Between Institutional Marginalization and Identity Reconfiguration: The Impact of Indonesia's Political Transformation on Chinese Indonesian Political Identity

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
	As one of Southeast Asia's largest archipelagic nations, Indonesia's multicultural social fabric plays a crucial role in its development. This paper examines how changes in Indonesia's political system have impacted the political identity of the Chinese community, focusing on institutional marginalization and identity reconfiguration. Despite longstanding marginalization in political, cultural, and social spheres, the post-1998 democratization reforms gradually expanded opportunities for Chinese political participation. Using a historical institutionalism framework, this study analyzes the evolution of Chinese political identity — from ambiguous status in the independence era, through assimilation under Suharto's New Order, to gradual reconfiguration during democratization. It also discusses adaptive strategies such as political apathy, economic adaptation, and community-based identity spaces. Despite progress, challenges persist due to religious nationalism, socio-psychological barriers, and institutional constraints. Future reforms should prioritize reducing implicit discrimination and enhancing social integration to foster political equality and identity reconstruction.

I. Introduction

Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country, possesses rich ethnic and cultural diversity. As a multi-ethnic nation, Indonesia's ethnic relations have long been challenging, particularly for the Chinese community. Throughout Indonesian history, the Chinese have undergone a complex process of identity formation, where their
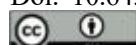
political participation and social status have often been impacted by institutional exclusion and social prejudice. Indonesia and China are separated by sea, with a history of interactions dating back to the early Han Dynasty. Scholars such as Li Xuemin suggest that organized Chinese immigration to Indonesia began as early as the late Tang and the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. By the 12th to 13th centuries, a vibrant overseas Chinese society had initially taken shape in Indonesia. In the early 20th century, the Chinese population in Indonesia numbered 220,000, growing to 1.23 million by 1930. During the ethnic census conducted by the Indonesian government in the 1960s, the Chinese population reached 2 million. Current figures for the Chinese Indonesian population remain highly disputed, with estimates from various government departments, institutions, and scholars ranging widely from 2.41 million to 30 million (Li,2005). This significant discrepancy in numbers itself reflects the complexity of Chinese Indonesian identity. The Chinese community in Indonesia has experienced numerous challenges and adaptations throughout history. From a relatively elevated status during the colonial period, to the cultural assimilation policies of the New Order era, and further to the social crisis of 1998, the transformation of the Chinese identity within Indonesian society has been a complex and intricate journey.

This paper aims to examine the profound impact of changes in Indonesia's political system on the political identity of the Chinese community. Utilizing the perspective of historical institutionalism, combined with theories of political identity, identity reconfiguration, and the concept of institutional marginalization, it analyzes the evolution of the Chinese community's identity amidst Indonesia's political institutional transformations. The study focuses particularly on the gradual transition of the Chinese community's political identity from the early years of Indonesian independence to the post-democratic reform era, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered throughout this process. It is hoped that this research will provide a valuable theoretical framework and practical insights for understanding the reconstruction of political identity among ethnic minorities in multi-ethnic nations globally.

II. Historical Changes in Indonesia's Political System and the Evolution of Policies Towards the Chinese Community

(1) Early Independence Period (1945-1965)

Indonesia formally declared independence in 1945, entering a complex phase of nation-building. The nascent post-independence regime sought to construct a unified national identity within a multi-ethnic society(Zheng,1991). However, the Chinese community, as one of Indonesia's principal ethnic minorities, encountered ambiguous identity status and institutional exclusion during this process.

During the Dutch colonial era, the Chinese community enjoyed relatively

privileged economic status, occupying significant roles as merchants and capitalists within the Indonesian economy. The Dutch colonial administration established specific social hierarchies and trade networks that elevated the economic standing of the Chinese while simultaneously deepening divisions with indigenous Indonesian groups. Following independence, the Indonesian government faced the challenge of addressing the "Chinese question" within its nation-building project(Huang,1988). Given the historically complex relationship between the Chinese and indigenous populations, many Indonesian nationalists viewed the Chinese as "outsiders" who should not be integrated into the new nation. Within this context, the government implemented various policies, including naturalization measures requiring the Chinese to choose between Indonesian citizenship or retaining foreign nationality. The 1958 Citizenship Law mandated this choice, gradually diminishing the political presence and participation of the Chinese community through enforced identity categorization. During this period, the citizenship status of the Chinese was often operationally constrained; the government not only legally obscured the position of Chinese citizens but also excluded many from electoral and political processes in practice(Long,2013). At this stage, the Chinese community struggled to fully integrate into mainstream Indonesian society while facing systematic marginalization within institutional structures.

Although the government verbally advocated equal treatment for all citizens, its practical implementation was marked by discrimination and restrictions against the Chinese community. By limiting Chinese political participation, the government aimed to consolidate the unity of the "Indonesian nation." These policies fostered strong resentment among the Chinese while exacerbating tensions between them and indigenous Indonesians. Due to the suppression of their political engagement, the identity of the Chinese community remained highly unstable during this period, and their marginalization within the national political system became increasingly entrenched.

(2) Suharto's New Order Period (1966-1998)

Following the "September 30th Movement" incident in 1965, Suharto ascended to power and established an authoritarian "New Order" regime, marking a new phase in Indonesia's political system. During this period, the Suharto government implemented a series of stringent "de-Sinification" policies that further suppressed the political presence of the Chinese community. These policies, rooted in nationalism, intensified the political and cultural exclusion of the Chinese. In 1967, the government enacted multiple measures aimed at diminishing Chinese cultural influence, including the prohibition of Chinese-language schools and media, mandatory adoption of Indonesian names(Yang,2003), and the comprehensive promotion of assimilation policies. These actions led to profound suppression of Chinese culture and language, severely challenging the cultural identity of the Chinese community. Simultaneously, the government imposed restrictive economic policies targeting the Chinese, limiting

their development in business, education, and other social spheres. The distinctive status of the Chinese in enterprise and social activities was undermined, with many Chinese-owned businesses forced to transfer ownership or subjected to stringent government controls.

Through these "de-Sinification" policies, the New Order regime not repressed the cultural identity of the Chinese community but also stripped them of political participation rights. During this era, the identity of the Chinese was not only marginalized but also politically stigmatized. By labeling the Chinese as "affluent yet unpatriotic," the government reinforced their negative societal image. This stigmatization exacerbated tensions between the Chinese and indigenous Indonesian groups. Faced with such a high-pressure political environment, most Chinese adopted strategies of "political apathy" and "depoliticization." Many chose to withdraw from the political arena, redirecting their efforts toward economic activities and private enterprise development to avoid potential political conflicts. Due to prolonged political suppression, the political identity of the Chinese community largely receded into obscurity, leaving them with no meaningful place in national politics (Zhang, 2017).

(3) Period of Democratization Reform (1998–Present)

The collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 marked Indonesia's entry into a new phase of political openness. The democratization reforms provided the Chinese community with unprecedented opportunities for political participation. The gradual liberalization of the political environment, particularly through electoral reforms and the legitimization of ethnic minority cultures, granted the Chinese community greater political rights. In 2000, the Indonesian government abolished restrictions on Chinese cultural expressions, and in 2002, designated the Lunar New Year as a public holiday, signifying state-level recognition of the Chinese community's cultural identity. These changes not only bolstered the community's cultural confidence but also catalyzed profound shifts in its political identity.

The advancement of democratic electoral systems significantly enhanced the political engagement of the Chinese community. Representative figures from the community began to enter the political arena, participating in policy-making and public affairs. The election of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) as Governor of Jakarta marked a major political breakthrough for the Chinese community. His success not reflected the growing political representation of Chinese Indonesians in the democratic process but also indicated a gradual reconfiguration of their political identity. Nevertheless, despite expanded opportunities for political involvement, Chinese politicians continued to face substantial pressure from nationalist and religious conservative forces. During his political career, Ahok encountered significant controversy related to religious issues, particularly in the highly publicized blasphemy case, which exposed the continued fragility and instability of Chinese

political identity. Although democratization created institutional opportunities for political engagement, the reconstruction of the Chinese community's political identity remains fraught with challenges. The resurgence of nationalist sentiments, the influence of religious politics, and persistent historical prejudices against the Chinese continue to impede full integration of their political identity into mainstream society. Together, these factors ensure that the evolution of the Chinese community's political identity involves not only institutional changes but also ongoing socio-psychological struggles.

The historical transformations of Indonesia's political system have profoundly shaped the political identity of the Chinese community. From the ambiguous status of the early independence period and the repressive policies of the Suharto era to the ongoing identity reconfiguration in the post-reform period, the Chinese community's political identity has undergone a long transition from marginalization toward gradual acceptance. Although the political system has increasingly incorporated the Chinese community, socio-cultural barriers persist, and their political identity continues to face significant challenges. This process underscores the crucial role of political institutions in shaping minority identity formation, as well as the complex interplay of opportunities and challenges brought about by political openness.

III. Characteristics of Chinese Political Identity under Institutional Marginalization

(1) Marginalized Characteristics of Political Identity

Since the founding of Indonesia, the Chinese Indonesian community has long occupied the periphery of the country's political system. Even today, they have yet to fully integrate into the mainstream national and ethnic identity framework of Indonesian society. Historically, the Indonesian government implemented a series of policies that excluded the Chinese community from the center of national political life. Whether during the colonial era or after independence, the Chinese have consistently been perceived as "outsiders" and subjected to institutional exclusion. This exclusion directly resulted in the long-term weakening of their political identity, gradually cementing its marginalized characteristics.

Institutional exclusionary policies enforced by the Indonesian government included, but were not limited to, restrictions on identity documentation, property registration, and cultural expression for the Chinese community. From the early to mid-20th century, the government not only denied the Chinese political rights equal to those of indigenous Indonesians but also significantly limited their opportunities for political participation through various legal mechanisms. The 1958 Citizenship Law, which required the Chinese to choose between naturalization or retaining foreign nationality, indirectly diminished their presence within Indonesia's political system. Even in the economic sphere, the influence and wealth accumulated by the Chinese

through economic activities failed to translate into corresponding political voice or social acceptance.

Although Indonesia's political system has gradually opened up in recent decades, the political identity of the Chinese community remains fragile. While they aspire to integrate into mainstream society and obtain political rights equal to other ethnic groups, they continue to face nationalist sentiments and societal rejection. Deep-seated stereotypes persist in Indonesian society, characterizing the Chinese as economically dominant yet politically disloyal. These perceptions further exacerbate interethnic tensions and reinforce the identity dilemma of the Chinese community.

The "otherness" of the Chinese community stems not only from external institutional exclusion but is also deeply rooted in socio-cultural dynamics. This dimension of marginalization extends beyond the lack of political rights to include the blurring and erosion of cultural identity. Within Indonesia's majority-dominated national identity framework, the cultural identity of the Chinese community is often viewed as incomplete or even entirely excluded from the conception of Indonesian national identity. This cultural marginalization intensifies the sense of isolation experienced by the Chinese in expressing their cultural identity, while also contributing to their lack of belonging in the realm of political identity.

(2) Coping Strategies of the Chinese Community

Faced with political marginalization and social exclusion, the Chinese Indonesian community has adopted various coping strategies to counteract unfair institutional and societal pressures. These strategies typically manifest as political apathy, depoliticization, and the pursuit of alternative spaces for identity expression. Particularly during the New Order regime, the Chinese widely opted to distance themselves from politics, avoiding participation in political activities that could trigger social conflict. Over the past decades, the community has primarily sought survival and identity preservation within the economic and cultural spheres, especially through business and education. This approach has somewhat alleviated political oppression while providing a stable social foundation and economic security for the Chinese.

Due to severe restrictions on political expression, many Chinese have focused their energies on economic development and commercial activities. By operating family businesses, the community has not only secured economic stability for itself but also created spaces for social interaction and cultural preservation. While this economic survival strategy has been effective, it has also reinforced negative stereotypes within Indonesian society regarding Chinese economic dominance, further fueling anti-Chinese sentiment. The success of Chinese businesses is often interpreted as "capitalist oppression," cementing their label as "foreign elites."

As the political environment gradually opened up, Chinese community organizations began to play a significant role in Indonesian society. Active participation in social welfare, educational philanthropy, and charitable initiatives by these organizations has not only fostered collective identity and cultural belonging among the Chinese but also promoted communication and interaction with other ethnic groups. Through public cultural events and charitable donations, Chinese associations have gradually shed their previously "invisible" social status and begun to express their identity in the public sphere.

Despite providing avenues for survival and identity expression, these strategies have also limited the Chinese community's further engagement in the political domain. Many Chinese remain cautious about political participation, perceiving it as high-risk due to the potential for social conflict and identity-based controversy. The persistent societal rejection of the Chinese political identity has led the community to prioritize seeking influence in the economic rather than the political arena.

IV. Changes in Chinese Political Identity After Political Opening

(1) The Rise of Multiple Identities and Identity Differentiation

With the gradual opening of Indonesia's political system, the political identity of the Chinese community has undergone significant changes. Particularly among the younger generation, identity expression has become more diverse and individualized. This shift not only reflects changes in the political environment but also reveals the complex relationship between ethnic identity and national identity. Against the backdrop of political liberalization, the identity of the Chinese Indonesian community has experienced profound differentiation. Traditional Chinese Indonesians often identify primarily as "Indonesian citizens," consciously downplaying their Chinese characteristics. This identity strategy stems largely from concerns about social exclusion. The older generation emphasizes integration into Indonesian society, seeking social and political acceptance by strengthening their identity as Indonesian nationals. The formation of this strategy is closely tied to Indonesia's historical political context, particularly under political repression and ethnic discrimination, where the Chinese community—whether consciously or unconsciously—suppressed their cultural traits to avoid provoking social discontent or conflict.

In contrast, the younger generation exhibits a stronger sense of self-identity and emphasizes their dual identity as "Chinese Indonesians." Unlike their predecessors, young Chinese Indonesians actively express their ethnic identity through platforms such as social media and cultural activities, asserting that their "Chineseness" should not only be respected but also recognized as an integral part of Indonesia's multicultural society. They no longer view their Chinese identity as a burden but rather as a source of cultural pride, displayed openly in the public sphere. This transformation reflects the younger generation's increasingly positive

self-identification in the context of globalization and cultural pluralism(Wang,2023).

However, this internal differentiation within the Chinese community has also generated certain conflicts and challenges. Some traditional Chinese view the younger generation's emphasis on ethnic identity as potentially exacerbating tensions with indigenous Indonesians and even provoking ethnic conflict. The confident expression and cultural assertiveness of the youth are often perceived by older generations as "radical," fearing that such actions may invite further exclusion and negative perceptions of the Chinese community. This divergence in identity perspectives highlights the tension between ethnic identity and national identity. On one hand, the Chinese community seeks to establish its place within cultural diversity; on the other, it strives to integrate into mainstream society and achieve harmonious coexistence with indigenous groups.

Balancing their "Chinese" identity with their "Indonesian" identity has become a critical challenge for the community in reconstructing its political identity. This is not only a cultural dilemma but also a political one. The question of how to harmonize ethnic identity with national identity and foster their coexistence remains a pressing issue for Chinese Indonesians to thoughtfully address.

Amid the gradually opening political environment, the identity expression of the Chinese community has shifted from passive adaptation to active assertion. In the cultural domain, Chinese associations actively shape their societal image through festivals, cultural exhibitions, and other activities. One of the most symbolic events was the official designation of the Lunar New Year as a public holiday, marking the Indonesian government's formal recognition of Chinese cultural identity. This move not only provided the Chinese community with an opportunity to showcase their culture but also signaled to Indonesian society that Chinese culture is an important component of the nation's multicultural fabric. By organizing cultural activities such as Lunar New Year celebrations, Chinese associations have begun proactively inviting other ethnic groups to participate, fostering cross-ethnic cultural interaction and identity building. This transformation extends beyond the cultural sphere into areas such as social welfare and political participation. The Chinese community has started to more directly articulate political demands, advocating for greater social resources and discursive power.

(2) The Challenge of Religious and Nationalist Revival

As the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia witnesses Islam playing a dominant role in social and cultural life, with religious faith crucially shaping national identity. The Chinese community exhibits diverse religious beliefs, including adherence to Islam, but a significant portion practices Buddhism and Christianity. This religious divergence, within Indonesia's multi-religious society, becomes a source of identity conflict between the Chinese community and indigenous religious

groups. Although the Indonesian constitution guarantees religious freedom, in socio-cultural practice, religious identity and national identity are often closely intertwined, creating specific religious expectations among certain ethnic groups. Many indigenous Indonesians, particularly Muslim communities, regard Islam as central to national identity in both social and political contexts. In contrast, the Chinese community, owing to their adherence to non-Islamic faiths such as Buddhism and Christianity, is frequently perceived as "religious others." This religious difference complicates their socio-cultural integration. In some regions, especially those with conservative religious views, the distinct religious practices of the Chinese often become grounds for their exclusion.

In recent years, the resurgence of religious conservatism and rising nationalist sentiments in Indonesia have further accentuated the divide between the religious beliefs of the Chinese community and the mainstream faith. The confluence of religious conservatism and nationalism has intensified religious prejudices against the Chinese, with their faith seen as incompatible with Indonesian national identity and even raising doubts about their loyalty to the nation. Some political figures and religious leaders have exploited these religious differences to exclusion and hostility toward the Chinese, exacerbating tensions between them and native Muslims. In local elections and public activities, Chinese candidates frequently face religious labeling, particularly in regions where religious conservatism prevails. Even when Chinese candidates propose policies aligned with public interests, their religious differences remain a magnified issue. They are often viewed as religious "outsiders" and sometimes suspected of questionable loyalty. This religious exclusion poses significant obstacles to the cultural identity and social integration of the Chinese community, especially when religious and nationalist forces combine, threatening their sense of identity.

Although the Indonesian constitution ensures religious freedom, conflicts between religious and cultural identities remain profound in reality. Religious difference constitutes one of the major social challenges for the Chinese community, particularly when religion intersects with national identity, making religious faith a "vulnerability" in their social acceptance. Therefore, addressing religious identity differences and achieving the integration of the Chinese community into mainstream society while respecting religious freedom present a formidable challenge.

(3) Historical Trauma and the Chinese Community's Identity Dilemma

Historical trauma remains one of the profoundly painful aspects of identity for the Chinese Indonesian community, particularly the anti-communist massacres of 1965 and the violent riots of 1998. These historical events not only exacerbated ethnic tensions between the Chinese and indigenous Indonesians but also deeply influenced the political and national identity of the Chinese community.

In 1965, Indonesia witnessed anti-communist massacres in which the Chinese community became one of the primary targets. Due to historical associations between some Chinese and the Indonesian Communist Party, many were erroneously equated with communists. Although the majority of the Chinese community had no involvement in politics or communist activities, the political complexities of the time made them victims of violent purges. Many Chinese were killed, disappeared, or forced to flee, during which the community suffered severe devastation economically, culturally, and familially. This historical trauma not only instilled deep skepticism among the Chinese toward the Indonesian state but also widened the rift between them and other ethnic groups. The memory of these massacres remains largely unhealed, posing a significant obstacle to the Chinese community's efforts to build a shared identity with mainstream Indonesian society.

The 1998 economic crisis and political turmoil once again made the Chinese community victims of violent conflict. During the large-scale riots, particularly in Jakarta and other major cities, Chinese-owned shops, homes, and properties became primary targets of violence. Chinese businesses were looted and burned, while Chinese women and children faced sexual violence on the streets. These riots profoundly shaped the community's perception of national identity. Many Chinese endured immense psychological trauma, the legacy of which continues to deeply affect their sense of belonging. Although the government implemented some remedial measures post-violence, many Chinese have yet to fully overcome the shadow of this historical trauma. To this day, their feelings toward national identity and political loyalty remain complex and ambivalent.

These historical traumas have left the Chinese community confused and uneasy in shaping their Indonesian national identity. Despite a strong sense of belonging, the deep divide with mainstream society renders their national identity particularly fragile. In a multi-ethnic nation, the Chinese community must not only navigate interethnic contradictions but also grapple with the emotional and psychological pain inflicted by historical trauma. This trauma has become a significant hurdle to reconciliation between the Chinese and other Indonesian ethnic groups. Despite numerous political and institutional reforms over the decades, these historical issues persistently impact the social identity of the Chinese community.

To this day, many Chinese remain unable to fully move past these historical wounds, and this collective memory continues to influence their relationship with Indonesian society. The unhealed historical trauma imbues their national identity with uncertainty. Even amid modernization and globalization, the historical trauma of the Chinese community remains deeply embedded in their cultural memory, creating a profound chasm in their efforts to shape a national identity.

While the reconstruction of political identity among Chinese Indonesians has made some progress driven by institutional reforms and social changes, religious

differences, nationalist resurgence, and the far-reaching impact of historical trauma continue to pose severe challenges to their national identity formation. Religious disparities and cultural identity conflicts persistently trouble the community, while the wounds of historical events fill their political identity with complex emotions and uncertainty.

Against this backdrop, key questions for the future include how the Chinese Indonesian community can break through traditional religious and cultural prejudices, find its place within a multicultural framework, and build a deeper sense of identity with mainstream Indonesian society. Indonesia's political openness and ethnic integration offer opportunities for the Chinese community to integrate into mainstream society, yet the enduring influence of history and religious divisions remain major challenges. Through further institutional reforms, cultural inclusivity, and social integration, the political identity of the Chinese community may achieve more comprehensive reconstruction in the future.

V. Conclusion

This study, focusing on Chinese Indonesians from a historical institutionalism perspective, examines the impact of changes in Indonesia's political system on the political identity of the Chinese community, with particular attention to the interactive mechanisms between institutional marginalization and identity reconfiguration. Through an in-depth analysis of institutional transformations during the early independence period, the New Order era, and the post-democratization phase, it is evident that the political identity of Chinese Indonesians has undergone a transition from institutional exclusion toward gradual institutional acceptance and identity reconstruction. However, this process has not achieved complete and thorough identity integration, as institutional and socio-psychological barriers persist for Chinese Indonesians.

The damage inflicted by long-term institutional discriminatory policies on the political identity of the Chinese community has been profound. Institutional marginalization not only deprived the Chinese of political participation rights but also severely weakened their sense of national belonging, prompting them to adopt self-preservation strategies such as political apathy and avoidance of political engagement. Relying on economic development and grassroots community networks, the Chinese community sought alternative spaces for identity to maintain ethnic cohesion. However, this strategy also yielded negative social consequences, further entrenching the negative perception of Chinese Indonesians as possessing "economic privilege" or being "foreign elites" within Indonesian society. This perpetuated political and social divisions, constraining the depth and breadth of the community's political participation.

Since the democratization reforms, institutional discrimination has somewhat

eased, and the space for political participation by the Chinese community has expanded significantly. The younger generation of Chinese Indonesians has demonstrated more proactive identity expression and political engagement, confidently showcasing their cultural characteristics and pursuing dual integration of cultural and national identity. While this trend of active expression positively contributes to the reconstruction of their political identity, it has also triggered intergenerational identity conflicts within the community. The older generation, shaped by historical memories and experiences of social exclusion, tends to advocate for cautious expression, fearing that the assertive display of identity by the youth may provoke societal backlash. Reconciling intergenerational differences in identity and fostering a more cohesive ethnic consensus remains a critical issue to address in the process of identity reconstruction.

Furthermore, the resurgence of religion and nationalism, along with the negative legacy of historical trauma, continues to pose severe challenges to the political identity of the Chinese community. The religious differences between the predominantly Muslim mainstream society and the Chinese community make it difficult for the latter to achieve full acceptance at the socio-cultural level. The tension between religious identity and national identity significantly restricts the political space available to the Chinese community. Simultaneously, historical violent events, such as the 1965 anti-communist massacres and the 1998 anti-Chinese riots, have profoundly impacted the community's trust in and identification with the nation. To this day, historical memories remain an invisible chasm between the Chinese and other ethnic groups in Indonesia, hindering smooth ethnic integration and the realization of political identity.

The conceptual framework of institutional marginalization, political identity, and identity reconfiguration employed in this study demonstrates strong explanatory power, effectively revealing the complex and dynamic relationship between changes in the political system and ethnic identity. When examining issues of ethnic identity, greater attention must be paid to the interaction between socio-psychological factors and institutional elements, avoiding simplistic attributions of identity changes to institutional policy adjustments alone. The reconstruction of identity is a comprehensive process involving historical, socio-psychological, and cultural factors, where institutional reforms are a necessary but insufficient condition.

Based on the above analysis, while continuing to promote institutional openness, the Indonesian government must also prioritize fostering socio-psychological and cultural inclusivity and acceptance, actively facilitating cross-ethnic communication and integration to reduce intergroup misunderstandings and hostility. Theoretically, future research should focus more on the mechanisms of political identity at the micro-level, particularly the long-term impact of individual and collective memory on identity formation. The reconstruction of political identity for Chinese Indonesians remains a challenging and protracted task, requiring not only ongoing government

policy efforts but also the collective commitment of the Chinese community and Indonesian society as a whole. Only through the dual effects of institutional openness and socio-psychological acceptance can genuine political and cultural integration between Chinese Indonesians and mainstream society be achieved.

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