

## RELIGIOUS IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION Cultural Interbreeding Between Dayak Indigenous Culture and Islam

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**Abstract:** The arrival of imported religions, Islam and Christianity in particular, in West Kalimantan creates cultural dialectic and transformation within local indigenous Dayak's culture and belief. This article tries to explore on cultural interbreeding between Dayak indigenous culture and Islam in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The findings have revealed that the interaction between local Dayak culture with variant of Islam creates new cultural identity such as Senganan Dayak in Semabi. This new identity is the consequence for those who convert to Islam as they do not abandon the Dayak identity. However, the massive conversion of Dayak to Islam does not necessarily imply the downgrading of identity from Dayak to Malay; instead they still remain to be Dayak in spite of their conversion to new religion. Another transformation occurred within tradition such as the ritual of "*ngantar buah pulang* (bring fruit home)". This Dayak indigenous ritual is replaced with Islamic kind of thanksgiving ritual and replaces the spelling of magic spell with supplication to God Almighty.

**Keywords:** Dayak Muslims, Local Culture, New Identity, Cultural Interbreeding, Kalimantan

### Introduction

Indonesia consists of 34 provinces lied in five big island and four archipelagoes.<sup>1</sup> The island of Kalimantan or Borneo is home to five

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<sup>1</sup> Singgih, T. Sulistiyo., Y. Rochwulaningsih, Y., 'Contest for Hegemony: the Dynamics of Inland and Maritime Cultures Relations in the History of Java Island, Indonesia,' *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, 2, 2 (2013), pp. 115-127.

provinces of West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, and North Kalimantan. According to Central Statistic Body in 2018, there are 243 islands in West Kalimantan, two cities, 12 regions, 176 districts; 2132 villages, and 4,932,564 people.<sup>2</sup>

Dayak is the indigenous tribe of West Kalimantan that shows plurality in terms of language, art, rituals and architecture.<sup>3</sup> They are considered as the native ethnic of Kalimantan identified as exotic group, known for their hinterland and primitive image,<sup>4</sup> hunting human heads,<sup>5</sup> living in a longhouse (*lamin*)<sup>6</sup> using machetes called *mandau*<sup>7</sup> and blowgun spears made from bamboo rubbed with poison. They have small eyes and long ears, nomads from one forest to another.<sup>8</sup> They have traditional dance which they often perform in customary rituals.

Schwenk's study has described the nomadic Dayak people are practicing shifting cultivation as their main livelihood observing traditional religion, and hailing *augury*' bird known in local language as

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<sup>2</sup> BPS, *Statistik Indonesia: Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia 2018* (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Masri Singarimbun, *Penduduk dan perubahan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996), pp. 258-259. See also Roslan T., and Mzailan S., "Surveying on the Cultural Approaches for the Melaka Malay Houses," *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 65 (2012), pp. 511-516; Cf. Janet Hoskkin, "Predatory Voyeurs: Tourist and 'Tribal Violence' in Remote Indonesia," *American Ethnologist*, 29, 4 (2002), pp. 797-828.

<sup>4</sup> Persoon, G.A., & Simarmata, R., Undoing 'Marginality': the Island of the Mahakam Delta, east Kalimantan (Indonesia)," *Journal of Marine and Island Culture* 3, 2 (2014), pp. 43-53; Cf. Carol J. P. C., "Marginalized Forest People's Perceptions of Legitimacy of Governance: an Exploration," *World development* 39, 12 (2011), pp. 2147-2164.

<sup>5</sup> Known as the term headhunting, it is a traditional warfare for men to fight for great status among fellow tribesmen and tribeswomen. The status for men who participates in war is in for of bravery acknowledgment. In addition, headhunting also means fertility, men's fertility, children, and family, which also means abundant harvest. Rebecca R., and Heather B., "Headhunting and Amphitheatre Combat in Roman London, England: New Evidence from the Walbrook Valley," *Journal of Archeological Science*, 43 (2014): pp. 214-226.

<sup>6</sup> Janet V., et.al., 'Bioclimatic Design Approach in Dayak Traditional Longhouse,'" *Procedia Engineering*, 180 (2017), pp. 562-570.

<sup>7</sup> The word *mandau* or *mando* originates from the Central Kalimantan language which means *Makan Dobong*, a weapon with the name of *dobong*. According to Chinese-descent Dayak in the hinterland part of the island, the word *mandau* originates from two words joined into one; 'man' means bravery, and 'dau' means arms or weapon

<sup>8</sup> Ida Aju P.R., et.al., 'Indonesia's Land Reform: Implication for Local Livelihoods and Climate Change,'" *Forest Policy and Economic* (2019), pp. 1-14.

Sigalong Burong' as ancestral symbol of God of war and healing.<sup>9</sup> The key of solidarity among them lies in the spirit of locality based on the existence of longhouse and ritual practice based on shared ancestors.

From the perspective of religious study, Dayak is portrayed as an animist community, in which each element has soul.<sup>10</sup> Their traditional religion is called *Kaharingan*.<sup>11</sup> This belief conform the old intellectual custom which is often used to point to Dayak identity. Tradition and religious practices of Dayaknese interbreeds local belief and custom with imported religions, especially Christianity and Islam. This kind of religious interaction plays important role in building identity of Muslim community as well as non-Muslims.<sup>12</sup> Those who converted to Islam is called 'halo' and no longer identified as Dayak.<sup>13</sup>

For some, Kutai and Banjar are no longer identified as Dayak because they do not observe traditional religion. Meanwhile, Dayaknese people are regarded as non-Muslim, and non-Malay., The construction of Dayak as non-Muslim and non-Malay leads some Dayak people to strip their Dayak identity off and locate their ethnicity as Kutai, Paser, Banjar or Malay.<sup>14</sup> However, for some converted Muslims retain their Dayak identity both as Ahe people or as Kanayatn people.

Hermansyah, who studied Dayak Muslim of Kanayatn in West Kalimantan stated that Muslims and non-Muslims of Kanayatn co-exist in harmony. This harmony even happens in one household. For instance, Apin and his wife are Muslims, whereas his mother and his

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<sup>9</sup> Richard L. Schwenk, "Iban Solidarity: Structural Factors that Promote Development," *Misiology: an International Review* 3 (1975), pp. 191-207; Cf. Elok Mulyoutami, R. Rismawan, and L. Joshi, "Local Knowledge and Management of Simpukng (Forest Gardens) Among the Dayak People in East Kalimantan, Indonesia," *Forest Ecology and Management* 257, 10 (2009), pp. 2054-2061; Cf. John Briggs, "People of the Earth: Inviting a New Animism," *Explore: the Journal of Science and Healing* 11, 6 (2015), pp. 475-484.

<sup>10</sup> Nurit Bird D., "Size Matter! The Scalability of Modern Hunter-Gatherer Animism," *Quaternary International* 464 (2018), pp. 305-314.

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad Muthohar AR, *Islam Dayak: Diaektika Identitas Dayak Tidung di Kalimantan* (Semarang: Fatawa Publishing, 2015), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance Masdar Hilmy, "Towards a Religiously Hybrid Identity?: The Changing Face of Javanese Islam," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 12, 1 (2018): pp. 45-68.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, *Tourism in South East Asia* (New York: Roudledge, 1993), p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Anis Masykur, "Resistensi atas Islamisasi di Kerajaan Kutai Kartanegara," *Jurnal Istiqro'* 1 (2007).

siblings are Catholics, one of his siblings is a protestant, and one of his little brothers is a believer of traditional religion.<sup>15</sup> Further, religious tolerance is displayed not only by the Dayak people, but also by the newcomers who life in West Kalimantan, as is commonplace in Semabi village of Sekadau region.

It is worth noting that the interaction between believers of different in the same Dayak ethnic is considered unique, because the location of Muslim pocket is in the middle of Christian village. The structure of village administration also consists of Muslims and Christians. It means that religious background does not disturb daily activities in the village. Dayak Muslims in Semabi also co-exist peacefully with fellows tribesmen from different religion. The solidarity and harmony in public sphere are related to the context of identity and ethnicity<sup>16</sup> Social class creates identity of elite class and common class, and religion creates identity as Muslims, Christians, and Confucians. Likewise, geographic background creates identity as Pontianak people, Ulu people, Sambas people, and mainland people.<sup>17</sup>

In the context of identity, the issue of ethnic bipolarity of Dayak-Malay becomes the point of discussion in public sphere.<sup>18</sup> One of local beliefs affiliated to Islam which will be presented in this article is Islam in Semabi, Sekadau Hilir, Sekadau, West Kalimantan. The majority of inhabitants of these villages have converted to Islam for four generation through marriage between customary leaders of Malay Muslim and the daughters of Christian Dayak. From the abundant of sub tribes in West Kalimantan, this study focuses on the struggle between Senganan Dayak and Malay people in Semabi because of customary rule that converting to Islam means giving up Dayak identity.

This article employs ethnographic method by means of a series of in-depth interviews and participatory observation on the dynamic of

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<sup>15</sup> Hermansyah, 'Islam dan Toleransi Beragama dalam Masyarakat Muslim Kanayatn Dayak di Kalimantan Barat,' *Islamica* 7, 2 (2013), pp. 340-359.

<sup>16</sup> A. Flesken and J. Harlt, "Ethnicity, Inequality, and Perceived electoral fairness," *Social Science Research* (2019), pp. 1-38.

<sup>17</sup> Yusriadi, "Identitas Dayak dan Melayu di Kalimantan Barat," *Handep* 1, 2 (2018), pp. 1-16.

<sup>18</sup> Andre P., Jurgen B., and Aliya T., "Provoking Local Ethnic Violence – a Global Study on Ethnic Polarization and Terrorist Targeting," *Political Geography* 58 (2017), pp. 77-89.

identity transformation and harmony of Senganan Daya.<sup>19</sup> This research is descriptive – explorative. It is a descriptive because it aims at fully describing the life of Semabi people and identity transformation of Senganan Dayak. It is explorative because it aims at gaining much information about Dayak people in Semabi as a basis for further studies about the community. In this regard, James Spradley explains the ethnographic steps as gradual forward course (Development Research Sequences-DRS) which consists of twelve steps,<sup>20</sup> which are equal to three main steps, namely data collecting, process of data analyzing, and ethnographic report writing.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Formation of Dayak Identity and Religious Crystallization *Semabi Dayak at A Glance***

Semabi Dayak community live in Sekadau region, located between Sanggau and Sintang in west Kalimantan. In terms of topography,<sup>22</sup> Sekadau is a landscape and mountainous with three main rivers flow across the area; Kapuas,<sup>23</sup> Sekadau and Belitang. In 2003, central government Sedakau was declared as a distinct autonomous administrative region with seven districts as follows; Sekadau Hilir,

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<sup>19</sup> Berenschot, W., & Mulder, P. Explaining Regional Variation in Local Governance: Clientelism and State-Dependency in Indonesia”, *World Development*, 122 (2019), pp. 233-244; Cf. James P. Spradley, *Metode Etnografi*, trans. Misbah Elizabeth (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1997), p. 30; Agus Salim, *Teori dan Paradigma Penelitian Sosial: Buku Sumber untuk Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2006), p. 129.

<sup>20</sup> They are (1) informant identification; (2) interview; (3) notetaking; (4) asking descriptive questions; (5) analyzing; (6) domain analysis; (7) asking structural questions (8) drawing taxonomic analysis; (9) asking contrast questions; (10) component analysis; (11) Themes finding; (12). Report writing.

<sup>21</sup> Spradley, *Metode Etnografi*, p. 130.

<sup>22</sup> According to report of Central Body of Statistic in 2018, the name Sekadau itself is a name of a timber *'batang adau'*. This tree is a variant of ironwood lumber that grows along the riverside and forest of Sekadau. Before becoming a region, Sekadau was a part of ancient court. It is thought as also a name of continent, the continent of Sekado which means amalgamation of some major villages in Sanggau region. This first king of Sekadau court was Prince Engkong, which was succeeded by both of his sons; Prince Kadar and later by Prince Suma and Prince Abang Todong with the title of Sultan Anum, whose grave is located in Mungguk village (sungai Barak) in Sekadau Hilir district and becomes a cultural heritage in Sekadau region.

<sup>23</sup> Said, “Optimization of River Transport to Strengthen Multimodal Passenger Transport System in Inland Region,” *Procedia Engineering* 125 (2015), pp. 498-503

Sekadau Hulu, Nanga Taman, Nanga Mahap, Belitang Hilir, Belitang and Belitang Hulu.<sup>24</sup>

Many Muslims live in Sekadau Hilir. Their sub tribe is called as Senganan. There are 17 villages in this district, including Semabi, which has four hamlets; Semabi, Ensanguk, Tapang Jaya, and Tapan Sejati. The name Semabi is abbreviation of “sekelompok msyarakat beragama Islam’ (a group of Muslim people). According to Jamri,<sup>25</sup> three Muslims from court house in Munggu village across the river of Semabi brought Islam to Semabi. They are Gusti Kayut, Gusti Masyhud and Gusti Kamal. From these three princes, it was Gusti Kamal who spread Islam in Semabi by marrying the daughter of elder of Kodah tribe.<sup>26</sup>

Semabi is the most prosperous village in Sekadau district with the surplus of paddy rice of 583 tons in 2018.<sup>27</sup> The deputy head of Sekadau region<sup>28</sup> appreciated the increase of rice production in Semabi by attending the harvest feast ‘rendengan’ held by farmer group Sepayang Permai of Semabi. Through the success of paddy farming, Islam is preached in flexible way through social economy.

### ***The Spread of Imported Religions in Dayak Community***

Kaharingan<sup>29</sup> or known as indigenous religion<sup>30</sup> of Dayak involves religious practices that centers upon life cycle, mainly birth and death. In addition, community cosmology which consists of upper world and under world in which the existence of shaman is important because of

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<sup>24</sup> “Profil daerah Kabupaten Sekadau per Juli 2017-Juni 2018,” pp. 25-35

<sup>25</sup> He is the village head as well a teacher of Elementary School 07 Semabi. He is an indigenous origin, and quite young (34).

<sup>26</sup> According to Jamri, Kodah is the name that region before it is called as Semabi.

<sup>27</sup> The office of agriculture and fishery of Sekadau, in “Profil daerah Kabupaten Sekadau per Juli 2017-Juni 2018”, p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> Deputy head of Sekadau is Aloysius, SH., M.Si, 2016-2021.

<sup>29</sup> Marko Mahin, *Kaharingan: Dinamika Agama Dayak Kalimantan Tengah* (Jakarta: Disertasi-FISIP UI, 2009), p. 1. Kaharingan is religion of Dayak people who inhabit the upstream and religion of ancestors of the past. However, Kaharingan is also urban phenomenon because many contemporary Dayak people practice Kaharingan, especially Ngaju Dayak in Central Kalimantan.

<sup>30</sup> Hamid Darmadi, “Dayak and Their Daily Life,” *JETL Journal of Education, Teaching and Learning* 2, 1 (2017), p. 101.

his or her ability to communicate with spirits.<sup>31</sup> The power of spirit can reveal their resentment by disturbing human affairs, this is often related to violation which has to be redeemed by offering rituals.<sup>32</sup>

During the colonial period, Dayak community was under influence of Western culture, in term of clothing and religious life as part of Christian mission. The Dutch tried to replace Kaharingan rituals with Christian rites to control the crops, while Japanese a more subtle way in approaching Dayak people by stating than Kaharingan is related to Shintoism. After independence, the government acknowledged five religions, thus Kaharingan is considered as custom, indigenous belief, and indirectly classified as a belief of non-believers. This position made Kaharingan believers the target of Christian missions as well as Islamic propagation (*dakwah*).<sup>33</sup>

Before interaction with Hinduism in the 1980s, Dayak people observed Kaharingan as their indigenous belief.<sup>34</sup> Religious conversion takes places for many factors, namely; economy, education, health and politics. Foreign missionaries during the colonial period was considered politically more authoritative. This phenomenon is called as “rice-bowl Christian.” Before the conversion, Dayak people venerates trees or shrines, then their object of worship was worship house built by the foreign missionaries.<sup>35</sup> The motive of religious conversion that happen in Semabi, although there are still people who believe in old teachings, is the open-mindedness of the Dayak people towards new culture brought by outsiders, the Christian missionaries.

With regard to the spread of Islam, a region of *dakwah* destination is Nanga Mahab, a district in Sekadau. Again, conversion does not alter cultural and communal life of Senganan Dayak people in Semabi. All old rituals and customs are in place, except rituals which are forbidden in Islam. Alternatively, they perform old rituals but alter them in such a

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<sup>31</sup> Ian Chalmers, “The Dynamics of Conversion: the Islamisation of the Dayak Peoples of Central Kalimantan,” *Espace* (2006), pp. 26-29.

<sup>32</sup> Larry Kenneth Thomsom, “The Effect of the Dayak Worldview, Customs, Traditions, and Customary Law (adat-Istiadat) on the Interpretation of the Gospel in West Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo,” *ProQuest Dissertation and Theses*, (2000), p. 231.

<sup>33</sup> Mahin, *Dinamika Agama Dayak*, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Wayan Gepu, et.al., “Religious Conversion towards Hindu Kaharinga to Christianity,” *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Culture* 4, 4 (2018), pp. 25-37.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas Tapp, “The Impact of Missionary Christianity upon Marginalized Ethnic Minorities: the Case of the Hmong,” *Journal of Southeast Studies* 20, 1 (1989), pp. 70-95.

way that become acceptable to Muslims, such as sweeping away food offerings in rivers which is substituted with conducting event of gratitude with no food is wasted. Likewise, Catholic mission by migrants from Sintang tend to be more acceptable because the more flexible in accommodating local culture. This is in sharp contrast with protestant mission which tend to be more puritanical, so that it tries to purify Christian theology from local culture.<sup>36</sup> The coming of migrants to Kalimantan is not only for religious mission, but also for economic motives. There are many valuable commodities and natural resources in Kalimantan that attract newcomers. Moreover, Kalimantan is located in equator belt with high rainfall all year which makes its soil fertile. This is one of the strongest magnets for the migrants to come.<sup>37</sup> Eventually, migrants with economic motives also become catalyst of religious conversion, especially from Christianity to Islam.

Another factor is interreligious marriage between migrants and local people, from which the process of religious, social and cultural assimilation take place.<sup>38</sup> From the perspective of Dayak Muslims, the location of Semabi hamlet with its Muslim inhabitants is strategic because it is located between Longkam hill and Ketungao Sosat which is inhabited by Christians. This hamlet is the milestone of the spread of Islam in the two hills because the interaction between communities is based on the idea of “preserving valuable heritage and accepting new better practices.”

The encounter between indigenous people and migrants gradually influence the formation of the concept of community’s identity in many ways: politics, economy, religion and organizational pattern. <sup>39</sup> With regard to religious identity, there has been an on-going contest among four identities; Dayak animists, Dayak Christians, Malay Muslims, and Dayak Muslims. Christianity has been quite some time in Kalimantan so that Christianity has become part of their ethnic identity for generations. Christianity is only second to animism in term of

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Jamri, September 6, 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Singgih Tri S., & Yetty R., “Contest for Hegemony: the Dynamics of Inland and Maritime Cultures Relations in the History of Java Islan, Indonesia,” *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 2, 2 (2013), pp. 115-127.

<sup>38</sup> Christian Oesterheld, “(Un)becoming Dayak: Inter marriage and the Dynamics of Identity and Belonging in East Kalimantan,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 17, 2 (2016), pp. 138-156.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth Sillander, & Jennifer A., “Belonging in Borneo: Refiguring Dayak Ethnicity in Indonesia,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 17, 2 (2016), pp. 95-101.

religious belief among Dayak people. Meanwhile, Dayak person who converted to Islam will be promptly considered as downgraded to be Malay.<sup>40</sup> It is interesting to note, although there was no open conflict based on religious conviction, each group struggles to maintain its conviction. At this phase, religious crystallization does happen.

### ***The Contestation of Dayak Muslims Identity***

Cultural encounter in this research is depicted as the encounter between Dayak culture and Malay culture. The term Dayak is used for the first time by Rademaker in 1790 to denote indigenous people in Kalimantan who were not Muslims. This term is equivalent to the term Malay for local Muslims. In the past, for indigenous people who were not Muslims, Dayak identity is a degrading attribute which has negative connotation. Indigenous people accepted this attribute reluctantly. Instead, they preferred to be attributes as 'Daja' or 'Daya' because it is more suitable and inspire them to assert power and spirit. Up until the 1980s, the Dayak identity was increasingly used by indigenous people as the slogan to rise from marginal situation. Even in 1990s, indigenous people in West Kalimantan who converted to Islam began to retain the term Dayak as their identity.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to Dayak, the Malay identity in West Kalimantan is used in positive context so that it is acceptable for people. Moreover, newly converts to Islam would be called Malay or becoming Malay in social-religious context. This phenomenon encounters to the previous research findings, such as Tanasaldy. He explains the introduction of foreign religions, especially Islam and Christianity, undermined Dayak cultural practices. After conversion to Islam the Dayak usually abandoned their traditional practices and beliefs, and changed their identity to become Malays.<sup>42</sup> Serious converts would often leave their community to settle in Malay communities because there were basic disagreements between Islam and many Dayak habits, such as drinking liquor and eating pork. For generations, Islam has changed the culture,

<sup>40</sup> Taufiq Tanasaldy, *Regime Change and Ethnic Politics in Indonesia: Dayak Politics of West Kalimantan* (Leiden: KITLV Press: 2012), p. 195

<sup>41</sup> Yusriadi, "Identitas Dayak dan Melayu di Kalimantan Barat," *Handep* 1, 2 (2018), pp. 1-16.

<sup>42</sup> Tanasaldy, *Regime Change and Ethnic Politics in Indonesia*, p. 195; in another context, see also Kunawi Basyir, "The Acculturative Islam as a Type of Home-Grown Islamic Tradition: Religion and Local Culture in Bali," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, 2 (2019): pp. 326-349.

habits, and identity of many Dayaks who became Muslims. In the beginning, Islam came to Kalimantan from Malacca Sultanate in Johor that launched expansion to Kalimantan and occupied Brunei sultanate. The heyday of Malacca sultanate also contributed to the spread of Islam to Pasir Sultanate, Pontianak, and Bulungan.<sup>43</sup> Like the case of Mbororo in Cameroon, in which pastoral group and nationalist minority is acknowledged by the United Nations (UN) as customary community, local people consider them as foreign and migrant group. From identity perspective this phenomenon harms the rights of minority community.<sup>44</sup>

The use of social identity for Muslim community also contributes to the making of religious tolerance in Semabi. Like it has been mentioned, Senganan is the term to denote Dayak who converted to Islam, but they remain recognized as Senganan Dayak, not as Malay as it happens elsewhere in West Kalimantan. However, not all indigenous Muslims in Semabi call themselves Senganan Dayak. Some younger generation under 40 years old prefer to call themselves Senganan (without Dayak) to avoid negative stigma of Dayak as being non-Muslim and animistic. In this sense, Senganan is a code to unite all Muslims in the village.<sup>45</sup> This description shows the different with Tanasaldy's findings that the introduction of Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism also contributed to the changing of Dayak culture and tradition. Unlike Islam and Protestantism which are usually rigid in their approach to the Dayak culture, Catholicism is generally more flexible and acceptable to Dayak culture.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Dayak and Jamaah Tabligh***

Jama'ah Tabligh (JT) is one of Muslim groups that has penetrated Semabi.<sup>47</sup> This group originally arrived in Indonesia during the 1950s and named themselves as "*Jamaah Khuruj*", which signifies their activity

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<sup>43</sup> Latifah, *Turun Melayu*, p. 80.

<sup>44</sup> Michaella Pelican, "Complexities of Indigeneity and Autochthony: an African Example," *American Ethnologist* 36, 1 (2009), pp. 52-65.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Abu Bakar (70 years old), the functionary of Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu, September 6, 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Tanasaldy, *Regime Change and Ethnic Politics in Indonesia*, p. 195.

<sup>47</sup> Aina al Mardhia I., "Discourse of the Tablighi Jama'at in Genre Studies," *Pasak* 3 (2018), pp. 604-617.

of leaving home for the purpose of preaching.<sup>48</sup> Later on, the concept of *keburuj* has become the main characteristic of the membership of this group, which all members have to allocate their time to preach to Islam outside their home at least three days in a month or 40 days in a year and four months in their lifetime. The coming of Jama'ah Tabligh in Semabi in 1970 was brought by local figure, named Muhammad Hasan, who originally from Belitang Hilir, Sekadau.<sup>49</sup> The main goal of this Islamic group is to purify and implement *Shari'a*, without any element of local culture.<sup>50</sup> Thus, JT's religious outlook is conservative. Therefore, JT refuses all kinds of local rituals and tradition which they consider as *shirk* (idolatry or polytheism). Meanwhile, Dayak people generally still strongly observe those local rituals. JT is a representation of transnational Islamic movement collides with another version of Islam which is accommodative to local values and has rooted in the community. JT's puritanical stance made it exclusive and uncompromising which force them to create their own identity. At this phase the conflict in identities was inevitable, which usually ended with the rejection of locals to JT's ideology. JT's transnational outlook cannot have stronghold in Semabi.<sup>51</sup> Their initial existence created no influence in Semabi. It is because of their exclusive outlook, their insistence to leave families for period of time, and especially the urge to abandon old tradition which JT considers not Islamic.<sup>52</sup>

### Identity Transformation of Dayak Muslims

Transformation is a planned and intended change for specific purposes.<sup>53</sup> Social transformation and cultural transformation have substantial difference. Social transformation includes changes in community in the form of age difference, birth rate, the decrease of

<sup>48</sup> Abdul Aziz, "The Jamaah Tabligh Movement in Indonesia: Peaceful Fundamentalist," *Studi Islamika* 11, 3 (2004), p. 467.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with customary leader, Abdurrazzaq, September 8, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Marloes J., "Roaming about for God's Sake: The Upsurge of the Tabligh Jamaat in the Gambia," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 35, 4 (2005), pp. 450-481.

<sup>51</sup> Halkano A., W., "Networking the Nomads: A Study of Tablighi Jama'at among the Borana of Northern Kenya," Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Universität Bayreuth (2012), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with member of Jamaah Tabligh, Muhammad Hasan (40), from Belitang Hilir district, Sekadau, West Kalimantan, September 7, 2019.

<sup>53</sup> Johannes Mardimin (ed.), *Jangan tangisi Tradisi: Transformasi Budaya menuju Masyarakat Indonesia Modern* (Yogyakarta: Kasinius, 1994), p. 13.

sense of kinship among members of community as a result of urbanization and modernization. Meanwhile, in general, the definition of cultural transformation is the change of concept, form, function, and character of culture to adapt with the constellation of the world, including many aspects of life, namely art, science and technology, organizational life, and philosophy.<sup>54</sup>

Social transformation has three dimensions,<sup>55</sup> namely: *first*, structural dimension, referring to the change of the form of social structure, including the change of role, the emergence of new roles, the change in the structure of social class, the change in social institution; *second*, cultural dimension, referring to cultural change in society. The changes include cultural innovation refers to internal component that invokes social change in a society; *third*, diffusion. Diffusion is external component that generates social change; *forth*, integration. Integration is a representation of cultural change caused by bringing elements from different culture that generates new culture.

The dynamic mixing of elements from local culture and Islamic teachings begins since a preacher from East Java came to Semabi. He was known as Ustadz Syarif Hidayatullah, 33 years old, who graduated from Pesantren Zainul Hasan, Kraksaan Probolinggo. In 2014, he was assigned by government as a farming counselor from Baznas (Badan Amil Zakat Nasional - the National Board for Zakat Management), under a program entitled zakat for community development. As a preacher, he arranged '*ngaji pasaran*' - a weekly Islamic study group, a year after he stayed in Semabi. In the middle of 2017, he successfully introduced the culture of *abl a-sunnah wa al-jama'ah* or Sunni to Dayak community as the replacement of what they had been observed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, he also approached the customary leader of the village named Aang Junaidi to back up his preaching activities. The customary leader has high authority in Dayak community so that it gives significant influence in preserving Islam.

Islamic tradition that flourishes and exists in Semabi until now include grave visit, *tablil* (supplication) for the deceased in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> days of the death, the recitation of the Holy Quran, and religious study groups for women. This includes a religious study group named *Majelis Taklim dan Maulid Al-Barzanji Tradisional*

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<sup>54</sup> Nanang Martono, *Sosiologi Perubahan Sosial: Perspektif Klasik, Modern, Postmodern, dan Psikolonial*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2016), p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

(MTMAT). The celebration of *Mawlid* (commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad) was led by H. Abdul Bakar and a compulsory event for the purpose of increasing devotion in following the example of Prophet Muhammad. He asked Semabi people for not to be easily provoked by irresponsible group who wished to ruin the celebration.

The transformation of new Dayak identity that takes place in Semabi encompasses three aspects: *first*, history. From its historical context, there are two sub tribes of Dayak; (1) Longkam Dayak who prefer to inhabit the hill of Semabi. They are mostly Christians; (2) Dayak Tungao Sosat, this sub tribe came from Sintang that eventually spread to Longkam and Semabi, the word '*sosat*' or '*sesat*' (lit: lost) means they dispersed from their place of origin to make their livelihood. They are not considered Longkam Dayak because they are migrants. The term 'Senganan' is a transformed identity for Longkam Dayak who converted to Muslims from Christianity. They still retain their identity as Longkam.<sup>56</sup>

*Second* is religion. The concept of identity transformation that takes place in Semabi refers to the change of identity form by not abandoning previous elements so that the cultural heritage is passed on with minor modification. H. Abu Bakar<sup>57</sup> explains that Dayak Semabi also member of a customary assembly called MABM (Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu – the Assembly of Malay custom and culture).<sup>58</sup> Semabi people who converted to Islam do not abandon their Dayak identity, as they call themselves as Senganan Dayak. This term is derived from the word '*kanan*' (right as opposed to left), which means they move from left to right by converting to Islam.

*Third* is tradition. The interaction pattern between Islam and local culture in Semabi is presented by modifying ritual of "*ngantar buah pulang*" (bring fruit home) at the eve of harvest feast by having a kind of thanks giving event. In the event customary magic spell is replaced by supplication in Islamic way. Moreover, durian season, the fruits

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Aang Junaidi (35), a traditional gold miner who becomes young Temenggung of Senganan Dayak. He is responsible for conserving culture of Kodah (Senganan) in Semabi hamlet, as well coordinating all events related to local custom in collaboration with village.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Abu Bakar, September 6, 2019.

<sup>58</sup> In short, MABM is known as an organization that aims at preserving values on Malay culture.

from three trees are given away as charity to seek for blessing and good harvest result.<sup>59</sup>

In addition, before the coming of Islam to Semabi (Kodah), the headhunting culture for dowry was conducted for appeasing the ancestors.<sup>60</sup> This tradition was obligatory to avoid the future bride and groom from misfortune as well as considered as pride, symbol of power, and bravery. The headhunters perpetuate the success in this traditional war by crafting ornaments and tattoos on parts of their bodies.<sup>61</sup> The importance of scarifying human head had become a major attraction for Dayak women. This view at glance shows that bloodshed is a necessity to improve life. ‘The Headhunting party’ become very significant ceremony because the Dayak believe that the party will facilitate the growth of rice paddy, the fertility of rainforest, the plenty fish in the river, pregnancy of women, and the birth of healthy offspring.<sup>62</sup> However, this ritual is no longer practiced and is now replaced by an Islamic ritual. Non-Muslim who wishes to marry Muslim girl of Semabi must convert to Islam.<sup>63</sup>

Ethnicity is increasingly viewed as a kind of specific identity which is attached to certain group or community as uniting or distinguishing factor. It is said that cultural items are the strongest symbols in shaping identity. In different words, identity is created and maintained in relation, either in the idea or action, with other person who is considered and categorized as ‘not us’ or ‘the other’.<sup>64</sup> In this research, there are two different identities which are used by Semabi people in religiosity. Religion is made to differentiate between Dayak and Malay. Dayak is identified as Christians and Malay as Muslims. Even more, this differentiation is considered the determinant of tribal identity.

Another identity which underwent transformation is regarding with symbol. This ethnic identity includes war weapons such as

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Aang Yuniarto, September 6, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> Human skulls were collected as historical relics in longhouse (*lanan*) or hung on ‘*tiang sandung*’ (pillar made of ironwood lumber) in Landau, Kodah.

<sup>61</sup> Noah, S., “Tattoos and Religion,” *Clinics in Dermatology* 25, 4 (2007), pp. 362-366.

<sup>62</sup> Barbara Waston Andaya, “History, Headhunting and Gender in Monsoon Asia (Comparative and Longitudinal Views),” *South East Asia Research* 12 (2004), pp. 13-52.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Jamri, September 6, 2019.

<sup>64</sup> Victor T King, “Identity, Material Culture and Tourism: of Ritual Cloths and Totem Poles,” *South East Asia Research* 25 (2017), pp. 192-207.

*talawang*,<sup>65</sup> a traditional wooden shield carved with Dayak related culture. The carving has supernatural power which can arouse the spirit and energy to the bearer. Generally, the motive of *talawang* consists of two birds called 'tinggang' and 'kamang' which were believed as divine and representations of the Dayak's ancestors. Those accessories initially were used for tribal war, but nowadays they are used as dancing attributes. Interestingly, the '*talawang*' of Semabi is not only depicted the two birds, but also the letter of NU (Nahdlatul Ulama), carved among traditional carving.

This modification is actually reflect the fluidity of an identity. Parallel to opinions concerning identity, that the identity as a frozen character or unchanged, even embedded and irreplaceable as well as a fluid character which changes depending on the interest. With identity, identification can be built upon the origin or collective characteristics of someone or group through labeling of one's status.<sup>66</sup> The depiction of 'tinggang' and 'kamang' represent the concept of Dayak identity transformation that generates positive repercussions for other communities, that is for Dayaknese people who converted to Islam. They have new identity as Muslims, but they retain old identity as part of the ethnicity. Identity transformation in the case of symbol as explained is a form of cultural application by not losing old culture. This aspect becomes the key to the acceptance of Islam of Nahdlatul Ulama with its *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* nuances in Semabi hamlet, Sekadau Hilir, Sekadau with the principle of conserving old tradition and embracing new better values.

The paragraph above shows that collective identity as based on dialectic interaction from internal and external process of definition. In one side, an individual should be able to differentiate himself with others by referring to their sub-group criteria. On another side, the process of this internal identification should be acknowledged by outsiders to create objective collective identity.<sup>67</sup> The process of

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<sup>65</sup> *Talawang* is made of Ulin wood or ironwood lumber with the square shape and made sharp in upper and under parts with the length of about 1 to 2 meters and the width of about 50 centimeters.

<sup>66</sup> Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publication, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Jonathan H. Turner, *Handbook of Sociological Theory* (New York: Springer, 2006), p. 172.

identity categorisation is framed from relationship of the past, present and future through cognitive and emotional dimension.

For Henri Tajfel,<sup>68</sup> social identity is someone's feeling on who he or she is based on group membership. Tajfel asserts that social groups that share same feeling is important source of pride and honor. The group gives the meaning of "us" as the sense of social identity, the sense of belonging into social realm. Therefore, social identity divides the world into "us" and "them" which is based on the process of social categorisation, which is inserting people into their social group, called as in-group, whereas outside the group and community is out-group. This is exactly what happens in Dayak people.

## Conclusion

Identity is a character of an individual or something as an identifier or signifier from one to another historically. The concept of identity transformation that happens in Semabi refers to the transformation of identity form by not leaving old elements behind, namely the identity of Senganan Dayak. In this regard, the cultural heritage has remained albeit with modification

From religiosity aspect, the indigenous people have undergone the process of identity transformation. Initially, they believed in the power of spirit, now they believe in God. Likewise, identification of Muslim and non-Muslim from Longkam becomes Senganan Dayak, although using new identity but old identity is intact for those who converted to Islam in Semabi, Sekadau Hilir, Sekadau, West Kalimantan.

In terms of tradition, the ritual of "*ngantar buah pulang*" is replaced with Islamic kind of thanksgiving ritual and replaces the spelling of magic spell with supplication to God Almighty. In addition, before the coming of Islam to Semabi (Kodah), headhunting culture for dowry was conducted for appeasing the ancestors. Now, non-Muslim who wish to marry Muslim girl of Semabi must convert to Islam.

The key of harmony in religiously and culturally plural Semabi is supported by the power of ethnicity based on the shared norms, values and cultural practices; locality, which is built upon the spirit of reaching out among people, both indigenous and migrants; trust; leadership, and the role of collective awareness to co-exist becomes the point of reference of harmonization embedded in indigenous and

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<sup>68</sup> Henry Tajfel and J. C. Turner, *An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, (California: Books-Cole, 1979), p. 33 and p. 47.

migrants in Semabi. In the perspective of *dakwah*, the harmony that was collectively nurtured by religious and customary elites is a model of transformative *dakwah* that is based on tradition.

In short, this study found out that there is uniqueness with regard to the conception of Dayak identity. There is relationship between religions, tradition, social identity that can be considered as identity based on symbolic boundaries. The massive conversion of Dayaks to Islam does not necessarily imply the downgrading of identity from Dayak to Malay; instead, they remain to be Dayak in spite of their conversion to new religion. []

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