts to navigate challenges during the Special Autonomy era in Papua, employing three approaches. Firstly, Muslim migrants strengthened their economy, particularly in the informal sector. Secondly, the political sector was not their primary focus. Thirdly, Muslim migrants were not exclusive, especially in their interactions with indigenous communities. Another study was conducted by [Yulianto et al. \(2021\)](#), which examined the dynamics of inter-ethnic marriages in Indonesia, specifically focusing on marriages between the Chinese and Javanese ethnicities. The study discovered that despite prolonged historical tensions between citizens of Javanese and Chinese ethnicities, there are micro-level efforts to cooperate and establish harmonious lives among these couples. Furthermore, in the dynamics of electoral politics, ethnic backgrounds, and other primordial aspects also contribute to the outcomes of elections in various regions ([Gunawan, 2021](#); [Teka, 2020](#)).

Several previous studies mentioned above have not specifically examined the cultural acculturation aspects impacting the acceptance of the Chinese ethnic group in governance, especially in Singkawang. Therefore, this research can fill an existing knowledge gap. Furthermore, this study will specifically focus on cultural acculturation that influences the acceptance of the Chinese ethnic group in the governance of Singkawang, West Kalimantan. This leads to a more focused and specific context, such as the political and administrative dimensions, which may have unique implications related to the role of the Chinese ethnic group in decision-making and public services. Hence, this study concentrated on several key points, such as the impact of cultural acculturation in Singkawang, the supporting factors of cultural assimilation in the community in Singkawang, and the active role of the Chinese ethnic group in the governance of Singkawang through acculturation.

2. Methods

This study employs data collection via field research characterized by direct engagement at the research site and researcher immersion in the subject under investigation. In terms of its explanatory nature, the research design adopts a descriptive approach coupled with qualitative methodologies. This approach seeks to comprehend the phenomena or occurrences related to cultural acculturation within a community group, presenting resultant data in descriptive formats. To comprehensively explore the phenomenon of cultural acculturation in Singkawang, a multi-faceted research approach is utilized, encompassing three distinct perspectives: (1) the historical approach, (2) the anthropological approach, and (3) the sociological approach ([Benois-Pineau & Zemmari, 2021](#); [Cavaye, 1996](#)).

The historical approach is a foundational framework for delineating and interpreting cultures as outcomes of acculturation processes. This methodology is crucial in discerning whether a given culture is indigenous or a product of acculturation, necessitating a thorough examination of its origins and developmental history. The anthropological approach is a basis for understanding human individuals and their cultural constructs. It enables researchers to map the cultural variances within distinct ethnic groups, such as the Malays, Dayaks, and Chinese, thereby facilitating the identification of the acculturated culture as a new cultural paradigm. The sociological approach provides a lens through which human interactions, particularly within the contexts of various cultural entities, are examined and interpreted. This approach forms a foundational basis for evaluating the interplay of cultures at individual and collective levels, thus enabling the observation of cultural amalgamation leading to the emergence of novel cultural forms through acculturation.

The present research was conducted in Singkawang City, in West Kalimantan Province. The selection of Singkawang as the research locale was a deliberate decision stemming from its unique position as a city hosting a diverse tapestry of ethnicities. Additionally, Singkawang stands as an exemplar due to the active participation of its Chinese ethnic community in the governance sphere, a phenomenon distinguishing it from other Indonesian cities.

Primary information is generated through interviews conducted with seven individuals from Singkawang City, representing the Chinese, Dayak, Malay, and Madurese ethnicities, and three officials from the Singkawang local government. The seven ethnic groups were chosen to represent ethnic diversity. Various ethnicities were also selected to help understand the diverse perspectives of the communities. In addition to involving residents representing various ethnicities, informants from the local government were chosen to provide essential information about policies, implementation, and dynamics related to the acceptance of the Chinese ethnic group in governance. By engaging various informants, the research can achieve a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of how the acceptance of the Chinese ethnic group in Singkawang's governance unfolds. This allows for the identification of differing viewpoints, conflicts, and agreements that may occur in this context.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Impact of Acculturation in Singkawang City

According to [Berry \(2005\)](#), acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological change resulting from contact between two or more cultural groups and their members. Furthermore, Suyono (as cited in [Rumondor, 2015](#)), acculturation is the taking or acceptance of one or several cultural elements originating from meeting two or several cultural elements that are interconnected or meet each other. Based on this definition, it seems clear that there is a demand for mutual understanding between the two cultures so that a process will occur in intercultural communication.

Every time cultural acculturation occurs, it will impact the owner of the culture itself. These impacts range from positive indications to fatal ones for the culture's survival. This is the researcher's finding regarding the phenomenon of cultural acculturation that occurs between ethnic Chinese and other ethnic communities (especially Malay and Dayak ethnicities) in Singkawang City, West Kalimantan Province.

With a substantial Chinese population rooted in historical ties, the city exemplifies a compelling fusion of both cultures. The annual Chinese New Year festivities are a testament to this amalgamation, blending vibrant parades and performances with local traditions and fostering unity among diverse cultural groups. Religious practices have seamlessly integrated, as temples and shrines dedicated to Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism coexist with the broader religious landscape. The culinary landscape mirrors this integration, with Chinese flavors and techniques infusing local dishes, presenting a gastronomic bridge that unites different backgrounds. Interactions facilitated by intermarriage, business partnerships, and shared experiences have nurtured mutual understanding, contributing to a rich cultural exchange. Language acts as a unifying thread, with Bahasa Indonesia serving as the common means of communication alongside various Chinese dialects. This intertwining of cultures has also seen economic collaboration, as Chinese-Indonesian families engage in local businesses and trade, adding to the city's economic vibrancy. Amid this fusion, Singkawang diligently endeavors to uphold the authenticity of Chinese and local cultural elements through heritage programs and preservation efforts. The harmonious coexistence of these cultures enriches the city's identity while embodying the spirit of unity within Indonesia's diverse cultural mosaic.

The data shows that the impact caused by the phenomenon of cultural acculturation between the Malay and Dayak ethnic communities and the ethnic Chinese community in Singkawang City, namely: First, there has been a change in the perspective of ethnic communities, especially the Malay and Dayak ethnic groups, towards the existence of the Chinese community. They no longer regard the Chinese community as ethnic immigrants, resulting in treatment and social relations changes. These findings demonstrate that the coexistence of cultural harmony enriches the city's identity while embodying the spirit of unity within Indonesia's diverse cultural mosaic.

The existence of the Chinese ethnic religion and house of worship, namely the Confucian religion, is not considered to be a disturbance to the Malay ethnic community, who are Muslim, and the Dayak ethnic group, who are predominantly Christian. This allows the Chinese ethnic community to freely worship and establish their places of worship. Many houses of different religions stand side by side. Yet, according to acculturation theory, traditional and religious ceremonies are the most difficult aspects to accept and often cause friction.

Second, the impact of acculturation in the form of culture. Researchers found at least four points while in the field, namely, aspects of language, living equipment/architecture, food, and clothing. These four aspects are the cultural elements most easily accepted and assimilated across cultures. Moreover, the younger generation, or millennials, are generally indifferent to traditional culture, so there is no rejection when the culture is assimilated. It even happens unconsciously. Aspects of traditional culture are very vulnerable to being lost or replaced by new cultures. Meanwhile, aspects of belief or religion are the most difficult to replace or eliminate. The next interesting thing is about cultural acculturation. The typical Chinese architecture then merged with other religions there. The mosque cannot be separated from the Chinese touch.

The interaction of two or more different cultures is not a process that is easy. Difference is a condition that can be lighter than certain tensions or social crises of the owner's different culture. In acculturation studies, there are four main problems, namely (1) the elements What are the elements of foreign culture? Easy to accept or

difficult to accept; (2) What are the cultural elements? Easy to replace or change by foreign culture; (3) individuals who one is quick to accept elements of foreign culture, or vice versa; (4) various social tensions and crises as a result of acculturation (Poerwanto, 2000).

In Singkawang City, no conflicts or disputes are caused by these cultural and religious differences. According to figures representing local ethnicity, they no longer questioned religious issues, such as the construction of places of worship, ceremonies for each religion, commemorations of religious holidays, marriages that were originally of different religions, and so on.

“People no longer asked about religious differences, such as places of worship, worship procedures, and commemorating religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Christmas, etc. In essence, we respect each other.”

Preventing and mitigating conflicts often involve community engagement, government initiatives, and intercultural dialogue. Local and national organizations may work to promote harmony and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups. Many areas in the country, including Singkawang, have diverse and harmonious communities where different ethnic and religious groups coexist peacefully. Additionally, Indonesia as a whole has made significant progress in promoting tolerance and unity.

3.2. Supporting Factors for Acculturation of Community Culture in Singkawang City

The findings showed several factors that support acculturation with Chinese society and culture, namely, direct contact between Chinese people and other ethnicities, which can accelerate change. Assimilation with direct contact made by the Chinese community makes people of different ethnicities feel valued, so there is no suspicion that their culture is degraded.

Suryadinata's analysis highlights the intricate composition of the Chinese population in Indonesia, revealing the presence of diverse subgroups within this community. Among these subgroups, the most prominent distinctions lie between the "peranakan," who have undergone a process of cultural assimilation into the Indonesian milieu, and the "totok," who continue to hold steadfast to their distinct Chinese heritage. The concept of "peranakan" encompasses several categories: (a) those who are born within the borders of Indonesia to parents of Chinese origin, (b) individuals born from unions involving Chinese men and indigenous women, where their status as legitimate children is legally recognized and formally registered, (c) those born from mixed parentage, wherein their fathers are of indigenous origin and their mothers are Chinese, and who subsequently receive their education within the context of Chinese cultural traditions (Suryadinata, 2002).

Their incorporation of local cultural elements adds complexity to the Peranakan Chinese community. This assimilation process extends to various aspects of their lives, including language, educational practices, and religious beliefs. This intersection between the Peranakan Chinese identity and local customs not only fosters a sense of shared understanding and connection with the Indonesian community but also represents a dynamic cultural exchange. Hirschman (1991) notes that this integration of local cultural facets enriches the overall tapestry of the

Chinese culture, shaping it into a unique and multi-dimensional expression of identity.

Over time, this interplay of cultural elements has contributed to transforming the Chinese identity. While the core of their heritage remains rooted in Chinese origins, their cultural identity has evolved to incorporate the Indonesian context's values, practices, and nuances. In this evolving cultural landscape, the Chinese community stands as a testament to the intricate intermingling of traditions and the enduring spirit of diversity within Indonesia.

In Singkawang, there are many marriages between ethnic Chinese and ethnic Malays and Dayaks (Nastiti, 2008). Likewise, there are many ethnic Chinese who embrace Islam. According to information received from the public, several Tinghoa children are adopted children of people of Malay or Dayak ethnicity, although far more still maintain their pure Chinese ancestry.

This direct contact or assimilation is seen in everyday life, including cultural and religious ceremonial activities. One of the moments that can be seen is during the Chinese New Year every year when thousands of ethnic Chinese from various parts of the archipelago and even from abroad come to Singkawang City to celebrate with their relatives in Singkawang city. In each of these events, Singkawang City is always full of people celebrating it. The largest and oldest worship center there, named Vihara Tri Dharma Bumi Raya, is the epicenter of the location of the event.

At that time, there was also an assimilation of other ethnicities such as Malays and Dayaks. They mutually reinforce each other, because this understanding of assimilation has been instilled from generation to generation. Hasyim (2011) explains that acculturation is a blend of the two cultures that occur in harmonious life and peace. It can be concluded that acculturation is the union of two cultures or more to form a new culture without eliminating elements of native culture.

One thing that is no less important in this assimilation of ethnic Chinese is the existence of multi-ethnic Chinese social organizations. This means they help various groups regardless of ethnic and religious backgrounds, such as social organizations working in health, education, and the economy, and for mutual security, such as firefighting organizations. All the people of Singkawang city feel all of these benefits.

Singkawang is renowned for its vibrant Chinese community, characterized by various social and cultural organizations. These organizations are open to members from various ethnic groups and are not limited to the Chinese ethnicity. These organizations are inclusive. They also promote diversity and ethnic integration within the Singkawang community. This reflects the spirit of unity and harmony within Indonesia's diverse cultural mosaic. By opening their doors to members from various ethnic backgrounds, these organizations can serve as a platform that enables different groups to interact, share cultures, and enrich shared social experiences. Among the Chinese social organizations in Singkawang, several notable ones included the Kong Hu Cu Temple (Vihara Tri Dharma Bumi Raya), which served as a focal point for religious and cultural activities, hosting events, celebrations, and social gatherings. Additionally, the city featured multiple Buddhist temples that acted as centers for religious practices and cultural exchanges within the Chinese community. Cultural and clan associations were prevalent, each devoted to preserving their specific cultural heritage and fostering social connections among members. Lion and dragon dance groups showcased traditional performances in various festivals, adding vibrancy to the cultural landscape. Youth organizations focused on cultural, social, and community development engaged younger generations in upholding and celebrating Chinese traditions. Educational institutions

and cultural centers likely provided language and cultural classes to pass down these traditions to the next generation. Business associations might have existed to facilitate economic networking and collaboration, while charitable organizations contributed to community service. Sports and recreational clubs fostered social bonds, and community centers were hubs for diverse social, cultural, and educational activities. To obtain the latest and most accurate information regarding Chinese social organizations in Singkawang, it's recommended to consult local sources, community centers, and local government offices or conduct an online search.

Secondly, the economic level of the Chinese community is almost the same as that of the Malay and Dayak ethnic groups. Unlike other areas in Indonesia, in general, the Chinese community has a much better economic level than the local community, but in Singkawang City, the economic level of the Chinese community is no different from that of the local community. In Singkawang City, many Chinese people work as small traders, farmers, laborers, manual laborers, and so on.

The absence of a stark difference in economic level makes them not awkward in association. They are small traders, farmers, laborers, and other lowly workers. Such a close association makes them know and use each other's language. In fact, more than 60 percent of the Singkawang people use Tionghoa Hakka in their daily conversations.

They also like each other's food and imitate each other in dress. So that many ethnic Malays and Dayaks understand and can speak Chinese. The Malay and Dayak communities highly favor various types of Chinese food. Not only do they make this dish their favorite, but they also make it themselves. In food stalls, you can find cakes or other Chinese dishes made and sold by the Malay community. This is in accordance with what was said by The Organization for Migration (2004) that the progressive adaptation of a person, group, or class to a culture on foreign cultural elements, which include ideas, words, values, norms, behavior, and so on.

3.3. The Active Role of Chinese Ethnicity in Government in Singkawang City by Acculturation

The role of citizens originating from the Chinese ethnicity in Indonesian politics and government has a long historical foundation. At the outset of independence, the government permitted this ethnicity to establish organizations such as BAPERKI (Indonesian Citizens Consultative Body), primarily composed of Chinese-Indonesian descendants, and Qiao Zong (the General Association of Chinese Residents in Indonesia), predominantly representing the totok Chinese group. Although these organizations were dissolved during the New Order era, they could affiliate with state-sponsored entities, notably Golkar. During that period, although not numerous, several individuals were part of the government, including in the DPR. Notably, Djoko Sudyatmiko, also known as Lie Giok Hauw, served as a Golkar representative from 1982 to 1987, and Budi Dipojuwono, also known as Lie Po Yoe, was a PNI (Indonesian National Party) representative from 1971 to 1977 (Suryadinata, 1981).

After the reform era, opportunities for all Indonesian society, including the Chinese ethnic group, to engage in practical political activities have not been fully maximized by the Chinese ethnic community. Their occupation primarily revolving around the national economy has led to the perception that the emergence of the Chinese ethnic group in the political arena is met by other ethnic groups with negative stereotypes.

Since its establishment as a city in 2001, Singkawang has been a notable example of the active involvement and leadership of the ethnic Chinese community within its administrative framework. This phenomenon is particularly evident in their prominent roles as members and leaders of the Singkawang City Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). Among these influential figures, Tjhai Chui Mie is pivotal in the city's governance. Serving as the mayor from 2017 to 2022, Tjhai Chui Mie has an extensive history of public service, having previously held the esteemed position of chairman of the Singkawang City DPRD from 2009 to 2014. His re-election further highlights his commitment to the community as a DPRD member in 2014 and his successful bid for the mayoral office in 2017, solidifying his position as the city's leader until 2022. It's worth noting that Singkawang is currently under the leadership of an Acting Mayor, with this interim role expected to continue until 2024.

A notable figure who has also significantly contributed to the Singkawang city administration is Ceng Linqin, known by the monikers Hakka Akhim or Suberanto Tjitra. His impactful role as the deputy chairman of the Singkawang City DPRD from 2014 to 2019, coupled with his previous tenure as a DPRD member from 2009 to 2014, underscores the enduring dedication of ethnic Chinese individuals to civic governance (Pratama, 2016). Additionally, a diverse cadre of ethnic Chinese representatives have consistently been active members of the Singkawang City DPRD since the city's inception. This commitment to public service has been integral to shaping the city's diverse and dynamic governance landscape. Notable names during the 2019 to 2024 period include Tjung Kie Tjhin, Anton Triadi, Lie Khian Loy, and Kon Jun Fun, among others, who have each played a role in driving Singkawang's development (Oxtora, 2019).

An emblematic manifestation of cultural acculturation within Singkawang's municipal framework is the regular utilization of the Hakka Chinese language in official communications. Mayors and government officials, as representatives of the diverse cultural fabric of Singkawang, often employ the Hakka Chinese language during various official functions, including meetings, public addresses, and interactions with the local populace. While this linguistic practice may raise queries among those newly introduced to Singkawang's unique cultural amalgamation, empirical data indicates that a significant portion—more than 60 percent—of the city's population is proficient in and actively engages with the Hakka language in their daily lives (Liputan6.com, 2007; Suarakalbar.id, 2022).

The enthusiastic participation and leadership of the Chinese ethnic community within Singkawang have garnered widespread acceptance and endorsement from the city's diverse ethnic groups. This collective embrace has solidified Singkawang's reputation as a paragon of tolerance and harmonious coexistence within Indonesia's cultural mosaic. The inclusive ethos and collaborative spirit that underlie this support are intrinsically woven into the ongoing process of cultural acculturation, which has been pivotal in shaping Singkawang's unique identity and administrative dynamics.

4. Conclusion

In Singkawang, the dynamic between Chinese and local cultures is characterized by harmonious coexistence and mutual respect. The fusion of these cultures has enriched the city's identity and contributed to its uniqueness within Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape. Assimilation between different cultures in Indonesia offers several valuable benefits. Firstly, it fosters social cohesion by creating a shared sense of identity among diverse communities, leading to greater understanding and harmony. Secondly, it promotes tolerance and respect as individuals learn about and

appreciate each other's traditions and beliefs. This, in turn, can reduce prejudice and enhance empathy. Thirdly, cultural assimilation drives economic growth by encouraging collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and skills across various cultural groups. Moreover, the blending of cultural elements enriches society by creating new traditions, art forms, and cuisines. This diversity also presents educational opportunities, allowing for the integration of unique learning approaches. Additionally, a culturally rich nation attracts tourism and improves international relations. On a personal level, assimilation contributes to personal growth by broadening individuals' worldviews and enhancing intercultural communication skills. Lastly, it supports political stability by fostering cooperation among different groups. However, it's crucial to maintain a balanced approach that respects the uniqueness of each culture to prevent negative consequences like cultural erosion or social tensions.

The phenomenon of cultural acculturation between the Chinese ethnic community and other ethnic groups, particularly the Malay and Dayak ethnicities, in Singkawang City, engenders several discernible impacts, including 1) A perceptible shift in the outlook of other ethnic groups, notably the Malay and Dayak communities, towards the presence of the Chinese community. 2) The tangible cultural repercussions of acculturation manifest in multiple dimensions. During the fieldwork, the research identified distinct aspects of language, material culture, dietary practices, and attire that have undergone modification due to cultural interplay.

Moreover, several factors contribute to the acculturation process of Chinese culture within Singkawang City, namely: 1) direct interactions and intermingling between the Chinese community and other ethnic groups, which can expedite cultural transformations. 2) comparable economic standing between the Chinese community and other ethnic groups, particularly the Malay and Dayak communities, further fostering cultural exchange and interaction. The active involvement of the Chinese ethnicity within the governance structure of Singkawang City has been notable since its formation in 2001, a trend that was also evident when Singkawang was a part of the Sambas district. The reception and endorsement of Chinese leadership can be attributed to the extensive process of acculturation that has unfolded over time.

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