

## REVISITING *PRIBUMI* – *NONPRIBUMI* DISCOURSES IN THE POST-SUHARTO INDONESIA

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**Abstract:** This study explores the ideological shifts surrounding the terms *pribumi* (native Indonesian) and *nonpribumi* (non-indigenous people) in the post-Suharto era (1998-2020). The data source are 173 news articles from the Indonesian press containing the term '*pribumi*.' By employing Van Dijk's 'Ideological Square' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) the study portrays groups in terms of dominance, inequality, difference, and victimization to understand power dynamics and ideological constructions in the language. The findings reveal that *pribumi* are portrayed positively as rooted in ethnic origin, cultural heritage, and mainly Muslim identity in recent periods, but also as economically disadvantaged landowners. Conversely, *nonpribumi* are depicted negatively as foreign, racially distinct, and economically dominant. Negative representations of *pribumi* as oppressors and politically dominant are de-emphasized, while positive portrayals of *nonpribumi* as passive victims are mitigated. The study suggests that evolving nuances stem from democratic transitions and heightened identity politics tensions. Economic perceptions linked to these terms persist across periods. These insights might help scholars and policymakers understand mobilization patterns and potential identity-related conflicts, prompting further research into using dichotomous terms within specific social and cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** Chinese Indonesians, *pribumi*, identity, indigeneity, racism

### INTRODUCTION

In 2017, Indonesia was rated as the lowest-performing country in terms of democracy by the Economist Intelligent Unit (2017), dropping 20 places to 68th position, falling behind Malaysia and Timor Leste. This decline was attributed to restrictions on free speech and pluralism, particularly highlighted during Jakarta's 2017 gubernatorial election. The incumbent candidate, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), a Chinese Christian, faced accusations of blasphemy after commenting on a Quranic verse, sparking tensions among various religious groups, including Muslims, Christians, Catholics, and Hindus (Power, 2018). This political turmoil led to degrading civil liberties, impacting Indonesians broadly. Concurrently, anti-Chinese sentiments

resurged in the community, coinciding with the re-emergence of the terms '*pribumi*' (indigenous) and '*nonpribumi*' (non-indigenous/foreigners) in the media. The situation escalated when the newly elected Governor, Anies Baswedan, mentioned '*pribumi*' in his inauguration speech in October 2017, prompting backlash (Tyson, 2021). This revival of the term, previously banned in 1998, was seen by Suryadinata (2017) as a resurgence of '*pribumi*-ism,' reflecting underlying values and ideologies.

The concept of '*pribumi*-ness' emerged during the Dutch colonization of the East Indies in the 19th century, initially dividing the population into Europeans and non-Europeans. Later, the Chinese were categorized separately as "Foreign Orientals"

to mediate trade between the Dutch and the Inlanders (Coppel, 1983; Heryanto, 2014). This classification polarised society into *pribumi* (non-Chinese) and *nonpribumi* (Chinese). Anti-Chinese sentiment escalated in the early 1900s, provoked by Sarekat Islam's efforts to limit Chinese influence (Shiraishi, 1990). Nevertheless, Chinese descendants eventually allied with *pribumi* to fight for independence, forming the Chinese Union and later the Partai Demokrat Tionghoa Indonesia (Afif, 2012).

Under Suharto's New Order (1966-1998), anti-Chinese sentiment intensified, and discriminatory policies were enacted, leading to several violent incidents against the Chinese community (Chua, 2004; Coppel & Suryadinata, 2002). These culminated in the significant riots of May 1998, where Chinese Indonesians were victims of widespread violence, looting, and destruction (Marching, 2007; Panggabean & Smith, 2011). Despite the end of Suharto's regime, anti-Chinese sentiment persists, and ethnocentrism and stereotypes remain unresolved issues (Dahana, 2004).

Several studies have examined the evolution of discourse over time, discriminatory language practices, and the dynamics between *pribumi* and *nonpribumi*. Partington (2012) explored the changing discourse on antisemitism in the UK from 1993 to 2009, noting a shift in the 2000s towards public discussions influenced by political and electoral considerations compared to the historical treatments in the 1990s. Baker et al. (2013) investigated the representation of the term 'Muslim' in the UK press from 1998 to 2009, finding that collocated phrases such as 'Muslim community' and 'Muslim world' depicted collective Muslims as 'easily offended,' 'alienated,' 'in conflict with non-Muslims,' and distinct from 'The West.' In a study by Liu & Jiang (2019), the portrayal of Hong Kong in the British press over the past two decades was analyzed, highlighting themes of democracy and freedom, often framed within the context of Hong Kong's history as a former British colony and referencing a 'discourse of fear.'

Regarding discriminatory language practices, Flowerdew (2012) observed in the South China Morning Post that Chinese

mainlanders were metaphorically depicted as an 'influx,' 'burden,' and 'flood' while being labeled as 'poor,' 'dirty,' 'uneducated,' 'lazy,' and 'uncivilized.' Cheng (2013) examined how the Australian Parliament's discourse on immigrants involved themes of exclusion and inclusion. Using the discourse historical approach (DHA), Cheng discovered that Australian parliamentarians framed cultural differences as barriers to assimilating into the superior Australian culture.

Past research on Chinese Indonesian identity has primarily concentrated on social and political dynamics (see Afif, 2012; Chua, 2004; Heryanto, 1998; Lindsey et al., 2005; Turner & Allen, 2007). Thaniago (2017) examined news reports from the New Order era to explore the state discipline of Chinese Indonesians. Using critical discourse analysis, the study reveals that they were stereotyped as economically dominant and socially exclusive. Further, the New Order government used discourse to promote assimilation and dependency, compelling Tionghoa to minimize their ethnic identity and participate in their subjugation. During the Reformasi era, the study by Dahana (2004) uncovered the lack of complete acceptance of ethnic Chinese as Indonesians during the early reformation period, leaving them vulnerable in subsequent years. Moreover, recent studies, such as those by (Setijadi, 2017b) and Suryadinata (2017), have focused on how prejudices within the *pribumi* community persist regarding the economic dominance of ethnic Chinese and how speeches by figures like Gatot Nurmantyo may ignite anti-Chinese sentiments. While prior research has mainly focused on the socio-political aspects of *pribumi* – *nonpribumi* relations, there is still a need to explore the evolving identity within the speeches of these dichotomized groups, particularly in the post-Suharto era to understand better the contextual evolution surrounding these speeches. This study, therefore, attempts to answer the representation of dichotomous words *pribumi* and *nonpribumi* represented in post-Suharto Indonesia, along with the discourse strategies applied.

## METHOD

This study centered on the ideological representation surrounding the contrasting concepts of *pribumi* and *nonpribumi*,

employing Van Dijk’s ‘Ideological Square’ framework within critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the discursive semantics while incorporating the diachronic evolution of discourse. CDA is the preferred analytical tool because it can uncover how minority groups are marginalized within texts (Irawan, 2017). Focused on discourse as a social practice shaped by contexts of power dynamics, social inequality, and injustice, the ‘Ideological Square’ framework is highlighted to explore the portrayal of positive belonging versus negative othering (Van Dijk, 2001, 2013). Apart from that, it also combines the aspects of discourse and society with the socio-cognitive interface, which means that the method perceives the ideology constructed in the society is formed by social cognition in the form of mental representations that are shared by society (Fiske & Taylor, 2013; Van Dijk, 2013). These discursive formations can be analyzed as a systematic analysis of various discourse structures unveiling ideological representations (Van Dijk, 1998).

Using news reports as primary empirical data may contribute to shaping identity construction, with the media facilitating discourses that form specific socio-cognitive frameworks (van Dijk, 1998). A total of 173 articles featuring the term ‘*pribumi*,’ ‘*nonpribumi*,’ ‘Tiong Hoa,’ ‘Cina,’ etnis Cina’ were gathered from six Indonesian news outlets spanning the post-Suharto era (1998 – 2020). These outlets include CNN Indonesia (CN), Jawa Pos (JP), Kompas (KM), Tempo (TM), Republika (RP), and Tirto (TR). The articles, which encompass various formats such as reports, profiles, surveys, interviews, and editorials, are categorized into five-year periods denoted as P1 (1998 - 2003), P2 (2004 - 2009), P3 (2010 - 2015), and P4 (2016 - 2020). Consequently, each statement will be marked with the format [outlet name\_YY]. For example, a statement from a 1998 Kompas article will be labeled as [KM98], while one from a 2018 Jawa Pos article will be labeled as [JP18]. Additionally, social media content from Twitter was incorporated to complement the analysis based on news reports. The distribution of articles across these periods is illustrated in Figure 1.

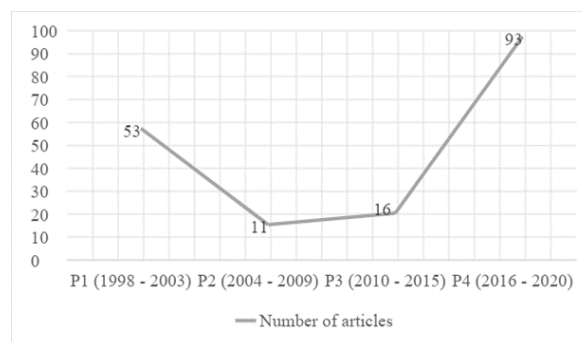


Figure 1 Periodisation of the articles

This research applied a mixed-methods strategy, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies through lexicometric techniques. The corpus-analysis tools AntConc Analysis and SketchEngine examine texts by assessing their keywords, co-occurrences, the consistency of prevalent keywords across various datasets, and their shared contextual associations. The sorted expressions were presented and analyzed with surface and formal structures of the multimodal discourse in CDA’s Ideological Square, i.e., passivity and nominalization (vagueness), metaphor, and the indexical/deictic expressions (Van Dijk, 1991, 2013)

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Analysis of the Argument Structure

The power dynamics in the dichotomy between *pribumi* and *nonpribumi* are highly significant and can be unraveled by constructing good/bad agencies (Van Dijk, 2004). The underlying ideologies are not confined to lexical choices alone; formal syntactic structures, such as word order, nominalizations, and active and passive sentences, can also reveal these ideologies (Van Dijk, 2013).

For instance, Trew’s (1979) study examined the reporting of a political protest in Rhodesia by British and local newspapers, highlighting how active and passive constructions reflect ideological biases. He analyzed headlines and texts from the Times and the Guardian, such as “Rioting Blacks Shot Dead by Police as ANC Leaders Meet” and “Eleven Africans were shot dead and 15 wounded when Rhodesian police opened fire on a rioting crowd of about 2,000.”

Trew argued that the Times’ use of passive constructions and the omission of the

police as the subject served to obscure the perpetrators of the violence and implicitly place blame on the black protesters. This linguistic choice suggested that the police's use of deadly force was legitimate, thereby facilitating the justification of their actions (Trew, 1979).

The statements below are taken from P1, P2, and P4 and are constructed in the passive voice, marked with the prefix 'di-':

(1) *Dari rombongan pengungsi inilah diperoleh kabar tak sedap: terjadi penyerangan seksual atas perempuan etnis Cina. Tidak ada data statistik yang jelas, hanya dikatakan bahwa tidak sedikit perempuan Tionghoa yang **diperkosa**.* [TM98]

(There was troubling news from this group of refugees: ethnic Chinese women faced sexual aggression. Although there is no precise statistical data, it is reported that a significant number of Chinese women **were raped**.)

(2) JS (8), *murid sekolah dasar (SD) [...] **dianggap** bukan pribumi. Kasubdit Jatanras Ditreskrim Polda Metro Jaya AKBP Hendy F Kurniawan mengatakan, selain **diejek**, JS juga sempat **dilukai** teman-temannya.* [KM17]

(JS (8), an elementary school student, [...] **was not regarded** as a *pribumi*. According to AKBP Hendy F Kurniawan, head of the Jatanras branch of the Jakarta Police Directorate General of Criminal Investigation, after **being mocked**, JS **was also physically harmed** by his peers.)

(3) *"Ya, masalahnya Yogyakarta memang begitu. Kalau dibilang tidak adil ya tidak adil, kalau dibilang diskriminasi ya **diskriminasi**. Aturan utamanya memang keturunan Tionghoa tidak memiliki tanah hak milik. Paling banter hak guna bangunan," katanya.* [KM18]

("Yes, that is the issue in Yogyakarta. If it is said to be unfair, it is unfair; if it is said to be **discrimination**, it is. The rules are such that Chinese descendants cannot own property rights. The most they can have is the right to build," he said.)

The text examines how linguistic choices such as nominalization and passive voice constructions impact the portrayal of agents and patients in sentences related to violence and discrimination involving the *pribumi* and *nonpribumi* groups. In example (1), the noun 'aggression' (*penyerangan*) is a nominalized form of the verb 'to aggress' (*serang*), which hides the agent attacking Chinese women. In passive sentences like "several Chinese women have been raped," the agent is omitted, de-emphasizing who is committing the violence. This linguistic strategy diminishes the negative image of the *pribumi* as aggressors during the 1998 riots. In example (2), a policeman describes a schoolboy, JS, using passive verbs like 'not considered,' 'mocked,' and 'injured,' placing the agents (perpetrators) at the end of the sentence. It de-emphasizes the role of the agents, reducing their negative portrayal. In example (3), the verb 'discriminate' (*mendiskriminasi*) is nominalized to 'discrimination' (*diskriminasi*), removing the agent who discriminates against the Chinese community. It avoids directly labeling the government as discriminatory.

Overall, these linguistic choices tend to portray *pribumi* as agents and *nonpribumi* as patients, reflecting power dynamics in which *pribumi* oppress and *nonpribumi* are oppressed. However, the strategies used, such as agentless passive constructions, help hide the negative image of *pribumi* as oppressors while highlighting the victimization of *nonpribumi*.

Tables 1 and 2 further illustrate these points. Table 1 shows that '*pribumi*' often collocates with neutral terms like 'word' and 'term,' avoiding specific identities and decontextualizing the subject. Table 2 indicates that *nonpribumi* and related racial terms emphasize the subjectivity of Chinese identity, contrasting with the abstract treatment of *pribumi*.

Table 1. The co-occurrence of the word *pribumi*

Collocate	Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	T-score	MI
Kata (word)	113	404	10.33120	5.1521	11.6192
Istilah (term)	74	112	8.49991	6.3922	11.4199

Table 2. The word frequency of *pribumi* and nonpribumi, as well as the denominations of nonpribumi

Word	Freq
<b>Pribumi</b>	773
<b>etnis Tiong Hoa (ethnic Chinese)</b>	83
<b>nonpribumi</b>	80
<b>keturunan tionghoa (Chinese descent)</b>	57
<b>keturunan cina (Chinese descent)</b>	36
<b>etnis cina (ethnic Chinese)</b>	19
<b>Peranakan (metis)</b>	16
<b>WNI keturunan (citizen of Indonesia descent)</b>	6
<b>WNI tionghoa (citizen of Indonesia descent)</b>	3

The analysis reveals that the word '*pribumi*' frequently collocates with nominal attributes such as '*kata*' (word) and '*istilah*' (term). It indicates that discussions around '*pribumi*' often focus on it as a term rather than specific identities. This usage helps to obscure the subjectivity of '*pribumi*' agents through decontextualization.

In contrast, the frequency of the word 'nonpribumi' in the corpus is significantly lower (80 instances) compared to '*pribumi*' (773 cases). Furthermore, various racial terms related to '*nonpribumi*' (such as 'ethnic Chinese' and 'Chinese descent') are more common than the term '*nonpribumi*' itself. There are 220 denominations related to 'nonpribumi,' which emphasize the subjectivity of Chinese identity. It suggests that while '*pribumi*' is discussed in abstract terms, 'nonpribumi' is often referred to with specific racial and ethnic identifiers, highlighting their subjectivity. At the same time, the comparison helps us see that the negative portrayal of *pribumi* as discriminators is de-emphasized, and the *nonpribumi* are depicted as passive victims with accentuated subjectivity in terms of social identities; it is crucial to recognize the contributions of nonpribumi in areas beyond the economic sphere.

Dahana (2004) elaborated that prominent figures like Kwik Kian Gie and Alvin Lie have significantly impacted Indonesian society and politics. Kwik Kian Gie, a popular cabinet member under President Megawati, opposed Indonesia's reliance on the IMF and supported populist policies, gaining widespread support. Alvin Lie, a member of the People's Representatives from the Partai Amanat Nasional, is known for his criticism of

government policies and advocacy for multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. These examples challenge the stereotype that ethnic Chinese Indonesians are only interested in business, showcasing their active participation and positive influence in politics and culture. Despite their significant achievements, Dahana (2004) stressed that Chinese Indonesians may frequently be perceived as powerless in politics. This narrow perception may feel a sense of entitlement among the *pribumi* to "fight back" against the *nonpribumi* based on the mistaken belief that the *nonpribumi*'s influence is confined to the economic sphere.

### "Us versus Them" Polarisation

As the *pribumi* – *nonpribumi* perception has created a dichotomization in society, it is interpreted as an 'othering' between the in-group and the out-group. In the past, several significant public policies have been reformed to improve the status and rights of Chinese Indonesians. Anggraeni (2017) explored that 1999 President B.J. Habibie issued a Presidential Instruction banning discriminatory terms such as 'native' and 'non-native' in official documents and transactions. This instruction also revoked the requirement for Chinese Indonesians to provide the Certificate of Proof of Indonesian Citizenship (SBKRI) for obtaining official documents, reinforcing a 1996 provision that exempted women married to Indonesian citizens and minors under eighteen from this requirement. In 2000, President Abdurrahman Wahid issued an instruction that lifted the ban on ethnic Chinese cultural expressions, allowing the public celebration of Chinese New Year. Following this, President Megawati's 2003 Presidential Decree declared the Chinese New Year a national holiday. Lastly, in 2006, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono enacted Law No. 12 on citizenship, categorizing ethnic Chinese Indonesian citizens as part of the ethnic groups of the Republic of Indonesia. Furthermore, Anggraeni recalled that these reforms gained media coverage and were implemented without significant public opposition.

Nevertheless, this section aims to uncover the persistent presence of polarised discourse throughout the given period. In examining discursive constructions, using

indexical features or deixis, such as personal pronouns (e.g., we, us, ours, they, them, theirs), is crucial in revealing the perception of 'othering' (van Dijk, 1993). These strategies can also indicate whether certain groups are socially assimilated or excluded from a community. The following examples are statements made by *pribumi* speakers using the pronoun *they* (*mereka*) to refer to non-*pribumi* groups:

(4) *Orang Cina sering menegaskan bahwa mereka "terpaksa" bersikap eksklusif karena tekanan yang mereka terima selama puluhan tahun. [TM01]*

(The Chinese often insist **they are "forced" to be exclusive** because of the pressure they have endured over the decades.)

(5) *Fraksi ini juga setuju dengan penggunaan kata 'pribumi' dalam Tap tersebut. "Kami tidak bermaksud diskriminatif, tapi harus ada pemihakan nyata terhadap kaum miskin dan golongan ekonomi lemah, yang memang sebagian besar adalah pribumi," kata Prayitno. [TM02]*

(This faction also supported the inclusion of the term '*pribumi*' in the law. **"We do not intend to be discriminative**, but there needs to be a genuine focus on impoverished and economically disadvantaged groups, who are predominantly *pribumi*," stated Prayitno.)

(6) *Saya memang melihat masih ada warga keturunan Cina yang tertutup. Seharusnya mereka membuka diri. [TM04]*

(I notice that specific Chinese communities remain reserved. **They** ought to be more open.)

(7) *Mereka perlu mengerti kebiasaan dan adat istiadat suku bangsa di Indonesia . . . Mereka seakan tidak mau berbaur dengan warga pribumi. [TM04]*

(**They** need to understand the lifestyles and customs of Indonesia's ethnic groups... They appear unwilling to integrate with the *pribumi*.)

(8) *Saya yakin, kendati minoritas, mereka juga sadar, mereka menguasai ekonomi. [TM04]*

(I am confident that, despite being a minority, **they** are aware of **their** control over the economy.)

In examples (4) - (8), the deictic pronoun 'they' (*mereka*) is used to refer to non-*pribumi*, creating a distance from 'us' (*kami/kita*) and highlighting racial stigma. The speaker in examples (4), (6), and (7) perceives the Chinese community as exclusive, culturally ignorant, and reserved.

In example (4), the speaker suggests that ethnic Chinese claim they are 'forced' to be exclusive due to historical pressure. The use of quotation marks around 'forced' implies irony and rejection (Lampert, 2013), suggesting the speaker believes this exclusivity is a choice rather than a necessity, thus de-emphasizing the social pressures faced by the ethnic Chinese. This statement comes from a commentary responding to a letter by an ethnic Chinese individual discussing ongoing struggles for social acceptance.

In example (5), a parliament member discusses a constitutional amendment, using 'we' to refer to *pribumi* and including a disclaimer, "we do not intend to be discriminative," before emphasizing the economic weakness of *pribumi*. This disclaimer helps reduce the negative image of 'us' while highlighting the negative image of 'them.' Examples (6) and (7) come from an article gathering opinions from Indonesians about ethnic Chinese. These statements suggest that ethnic Chinese are reserved and culturally ignorant, with modal verbs like 'should be more open' and 'need to understand' used to imply a need for change. According to Van Dijk (2013), such modalisation is part of promoting an ideology of domination, indicating that non-*pribumi* are seen as needing to conform. In example (8), 'they' describes the Chinese community as economically dominant, reinforcing the perception of their economic power.

In this context, a collocational word search in SketchEngine can also observe the us versus them polarisation. Tables 3 and 4 below display the collocated words surrounding the deictic pronouns 'we/us' (*kita/kami*) and 'they/them' (*mereka*):

Table 1. The co-occurrences of pronoun us

Collocate	Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	T-score	MI
<b>tuan</b> ( <i>master</i> )	20	36	4.45002	7.65969	11.06454
<b>pribumi</b>	25	627	4.65547	3.85923	9.83489

Table 2 The co-occurrences of pronoun them

Collocate	Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	T-score	MI
<b>cina</b> ( <i>Chinese</i> )	16	149	3.87833	5.03891	10.12348
<b>Keturunan</b> ( <i>descendant</i> )	6	142	2.26013	3.69329	8.73009
<b>tionghoa</b> ( <i>Chinese</i> )	8	313	2.46696	2.96806	8.69166

Using the terms us versus them aligns with the binary concepts of ‘*pribumi*’ and ‘*nonpribumi*.’ In Table 4, the pronoun ‘they’ is associated with terms like ‘cina’ (Chinese), ‘keturunan’ (descent), and ‘Tionghoa’ (Chinese), all representing *nonpribumi* identities. Additionally, Table 5 reveals that the pronouns are linked with words like ‘tuan’ (master/owner) and ‘*pribumi*.’ This polarization also carries religious nuances, as evidenced by supplementary data such as images and speeches. The shifting nuances can be observed in Figures 2 and 3.

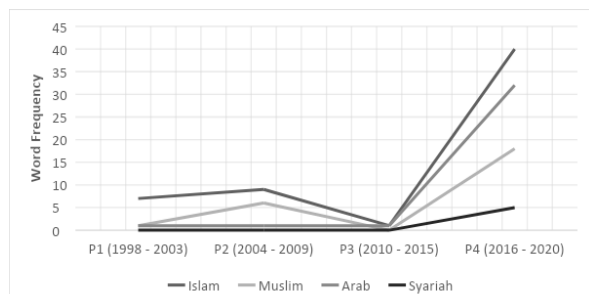


Figure 2. Word frequency of Islam, Muslim, Arab, and Syariah

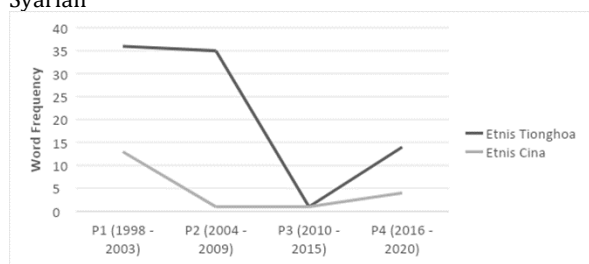


Figure 3. Word frequency of Etnis Tionghoa and Etnis Cina

The analysis of the figures indicates a notable increase in Islamic-related terms like ‘Islam,’ ‘Muslims,’ ‘Arabs,’ and ‘Sharia’ in P4. Conversely, compared to Figure 3, there is a decrease in racial denominations directed towards *nonpribumi* individuals, such as ‘*Etnis Tionghoa*’ and ‘*Etnis Cina*’ (ethnic Chinese), in P1, with a slight increase in P4. It suggests that racial discourse in P4 is nuanced in the Islamic

context, contrasting with the earlier periods where racial discourse was more prominent.

In addition to the Islamic-related terms found in news reports and speeches (see (19) discussed later), a speech is also retrieved from Twitter in P4 containing the term *pribumi* firmly attached to Islamic nuances. The accompanying image (Appendix 1) is a brochure circulated within a community in Jakarta Timur. Published by an organization known as GOIB (*Gerakan Ormas Islam Betawi – Batavians Moslem Organization Movement*), initially protesting the construction of four cinemas near a mosque, the brochure implicates ‘*pengusaha Cina*’ (Chinese entrepreneurs) as responsible for the issue. However, police investigations revealed an economic motive behind the incident, suggesting the company should have negotiated with local citizens regarding pre-existing agreements. As the perpetrator is convicted of using racist and discriminatory speech, it is essential to scrutinize the brochure’s discursive strategies, potentially exposing underlying ideologies, particularly within the framework of us versus them polarisation.

Discursive strategies employ local and global coherence, deictic reference, lexical choices, actor descriptions, and predicative propositions.

(9) *Yok bareng-bareng kita usir Cina-Cina **brengsek** dari cililitan yang merusak moral ummat Islam dan kaum pribumi.*

(Come on, together, **we expel** the Chinese **bastards** from Cililitan who destroyed the morals of Muslims and *Pribumi*.)

In example (9), the deictic reference ‘we’ as *pribumi* distances the group from ‘them’ as *nonpribumi* (the Chinese), employing an ‘othering’ strategy. This is reinforced through the pronoun ‘we’ (the Muslim community or Umma) and *pribumi*, excluding the Chinese. Additionally, the statement is lexicalized with the verb ‘expel,’ suggesting the Chinese ethnicity is deemed unacceptable. Actor descriptions portray negative connotations, with the Chinese depicted as potentially undermining the morality of Muslims and *pribumi*, employing a scapegoating strategy:

(10) *Pengusaha Cina ini sudah tidak menghormati ummat Islam dan tidak menghargai orang betawi Cililitan dan sekitarnya dan sudah menginjak-injak harkat martabat ummat Islam dan kaum pribumi.*

(This Chinese entrepreneur has no respect for the Muslim Ummah, does not respect the Betawinese of Cililitan and its surroundings, and has trampled on the dignity of Muslims and pribumi.)

(11) *Hai Cina-Cina brengsek elo jangan pake cara komunis menghancurkan moral umat islam dan moral bangsa Indonesia. Gue betawi Jakarta Timur siap menghancurkan Cina-Cina brengsek.*

(Hey, you Chinese bastards, do not use communist methods to destroy the morals of the Muslim Ummah and the morals of the Indonesians. I, am Batavians from Jakarta Timur, am ready to conquer the Chinese bastards.)

(12) *Saudara-saudaraku sesama ummat Islam dan kaum pribumi mari kita berjihad untuk membela agama Islam dan kedaulatan NKRI.*

(My brothers and sisters, the Muslim Ummahs and Pribumi, let us do the jihad to defend Islam and the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.)

In example (10), negative depictions of individuals are emphasized through the use of 'this' to refer to the Chinese entrepreneur and the verb 'to trample,' suggesting oppression. Example (11) employs the othering strategy by using 'you' to refer to the Chinese and 'me' for the Batavians, highlighting the distinction between the groups.

This othering strategy continues in example (12), where 'us' is represented by the possessive adjective 'my' referring to both Muslims and pribumi and through the use of the second person plural form of the verb 'to do.' These examples not only serve to distance the Chinese group but also convey negative implications, as seen in (11), where the Chinese are depicted as bad actors while pribumi see them as prey. Additionally, Islamic terms such as 'agama Islam' (Islam), 'ummat'

(Umma), and 'jihad' are often associated with pribumi, while the adjective 'komunis' (communist) is linked to the Chinese, emphasizing ideological differences.

At the beginning of the period (P1 and P2), the polarization of us versus them was primarily based on class and race. However, in more recent times (P3 and P4), the religious aspect, especially Islam, has become more nuanced in the polarisation despite the continued presence of racial and class aspects. These nuances are evident in the referential coherence and Islamic collocations observed in P4.

While dichotomization appears to persist, there were times when Chinese Indonesians and native Indonesians showed significant collaboration and contributions. After the Chinese New Year became a national holiday in 2003, the media covered celebrations widely. In 2004, Tempo News Magazine dedicated 56 pages of its Indonesian Independence Day Special Edition to stories on Chinese Indonesians, free from prejudice (Anggraeni, 2017).

Anggraeni (2017) further elaborated that notable individuals like artist Halim H.D., architects Budi Lim and Eko Agus Prawoto, social activist Sofyan Tan, and human rights advocate Ester Indahyani Jusuf were featured for breaking stereotypes and integrating into mainstream society. The edition also highlighted arts blending Chinese origins with local elements, which was well-received by the public. This inclusive reporting by Tempo is part of a broader trend, with other major news outlets like Kompas, Media Indonesia, The Jakarta Post, The Jakarta Globe, and lifestyle magazines consistently featuring ethnic Chinese culture. Adverse reporting has occurred, however, when Chinese Indonesian individuals have committed crimes (Anggraeni, 2017). It further emphasizes that (dichotomized) discourse depends on social practice and can evolve based on the context and interactions between different groups within society.

### Descriptive Characteristics

This section will analyze the descriptive characteristics attributed to pribumi and nonpribumi. Following Van Dijk's (2013) framework, various descriptive strategies, including portraying actors, actions,



metaphors, adjectival and nominal attributes, and linguistic choices, are employed in constructing labels or images of these groups. This analysis investigates how these description strategies contribute to emphasizing or de-emphasizing the significance of *pribumi* and nonpribumi. Seven statements are examined in this regard.

(13) *Lengsernya Soeharto diasumsikan pula sebagai keambrukan konglomerat Cina alias para kroni Orde Baru.* [TM98]

(The fall of Suharto is also believed to be the collapse of **Chinese conglomerates** known as **New Order cronies**.)

(14) *Selama ini jika terjadi kerusuhan di Indonesia, kami selalu jadi kambing hitam. Padahal hanya beberapa gelintir saja WNI keturunan Cina yang betul-betul kaya dan berkolusi dengan penguasa.* [KM98]

(Until now, if riots occur in Indonesia, we will always be **scapegoats**. Despite this, only a few Chinese citizens are **wealthy and collating with the authorities**.)

(15) *Bayangkan, saat pemerintah pusat masih setengah hati mengakui eksistensi warga keturunan Tionghoa di Indonesia, masyarakat Kalbar sudah mendudukkan kaum "mata sipit" sama dan sederajat dengan pribumi.* [KM01]

(Imagine, when the central government still half-heartedly acknowledged the existence of citizens of Chinese descent in Indonesia, the people of West Kalimantan had placed their **"slanted eyes" equal to the pribumi**.)

(16) *Etnis Tionghoa digambarkan sebagai suatu komunitas yang licik, eksklusif, kikir, dan serigala ekonomi.* [TM04]

(The Chinese ethnicity is described as a **cunning, exclusive, stingy, and "economic jackal" community**.)

Nominal attributes such as 'Chinese conglomerates' and 'New Order cronies' emphasize the depiction of actors, as demonstrated in example (13). This excerpt is taken from an article titled "The order has ended; will the conglomerates change?" published in Tempo Magazine, exploring the

potential shift towards the premiumization of conglomerates post-New Order, replacing ethnic-Chinese conglomerates. These attributions, associated with *nonpribumi* and tied to economic nuances, suggest a form of economic monopolization in politics. A similar portrayal can be found in statement (14) of a news article titled "The Hopes of the ethnic-Chinese for the President," which gathers voices of ethnic Chinese from various regions in Indonesia addressing the incoming President. Here, the *nonpribumi* speaker characterizes the action as colluding, explaining the stigmatized Chinese characteristic to the *pribumi* audience while also employing a scapegoat metaphor to describe the stigma Chinese individuals face. Additionally, in the statement (15), a racially and physically metonymic attribute is used to describe the physical appearance of Chinese people. The mention of 'slanted eyes' in quotation marks alludes to nonpribumi as an Oriental, distinctly Asian community, contrasting with the term 'pribumi'. This statement is from an investigation titled "They are part of us," published in Kompas, examining inclusive measures and policies for ethnic Chinese in Pontianak, West Kalimantan.

The report titled "Tionghoa discrimination, do not let the mistake recur," published in Tempo, features descriptive presentations in statement (16). The author identifies potential discrimination factors against Chinese Indonesians and proposes measures to prevent recurrence. Chinese individuals are characterized by several collocations, such as 'cunning,' 'exclusive,' and 'stingy'. Furthermore, metaphors like 'economic jackals' describe *nonpribumi* actors, reflecting similarities to Chinese characteristics in economic contexts. These examples illustrate explicit descriptive characteristics associated with Chinese Indonesians, portraying them as economically solid or dominant, exclusive, and possessing specific physical characteristics.

Meanwhile, the descriptions of *pribumi* are discussed as follows:

(17) *Di ruang kelas berukuran sekitar 4 x 6 meter, serombongan remaja belasan tahun menerobos masuk pada suatu sore. Di antara 13 remaja, cuma ada satu yang bertampang amoy. Itu pun*

*separuh "neneng" alias campuran Cina-Sunda. Selebihnya pribumi asli.* [TM04]

(In a 4 x 6-meter classroom, a group of teenagers arrived in the afternoon. Among the 13 teens, only one stood out in appearance. She was a mixed-neneng individual, known as Sino-Sundanese. The rest were **native pribumi**.)

(18) *"Pada saat bersamaan, komunitas masyarakat Tionghoa harus kian menumbuhkan upaya membaaur, tidak mengelompok dalam permukiman pecinan, demi segera menghentikan terwarisinya anggapan masyarakat bahwa mereka orang asing, dan etnis yang selama ini dalam tanda kutip disebut pribumi, adalah pemilik tanah negeri kita,"* [KM05]

(“Meanwhile, the **Chinese community should integrate** rather than cluster in Chinatowns, to challenge the public perception that Chinese people are foreigners and that the ethnic group **pribumi are quote-unquote the rightful hosts of our country’s lands.**”)

(19) *"Pribumi adalah bangsa pemenang dan bangsa pendiri negara NKRI yang mengerucut dari paham bangsa ketimuran yang cinta dengan adab dan kebudayaan leluhur bangsa sendiri,"* katanya. [TR19]

“The **pribumi are the triumphant and founding nation of the Republic of Indonesia**, rooted in the values of eastern nations **who cherish adab and their ancestral culture,**” he stated.)

In a statement (17), an author’s commentary from an article highlights the mainstreaming of Chinese cultures post-reformation, including opportunities to learn Chinese languages in various language centers. The author describes a student using the Sundanese form of address ‘*mining*,’ emphasizing that the individual of Chinese descent in the statement is not entirely *pribumi*. The statement is further specified with a Sino-Sundanese description. It suggests questioning the originality of *pribumi* identity in the context of Chinese cultural influences.

The subsequent statement pertains to a news article titled “Make the hatred toward Chinese ethnic soon disappear,” featuring a speech by academic Dr. Ahmad Habib during a

seminar at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, explaining the causes of ethnic conflicts. The statement suggests that the Chinese community should integrate, causally coherent with describing the *pribumi* actor as the landowner of the country. Additionally, the speaker emphasizes the description of *pribumi* as a landowner using the prefixal particle ‘quote-unquote’, indicating sarcasm and irony (Lampert, 2013). Although the speaker rejects the notion that *pribumi* are the country’s landowners, the advice for ethnic Chinese to integrate implies an exclusivity attributed to them.

In addition, in the statement (19), a speech from the Gerakan Pribumi Indonesia (GEPRINDO – Indonesian Native Movement) voices opposition to the annual Djakarta Warehouse Project (DWP) music festival in Jakarta, urging the Governor to halt the event for its perceived departure from civil norms. The term *pribumi* is positively portrayed as the founding nation of Indonesia, aligned with the Islamic concept of Adab, setting up a contrast between *pribumi* and non*pribumi* actors.

The characters’ negative and positive descriptions are delineated through distinct speech strategies. Negative depictions of non*pribumi* actors stem from lexical choices, identity attributes, and metaphors, portraying them as economically dominant yet socially ignorant. Terms such as ‘conglomerates,’ ‘cronies,’ ‘cunning,’ and racial descriptors (e.g., ‘slanted eyes’) contribute to these representations. Conversely, descriptions of *pribumi* emphasize positivity rooted in historical, religious, cultural, and racial originality. Attributes such as ‘owners of the lands of our country,’ ‘cultural roots,’ and ‘victorious nation’ construct a favorable image. Some sentences are intentionally decontextualized to avoid explicit actor descriptions. Using noun attributes helps decontextualize the discourse within the polarised community, underlining its linguistic nature.

These portrayals of Chinese Indonesians as economically dominant but socially disconnected may align with the results of the 2017 survey conducted by Setijadi (2017b) on *pribumi* public perceptions of their wealth and social behavior. The results revealed that 59.8% of respondents view Chinese

Indonesians as more likely to be wealthy, with 60.1% considering them typically middle-class. Nearly half (48%) believe life is more accessible for Chinese Indonesians, and 48.7% think they have more opportunities than *pribumi*. Additionally, 68.1% see them as naturally talented in making money. However, 42.4% feel Chinese Indonesians have their religion, and 42.6% believe their culture does not fit well in Indonesia. Furthermore, 48.4% think they only care about their community, and 46.3% perceive them as greedy and ambitious. Despite this, 35.8% are open to intermarriage, though 44.1% find it hard to form close friendships with them. Politically, 41.9% feel Chinese Indonesians have too much influence, and 62% believe they dominate the economy. Discomfort with Chinese Indonesians in political roles varies by education and ethnic group, with more educated individuals and certain ethnic groups like Bataks and Balinese showing greater acceptance.

Despite the widespread perception that Chinese Indonesians are wealthy, Setijadi (2017b) noted that there are efforts to highlight that many are poor and not linked to economic elites. For example, television shows and news stories feature Chinese Indonesian communities in rural areas like the Cina Benteng community on the outskirts of Jakarta, who have been farmers for generations. Additionally, a museum dedicated to the Cina Benteng community was opened in Tangerang, Banten province, to promote awareness of their history and culture (Setijadi, 2017b).

The analysis of argument structure reveals that, semantically, the term *pribumi* often functions as the agent of a verb, while non*pribumi* typically serves as the patient. Verbs associated with *pribumi* tend to be dynamic and oppressive. However, this can be contrasted with the increasing political prominence of some Chinese Indonesians, indicating that their agency extends beyond the economic sphere (Dahana, 2004).

The analysis of the polarisation between us (*pribumi*) and them (non*pribumi*) reveals that the othering strategy is based on racial, economic, and religious aspects. However, these aspects only sometimes align with the us-versus-them polarisation across all periods. From a diachronic perspective, the

portrayal of Islam has become increasingly nuanced and accentuated in recent times. It is evident from the use of deictic pronouns like 'we' frequently linked to Islamic terms in P4, such as 'Muslim,' 'Islam,' 'ummat,' and 'adab' in (9), (10), (12), and (19), particularly in discussions of originality and economy. The shift towards emphasizing Islamic aspects is closely related to the rise of an Islamic movement during the 2016-2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election (Setijadi, 2017a). Although the dichotomy between Chinese Indonesians and native Indonesians persists and evolves, a historical collaboration between the two groups suggests that social upheaval can exacerbate this polarization and its negative effects.

The analysis of descriptive characteristics reveals that their social class primarily characterizes the non*pribumi*. In contrast, the *pribumi* are depicted through historical and cultural aspects, emphasizing their status as 'landowners' and 'Muslims.' The economic perception of the Chinese community in Indonesia is constructed through descriptive lexicalizations such as 'cunning,' 'exclusive,' and 'stingy,' as well as metaphors like 'economic jackals' in (16), and the coherence between clauses and sentences. This perception is partly due to the New Order government leveraging Chinese corporate 'tycoons' as trading partners with *pribumi* elites while discriminating against the broader Chinese community (Chua, 2008). However, a study by Setijadi (2017a) indicates that most *pribumi* view the Chinese community as economically privileged and wealthier, overlooking the reality that many ethnic Chinese live in poverty.

## CONCLUSION

The study investigates the persistent and evolving dichotomy between *pribumi* and non*pribumi* in Indonesia, particularly in the post-Suharto era. By employing Van Dijk's 'Ideological Square' within a CDA framework, the research reveals how *pribumi* are consistently portrayed with positive attributes linked to historical, cultural, and religious aspects, while non*pribumi* are depicted negatively, emphasizing economic dominance and social exclusivity. The presentations of *pribumi* and non*pribumi* can be synthesized in

Table 5, following Van Dijk's concept of the ideological square, as follows:

Table 5 The ideological square of the presentations of *pribumi* and nonpribumi

	Us ( <i>Pribumi</i> )	Them ( <i>Nonpribumi</i> )
<b>Emphasise</b>	<b>Positive Image</b>	<b>Negative Image</b>
	Ethnic origin	Foreign
	Cultural heritage	Racially different
	Poor	Ignorant/exclusive
	Country land owner	<i>Kafir</i> (infidel)
	Muslims	Dominant in economics
<b>De-emphasise</b>	<b>Negative Image</b>	<b>Positive Image</b>
	Oppressors (dominant)	Oppressed (passivity)
	Dominant in politics	Some of them are poor

The representations of the dichotomous terms *pribumi* and non*pribumi* in post-Suharto Indonesia are closely linked to specific events that occurred during different periods. The socio-political changes in Indonesia during the early periods (P1 - P2) have influenced these representations. The initial democratization phase of post-Suharto Indonesia (P1) saw discourses on *pribumi* and non*pribumi* shaped by events such as the May 1998 riots and issues surrounding the status of Chinese citizens. Emphasizing and de-emphasizing these dichotomous representations have been linked to aspects of nationality, racial origin, and economic class. In more recent times,

particularly in P4, the representations of *pribumi* and non*pribumi* have become nuanced in an Islamic context, though they still intersect with class and racial contexts.

Finally, this research offers an initial exploration that could assist policymakers and scholars in peace studies/conflict resolution in understanding how discriminatory language influences mobilization patterns and potential conflicts within communities. While the findings provide valuable insights, they are limited by the data collected from media articles and social media content. Despite covering the period from 1998 to 2020, the analysis predominantly focuses on the early (P1) and recent (P4) periods. Future research should examine the triggers that lead to the use of discriminatory speech and how this impacts civil liberties and democracy. Additionally, it is essential to study the use of these dichotomous terms in specific contexts over time, such as the intersection of *pribumi* and non*pribumi* with Islam, i.e., how Chinese Indonesian Muslims are represented and negotiated in public discourse.

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### Appendices

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**GOIB**  
(GERAKAN ORMAS ISLAM BETAWI)

**AKSI DEMO BELA AGAMA ISLAM DAN KAUM PRIBUMI**

WARGA MASYARAKAT BETAWI CILILITAN DAN SEKITARNYE  
BERSAMA UMMAT ISLAM JAKARTA TIMUR  
MENGAJAK UMMAT UNTUK AKSI BELA AGAMA ISLAM DAN KAUM PRIBUMI

**YANG TELAH DIRESAHKAN OLEH PENGUSAHA CINA  
YANG MEMBANGUN 4 BIOSKOP XXI BERDEKATAN MASJID AS-SINAH  
± 20 METER DI LANTAI 7 PGC (PUSAT GROSIR CILILITAN)**

DAN BERDEKATAN DENGAN MAKAM KERAMAT PARA HABAIB  
YANG DIHORMATI DAN DIMULIAKAN OLEH UMMAT ISLAM DALAM DAN LUAR NEGERI:  
HABIB MUHSIN AL-ATTAS, HABIB SALIM JINDAN, HABIB UMAR BIN HUD AL-ATTAS,  
HABIB MUHAMMAD ALHADDAD, HABIB UMAR AL-ATTAS HABIB JA'FAR ALHADDAD.

PENGUSAHA CINA INI SUDAH TIDAK MENGHORMATI UMMAT ISLAM DAN  
TIDAK MENGHARGAI ORANG BETAWI CILILITAN DAN SEKITARNYE  
DAN SUDAH MENJAJAK-INJAK HARKAT MARTABAT UMMAT ISLAM DAN KAUM PRIBUMI.

AKSI DEMO PADA :

**HARI JUM'AT, TANGGAL 17 JANUARI 2020**  
**JAM : 13.00 WIB (JAM SATU SIANG) SETELAH SHOLAT JUM'AT**  
**TEMPAT: DEPAN PGC (PUSAT GROSIR CILILITAN)**

HAI CINA-CINA BRENGSEK ELO JANGAN MACAM-MACAM DI KAMPUNG GUE.  
GUE BETAWI JAKARTA TIMUR JANGAN DISAMAIN YAA. SAMA YANG LAIN.

HAI CINA-CINA BRENGSEK ELO JANGAN PAKE CARA KOMUNIS  
MENGHANCURKAN MORAL UMMAT ISLAM. DAN MORAL BANGSA INDONESIA.  
GUE BETAWI JAKARTA TIMUR SIAP MENGHANCURKAN CINA-CINA BRENGSEK.

**NYOK BARENG-BARENG KITE USIR CINA-CINA BRENGSEK DARI CILILITAN  
YANG MERUSAK MORAL UMMAT ISLAM DAN KAUM PRIBUMI**

**SAUDARE-SAUDAREKU SESAMA UMMAT ISLAM DAN KAUM PRIBUMI  
MARI KITA BER JIHAD UNTUK MEMBELA AGAMA ISLAM DAN KEDAULATAN NKRI**

Penanggung Jawab  
Aksi Demo Bela Agama Islam dan NKRI  
  
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# YANG IKUT AKSI DEMO BERARTI IKUT  
MEMBELA UMMAT ISLAM DAN MEMBELA  
KAUM PRIBUMI YANG DI DZOLIMI