



## The Effect of Catholic Religion on Dayak Identity in West Kalimantan

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The background of this research is the issue of ethnic identity in West Kalimantan, where religion is associated with ethnic identity. This study used the ethnographic method by interviewing 26 Catholic religious leaders and community leaders for three months. The data analysis used in this study was a qualitative descriptive analysis. The data that had been collected based on observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed and described critically. The research findings showed that the thesis that said Dayak identity was influenced by the Dutch colonial was not fully accepted. The formation of Dayak identity was actually influenced by Catholicism. The names of the inhabitants used the names of Catholic saints. The use of language, dance, and symbols with Dayak nuances carried out in Catholic religious rituals attracts the Dayak people to embrace Catholicism. The Dayak language as a medium of communication had been used by Catholicism, not only for singing texts but also for the entire series of ritual ceremonies to the most sacred expressions of prayer. This research is still far from perfect, but the results can at least be used as a dialectic for academic discussions about Dayak identity. Some data sources are still in Dutch, so they can only be understood in a limited way, for it is recommended that in further research these documents can be translated first.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Dayak tribe consists of hundreds of tribal children in it, at least some say up to 406 tribal children, ranging from the Ngaju Dayak tribe in Central Kalimantan to the Sebaruk tribe in the Sintang Regency area of West Kalimantan (King, 2021). At first, the Dayak came from a large group, but due to geographic and demographic processes that lasted for more than a thousand years, the group became fragmented (Sercombe, 2020). The Dayak tribes have similarities, especially their culture (Kristianus, 2016). In West Kalimantan, there are many Dayak sub-tribes, and they are united by their own culture, language and customs. They may not understand each other, but they have similarities, especially in terms of culture, and it is thought that they have a common origin, that is, they come from a common

ancestor. Most of them inhabit areas along rivers and make a living from growing rice in the fields (Dove, 2015).

The Dayak people, who mostly live in rural areas, can say that their lives are traditional, with characteristics of agro-cultural life (König, 2016a). Recent developments with resettlement programs for indigenous peoples carried out by the government and the opening of a causeway that connects several districts, and the division of the district into several districts, has opened up isolation for the Dayak people, in turn, they have opened themselves up to external developments and modern life. loaded with information and technology (Kristianus, 2011). If in the past the river was used as a transportation route, now the highway has become the most dominant and more effective transportation route. The life of the Dayak today is no different from the life of other ethnic groups (Darmadi, 2017).

The entry of Catholic missionaries to West Kalimantan, of course, also had an impact on Dayak culture and identity. The Catholic Church in Indonesia in general and in West Kalimantan, in particular, is still very young when compared to the Catholic Church in other countries (Magnis-Suseno, 2010). Although in reality the Catholic Church only began to develop evenly in the early 20th century in Indonesia, actually Chaldean rites began to exist in Indonesia long before the 14th century (Terblanche, 2010). From the available reports and records, for example, based on the report of the Arab Islamic historian, Abu Salih Armini, it can be seen that in the 7th century there were Catholics on the west coast of Sumatra and archival data of the Franciscan Order recorded that in 1313 Kalimantan visited by a Franciscan priest (Lindblad, 2009).

During the 16th century, many Catholic missionaries entered Indonesia. Many missionaries, apart from stopping in Java, also stopped in Maluku, Sulawesi, and Nusa Tenggara. Nobody stopped by Kalimantan. This situation lasted until 1668 when finally some priests came to Kalimantan. In the early 20th century the Apostolic Vicar of Jakarta asked for power from religious groups in the Netherlands. As a result, the priests of the Capuchin Order of the Netherlands Province accepted responsibility for the Apostolic prefecture of Borneo which had just been established in 1905. Since then missionaries began to arrive regularly to various places in West Kalimantan. On November 30, 1905, the missionaries arrived in Singkawang and 1906 Sejiram (Kapuas Hulu), got another priest. So, the forerunners of Catholics in West Kalimantan started from Singkawang and Sejiram (Kristianus, 2017).

Because the work area is very wide, the relationship is difficult, and the number of staff is very limited, it is impossible to provide ideal services. Because of that Mgr. Pasifikus Bos is looking for staff from other congregations to help work in Kalimantan. This was recorded in 1926 when members of the MSF Congregation took over South and East Kalimantan which in 1938 became the Apostolic prefecture of Banjarmasin. Compare with Islamization in Banjarmasin (Noor, 2013). Thus the Capuchin priests could focus their attention on the church in West Kalimantan only.

Although the area is getting smaller, it is still large enough for Capuchin priests. For this reason, assistance from other congregations is still needed. This time from the Congregation of the Society of Mary Montfortan (SMM). In 1939 the first Montfortan priests arrived in West Kalimantan and took over the eastern part of West Kalimantan, namely the Sintang and Kapuas Hulu areas (Efriani et al., 2020). In 1948 this area became the Apostolic Prefectus and in 1955 it was upgraded to the Apostolic Vicariate.

Given the rapid development of the Catholic Church, while the number of missionaries is not too much, the Ketapang area cannot be served optimally. It was only after World War II ended, when the Passionist Pastors came to help, that the Ketapang area received full attention. It turned out that the development of the Church in Ketapang was encouraging enough that in 1955 Pope Pius XII separated it from the Apostolic Vicariate of Pontianak and made it the Apostolic Prefecture of Ketapang

(Magdalena et al., 2021). Based on the description above, from 1905 until now the Apostolic Prefecture of Borneo has developed into six ecclesiastical regions, namely (1) the Archdiocese of Pontianak, (2) the Diocese of Sintang, (3) the Diocese of Ketapang, (4) the Diocese of Banjarmasin, (5) the Diocese of Samarinda, and (6) Sanggau Diocese.

Thus, the impact of the spread of Catholicism on Dayak identity also creates a dialectic. In this realm, it is more of a dialectic between the Dayak religious system and the Catholic religion, which is usually considered a non-religious Dayak religion. So, in general, the dialectic in this realm is the dialectic between culture and religion (Kristianus, 2017). The problem is "What is the relationship between Dayak identity and Catholicism? The things that are sought as identity formation are names that later become the identity of people and their culture. This study aims to find the antithesis of the theses of previous researchers regarding the Dayak identity which was influenced by Dutch colonialism, which has been alive and well maintained by the Indonesian people.

Identity is the result of the construction of the human mind, therefore identity is subjective (Harris, 2007). This is because humans are not autonomous and are not rational subjects with free will. When a person is born as a Dayak, then he is constructed by economic, social, cultural and even political/ideological relations (religion, ethnicity). Such material construction determines the form of human identity, who is human in its formulation. The construction of various aspects of this relationship will be described in this research. Then after being described, it will be categorized into various relations between aspects so that they can be interpreted and dialogued so that they will find an intersubjective identity construction (everyone understands it in the same context).

Historically, there are at least four known versions of the term Dayak, which have been considered as an umbrella for shared identity, namely Dayak, Dyak, Daya', and Dayak (Wideen, 2017). From the four versions, the first version (Dayak) is the most frequently used. Next is Daya, Daya', and what is rarely used is Dyak. The term Dyak was commonly used by pre-World War II British authors and publishers (König, 2016b). Historically, the oldest term used is the term Dayak. Charles Brooke, an English adventurer who arrived in Sarawak in 1839 has used the term. In 1956, when a conference was held in Sanggau Kapuas (West Kalimantan) by Dayak community leaders, the term Dayak was changed to Daya'. Over time, the apostrophe (') disappears so that it becomes Daya (Darmadi, 2016).

There is a temporary opinion that says that Daya means upstream as a legitimacy (justification) that the Dayak people come from upstream of the river or are often also referred to as Darat people. Meanwhile, some say that Daya means power. So Daya people mean powerful people, strong people. The younger generation of Dayak and Dayak intellectuals themselves prefer to use the term Dayak because judging from its historicity, the term is the oldest (Sutama et al., 2020). Therefore, in this study, the term Dayak was also used.

All the Dayak tribes belong to groups that migrated massively from mainland Asia. The Dayak people are descended from immigrants who came from what is now Yunan in South China. From there they wandered to various places. One of them is via Indochina to Malaysia. From Malaysia, they headed to Indonesia. In addition to those who pass through Malaysia, some pass through Hainan, Taiwan, and the Philippines (Singarimbun, 1991).

Furthermore, it was said that the first groups to enter Kalimantan were the Negrid group and the Weddid group. These two groups are now gone. Meanwhile, the other group is the Proto-Malay group. This second group is now in Kalimantan. Their migration took place around 3000 – 1500 BC. Groups that moved from mainland Asia to Kalimantan there were stopovers in Sumatra and Java. Most likely, those who currently live in South Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan previously lived temporarily in Sumatra and Java. Meanwhile, those who currently live in West and East Kalimantan did not stop in Java before (Darmadi, 2016). From the description above, it can be said that the Dayak people who are mostly on the island of Borneo come from mainland Asia and belong to a migration group called

Proto-Malay. They then get influence from the nations they pass, such as India and Java (Boulanger, 2002).

From the description above, it can be seen that the "original religion" is still ongoing or ongoing while the official religion recognized by the government, especially Catholicism is also practised by the Dayak community (Efriani et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important and urgent to research the influence of Catholicism on the formation of Dayak identity.

## METHOD

This research was conducted using the ethnographic method, where the researcher participated directly in the events that were happening (Jailani, 2013). The data was taken by observation and direct interviews with people who know about the development of Dayak identity (Moleong, 2019). The data taken focused on the factors that cause Dayak identity. Before going to the field, do a literature study first (Farida, 2010), especially to find out the identity of the Dayak. This research certainly paid attention to the working principles of qualitative research such as a natural setting, inductive analysis, the researcher as an instrument, the existence of research boundaries, and others. The period of this research was three months, from October to December 2021.

An instrument is a tool to collect data. So, the instrument is closely related to the technique of getting data. There were 3 data collection techniques used in the study: (1) observation, (2) interviews, and (3) documentation.

- a) The observation was involved staying on the research subject for some time as needed. The researcher stayed for 20 days at the research location, namely in the sub-district of Menjalin, Landak Regency.
- b) In-depth interviews with several key informants. The key informants in question were Dayak cultural figures, Dayak leaders, political figures, religious leaders, and traditional leaders.
- c) Documentation in the form of folklore, photos, recordings, printed materials as far as available.

The data analysis used in this study was descriptive qualitative analysis and content analysis as stated by Miles and Huberman (Miles & Huberman, 2014). The data that had been collected based on observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed and described critically. The interview data after being transcribed were read repeatedly to understand the contents, then interpreted and given meaning. Data in the form of story documents were also read repeatedly to get the content and then interpreted and given meaning (Darmadi, 2014). To guide data mining, a guide is used such as Table 1.

Table 1  
Field Research Questions Grid

Research question	Elements/Aspects of Research	Data Type Required	Data collection technique	Output
What elements of Dayak identity and Dayak culture have a dialectic with Catholicism?	Belief system, knowledge system, livelihood system, language, technology, arts, community organization	Interview data and documentation	Study of literature, Interview	An overview of the elements of Dayak identity, Dayak culture, Element identification dialectic with Catholicism, Analysis result
What is the role of Catholic missionaries in	The history of the Catholic mission in West Kalimantan,	Documentation data, interview data	Study of literature, Interview	Historical description of the entry of the Mission in West

<b>Research question</b>	<b>Elements/Aspects of Research</b>	<b>Data Type Required</b>	<b>Data collection technique</b>	<b>Output</b>
spreading Catholicism to the Dayak people of West Kalimantan?	The influence of the entry of the Mission on the Dayak culture			Kalimantan; An overview of the impact of the mission on Dayak culture.
What is the dialectic between the Dayak religious system and Catholicism in the West Kalimantan Dayak community?	The Dayak religious system, Catholic religious system	Documentation and interview data	Interview, FGD	Understanding the dialectic between the Dayak and Catholic religious systems
What is the dialectic of Dayak identity from the perspective of the Dayak community itself and the perspective of the non-Dayak community?	Dayak identity according to Dayak people and Dayak identity according to outsiders (non-Dayak)	Interview data	Interview, FGD	Understanding of the dialectic of identity

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

After discussing with Catholic religious leaders in Menjalin and several areas in Landak Regency, the main element of identity, namely the name was influenced by Catholicism. In 1964, Arfina, a girl from the Nangka village of Menjalin was accepted as a Catholic nun. She was the first Catholic nun from the village of Nangka. From what she said when interviewed, several Dayak figures in the village of Nangka used the baptismal name as their identity. She even dared to say that more than 80% of the Dayak names in the village of Nangka use their baptismal names.

Another Catholic figure, Nicodemus, who is also the head of the Catholic community, said that the identity of the Dayak people is very easy to recognize from the baptismal name they use. He said that 100% of the Catholics in Nangka were baptized, and it was certain that they had a baptismal name. The baptismal name is also used on the Identity Card.

If we look back, based on discussions with Yohanes, a Catholic figure from Kapuas Hulu, the Catholic Church had a big role in stopping the headhunting that occurred for hundreds of years before the missionaries came in. Catholic missionaries participated in initiating the creation of peace between the Dayak tribes in Tumbang Anoi May 22-24, 1894. So far this is considered to be done by the Dutch colonialists (Citranu, 2019).

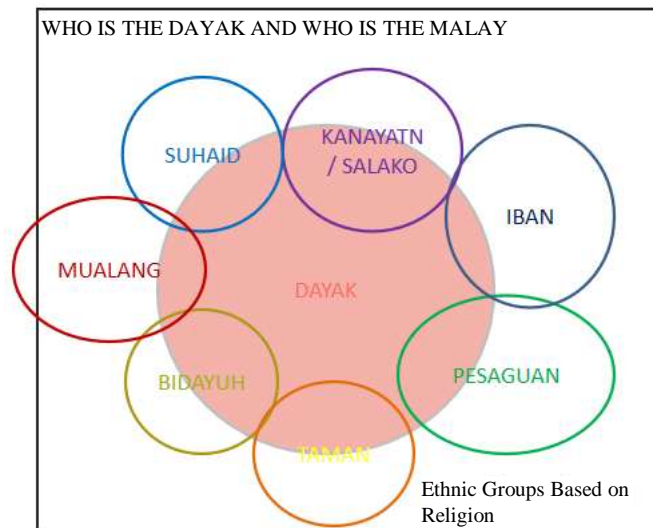
The famous peace meeting in Tumbang Anoi (Central Kalimantan) in 1894, where war, slavery and headhunting were declared prohibited, is the result of this effort. While the legacy is preserved, the Dutch efforts are rewarded. In particular, through the unification of the dispersed Dayaks, the ruler united them among the participants with an awareness of common destiny. The term Dayak was used in the meeting. So there was a union between them (Baddak et al., 2019).

The description above illustrates how diverse identities are designed to become a uniform identity for non-Muslim indigenous people. Furthermore, giving effect and providing the basis for future political mobilization, "Dayak" as a political identity requires recognition from others to become a symbol (Prasojo et al., 2019). A key event in its growth was the emergence of young students who were

educated in Catholic missionary schools and began to feel compatible with what the Dutch had believed them to be “Dayaks”. Through recognition of one another and most importantly among them, as Dayaks, they no longer maintain independence solely over watersheds or language groups, but as part of the general categories presented (Appandie & Ar, 2019).

Based on a discussion with Donatus, a Catholic figure from Ketapang, he said this; as a counter to the Dayak identity, the Pesaguan Dayak people in Ketapang have a song about who is Malay: “*Urang menyago dagang lantang pulau – urang atang dipersisir tobing tinggi – pengolang lowot luas - uang atang di layaran tembalik lowotan di selibah*”. This means that the Malays came from outside, from across the sea, came to trade. Other stories can be explored in the art and culture of the *siagan* story about the *golar-golar* of the Pesaguan Dayak people. Formerly the Pesaguan Dayak people lived around the coast of Kuala Pesaguan. They were attacked slowly so many fled upstream. Those who could not be defeated by the Pirates were the Pesaguan Dayaks in Serongkah village. The Dayak village on the banks of the river is only in Serongkah.

Regional autonomy has become a trigger for the re-growth of identity which later developed into identity politics. The issue of regional sons always appears at every local political event (Alfarabi et al., 2021). If illustrated, the identity of the Dayak is as shown in Fig. 1. Dayak identity is associated with Catholicism and Protestantism. The Dayak people who embraced Islam were then labelled Malay. Compare this with Yusriadi's explanation of Dayak and Malay identity (Yusriadi, 2019).



Source: Data Analysis

Fig 1. Analysis of Dayak and Malay Identities

This change in identity can be traced back to history. Before the missionaries entered and worked in this area, in this area there were the Sultanates of Sambas, Mempawah, Tanjungpura, Sanggau, and Sintang who were Muslim. The families of the Sultan who became rulers (later called kings), lived in the city at the mouth of the existing river. This sultanate is closely related to the process of Islamization in West Kalimantan, compared to what happened in Banjarmasin (Noor, 2013) and also what happened in Malaysia (Mahmood et al., 2009).

This event of identity formation is important to look at: First, the acceptance of religion from outside by the people of West Kalimantan depends on the mutual respect between the propagator and the recipient of the religion. This relationship is perfectly normal. Second, what is not stated in the reason why not all of West Kalimantan people convert to Islam is that the tribal customs that form the Dayak tribe use pigs (Thomson, 2000). In Islam, as practised by the Sambas people, pigs are unclean animals,

while in the traditional Dayak Kalimantan belief system (SKDK), pigs are very important, and in fact, are important economic resource and are integrated into the social structure of West Kalimantan in general. It should also be pointed out that behind the failure of the sultanate there was a reason for the progress of civilization that was sparse between the people of West Kalimantan at that time who could not read and write at all. Third, this point of view does not contradict the fact that from the past until now there have been quite some Muslim people in West Kalimantan. In the previous analysis, the Muslim community in West Kalimantan came from outside (Yusriadi & Muttaqin, 2018),

Dayak people in general easily accept Christianity, especially Catholicism because: First, these different belief systems have some similarities, especially since the Second Vatican Council (Kristianus et al., 2018). Second, social interaction according to the two systems must occur in space and time (an important historical dimension in philological analysis), which becomes part of social structures and systems at a certain time, which will determine the development of these structures in the future, both in terms of innovative products, as well as in terms of reproduction, to date. Third, the acceptance of Catholicism by the people of West Kalimantan is reinforced by a principle in sociology called self-fulfilling prophecy (Sulaiman, 2016) which refers to the similarity of ideas or elements about God in the SKDK called Jubata (with various names) and God in Catholicism. Or it can also be strengthened by the affinity between the two systems running in parallel in their social processes (Habermas, 2006).

It is known that since the Vatican II Council was proclaimed (1962-1965), the Catholic church, especially in Indonesia, began to take advantage of local culture as a means to invite non-religious people to embrace the Catholic faith, to deepen their appreciation. Various branches of culture, such as language, music, dance, fine arts, and customs colour life in ceremonial ceremonies and rituals of the Catholic church (Geldhof, 2013).

In subsequent developments, the Catholic church opened up even wider opportunities, even more so after the Second Vatican Council (Yewangoe, 2018). In this case, Bernhard Mayer SJ. stated as follows: "The Vatican II Council generally expressed high regard for works of art and artists, especially sacred art. It was emphasized that the arts of today and the culture of nations should be recognized and should have a place in the liturgy. Also, the arts of today, as well as the arts of all nations and regions, should be given freedom in the church, provided it is with the reverence and respect that should serve the sanctity of the churches and rites". The Vatican II Council later became the entrance for the Dayak people to embrace Catholicism while continuing to be able to preserve their culture.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

From the description above, it can be concluded that it was very real if the formation of Dayak identity was influenced by Catholicism. The use of language, dance, and symbols that have a Dayak nuance that is carried out in Catholic religious rituals helped the Dayak people to be able to accept Catholicism. The Dayak language of West Kalimantan, for example, was not only used for singing texts but was also used for the entire series of ritual ceremonies to the most sacred expressions of prayer. The dance was used for welcoming processions of Catholic figures, such as bishops when visiting parishes. Dance was also used as a means to convey events in the scriptures, such as the drama dance of the Birth of Jesus and the Ascension of Jesus. Events in the Old and New Testaments were expressed through dramatic performances that convey the messages of the Good News. All of this showed that Catholicism greatly influences Dayak Identity in West Kalimantan.

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